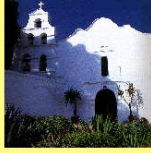


San Diego de Alcalá



First Mission

Founded: July 16, 1769 by Father Junipero Serra

Named for: Saint Didacus of Alcalá

Location: 6 miles from the city of San Diego on Presidio Hill overlooking Mission Valley

Mission San Diego is the oldest mission in California, and the first link in the "chain" of missions that stretches 650 miles along the El Camino Real or King's Highway. On Presidio Hill there stands a large cross on which the following words are written: " Here Father Serra first raised the cross. Here began the first mission, here the first town, San Diego, July 16, 1769.

Being the first mission in Alto (upper) California, it understandably got off to a very slow start. The Native American's were very leery of close contact with the missionaries. They came at first only to receive the gifts brought by the missionaries. There was also much stealing of goods by the natives. There was even an attack on the mission, but the natives soon found out that their bows and arrows were no match for the Spanish soldiers firearms.

After a few years the padres decided to move the mission to a new site further away from the soldiers that were harassing the natives at the mission. The new location also had difficulties. There was not enough water and soil to grow enough crops to feed all the people living at the mission.

Eventually many of the Native Americans came to believe that the presence of the padres would soon force all the natives into this new way of life. With the help of many other tribes, on a night in November 1776, an attack party of 800 armed natives fell on the mission. They looted the supplies and set fire to the buildings.

Eight months after the attack the San Diego mission was rebuilt as a full quadrangle, much larger than the earlier buildings. In 1807 work was begun on a dam 6 miles upriver that would provided the necessary water for the mission to flourish. The dam was complete in 1816. Today there can still be seen evidence of the dam.

In 1834, when the San Diego mission was secularized, the buildings were sold to private parties and soon fell into disrepair. For 12 years (1850-1862) the US Army occupied the buildings, using the adobe church as a stable for their horses.

In 1862 the mission land and buildings were returned to the Church; but by 1931, when restoration began, only the facade was still standing. Today is continues as an active Catholic parish.

What words are written on the cross? _____

What was the problem with the new location of the Mission? _____

Why did the Native Americans attack the Mission? _____

From 1850 – 1862 who occupied the Mission? _____

Imagine you are a Native American living in 1776. Write your thoughts about the Mission and the Missionaries.
