

Mission San Antonio de Padua

Founded July 14, 1771

Historical Features

Walking Tour

Welcome to Mission San Antonio de Padua. This is the third mission in Alta California, founded by Padre Junipero Serra in 1771.

This is the territory of the first people, the Salinans. The permanent structures at Mission San Antonio were built originally by the Salinan people under the direction of the Spanish Franciscan friars.

Please start this tour in front of the church which was completed in 1813. The six-foot thick walls of the church are original, composed of adobe bricks on a cobblestone foundation. Mission San Antonio is an active Roman Catholic parish, part of the Diocese of Monterey.

Original Olive Tree

Olive seeds and perhaps cuttings were brought to California as early as 1769. Thirty years later olive culture at the missions was an assured success. Olives were used to make olive oil, which was pressed three times. Olive oil was used for Sacraments and was also used in cooking, for lamp oil, and as a lubricant.

Original Pomegranate Tree

Pomegranates were a favorite fruit at the missions. This tree survives from the Mission Period. The orchard (*huerta* in Spanish) was located north of the Family Housing and west of the reservoir. Other fruit trees in the *huerta* included pears, citrus, apples, olives, plums and peaches.

Cobblestone Foundations

Cobblestone foundations were used beneath the adobe walls of the mission. A row of cobblestone foundations running parallel to the east side of the church marks the location of some of the workshops. One of these was the blacksmith shop. Iron and copper were brought from Mexico and used by the blacksmith to make a variety of kitchen utensils, tools, farming implements, and hardware. Other shops here included the carpenter and leather works shops.

Orno

Beehive style ovens were used chiefly for baking bread. Charcoal was frequently used as a fuel. After heating the oven, the ashes were removed and the bread dough was closed inside to bake. Typically a *orno* was built upon a base of stone or adobe, and the oven was constructed of fired tiles or bricks covered with plaster.

Married Housing (*Rancheria*)

Early in the history of the mission, the Salinan people lived in a village (*rancheria*) here which was comprised of their traditional dwellings. Eventually adobe buildings were erected. Salinan married couples and young children lived in a long single story apartment building. Although this building has disintegrated, the holes you see are from an archaeological dig. Many of the artifacts found here are on display in the museum. Unmarried young men lived in another building to the south, which is now gone. Unmarried young women lived in the north wing of the mission quadrangle.

Reservoir (Millpond)

Mission San Antonio had the first engineered water system in California. The retaining walls of the reservoir were constructed in the early days of this mission. Padre Buenaventura designed this water system based on instructions brought with him from Europe, written in Latin, from third century Rome. To fill the reservoir the San Antonio River and San Miguel Creek (now Mission Creek) were tapped three miles upstream. The water was carried by aqueducts to this basin.

Water from this reservoir was used to provide irrigation for the orchard, vineyard, and domestic use. The flowing water was also used to power the gristmill, hence the term "Millpond."

Filter House

Water from the reservoir was used for irrigation, drinking water, and washing. Drinking water was filtered using layers of charcoal and sand. After filtration the water flowed through fired clay pipes. The outlet pipe can still be seen in the bottom of the filter structure.

Tile Brick Kiln

This is where bricks, water pipes, and tiles for roofs and floors were made. The native clay was shaped by hand in molds, then dried and burned for several days. It is estimated that more than 200,000 tiles were made here. This was the first brick kiln in California and Mission San Antonio was the first mission to have a tile roof.

Millrace (Aqueduct)

Aqueducts were referred to as *zanjas* during the mission period. This aqueduct, which has been partially restored, supplied water to power the gristmill (hence the term millrace). After passing through the gristmill the water was used to irrigate the fields adjacent to the creek. The mission grew wheat, barley, corn, peas and beans.

Mission Well

This was one of the original wells dug at the mission. A report in 1823 describes it as having exceptionally good drinking water. It was reopened in 1954. Other wells from the mission period can also be found on the grounds.

Noria Well and Reservoir (1824)

Two men or a donkey operated a large water wheel attached to a chain of buckets, to move water from the well into the reservoir. It took seven hours to fill the stone reservoir which held 15,000 gallons after it was expanded in 1826. The wheel and structure have long since disintegrated, but a model can be seen in the museum.

Matanza (Slaughter) Tree

West of the *noria* is a large trunk of very old oak tree. This is the location where cattle were herded from outlying ranchos and corralled by Salinan and Californio *vaqueros* (cowboys). The cattle were slaughtered for food, hides and tallow. Cattle hides and tallow were the primary trade items exported from California. The beef was dried in a form of jerky in order to preserve it.

Temescal (Sweat-House)

South of the *noria*, near the front gate, is the lower portion of a sweat house, or *temescal*. The upper portion, while not present, was composed of poles and brush, with a conical shape. The Salinan people crowded around the fire that was set inside. They stayed inside until they sweated profusely. After a period of time they left the *temescal* and plunged into a stream to cool off. The use of the sweat lodge had both hygienic and ceremonial purposes.

Olive Crushing

The olives were harvested from the orchard and were crushed in this type of device, called a *molino de olivo*. The grinding stone rolled around like a wheel in this rock structure, powered by a blindfolded burro. The crushed olives were processed in a press to make olive oil of three grades.

Threshing Floor

Wheat was the mission's largest producing crop. The wheat was harvested and placed on the threshing floor. The wheat was trampled by mares and beat with flails. In that way the grain (seed) was separated from the other parts of the wheat plants. The grain was tossed in the air (winnowing) and the chaff blew away. Grain was stored in the west wing of the mission quadrangle.

Tannery

These are the original tannery tanks, constructed adjacent to the millrace in 1803. The hides were first soaked in a solution of lime to remove hair and allow scraping. Next the hides were placed in a solution containing tannins (acids derived from the bark of oak trees) for permanent flexibility. The hides processed here were used for various leather products like saddles, ropes, belts and shoes.

Gristmill

Padre Sitjar and a Salinan man named Nolberto, designed and directed the building of the water powered grist mill, completed in 1806. Water from the millrace flowed into the ten foot deep cobblestone pool. That water was gravity fed into the lower portion of the structure to power the horizontal water wheel. The rotation of the water wheel caused the upper grinding stone to rotate on top of the lower stone. Grain from the threshing floor was ground into flour in this mill and used to make bread.

Cemetery (Please Stay Out)

The original inhabitants of this mission are buried here in this Catholic Cemetery. Most of these people are the ancestors of the Salinians and other tribal people.

Mayordomo's House

Cobblestone foundations, floor tiles and mounds of disintegrated adobes indicate the outline of the house of the *mayordomo* (overseer). This building was 142 feet long and 25 feet wide. The *mayordomo* supervised the work performed at the mission.

Tahona (1810)

This was an animal powered mill for making flour. A blindfolded mule or burro was harnessed to a pole and walked in a circle, continually rotating the upper grinding stone. A hopper funnel set in a hole in the upper stone fed grain to the grinding surfaces between the two stones. Flour (grist) discharged from the mill was stored in the west wing of the Mission quadrangle.

Lavanderia

The mission was built in a natural seasonal wetland, some of which survives today south of the church. A 573 foot long drainage aqueduct carried water from the area of the *rancheria*, church, convent and barracks to this small brick reservoir. This reservoir was the *lavanderia* (laundry), used by the soldiers' families for washing and bathing.

Barracks

There was a very small garrison of soldiers here for the protection of the mission. One corporal and five soldiers lived in this building, along with their wives and families. Many soldiers married local women and several also served as godparents to Salinan children.

Original Vines

Mission San Antonio had the first vineyard in Monterey County, dating from the eighteenth century. The vineyard of 4,000 vines was located south of the gristmill, and was surrounded by an eight foot high adobe wall. During the middle of the nineteenth century, after secularization, a row of vines were moved nearer to the mission complex. Scientists have performed genetic testing on these original mission vines. These grapes were found to be identical to *Listan Prieto*, an ancient wine grape still grown in Spain and the Canary Islands.

Gift Shop and Museum

This building, immediately west of the church, was the living quarters (*convento*) of the padres as well as the administrative center for the mission. Most of the brick arches in front of the *convento* are original, but most of the building was rebuilt in 1950. The original brick wine vat and cellar are still located inside.

Brochure created by the Friends of Historic San Antonio Mission, Jolon, California

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