

OLD MISSION SANTA BARBARA



"The Queen of the Missions"



A PIECE OF LIVING HISTORY

Old Mission Santa Barbara is a community of many parts, but one spirit. Nicknamed the "Queen of the Missions" for its beauty and location overlooking the city of Santa Barbara and the Pacific Ocean, it has served as a gathering place and spiritual home for many since its establishment in 1786.

The Mission today continues to function as a chief cultural and historic landmark for both the community and city of Santa Barbara. Its operations include a museum, gift shop, cemetery, mausoleum, several historic gardens, and is home to a community of Franciscan Friars.

The Mission also houses Saint Barbara Parish, which operates under the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, the Santa Bárbara Mission Archive-Library, a separate Franciscan-sponsored non-profit, and a Novitiate which provides training for new Friars from across the United States.

QUICK FACTS:

MISSION SANTA BARBARA IS THE 10TH OF THE 21 ALTA CALIFORNIA MISSIONS

ESTABLISHED DECEMBER 4, 1786 BY THE SPANISH FRANCISCANS

THE LONGEST RUNNING ACTIVE MISSION AND IS HOME TO A COMMUNITY OF FRANCISCAN FRIARS INCLUDING NOVICES

**OLD MISSION SANTA BARBARA
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SANTA BARBARA, CA 93105**

**WWW.SANTABARBARAMISSION.ORG
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IMPORTANT DATES:

1542- Santa Barbara Channel is explored by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

1602- Sebastián Vizcaíno named the channel, Canal de Santa Bárbara

1769- Expedition led by Gaspar de Portolá camped in Santa Barbara en route to Monterey; Spain ruled over California until 1821

1782- El Presidio of Santa Bárbara was founded by Governor Felipe de Neve; Junípero Serra established the chapel at El Presidio

1786- Mission Santa Barbara was founded by Fr. Fermín Lasuén as the 10th of the 21 Missions in California

1808- The original fountain outside the Mission was built along with the rest of the water system including aqueducts and the lavandería

1820- The building of the new Mission church (the one that stands today) was finished after the earthquake of 1812 destroyed the old church

1821- Mexico gained its independence from Spain and ruled over California until war with United States (1846-1848) which ended with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the loss of much of its northern territory

1833- Act of Secularization implemented by Mexican government

1834- The Mexican government ended the Mission system. Most Missions were sold off or shut down, however, the Friars were permitted to stay at Mission Santa Barbara, becoming the only Mission to maintain a Franciscan presence since its founding

1842- The first Bishop of California, Francisco García Diego y Moreno, arrived and took residence at Mission Santa Barbara

1856- The Mission became an Apostolic College, a training center for Franciscans, and a Boys College

1870- The second story added to the Friary or convento was completed

1903- The Franciscan Theological Seminary was started

1927- Re-dedication of the restored church took place after the significant damage from the earthquake of 1925

COLONIZATION & FOUNDING

The colonization of the Americas by Spain began in the early 16th century in what is now central Mexico. The Franciscans arrived in Alta or Upper California - considered the frontier - to establish Missions in 1769. Fray Junípero Serra founded the first 9 missions of Alta California. He intended to establish Mission Santa Barbara on April 21, 1782, when the Presidio of Santa Barbara was founded, but the Spanish Governor, Felipe de Neve, did not agree. The founding eventually took place on December 4, 1786, by Fray Fermín Francisco de Lasuén, after Fray Serra's death.

Mission settlements were primarily communities of baptized Native Peoples with only one or two Friars in residence. After secularization or the end of the Mission era in the 1830's, many Indigenous people left the Missions and the buildings were no longer used by the Friars. Old Mission Santa Barbara is unique in that it is the only Mission of the 21 that has been continuously occupied by the Franciscan Friars since its founding. After secularization, this Mission became primarily a community of Franciscan Friars.



INDIGENOUS PEOPLES & MISSION SANTA BARBARA

The Chumash had lived on the central coast of California between present-day Malibu and San Luis Obispo for about 11,000 years before the arrival of Europeans. At the time of contact, there were several key communities in the Santa Barbara-Goleta area, and a major Chumash village, *Syuxtun*, was located at the mouth of Mission Creek with an estimated population of 600. Chumash settlements included an open-air dance ground with an enclosed sacred space used for ceremonial purposes and formal cemeteries with whale bone markers. Accounts from explorers describe houses made of reeds and "shaped like half-globes," spacious, and with an opening at the top to allow for light to filter in and smoke to escape. They varied in size from 12 to 20 feet in diameter. Adobe homes for the baptized Chumash were built to the left of the Mission, on what is now the parking lot. Single women were housed separately.



AGRICULTURE & THE EFFECTS OF EUROPEAN CONTACT

Colonists from New Spain (Mexico) brought animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, and horses, as well as many plants including wheat, barley, corn, beans, and peas. European style farming and ranching often resulted in the destruction of the natural habitats which, before contact, supplied the Chumash with traditional foods and other resources. Along with plants and animals, colonists also brought diseases which were not known in this area and from which the local population did not have immunity. These diseases caused epidemics and a tremendous loss of life not only in Santa Barbara, but throughout California. The introduction of new food sources weakened the immune system of many Native peoples at the Missions. In addition, they were now living in very close quarters allowing illnesses to spread easily.

The overall impact of the Mission period on Indigenous communities was devastating, and a serious decline in population meant Native communities struggled to hold on to their culture, language, and traditions. Today, an ongoing process of collaboration seeks to better understand the diverse perspectives of individuals and communities that are part of the Mission's history. In a spirit of reconciliation and healing, we continue learning from our experiences and the experiences of those affected by the Mission era.

WATER SYSTEMS

Critical to the success of a Mission was a steady supply of water for people, animals, crops, and some industries. At Old Mission Santa Barbara, water was supplied through a system of aqueducts and dams designed by the Friars and built by the Chumash in the early 19th century. Two dams were constructed near the headwaters of two water sources, present-day Mission Creek, located in the Botanic Garden and built in 1806, and the other in Rattlesnake Canyon. The walls of both dams as well as miles of aqueducts were made of sandstone. Through gravity, water flowed to reservoirs constructed in 1806 and 1807, and a nearby filter house. The main reservoir could hold 535,000 gallons and was part of the city water system until the 1980's. Eventually it made its way to the front of the Mission into the lavandería (washbasin) and fountain which provided fresh clean water for residents of the Mission. The baptized Chumash people used the water from the lavandería, still seen in front of the Mission today, for washing clothes. Remnants of the aqueduct can still be seen across from the mission on Los Olivos Street.

MISSION BELLS

The entire day at the Mission was regulated by bells. The bells called people to prayer, work, and sleep. The Angelus bell tolled "at morn, at noon, and at eventide" with a triple stroke repeated 3 times with a pause in between. The Angelus still tolls today at the Mission at 6:00am, 12:00 noon, and 6:00pm.

The Mission began with two bells in 1787 and two more were added in 1797. Another was added in 1804. Two bells were lent to Mission San Buenaventura by 1791. After an earthquake in 1812 destroyed the adobe church, the stone church was built and finished in 1820 and had only one tower. Two more bells arrived shortly after 1818. Sources state that in 1820 the new Mission Church had 6 bells in one tower. When the second tower was built in 1833, there were 8 bells, total. Today there are 10 bells in the Mission Church towers, but at this time, only three bells toll through an automated motor, sprockets, and chains.

THE CHURCH

The first church built at Old Mission Santa Barbara was a simple structure; Almost immediately, construction began on a larger church. The third adobe church was finished in 1794 and lasted until the great earthquake of 1812. The fourth church, seen today, was finished in 1820 with walls of solid sandstone 5 ½ ft thick, and stone buttresses with a height of over 27 feet.

The chandeliers seen today are original, however they were retrofitted to operate with electricity, but still have candles which are lit for special ceremonies and events, such as Christmas Eve midnight Mass and Easter Vigil Mass. In addition to being a historic site, the Mission Church continues to serve as a gathering place for spiritual reflection, prayer, and worship.

MISSION ARCHITECTURE

The facade of the current Mission church is a design based on the ideas of Roman architect and engineer Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, who lived during the reign of the first Emperor of Rome, Caesar Augustus (27 BC – AD 14). Vitruvius' ideas around design and architecture were represented in a book published in Madrid in 1787, *Los Diez Libros De Architectura de M. Vitruvio Polion*. This book was in the Mission Library when plans were being finalized to build the new church and influenced its design. This book is currently in the collections of the Santa Bárbara Mission Archive-Library. You can see the Neo-Classical influences in both the exterior and interior of the Church such as the use of columns and emphasis on symmetry.

The Chumash artisans learned new building skills from craftsmen from Mexico. Approximately 20 artisans arrived between 1792 and 1795 on four- or five-year contracts. The growth of an artisan class at the Missions had an impact on the individuals as well as the Mission. Baptized Native Peoples acquired skills that were highly desired throughout colonial society.

New construction and restoration work has continued over the years. The monastery wing, or convento, was initially one story and the second floor was added in the late 19th century. In 1925 another earthquake caused extensive damage to the Mission church and bell towers; The restoration work was completed in 1927. Structural work on the façade in the 1950s addressed cracks that resulted from faulty materials used in the 1920s restoration. During this period, the bell towers' construction was changed from stone to wood and concrete for safety reasons. If you look closely, you will see that the "stones" on the towers are actually tromp l'oeil or painted. Another phase of restoration was undertaken from 2013-2015. These projects included repairing cracks in the church façade and repairing the domes of the bell towers. The large round window in the church façade was also replaced with a design found in a photo dating from the 1870's. Today, the beauty of the church reveals the history of the mission, craftsmanship of Chumash artisans, and continues to serve as a space for prayer and peace within the community.



CEMETERY & MAUSOLEUM

The cemetery houses many types of burials. Individual grave markers were not used during the Mission period. Around 4,000 Chumash are listed in the registers, however records show some were buried in their home village. Mass burials were used during the Mission period. Instead of grave markers, skull and crossbones were placed over the top of the door to indicate the graveyard. This practice ended by the mid-19th century.

On the wall of the East bell tower is a plaque honoring Juana Maria or "The Lone Woman of San Nicolas Island" whose story inspired the historical fiction novel, *Island of the Blue Dolphins* by Scott O'Dell. Sources indicate she was buried near the bell tower in 1853. Many details of her story are unknown, but recent research continues to help shed new light on this part of history.

The Historic Mausoleum is situated in the center of the Mission cemetery. Since 1893, this simple structure has served as a final resting place for Franciscan friars and lay people who were part of the early history of the city. An extensive restoration of the building was completed in 2011, which included the addition of a columbarium with niche spaces for inurnment of cremated remains and available to all.

THE FRANCISCAN FRIARS & THE MISSION TODAY

Franciscan Friars are men who have dedicated their lives to living out the values of prayer, fraternity, joy and service. They give special attention to walking with the poor, marginalized, and vulnerable of society. In a wider sense, the Franciscan tradition began over 800 years ago by St. Francis of Assisi as part of the broader Catholic Church. Today it includes men and women, religious and lay people across the world. Rooted in the understanding of God as love, the Franciscan movement is founded on service and strives to reflect a deep sense of joy and hope.

The Mission today continues to be committed to maintaining the tradition of radical hospitality in the humble spirit of St. Francis of Assisi. Along with community events, such as "I Madonnari" a chalk painting festival which benefits art programs in local schools and "Fiesta Pequeña," the opening ceremony to Santa Barbara's week-long Fiesta celebrating music and dance of early California, about 200 thousand visitors come to Old Mission Santa Barbara each year including thousands of students learning about the influential Mission Era of California history. Old Mission Santa Barbara works to bring diverse communities together to work toward healing and reconciliation.