

Mission san diego de alcalá



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Mission San Diego de Alcalá is the first of the many missions for which California is famous and is known today as the birthplace of California Christianity. The first church in California, the mission began with a group of Spanish missionaries in 1769. Founded by Blessed Father Junipero Serra the mission proposed to serve Native Americans of the area. The Native Americans, which the mission proposed to serve, were wary initially at the newcomers.

The initial mission structure was built close to the water. Later, the mission would construct a more permanent structure inland, about 5 miles away. The new structured was demolished in an attack by native Americas and the mission was moved back inland some years later. Mission San Diego de Alcalá and church of today were completed by the early 1800's.

The Mission San Diego de Alcalá is the first of more than twenty such mission build by the Spanish to serve the Native Americans. The Native Americans have been called by different names throughout history. Originally known as Kumeyaay and Yuma, they were later called Mission Indians or Diegueno. The Kumeyaay were a nomadic group who had never seen cloth until the missionaries arrived.

In 1976, Pope Paul VI designates the Mission San Diego de Alcalá as a Minor Basilica. The mission today is an active Diocese of San Diego parish. The mission housed many of the Native Americans, who lived and worked at the mission and grew crops including; corn, barley and grapes. Cattle and sheep in addition to horses were also raised on the mission compound. In the late 1700's, the mission began to construct a system of aqueducts to bring water

to the area and assure successful farming. This was the first irrigation project in this region of California.

When California became part of the United States, the mission was used for military purposes and then in 1863, President Lincoln gave all of the mission properties to the Roman Catholic Church. At that time The Mission San Diego de Alcalá was in ruins. Restoration of the mission began in the late 1800's. In 1900, the Landmarks Club of California provided funding, along with other organizations to restore the mission. They worked with local architects to begin stabilizing the mission buildings.

Originally built with adobe, the mission buildings were reinforced with concrete during this time in an attempt to add stability and strength. One of the most famous elements of the mission is the Bell Tower. Today's Bell Tower has one of the original bells from the early mission. When the Bell Tower was originally constructed it had a central function to the operation of the mission, as clocks were not yet part of everyday life. Bells were used to signal time for gather for meals, church work and other functions.

These restoration efforts were followed by work from other civic groups and school who viewed the mission as historical landmarks and were committed to painstaking and accurate preservation. The restoration was wrought with financial problems and was not completed until the 1940's at which time the church became an active parish. Today the mission serves also as a place of historical display and entertains frequent visitors. The site provides the history of both the Native American in the region and the European influence.

References

The California Mission Site. Ed. The Civic Group. 24 Sept. 1998.

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