



# Friends of Historic San Antonio Mission NEWSLETTER

Volume 28, No. 2

AUTUMN 2022

## The President's Message

Once again California has been experiencing serious drought conditions. Longtime residents know that there is a natural cycle of alternating drought and plentiful precipitation periods. The Native Americans knew this, and the Spanish experienced this as they began colonization.

The state is currently in a three-year drought. This coincides with the fact that "La Nina" conditions are prevailing in the Pacific Ocean, resulting in cold ocean waters and little rainfall in California. The opposite condition, "El Nino," is characterized by warmer ocean water and plentiful rain, even severe flooding. California climate is dominated by these two alternating phenomena.

When Mission San Antonio was first established in July 1771 its original location was on the San Antonio River south of the Mission's current location. It has been postulated that the winter of 1770-1771 was an El Nino with larger than average rainfall, and the river flow was still abundant the next summer. Under those conditions it was reasonable for the missionaries to select that original site. However, by 1772 it became clear that the river flow was declining, dry in the summer, and that a more sustainable location was necessary. Padre Sitjar, who beside being a priest was also an engineer, recognized that San Miguel Creek (now Mission Creek) had consistent flows and was the main tributary to the San Antonio River. He decided to re-locate the mission in proximity to the confluence of the two streams, where it remains today. Along with the Salinan neophytes, he initiated the first engineered surface water system in California to tap into a more sustainable supply.

In this issue we are pleased to present an article by Ms. Debbie Jewell on the water system at Mission San Antonio. Debbie is a Board Member of FHSAM, a landscape architect, and she recently wrote a paper on this same subject that was accepted for publication in the California Mission Foundation's next annual journal *Boletin*.

Another of our Board Members, Carol Kenyon, is a noted art conservator, and the former director of the South Coast Fine Arts Conservation Center. In this issue Carol is presenting an article on one of Mission San Antonio's eighteenth-century painting, *The Holy Trinity*, which has recently undergone a major restoration.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter. We are continuing to send out the newsletter in black and white print via mail, but

recently we started also posting a color version on our website at <https://www.fhsam.org/>. You may be interested in looking at the website to see the excellent color images in the two articles by Debbie and Carol.

Sincerely,  
Dominic Gregorio

## Dues and Renewals

### WONDERING ABOUT YOUR SPONSORSHIP STATUS?

The listing of your FHSAM sponsorship may be found on Page 7 of this newsletter.

A FHSAM sponsorship is for one year. We encourage you to send in a renewal or take out an initial sponsorship. Donations and sponsorships are tax deductible and are gratefully accepted!

### SAVE THESE FUTURE DATES IN 2022 & 2023!

Evening in the Garden	November 5, 2022
Los Posadas	December 24, 2022 4:30pm
Christmas Eve Mass	December 24, 2022 5:00pm
Mission Days	April 15, 2023 11:00am-3pm
Mission Fiesta	June 11, 2023 10:30-2 pm

### THE PURPOSE OF THE FRIENDS OF HISTORIC SAN ANTONIO MISSION

The specific purpose of this Corporation is to foster the preservation, maintenance, and interpretation of Historic Mission San Antonio near Jolon, California and adjacent historic cultural sites and their environment, including the other Salinan Mission San Miguel

## Fall in love with Mission San Antonio

. . . all over again!

~ by Joan Steele, Mission Administrator  
FHSAM Board Member

The leaves on the cottonwoods are turning sunny gold and the evenings are offering a definite cold shoulder. Nature seems ready to move on . . . into cooler air and earlier evenings. The Mission, too, is ready for the next season.

With the restoration work complete on the sewer system, we have been full to capacity with retreat groups eager to return to the serenity of the Mission. We endured a six-week “boil water” mandate due to breaks in the main water lines on Fort Hunter Liggett, but our guests took it all in stride and we weathered the challenge in fine form!

Fall at the Mission means the new “native” garden needs tending. Seeds will be harvested and made available through *Gifts from the Garden* in the Mission Gift Shop, and at our annual *Mission Days* on April 15, 2022.

Fall also means our annual wine-tasting event — *An Afternoon in the Garden*. By the time you are reading this newsletter, this wonderful event will be in our rear-view mirror. I hope you were able to join us in sampling wine from more than a half dozen boutique wineries from the Central Coast region. For those who wanted to enhance their *Mission experience* . . . we progressed from our afternoon event into *An Evening in the Garden* – an elegant wine-maker’s dinner

with wines expertly paired with each course, as well as a sharing of some of the *insider’s scoops* on wines. All enjoyed the cascading water of the fountain and the subdued, warm lighting in the garden while conversing with friends and loved ones at this magically enchanting Mission.

While the Mission is not hosting its former annual Day of the Dead Mass this year, we will be celebrating Las Posadas (on Dec. 24 @ 4:30pm) and Christmas Eve Mass @ 5pm. The Mission church and grounds are closed to the public on Christmas Day.

In our next newsletter I will delve into upcoming projects, one of which is the restoration of the pavilion in the Mission fiesta grounds. The goal of this work will be to make this area of the Mission more conducive to archeological field schools and use by other non-profit groups for educational programs. It is imperative that we remain interactive and collaborative with the greater community to ensure the validity of our *Mission*.

While there is always more work to do, other projects to begin, and deadlines looming ahead, this is the time of harvest. We have worked hard for a very long time to accomplish the seismic retrofit and the upgrades needed to improve the Mission’s safety and comfort for our visitors and guests. Now, we would like to have you join us in a celebration of the harvest, and on into the New Year. Let’s all take a deep breath, toast one another with a sparkling glass of wine and enjoy one another’s company, as we fall in love with Mission San Antonio . . . all over again

Contact us at [office@missionsanantonio.net](mailto:office@missionsanantonio.net)



## Jesuit Missionaries of the Northwest

### Part II

~ by Dominic Gregorio, President

#### Giuseppe Cataldo

Father Giuseppe Cataldo, a young Italian Jesuit priest, came west during the California gold rush. While he was originally assigned for missionary work in the Northwest, for health reasons he was stationed in California at the Jesuit's Santa Clara College (previously old Mission Santa Clara). In 1865 Father Cataldo was finally ordered north from Santa Clara to work in the Jesuit missions among Rocky Mountain tribes. After reporting to the Sacred Heart Mission, in 1866 he served as a parish priest in Lewiston, Idaho.

Cataldo began working with another Jesuit, Brother Achilles Carfagno, to establish St. Joseph Mission among the Nez Perce in the Lapwai area. Cataldo spoke the Nez Perce language and was well liked by the tribe. A temporary chapel was built in 1868 but the more permanent buildings were established in 1873-1874. Chief Slickpoo was the first chief of the Nez Perce baptized there. A large mission complex grew on the site. Saint Joseph's is now an affiliated site of the Nez Perce National Historical Park and is no longer active. However, there is still an active Catholic Church, Sacred Heart, near Lapwai.

In 1877, one band of Nez Perce under Chief Joseph refused to leave their homeland in Oregon for the reservation at Lapwai, and a war erupted. Father Cataldo's ability to speak in the Nez Perce language allowed him to persuade the Nez Perce at Lapwai, under Chief Slickpoo, from joining in the conflict. After Chief Joseph's band surrendered in Montana, Cataldo assisted the Nez Perce with negotiations. Cataldo was accused by an Indian agent of being Chief Joseph's accomplice. At the time, the Nez Perce reportedly said, "We believe in Cataldo's teaching and that is the only teaching we wish to have."

Back among the Coeur d'Alene at Sacred Heart, Father Alexander Diomedi arrived in 1875. Trouble was brewing because of increased mining activity. While the tribe was reluctant, Father Diomedi and Father Joset convinced Chief Seltice to prevent war and to relocate to the south. In 1877 the Coeur d'Alene tribe, along with Diomedi and Joset, moved to the area south of Lake Coeur d' Alene. During the Nez Perce war many settlers in the area had fled. Chief Seltice instructed his Coeur d' Alene warriors to stand guard over the settlers' cabins and farms, to keep them safe until the settlers returned. This new Sacred Heart Mission is still there, in the town of "De Smet" Idaho, and is an active parish.

The original Sacred Heart Mission remained the headquarters of the Jesuits in Idaho and eastern Washington, led by Father Cataldo. It remained an active church, and a steamboat stop for merchants, miners, and settlers travelling between Montana and Spokane. It became known as "Cataldo." It is now an Idaho state historic park.

#### Father Jutz and the Saint Stephen Mission

During the late 1800s the Shoshone, under Chief Washakie, avoided war and were established at Wind River. The Wind River Reservation was also the home to a band of Arapaho. In 1884 Jesuit Father John Jutz arrived at the Wind River Reservation, and the Jesuits established Saint Stephen Mission. St. Stephens was initially established among the Arapaho, but also attracted many Shoshone. Saint Stephens is still an active Catholic parish in Wyoming.

Father Jutz went on to work at missions among the Lakota people in the Dakotas. He tried in vain to stop the massacre at Wounded Knee but was able to prevent the Catholic members of the tribe from being involved. Following the massacre, Father Jutz protected children and other refugees, and cared for the wounded Lakota. In 1896 Father Jutz left the missions for an assignment in Boston and passed away in 1924.

#### Gonzaga University and the Last of the Black Robes

In 1887 Father Cataldo went on to establish Gonzaga University in Spokane. Later, Cataldo ministered to the Nez Perce and the Umatilla until his death 1928 at the age of 92. Father Diomedi authored "Sketches of Modern Indian Life" in 1894 and was appointed Spiritual Father at Gonzaga in 1895. Diomedi went on to serve at various positions in Brazil, the Northwest, and California until his retirement in 1929. He died in Port Townsend, Washington in 1932 at the age of 89. Both Diomedi and Cataldo remained lifelong friends to the tribes and were considered the "last of the Black Robes."

## The Water System of Mission San Antonio de Padua

~ by Debbie Jewell, Landscape Architect

Water is essential for every living being and this planet cannot survive without it. It takes less than a 1% deficiency of our body's water to make us thirsty, a person cannot walk with a 10% deficiency, and a 12% loss of water brings death. As the world's population is expected to double in the next 50 years,

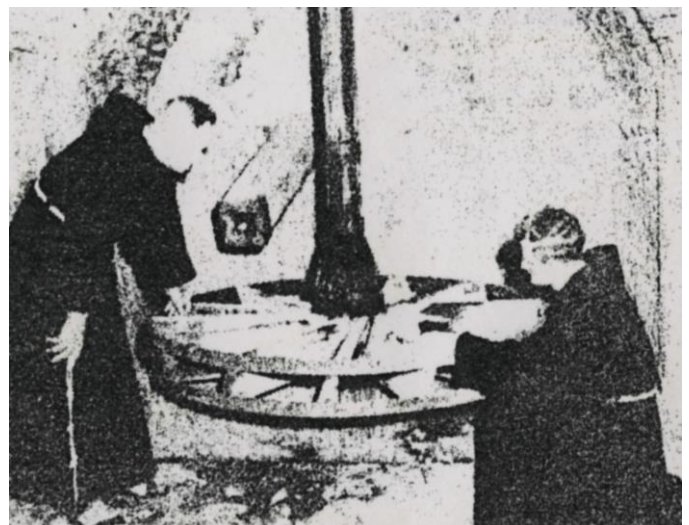


Photo of padres at the Grist Mill.

it is important to learn from the water conservation and recycling methods that allowed Mission San Antonio to settle in a very arid region.

At Mission San Antonio, the missionaries diverted the water from Mission Creek and the San Antonio River, developed a reservoir to store water to be used in a defined order of use: drinking water, washing and processing, and finally irrigating gardens and agricultural crops. Recycling and reusing the water to all its capabilities conserved water and enabled the Mission to not only settle, but thrive, in this extremely harsh dry climate.

Mission San Antonio has the first Spanish Colonial water system established in California and is the only Mission which has left the entire area surrounding its aqueducts relatively undeveloped. The water system is more complete than any other Spanish Colonial Mission site in North America and remains a valuable link to understanding a past Mission lifestyle.

The first site of Mission San Antonio was settled in 1771, situated a few miles south of the current Mission location. The original Mission site was abandoned in 1773 because the missionaries discovered that the only river in the valley, the San Antonio River, became dry each summer. To settle in this region, the Mission was moved to its current location strategically situated near the confluence of the San Antonio River and Mission Creek, and an elaborate water delivery and storage system was developed to allow the Mission to remain year-round. The Mission created the water system out of necessity to survive, and it had a great and lasting contribution to the cultural development of this region. Mission San Antonio depended on its extensive water system to support domestic agricultural and industrial uses as part of their daily lives. Through the ability to store water, grow food and grind grain, the water system allowed the Mission to prosper economically and quickly expand in population and become a steppingstone to building other Missions up and down the coast of California.

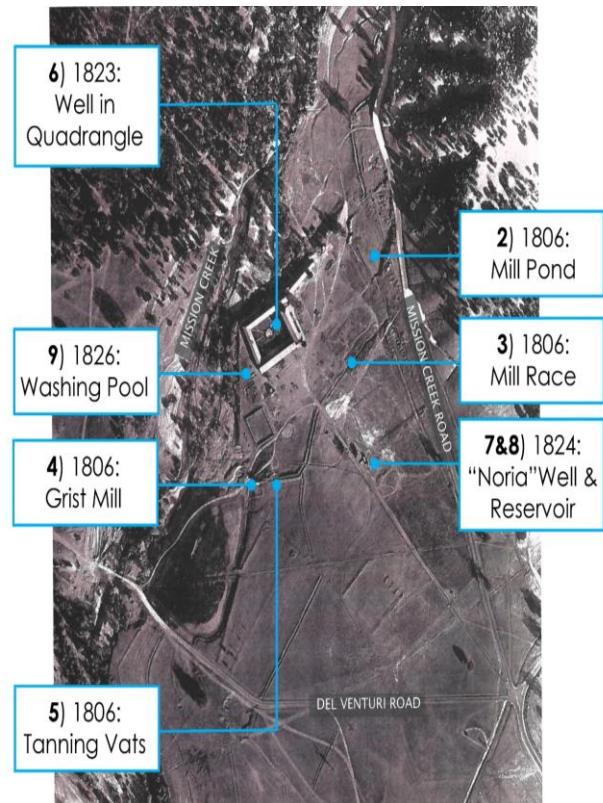
San Antonio was the first California Mission to establish an aqueduct (*zanja*) system in 1772. Amazing aqueducts and dams were built, sometimes excavating deep trenches in steep sandstone cliffs and through dense oak tree roots, and engineering devices were developed which allowed the missionaries to use water to do work for them. The aqueducts were cut into bedrock and conducted by natural gravity to bring water to Mission San Antonio. Rock by rock, mile after mile, the aqueducts were carefully constructed for miles up the San Antonio River and adjacent Mission Creek, and then miraculously converged the two *zanjas* together at the Mission.



Photograph of aqueduct

The upper portions of the water system were first established in 1772, and these elements are located within property currently owned by the US Army. There are nine main contributing water system components existing within the current Mission San Antonio property boundary:

- 1) **1778: Irrigation Drain Lines & Clay Pipes**
- 2) **1806: Mill Pond**
- 3) **1806: Mill Race**
- 4) **1806: Grist Mill**
- 5) **1806: Tanning Vats**
- 6) **1823: Well in Quadrangle**
- 7) **1824: Noria Well**
- 8) **1824: Noria Reservoir**
- 9) **1826: Washing Pool**



Map of Water System at Mission San Antonio

Clay water pipes were shaped on potter's wheels and used to control drainage under the Mission and from the Grist Mill. Irrigation drain line tiles were made from burnt clay and are larger on one end to slip into each other easily. They are about 12" long, ¼" thick, and 3½" in diameter.

## 2) Mill Pond Reservoir & Dam (1806)

By 1805 there were 1,300 Indians living at the mission and in 1806 the missionaries decided to build the Mill Pond to capture and use the water, and then let it flow out to fields. The Mill Pond is a reservoir lined with mortared stream cobbles and encapsulated by a wall made of rock and mortar on the southwest side. The walls are constructed of masonry with a wooden flood gate (sluice) in the southern wall. The Mill Pond was restored in 1913 to supply the owner of Milpitas Rancho with water for cattle and irrigation. The restored system was still in use in 1927, and according to oral history was used by the Hearst Ranch in the 1930's.

## 3) Mill Race (1806)

The Mill Race is an elevated masonry aqueduct which carried water from the Mill Pond to the lower parts of the Mission. Water could be released to the Grist Mill and Tanning Vats when needed, and excess water was carried south to the lower vineyard, orchard, and the other fields further south.



Photograph of the elevated masonry Mill Race

## 4) Grist Mill (1806)

The Grist Mill is a two-story structure made of adobe bricks. The upper story contains a grinding stone and storage, and the lower floor contains a water wheel. The water was released from the upper floor and the water pressure forced the grinding stone below to turn and the mill to operate. The Grist Mill is thought to be the fourth water-powered mill ever built in California and the best remaining example of a water-powered mill in the state. Water from the Mill Race could be released through a gate to the Grist Mill when grain needed grinding, and excess water which flowed from the mill was used to irrigate the adjacent wheat fields.



Photograph of the Grist Mill

## 5) Tanning Vats (1806)

Mission San Antonio had an extensive tannery complex which reflected the importance of the hide and tallow industry in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Tanning Vats were located along the lower course of the northwest side of the Grist Mill. The tannery consisted of three open tanks, two of which were subdivided into smaller tanks. Historic records state that the vats were covered with tiles and a roof, but there were not any walls. There was once a building located next to the Tanning Vats for drying and storing grain and leather.

## 6) Well in Quadrangle (1823)

As the Mission continued to prosper, a well was constructed in the northeast corner of the Mission quadrangle. The well is lined with masonry and the walls are plastered with cement which is thought to have been added in the 1950's reconstruction.

## 7) Noria Well (1824)

The Noria Well was constructed along with the adjacent Noria Reservoir to secure water for irrigation. The well was built of stone cobbles and bricks mortared in lime. Historically, the well had a water wheel which was used to lift water with a series of buckets from the well into the reservoir. The well originally had a protective shed covering the water wheel



Photograph of the water wheel once located at the Noria Well.  
 Photograph courtesy of Mission San Antonio Archives, 1952.

Surplus water was used to irrigate the fields. The washing pool was partially restored in 1950s with a new course of adobe bricks laid around the perimeter of the pool.

In conclusion, the water system at Mission San Antonio is still sufficiently intact and it provides a valuable link to understanding Mission lifestyle. There is still a direct connection between the Mission, the activities performed there and the water system. Mission San Antonio gives visitors a glimpse at past Mission life, and its amazing water system continues to provide an understanding of the engineering marvels that allowed the Mission to prosper in an arid region in a pre-industrial age. Learning from the water recycling methods that allowed Mission San Antonio to not only settle, but thrive, in an extremely dry climate over 240 years ago can teach us valuable lessons about water conservation for drier days ahead.

### The Holy Trinity

~ by Carol Kenyon, Art Conservator, RTD

Another painting contained in the Mission San Antonio art collection for over 100-years has undergone conservation and preservation treatment at South Coast Fine Arts Conservation Center.



The Holy Trinity is an 18th Century Mexican painting whose artist remains unknown. Dimensions: 30 1/2" tall x 22 7/8" wide. Composition: oil paint on fabric support system. It had been glued to plywood as the canvas could no longer support the paint film. The painting had been "rolled up" which resulted in horizontal lines across the surface with corresponding paint-film losses. The frame was not original to the painting. Nails were used to attach the painting to its frame resulting in nail holes piercing its edges.



### 8) Noria Reservoir (1824)

The Noria reservoir was used to store water and water was released from the reservoir and transported to irrigate the orchard and vineyards over 400 feet away. The outlet from the reservoir was ingeniously constructed so that the end of the basin that opened into the pipeline was protected by a square tile filter pierced with small holes to keep sticks and dirt from entering the pipes.



Photograph of the metal grate at the Noria Reservoir

### 9) Washing Pool (1826)

The stone and tile washing pool or *lavanderia* was built as part of the drainage system around the Mission and it was fed by a drainage ditch which ran from the native dormitories along the front of the church and arched arcade. The soldiers used it for drinking water and their wives did their washing there.

There was an additional painted oval frame (pentimento) surrounding the image. Another painting was found to exist beneath the image; its additional paint film fostered the appearance of an irregular (distorted and bumpy) surface.

Upon arrival at the conservation studio, testing commenced. Immediate paint film stabilization was required. Tests determined there was overpaint in the paint loss areas; the unvarnished surface was dirty and covered with smoke residue. After stabilization and tests were completed, the surface was cleaned removing overpaint, dirt and anything else not original to the painting. The wood backing was carefully removed to prevent further migration of the acid in the wood into the back of the canvas.

The painting was then lined to a new canvas support system and attached to stretcher bars. A reversible adhesive (BEVA) was used so that if in the future this new backing required removal, it could be accomplished without damage to the original canvas. Materials employed in proper conservation treatment must be reversible.

Lastly, the paint film losses were filled to make a smooth surface transmission between the height of the original paint film and the lost areas. These fills were then “inpainted” to match surrounding areas. Following correct conservation practices, only the losses were inpainted. For future protection, a non-yellowing, acrylic varnish was applied to its surface.



## THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

### **Fall 2021**

Robert Amarante  
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Hugo and Maureen Bianchini  
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Tim and Kate Hearne  
\*\*in memory of Margaret “Peggy” Casey, Albert “Butch” Dani  
Bob and Christine Hoover  
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### **Spring 2022**

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Please copy this form and pass it along to your friends

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No financial assistance is given to the Catholic Church.

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