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## FRANCISCAN MISSIONS OF CALIFORNIA

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By Hon. Joseph R. Knowland.

President California Historic Landmarks League, and Chairman Landmarks Committee, Grand Parlor, Native Sons of the Golden West: The remains of the old Spanish missions recall a most interesting period of California's picturesque and romantic history. It is impossible to view these beautiful ruins and fail to become keenly interested in the story of the establishment of the twenty-one Franciscan missions, stretching from San Diego in the south to Sonoma in the north. The Franciscan missionaries were the original pioneers of California, sowing the first seeds of civilization and establishing the first permanent settlements.

It was in the year 1769 at San Diego that the first mission was established. Monterey was the next spot selected. Thus the work continued until a chain of missions had been established, located in such proximity that a traveler could start on foot from San Diego and nightly enjoy the hospitality of a different mission until Sonoma was reached. San Francisco Solano (Sonoma) mission was the last to be founded, 1823 being the date of its establishment.

Of the original twenty-one mission establishments there to-day remains ruins of nineteen. Every vestige of Santa Cruz and San Rafael missions have disappeared. A few crumbling walls mark the spot where once stood Soledad mission. The rains of successive winters beat down: upon the exposed adobe walls, and the day is not far distant when even these walls will entirely disappear. San Diego, the mother mission, is in poor State of preservation. An unsightly Indian school now adjoins these ruins. La Purisima, five miles from the town of Lompoc, in Santa Barbara County, is a hopeless ruin. San Francisco Solano mission at Sonoma is in need of immediate attention, but as the remaining buildings and surrounding grounds have recently been purchased by popular subscription and turned over to the State of California, the future restoration of this mission is assured. One of the most beautiful and less frequently visited missions is located in Monterey County, twenty-six miles from King City. This is mission San Antonio de Padua, a most picturesque ruin. Formerly one of the largest and most beautiful of the mission establishments, it was fast crumbling to dust. The roof of the imposing chapel had fallen and the rains of each winter were disintegrating the adobe walls. The interesting ruins cover several acres of

ground. The California Historic Landmarks League is determined to save this mission, and has already expended the sum of \$1200 in rebuilding the walls and re-roofing the chapel. Owing to a lack of funds work has been temporarily suspended. At San Luis Rey the chapel is in good state of preservation, but the arches, of which there were originally thirty-two, ornamented with latticed railings, which supported the long corridor, are year by year crumbling. At San Juan Capistrano the chapel was years ago destroyed by an earthquake, but a number of other buildings remain. San Gabriel mission, ten miles from the city of Los Angeles, is in use, services being held within this old structure every Sunday. Twenty miles north from Los Angeles stand the remaining buildings belonging to San Fernando Rey. The chapel is filled with hay; the long building with the arched corridor serves as a boarding-house for the farm hands. The Southern California Landmarks Club has re-roofed the chapel. Santa Barbara and San Buena Ventura missions are in a very satisfactory state of preservation. This is likewise the case with Santa Ynez, in Santa Barbara County. The missions of San Luis Obispo and San Juan Bautista, located respectively in San Luis Obispo and San Juan, San Benito County, have been disfigured by the erection of modern church steeples. What little remains of Santa Clara mission has been modernized. The mission near the old town of Monterey, San Carlos Borromeo, has been restored with a vengeance, a peaked shingle roof destroying, to a great extent, the original beauty of this structure. Little remains of mission San Jose. The old mission of San Miguel, in the town of like name, is most interesting, the interior of the church still showing the decorations made by the Indians. San Francisco de Asis (Dolores) mission, in San Francisco, with the modern church structure adjoining, strikingly contrasts the past with the present.

These old missions should be preserved. Over one hundred years have come and gone since the death of the old mission system, and each year, Californians are becoming more impressed with the importance of preserving these reminders of the days when Spain ruled this territory. They should stand as monuments to those self-sacrificing padres who labored unceasingly for the betterment of the Indians, facing the greatest difficulties, enduring hardships, and in many instances sacrificing their lives.



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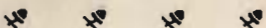
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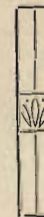
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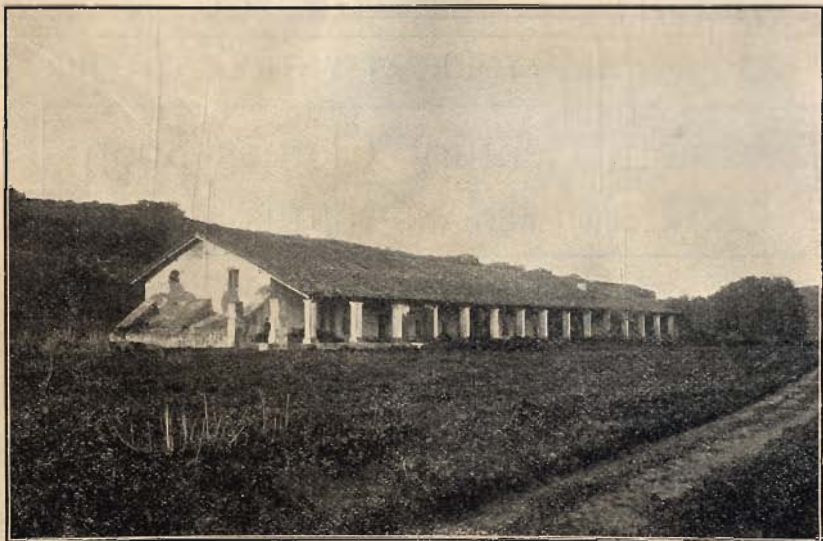




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Founded August 25, 1823



SANTA YNEZ, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY  
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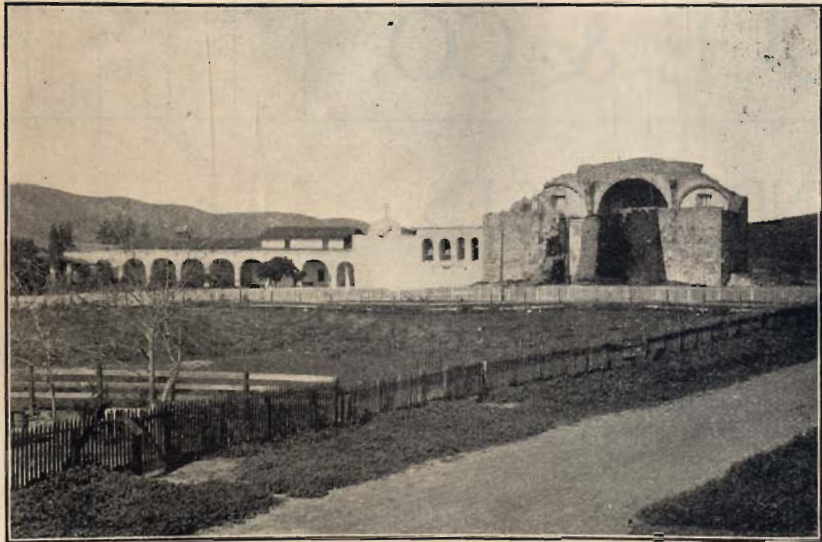




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SAN FRANCISCO DE ASIS (DOLORES) SAN FRANCISCO  
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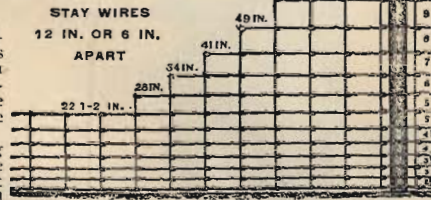
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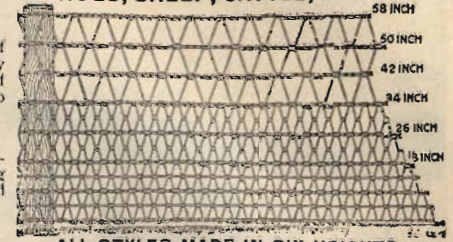
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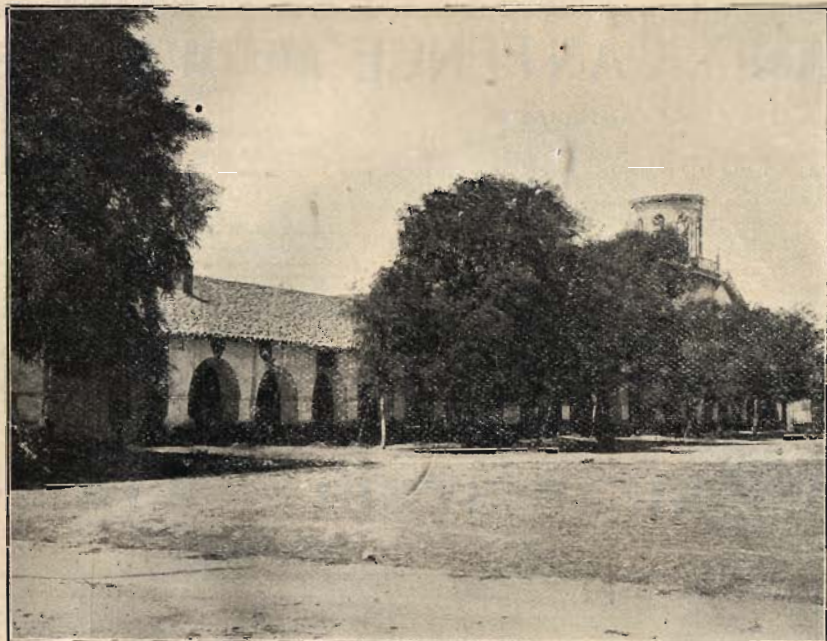
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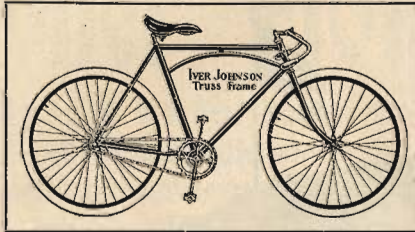
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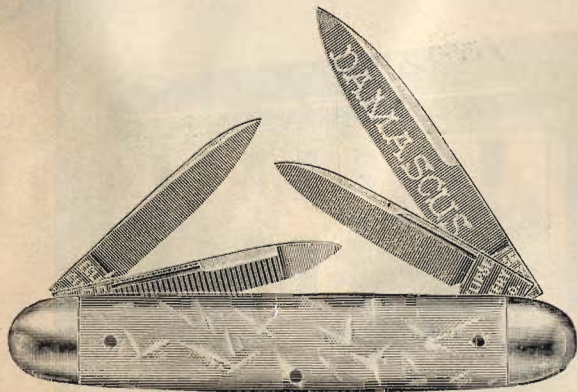


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