

The original Mission Church was a thatched roof structure constructed north of this site near Mill Creek. The first permanent chapel was built of adobe and completed in 1809. In 1868 a massive earthquake destroyed the adobe church and a wooden church was built directly over the old rock foundations and tile floor. Later, a Victorian Rectory was built between the wooden church and the only remaining adobe building (now the museum). To make room for the reconstruction of the 1809 church, the rectory was moved in 1979, and the wooden church in 1982. The adobe church is now reconstructed. The interior appears now as it did after having been redecorated in the years 1833-1840. The walls vary from 4 to 5 feet thick. Originally, the timbers were cut in the Oakland hills and dragged here. The milled lumber for the reconstruction was "adzed" to give it a hand-hewn appearance.

Archeologists found the original tile floor and Robert Livermore's grave marker. Many prominent Spaniards are buried within the 1809 church floor, but only Livermore's grave was marked. Across from Livermore's grave is the original baptismal font (please do not touch) made of hammered copper with a wooden pedestal. It was installed in the 1830's. At that time, Augustin Davila was hired to paint the font and all of the redecorated church interior. The painted walls were recreated by Richard Menn of Carmel and his assistants, following the design of the font.

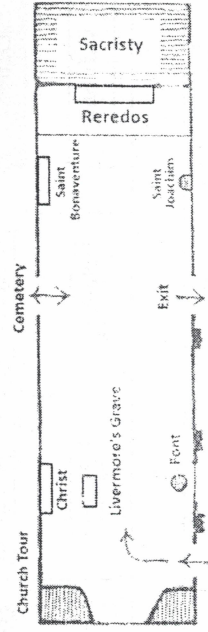
The altar nearest the entrance signifies "Martyrdom" and features a statue of the scourged Christ as He was presented to the crowd by Pontius Pilate. The old Spanish custom was to leave the statue's torso only roughly modeled, then adorn it with clothing. Also included in this altar are relics of Roman martyrs and a nail said to contain within its hollow center filings from a nail of the true cross. The second side altar contains the polychrome statue, circa 1808, of St Bonaventure, which, along with the statue of Christ, survived the 1868 earthquake. The tabernacle door below is a 17th century piece from Guatemala. The chandeliers are copies of period pieces similar to ones listed in the old church inventories.

Now observe the reredos behind the main altar. Below the painting of Christ are His earthly parents. The statue of St. Joseph, patron of the Mission, is Spanish from the 15th century. The statue of Mary was carved in Mexico in the 18th century. Above Christ are two carved figures: a dove representing the Holy Spirit and, at the top, God the Father. The large candlesticks are wood, painted silver. The altar rail and choir rail were copied from a piece of the original railing. The sanctus bells are mounted on a wheel and were used during sacred moments of the Mass.

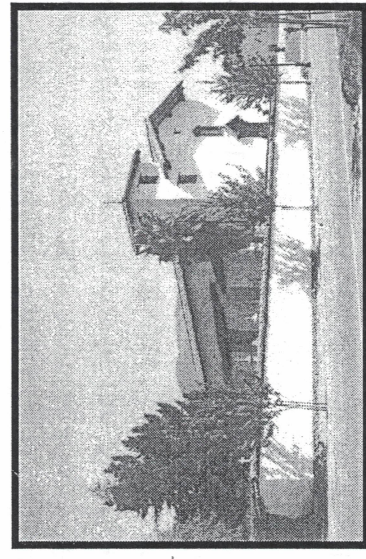
You are welcome to visit the Mission cemetery through the side door but you must return through the church to exit. Many pioneers of Mission San Jose are buried here. Leaving the cemetery to re-enter the church, you will see a skull and crossbones above the door. This is a symbol for death, used here as a sign for the cemetery. Thousands of Ohlones are resting in the Ohlone Cemetery located a short drive down Washington Boulevard.

Three bells of the original Mission bells were transferred to the wooden church where they hung until the 1970's. A fourth bell was given to a church in Oakland and recast, but was returned upon reconstruction of the Mission. Now all four bells hang together, ready to ring for special occasions.

As you leave the church to exit through the gift shop, notice the architectural details. The overhang of the roof features 12,000 hazelwood branches carefully lashed with rawhide. Nails were scarce in the Mission Period. The wall fragments jutting from the building show how the church was once connected to the west wing. The original stone foundations for this portion of the building were located during the archeological dig and are carefully covered with soil to protect them from the elements. Those that you are viewing were constructed in the exact location of the originals.



Welcome to Old Mission San Jose!



Old Mission San Jose & Museum
 43300 Mission Blvd.
 P. O. Box 3159
 Fremont, California 94539
 (510) 657-1797

Masses held at 8 a.m. weekdays
Museum open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily
 Closed New Year's, Easter,
 Thanksgiving & Christmas Day.

~ Founded 1797 ~

Mission San Jose is not owned nor subsidized by the State of California. This Mission depends upon your generous donations for its support.

From the early 1500s until the mid-1800s, the missions were the primary means by which the Spanish taught both Catholicism and the Spanish lifestyle to Native Americans (Indians). In that time, Spanish culture and religion were an inseparable combination. By advancing these causes in the Americas, the missionary priests hoped to Christianize the Natives and the government hoped to gain new loyal subjects.

A fully developed mission was a self-sustaining village. It was occupied by local natives, a few soldiers, several artisans with families, and one or two priests. According to Spanish law, the mission's lands and resources belonged

to the natives and would be put in their control when they had learned to manage themselves in the Spanish way. The plan worked to varying degrees as the Empire spread.

In 1769 the Franciscans carried the mission movement into Alta (upper) California beginning with the founding of San Diego. On June 11, 1797, Padre Fermin Francisco de Lasuen founded Mission San Jose, 14th of the 21 Alta California missions at the site of the Ohlone village of Oroysom. Here the soil was fertile and water plentiful. By 1831 the Mission Indians numbered about 1,886 comprised of the peaceful Ohlone and other nearby tribes.

events which helped to create the California of today. Enjoy your time to look back on our past here at Mission San Jose.

You will visit nine rooms which tell our story:

OHLONE - Pre-mission Ohlone Indian artifacts.

PADRE - A typical padre's room (cell) & Spanish contact.

SACRED ITEMS - Church items from the Mission period.

INDIAN LIFE - The Indian's daily life at the Mission.

AUDIO/VIDEO ROOM - Only shown for GROUP tours.

RANCHO - The lands were divided into Ranchos after secularization. You will recognize many famous names.

1869 CHURCH - The adobe church of 1809 was destroyed by an earthquake in 1868 and a wooden church replaced it.

RECONSTRUCTION - In 1974 plans were unveiled to rebuild the 1809 church and missing piece of the convento.

To visit the church, go through the gift shop, passed the counter, and out the second door.

MISSION MUSEUM WING

In Alta California, the missions never completed the planned cycle. Many factors, political and personal, combined to take California's history in a direction far different from that imagined by the Padres. Today the Missions remain as a monument to the Natives, the Padres, and to all of the

Museum Tour

