



MISSION VALLEY NEWS & VIEWS

The Positive View of the Community

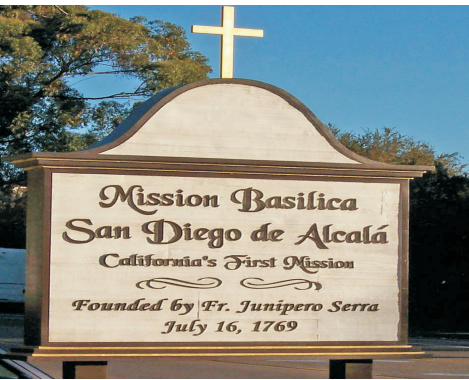
MISSION BASILICA SAN DIEGO DE ALCALA 238 Years of History



Mission San Diego de Alcala was founded on July 16, 1769, by Father Junipero Serra, Father-President of the Mission Chain. It was the 1st mission in the 21-mission chain in Alta California and known as the “Mother of the Alta California Missions”. It was named for Saint Didacus of Alcala, a name given to the bay 167 years earlier by the Spanish explorer, Sebastian Vizcaino. Father Luis Jayme was left in charge of building the mission when Father Serra left for Monterey to establish the 2nd mission.

The Indians were not friendly in the beginning. They did not want these men taking their land. The missionaries were having trouble bringing the Indians into the mission due to the soldiers’ treatment of the Indians. Indians slowly began to come to the mission.

In 1775, several hundred Indians attacked the Mission. Father Jayme walked towards the attacking Indians saying “Love God, my children”. The Indians killed the man who was trying to help them. Father Jayme was the first priest and martyr in California. Many people were killed and the Indians lost the battle.



After that night, the Indians were friendlier to the white man. In 1797 there were 565 new Indians added to the mission which brought the total to 1,400 Indians living at the Mission San Diego de Alcala. All of the Indians were given new clothes each year.

The economy at Mission San Diego de Alcala was similar

to the other missions in that they planted crops of wheat and corn. They also planted vineyards, and raised cattle and sheep. The agriculture was needed not only to maintain the mission community and the nearby Indians, but also was used for trade and food for visitors to the mission.

In 1795 a system of aqueducts was begun to bring water to the fields and the mission and by 1797, the mission had 50,000 acres of land growing wheat, barley, corn, and beans. They also grew vineyards of grapes, orchards and vegetables. They had 20,000 sheep, 10,000 cattle and 1,250 horses. The Indian women were trained in candle and soap making, weaving, sewing, and cooking.



After Mexico won its independence from Spain, it found that it could no longer afford to keep the missions running as Spain had done. In 1834, Mexico decided to end the mission system and sell all of the lands. They offered the lands to the Indians who did not want the lands or could not come up with the purchase price. The lands were divided into smaller Ranchos and sold to Mexican citizens who were helpful during the war for independence.

By 1827, the mission had begun to decline. There was no money coming from Mexico or Spain to help the mission. For years weeds grew on the mission land. In 1846 the Mission San Diego de Alcala was given to a Mexican man, Santiago Arguello.

When the United States took over California, the mission was used by the military from 1846 to 1862.

When the Mission San Diego de Alcala was given back to the church, it was in ruins. It wasn’t until the 1880’s that Father Anthony Ubach began to restore the old mission buildings. He died in 1907 and the restoration stopped. In 1931 an effort was begun to rebuild the mission. Slowly the mission compound



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