
ELLEN BROWNING SCRIPPS
MEMORIAL PIER

March 26, 1987



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*Scripps Institution of Oceanography
University of California, San Diego*

Seventy-one years ago, through the benevolence of Miss Ellen Browning Scripps, a pier was constructed at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, on the shores of La Jolla, California.

At this ceremony, a new pier, to be built during 1987-88, will be named the "Ellen Browning Scripps Memorial Pier" in recognition of the many contributions of Miss Scripps to the birth and development of the institution. Without her support and encouragement, there might not have been a pier, a Scripps Institution of Oceanography, or a University of California campus in San Diego.

The story of

ELLEN BROWNING SCRIPPS

Teacher, journalist, businesswoman, philanthropist—Ellen Browning Scripps was described by *The New York Times* at the time of her death at age ninety-five in 1932 as having given “a new glory to American womanhood by a life that added the best of the new to the best of the old.”

Ellen Browning Scripps was born October 18, 1836, in London, England, the third of six children of James Mogg Scripps and his second wife, Ellen Mary Saunders. Her mother died when she was five, and a few years later, Ellen's father moved the family to the United States to a farm near Rushville, Illinois. James Scripps remarried and had five more children.

Ellen followed the pattern of serious, hard-working women of her time. In 1858, she was one of the first women to graduate from an American college, Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. She then became a teacher,

and during the Civil War, she raised money and contributed time to the Sanitary Commission and the Freedman's Association. In 1868, she returned to the



Ellen Browning Scripps, 1927

family farm to care for her ill father, and she remained at his side until his death in 1873.

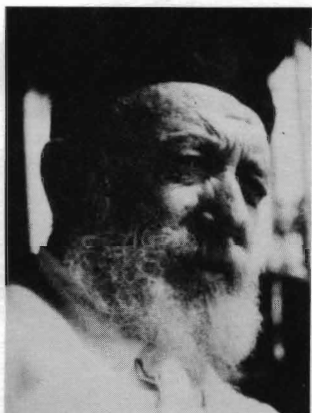
Ellen joined her brother James Edmund Scripps in his newspaper enterprise, the *Detroit Evening News*, where she read proof, edited copy, and wrote a column, “Matters and

Things,” aimed at women readers. This column was later syndicated as “Miss Ellen's Miscellany.”

When Ellen's half-brother Edward Willis

Scripps, who was known as E. W., set out on his own in the newspaper business to found the *Cleveland Penny Press* in 1878, she backed him financially and wrote copy on a part-time basis. By 1900, she held shares in six of E. W.'s nine papers, and ultimately she held stock in sixteen.

In 1891, Ellen joined E. W. and his family when he bought a ranch at Miramar, north of San Diego. Six years later, she built her own home, the first of her life, in La Jolla, where she lived with her sister Virginia. Over the next three decades, Ellen's investments earned her a considerable fortune, and she made a second career of active philanthropy. E. W. joined her in many worthy enterprises.



E. W. Scripps, circa 1920

One of the early recipients of their philanthropic activities was a budding marine biology laboratory in San Diego established by UC Berkeley Professor William E. Ritter. In June of 1903, Ritter and his small staff were conducting a summer field study at the Hotel del Coronado, which attracted the attention of several prominent San Diegans. E. W., Ellen, and Virginia

William E. Ritter, circa 1910

were among the visitors to meet Ritter in Coronado, and a friendship developed between the benefactors and the scientist that continued for many years. Ellen provided the money to acquire a permanent site for the oceanographic institution in La Jolla in 1907; and over the next few decades, she funded the construction of several buildings, a road to the campus, and a research ship. In 1915, she gave funds to construct and outfit the pier, which was completed in 1916. She also established an

endowment fund for the institution.

Among the many other San Diego beneficiaries of the Scripps's generosity were Scripps Clinic and Research Foundation, Scripps Memorial Hospital, the Bishop's School, the San Diego Museum of Natural History, the San Diego Zoo, and several parks. In addition, Ellen made contributions to her alma mater, Knox College, and to establish and endow Scripps College in Claremont, California.

Scripps Institution, 1910



President Benjamin I.

When the pier was completed, the scientists soon began using it for their investigations and observations. The first continuous recorder was a tide gauge, installed in 1916, primarily for studies by Professor George F. McEwen, a physicist, who soon afterward installed a complete weather station at the end of the pier. Daily readings of temperature, precipitation, and salinity have been continued from the pier since then. Among the other early pier users were chemist Eric G. Moberg, who collected daily water samples for analyses; biologist Winfred E. Allen, who assessed phytoplankton samples; and zoologist C. O. Esterly, who analyzed zooplankton and, for one study, took samples at four-hour intervals for a two-year period.

Since its construction, the pier has supplied the Scripps Aquarium with a continuous seawater supply for its aquarium tanks. The aquarium's first cura-

tor, Percy S. Barnhart, fished from the pier or set traps from it to gather specimens for the aquarium and the fish collection. For many years, townspeople were allowed to fish from the pier for 25 cents a day or \$20 for a lifetime permit. Scripps's popular fishing spot was closed in 1941.

Over the years, the pier sustained damage from heavy storms and, in 1946, was extensively rebuilt at a cost of \$65,000. During the winter storms of 1982-83, several of the pier's 105 pilings were further damaged and

cracked. Plans were prepared immediately to replace the pier with a slightly larger, all-concrete structure, and funds were sought from the state of California.

When construction is completed on the new pier, the old one will be removed, having served as a prominent landmark along the San Diego coastline for more than seventy years. The pier at Scripps has stood as a symbol of the institution, but more significantly it has been an important support facility for the research and educational activities of generations of Scripps staff and students.



The pier today

Ground-Breaking Ceremony

**E L L E N B R O W N I N G S C R I P P S
M E M O R I A L P I E R**

*Scripps Institution of Oceanography
University of California, San Diego*

Thursday, March 26, 1987

3:00 p.m. **Historical Retrospective**
Sumner Auditorium

Master of Ceremonies:
Edward A. Frieman, Scripps Director

Speakers:
Roger Revelle, Scripps Director Emeritus
Jeffery D. Frautschy, former Deputy Director
James Stewart, Scripps Diving Officer
William A. Nierenberg, Scripps Director Emeritus

4:00 p.m. **Ground-Breaking Ceremony**
New Pier Site

Speakers:
Ellen Clark Revelle, Grandniece of Ellen Browning Scripps
Richard C. Atkinson, UCSD Chancellor

4:30 p.m. **Reception**
Scripps Aquarium

SCRIPPS INSTITUTION OF OCEANOGRAPHY

For more than eighty years, Scripps Institution of Oceanography has conducted a continuous search on the seas and in the laboratory for knowledge about the marine environment. Now a part of the University of California, San Diego, the institution is the oldest, the largest, and one of the most important centers for marine science research and graduate training in the world.

The scientific scope of the institution has grown to include physical, chemical, geological, and geophysical studies of the oceans as well as biological research. More than 250 research programs may be under way at any one time. The institution has a staff of about 1,200, including approximately 180 graduate students. The annual budget is about \$60 million, from federal, state, and private sources.

Part of the original charter establishing the institution mandated a

public aquarium and museum to serve as a window to the ocean world. Exhibits on the research work at Scripps and developments in oceanography may be viewed at the Scripps Aquarium, 8602 La Jolla Shores Drive. It is open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

daily, including all holidays. A new, \$8.2 million aquarium and museum is scheduled to open in 1990 through funding from individuals, corporations, and foundations. For further information about Scripps Institution, call the Scripps Public Affairs Office, (619) 534-3624.



On board research vessel Melville, 1982

Scripps Archives

The Archives of Scripps Institution of Oceanography collects materials that document the history of Scripps Institution and the history of oceanography. Collections consist of correspondence, photographs, diaries, drawings, and other materials.

The Scripps Archives

provides information on Scripps's history and is always ready to examine materials related to its areas of interest. Persons with historical materials portraying Scripps are encouraged to call the archives at (619) 534-4878.



New Pier

Construction: Estimated construction period March 1987–February 1988.

South of existing pier; all concrete

Length: 1,084 feet

Width: 22.5 feet

Seawater system: Three 1,200 gallon-per-minute pumps

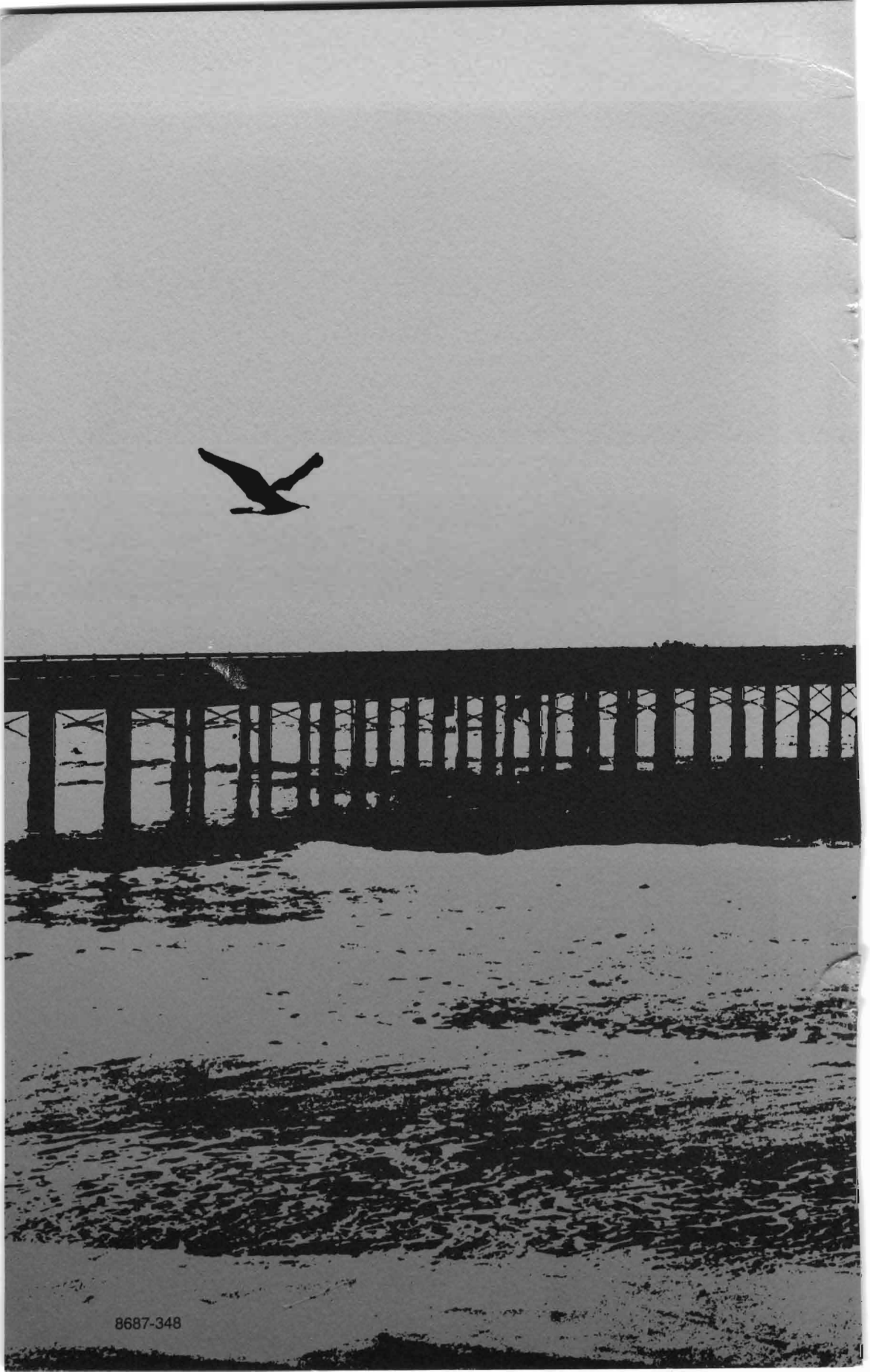
Laboratory space: Approximately 1,000 square feet

Boat launching: New hoist with launching off both sides

Total cost: \$3.95 million (state of California funds)

Design firm: Ferver Engineering, San Diego

Construction firm: Kiewit Pacific Company, Vallejo, California



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