



Friends of Historic San Antonio Mission NEWSLETTER

Volume 30, No. 2

Fall 2024

President's Message

Dear Friends,

Every six months the Board of Directors of the Friends puts together this newsletter with our best intentions of providing you with information that you might be interested in. At our last meeting we all agreed that we would like some feedback from you, our readers and supporters, as to what kind of articles and what kind of information you are interested in. In short, we want to know what you want to know about. Or, if you don't have any specific requests for information and stories, maybe you can drop us a line to just tell us how we are doing with the newsletter. Please contact us at our website email address at webmaster@fhsam.org We look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,

Dominic Gregorio

Mission San Antonio Fall & Winter Events

Evening in the Garden November 2, 2024, 4:30—8:00 pm

Tickets for this fundraising event are \$250/person. For more information see the event webpage at the Mission's website at <https://www.missionsanantonio.net/evening-in-the-garden>

Los Posadas, Christmas Eve December 24, 2024
Carols at the Mission Church will be at 4:30 pm followed by Christmas Eve Mass at 5:00 pm.

Mural of Mission San Antonio completed in King City

By Karen Jernigan, FHSAM board member

A historic mural was dedicated on June 7, 2024 in King City featuring Mission San Antonio de Padua in Jolon. Members and friends of the non-profit group King City In Bloom gathered to celebrate the completion of the mural at 122 North Second Street across from the Hartnell College campus.

The mural was financed by individual donors, including a



Mural of Mission San Antonio in King City

donation from Friends of the Historic Mission San Antonio. Also, a grant from the Arts Council for Monterey County helped fund the project. Money raised beyond the cost of the mural was shared with the Campaign for the Preservation of Mission San Antonio which works to fund the historic preservation of the mission. King City in Bloom treasurer Janet Buttgerreit presented a \$7000 check to Joan Steele, administrator of Mission San Antonio, who accepted on behalf of the Campaign.

The mural was designed and led by artist Gloria Sanchez, and assisted by Daysi Cuellar, Heidi Torres, Bryan Valdez, and Tessa Rava. All the artists were honored with certificates from the City of King City presented by City Council member Rob Cullen.



Artists with certificates presented by Rob Cullen

Come experience the mission of Mission San Antonio

By Joan Steele, Mission San Antonio Administrator

On July 14, 1771, Fray Junipero Serra, a Franciscan friar from Spain (now St. Serra), founded the third of the twenty-one Alta California Missions in the Valley of the Oaks, nestled snugly against the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range. Serra's goal was to spread the *Good News of the Gospel* in the New World, saving the souls of the indigenous Native Peoples and establishing Christian communities. The goal of the Spanish government was to expand their territories and increase their tax base with the addition of new colonial citizens.

This article will not address the pros and cons of European expansionism. We all know that both good and bad came out of this movement, highly dependent on which side you were on and the disposition of the individuals involved at each Mission.

I want to focus, instead, on the original *mission* of the Missions. These places were meant to become Christian Communities. Places of hospitality and safety. Places where everyone would work toward the common good to include housing, food, clothing and above all, spiritual education and enlightenment to ensure eternal life for its inhabitants.

At Mission San Antonio, we haven't forgotten our initial *mission*. First and foremost, we remain a Roman Catholic Parish Community. From Baptism to Burial, we are here to walk through life's celebrations and challenges with our parishioners. We educate, we serve our community, we laugh and cry together, we pray for and lift up one another, and we welcome those who are inquiring about the tenets of our faith.

Our Retreat Center offers housing for both individual and group retreats in a variety of educational and spiritual venues. Our pristine location offers a unique perspective of a historical Mission and affords the perfect atmosphere for a step-back from the fray of our hectic lives. Mission San Antonio offers a place to relax, review, reset, rejuvenate, and reinvigorate our lives. It's a place of peace and rest, safety and serenity.

Whether you are considering bringing your family, your group of friends, your church family, your work community, or just getting away by yourself, we would love an opportunity to share our beautiful Mission with you. Rooms are simple, yet clean and comfortable. Private retreat guests are responsible for bringing their own pre-prepared meals, as the Mission no longer offers catering. You will have access to a refrigerator, microwave, toaster, and electric teapot in the dining room, but no access to the kitchen for cooking.

Groups, however, must provide a Certificate of Insurance that includes the Mission as an additionally insured property on your policy for the days you have participants on site. Groups pay a facility usage fee and have access to the kitchen, conference room, small chapel, etc. for their retreat use. They can bring in their own cooks to prepare meals for them, cook together with their group members, or arrange with local restaurants to deliver meals to them.

The quadrangle garden is newly restored and filled with a wide variety of native plants. Enjoy the relaxing sound of the water tumbling down the fountain and the fish swimming through the cool water and nibbling at the flowering lily pads. Delight in the industriousness of the hummingbirds and bees, intently working their way to every flower in this lovely native garden. In the evenings you can revel in the absolute splendor of the universe, on full display in the night sky, courtesy of the absence of any light pollution.

All reservations can be handled online at office@missionsanantonio.net. The retreat center is closed Sunday through Tuesday evenings and on holidays.



One of the recently renovated rooms at the Mission.



Hall way at the Mission San Antonio Retreat center. This hallway is located in the north wing of the quadrangle which was once the housing for the unmarried girls.

Dates for 2025 are filling up fast, so if you are considering a retreat, individual or group, please contact us as soon as possible for your reservations.

While on site, be sure to visit our Mission Gift Shop and Gallery. With our *Circle of Giving* program, we have dozens and dozens of artists who consign their unique crafts for sale in our Gift Shop. Items are unique and personal and not the run-of-the-mill items that you find at every other gift shop on the Central Coast.

Your stay at the Mission also includes your entrance into our newly refurbished Mission Museum – 10 rooms of unique items, clearly identified and beautifully displayed. It's a not-to-be-missed part of your Mission experience.

If you come for the weekend, you are welcome to join us for our recitation of the Rosary at 10am in main Church. Then, please stay and join us in our Parish's celebration of the Mass at 10:30am. All are welcome!

Warm regards, Joan Steele, Mission Administrator

P.S. The funds from the operation of the Retreat Center are critical to the success of meeting our annual operational budget.

Native American Plant Use in California

By Debbie Jewell, FHSAM Board Member

Native Americans have used plants for centuries for several purposes, such as food, tools, basket making, jewelry, and medicinal uses. Plants were used to treat sores, wounds, and skin problems, for respiratory diseases, gastrointestinal tract problems, reproductive affections, and even cardiovascular diseases.

In some locations, Native Americans carefully managed their environments through controlled burning, clearing underbrush, and promoting the new growth of preferred plants. They upturned soil by harvesting bulb plants, which caused such vegetation to multiply. They harvested seeds from grasses and in doing so they spread plant species into new areas. Such practices not only ensured an abundance of food, but also provided the raw materials for clothing, baskets, and numerous household items.

Native Americans used many types of plants for making baskets, such as deer grass, willow, sumac, bracken fern, wild rose stems and fibers, and sedges and rushes. The baskets were used for gathering acorns, sifting flour, food storage, and preparing soups. Elderberry, *Sambucus nigra*, berries were sometimes used for dyes in basketry and the wood was used for pipes, game pieces, and musical instruments, such as clapper sticks and flutes. Elderberry is toxic, but it was processed to use for both medicine and food. Spiny Rush, *Juncus acutus*, was used as sewing needle and in basketry and the stems of Wild Rose, *Rosa californica*, were used for fiber and string.



**Example of elderberry collection and preparation
(Photo courtesy of Milkwood.net)**

MEDICINAL USES

The preparation of plant materials for medicinal purposes by the Native Americans in California included both application on the skin and ingesting the plants, such as:

APPLICATION

- Direct application of leaves to the affected area: Coffee Berry *Rhamnus californica*, to treat rheumatism
- Application of a poultice prepared from the plant material: Cheeseweed Mallow, *Malva parviflora*, to treat wounds
- Bathing the skin with water in which the plant had been boiled: Gray Mules' Ear, *Wyethia helenioides*, to treat sores
- Rubbing dry ashes of a plant on the skin : California Bulrush, *Scirpus californicus*, to treat poison oak

INGESTION OR BURNING

- Drinking water where plant material is boiled or dried leaves added to make tea: Blackberry, *Rubus ursinus*, to treat diarrhea; Wild Rose, *Rosa californica*, petals and buds, leaves, roots, and/or rose "hips" for medicinal uses; Buckwheat, *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, to treat headaches, stomach pain, and heart problems; Wild Lilac, *Ceanothus*, used medicinally during childbirth and a relief for rheumatism; Elderberry, *Sambucus mexicana*, flowers to treat colds and stems to treat fever
- Eating or chewing the plant: Watercress, *Rorippa nasturtium*, to treat liver ailments; Rock Parsnip, *Lomatium californicum*, to treat pain
- Burning the plant: White Sage, *Salvia apiana*, for cleansing and healing properties

FOOD PREPARATION & STORAGE

Native Americans ate almost all parts of the plants and they enjoyed many different plant foods. Several plants were dried either by the sun, fire, or smoke before they were eaten. Primary foods included: acorns, mushrooms, seaweed, flowering plants, seeds, berries, and nuts.

- Plants dried in the sun included: wild grapes dried to make raisins, dried berries, dried and peeled prickly pear cactus fruit, dried corn, beans, and muskmelons.
- Miner's lettuce, *Claytonia perfoliate*, is an annual plant which grows and flowers in the spring, and it was eaten fresh.

- There are three native species of prickly pear cactus, *Opuntia ficus-indica*, and they were carefully picked and processed to serve many uses to the California Indians: Fruit (tuna): eaten fresh or dried, juice used for dye and as a pigment binder for rock art paintings; Paddles (nopales): Juice used for medicinal uses

Drinks included water, berry juices, ciders, nut drinks, and herbal teas.

- Berry ciders and herbal teas were popular, especially as medicines, and they made juices from elderberries, manzanita berries and wild grapes
- Many groups made drinks from pounded nuts and some mixed small seeds with cold water to make a thick gruel served to children as a snack

Native Americans in California made several types of earth ovens and pits to cook meat and plants such as salmon, potatoes, buckeyes, baked greens, and acorn bread



Example of prickly pear pads and fruit harvesting and preparation (Photo courtesy of Gardener's Path.com)

An important mineral to California Indians was salt, which was used as a condiment to flavor food. A lump of salt might also be chewed by itself. In some areas salt was considered a medicine for curing stomachaches and colds. Salt came from seaweed, grass, mineral deposits, and saline water (from marshes, springs, lakes, and the ocean).

Drying food was a way to preserve it so it would not spoil and allowed it to be stored for the winter months. Food was often stored in baskets and pots, such as dried fish stored in large baskets and storing seeds, acorns, and other foods in large clay pots. Southern California tribes also stored large amounts of food in granaries made of twigs.

The acorns of Oak trees were a major food resource for the Native Americans people of California because they were plentiful during the late summer and fall season, highly nutritious, and could be dried and stored easily for winter. Acorns were carefully processed to leech out their toxic tannins using intricate step to ensure the acorns were safe to eat.



Example of acorn preparation, with traditional baskets and tools

Some of California's Indigenous people also used tanoak acorns for medicinal reasons, such as to treat coughs.

California Indians also ate the seeds from Gray Pine, *Pinus sabiniana*, uncooked after being harvested from the cones and also roasted whole. The seeds were also ground up with a mortar and pestle and made into a flour. The flour was used to make a bread and was used in a soup. The wood of the Gray Pine was used as firewood and the sap was used for medicinal purposes.

There are many other plants that are important to Native Americans which continue to be used today and these are just a few examples of the ingenuity and adaptability of Native American Indians to live a harmonious relationship with the land. Native American people have used nature's resources respectfully and wisely managed their plant food sources in many different ways to survive in the natural environment.

New Board of Directors Member Marilyn Merlino



Marilyn taught in the Albany Unified School District in fourth and fifth grades until retiring in 2016. Her focus was on teaching social studies, especially history, and created many hands-on activities for students, including singing, dancing, Rancho days, and visits to missions. She is currently a performing member of Los Arribenos de San Francisco. Our group performs authentic songs, dances, and children's games of early California for various venues within the state. Prior to that, she was a performing member of Calicanto Associates, a group dedicated to bringing California history to life through music and historical plays. Calicanto Associates produced the classroom songbooks "They Came Singing" and "Days of Gold" with accompanying CDs and are used to teach social studies curriculum in many schools across the state. Mission San Antonio has been one of her favorite performing venues, as it so closely represents what life in old California would have been like.

New Board of Directors Member Jessica Kusz



Jessica Kusz currently serves as Preservation Project Director for Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks. She has worked closely on the restoration, interpretive planning and exhibit development for the Castro Adobe State Historic Park for many years. She also works on other State Parks historic resources within the Santa Cruz District including the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park and Wilder Ranch Cultural Preserve. Jessica has over twenty years of experience with historic resources and archival research in California. Working at a number of architectural and engineering firms, her experience includes primary research, writing, evaluation and planning for preservation projects. Jessica has a MS in Historic Preservation from the School for the Art Institute of Chicago and a BA in Cultural Anthropology from the University of New Mexico. She has served on the City of Santa Cruz Historic Preservation Commission since 2017.

New Board of Directors Member

Dennis Palm



Dennis was born and raised in New York and graduated from Long Island University. He earned an MA in Counseling Psychology while serving in the U.S. Air Force at Vandenberg AFB. He has been retired as a Peace Officer for the State of CA for the past 20 years.

During his 48 years on the Central Coast, Dennis has become a local historian serving on the Boards of the El Paso de Robles Historical Society, the San Antonio Valley Historical Association and the Ventana Wilderness Alliance. He has also been active in the Partners in Preservation Site Steward Program (25 years), monitoring archeological sites in the Los Padres National Forest.

Dennis and his wife Ollie have resided in Paso Robles for the past 48 years, and they also have a cabin at The Indians.

Threshing Wheat at the Missions

By John Grafton, FHSAM Board Member

Description of threshing wheat at the San Antonio Rancho at San Juan Bautista. Interview of Estolano Larios from the Millikin Papers:

"The patio was the big front yard in front of the Ranchito. It was a little wider than the house and extended a hundred feet or more in front. It was surrounded by a fancy fence. Rose bushes and hollyhocks were planted in front of the fence.

Most of the threshing was done in the Patio. The grain,

wheat and beans would be hauled in from the field in ox wagons and stacked in the patio. Then a circular fence would be rigged up around the stack. Usually in the afternoon the threshing would be done. Several horses would be turned loose in the enclosure around the stack. Two or three boys on horseback would be turned in with the bunch. A man with a pitchfork on top of the stack would throw down enough grain and the boys would drive the horses around and around the stack. The boys all liked to ride. It was fun lashing the horses and making them run around the stack. Estolano would ride the stallion. This threshing was usually done in the afternoon. Perhaps the next day the Indian women would be gotten in. They had wooden trays. Sometimes had tule trays, shaped like a basket. When the wind would be blowing in the afternoon they would toss up baskets of grain and chaff and the wind would blow the chaff away and the grain would fall down in a pile. Sometimes it would have to be tossed up several times if the wind was not strong. The wheat would be winnowed very clean."

This account probably also accurately describes the manner in which wheat would have been threshed at the San Antonio Mission on the threshing floor, the remnants of which still exist at the Mission.



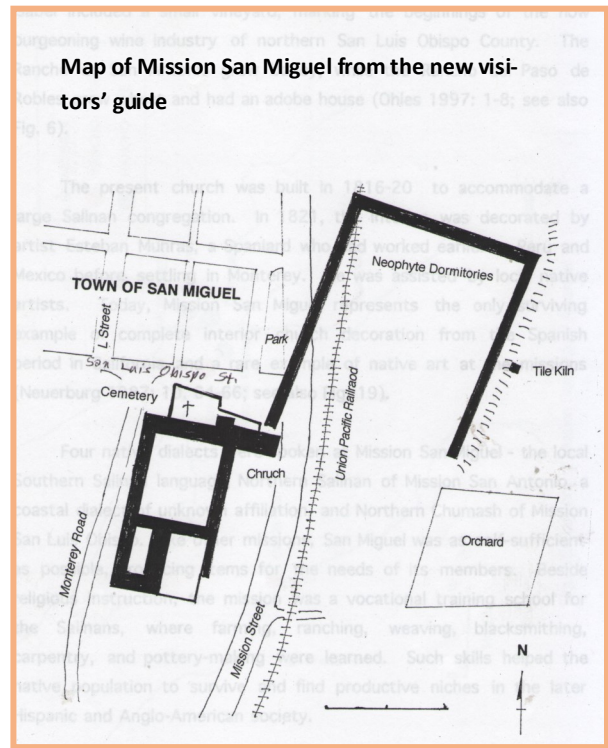
Threshing floor at Mission San Antonio

New Visitors' Guide for San Miguel

By Robert L. Hoover, Board Member

The Friends of Mission San Antonio also take an interest in what the needs are at Mission San Miguel, since they were both missions that served the Salinan people. San Miguel recently ran out of its tour guide flyers which are distributed to visitors. The Friends offered to fund the initial run of a new set of 1,000 flyers for this purpose. I worked in conjunction

with Isabella of the Mission San Miguel gift shop; my IT advisor, Justin Montejano; and the staff of ASAP Reprographics. The new flyer contains all the factual information of the old version plus additional material in the form of two new maps of mission territory and visuals of the interior of the mission church. The final version is an accordion folder to produce four columns (instead of three) on each side of the sheet. The background is a subdued yellow earth tone with black script and full color mini-photos of the Esteban Munras murals inside the church, to be attractive while reflecting the historical character of the site. The new flyer contains more information and color graphics, resulting in a narrower folded format, fitting more easily into the smaller pockets a more modern clothing. By making it more attractive and informative, the visitor will hopefully want to keep the flyer and share it, rather than discarding it on the ground. The added maps provide insight into the extensive mission grounds and area of control which extended from Atascadero to the ocean at San Simeon. All production information has been turned over to Isabella so that San Miguel can produce more if needed. The price was reasonable and will improve as San Miguel orders them in larger quantities.



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Many Thanks to Our Supporters!!

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No financial assistance is given to the Catholic Church.

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