

Santa Barbara



Tenth Mission

Founded: December 4, 1786 by Father Fermin Lasuen

Named for: Saint Barbara

Location: on a hill at the end of Laguna Street, overlooking the city of Santa Barbara

Santa Barbara was the first mission founded by Father Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, Father Serra's successor as President of the California missions. Although Father Serra dedicated the site of the Santa Barbara presidio (fort) in April of 1782, he did not have permission at that time to found a mission in Santa Barbara. The Governor at that time, Filipe de Neve, was jealous of the power he believed the Franciscans gained with each new mission. Through his superior, the Viceroy in Mexico, he was able to delay the necessary funding for new missions.

Sadly, Father Serra died just one month after the new Governor told him that permission was granted to found his longed for mission in Santa Barbara. It was Father Lasuen who traveled to Santa Barbara and selected the mission site. It was one and a half miles northeast of the Presidio (fort) in a hilly area called "rocky mound" with a majestic view of the valley and channel.

The first mission buildings were made of logs, with thatch roofs. Later an adobe wing completed the quadrangle with a dormitory, kitchen and storeroom. There were also rows of over 200 houses for the mission natives built next to the mission.

Eventually, construction of a second quadrangle was begun adjacent to the first. Throughout all this construction a succession of larger adobe churches was being built. The largest one, completed in 1794, had six side chapels and was destroyed in the 1812 earthquakes. Then work began on a new stone church that was 161 feet long, 42 feet high, and 27 feet wide. Initially only one tower was included, but in 1833 a second tower was added, making it the only mission with two towers.

The water system at this mission was so extraordinary that parts of it are still used today by the city of Santa Barbara. It was the most elaborate water system of all the missions. Water from a dammed creek in the hills two miles above the mission was carried by a stone aqueduct to a storage basin near the church. There was even a separate branch with a filtration system used for drinking water.

One year before secularization, in 1833, Father Narciso Duran, then president of the California missions, moved his headquarters from Mission San Jose to Mission Santa Barbara. Hence the documents for the entire California mission chain are in the archives here along with a large collection of sheet music from the mission era.

An earthquake in 1925 nearly destroyed the beautiful stone church that had survived all these years. An extensive restoration, at the cost of almost \$400,000, was completed in 1927. Unfortunately, in 1950 a chemical reaction in the materials used in the restoration weakened the structure. The front of the church then had to be rebuilt, and steel-reinforced concrete now supports the mission that now appears just as it did in the mission's glory days.

What was this Mission made from? _____

Describe what buildings were included in this Mission. _____

How was water delivered to the Mission? _____

What weakened the structure of this Mission? _____
