Spanish-Mexican Records of the San Jose Pueblo

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Spanish-Mexican Records of the San Jose Pueblo
Dates: 1781-1870
Collection Number: 1979-861
Creator/Collector: California. Surveyor General’s Office
Extent: 8 linear feet
Online items available [http://www.sanjosepueblopapers.org/]
Repository: History San Jose Research Library
San Jose, California 95112
Abstract: Founded in 1777 as El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe, the City of San José was the first civil settlement established in Alta California under Spanish dominion. These 6,000 original manuscript pages span the founding of the pueblo site in 1777 through the admission of California to statehood in 1850.
Language of Material: Spanish; Castilian
Access
Records are open to the public for research by appointment with the Curator of Library and Archives.
Publication Rights
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Preferred Citation
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Acquisition Information
The records have been part of the city of San José’s archives since the city’s incorporation in 1850; as such, they were inherited by the San Jose Historical Museum as part of its contract with the City as its archival repository.
Scope and Content of Collection
Founded in 1777 as El Pueblo de San José de Guadalupe, the City of San José was the first civil settlement established in Alta California under Spanish dominion. These 6,000 original manuscript pages span the founding of the pueblo site in 1777 through the admission of California to statehood in 1850. These documents delineate the ayuntamiento or municipal government activities, capturing the official governmental rule colored with patriarchal concern. The primary official, the Alcalde, served as the magistrate, governor, and “town father,” and his interests reflected not only the official viewpoint, but the particulars of the town, its citizens, and its role as a Spanish settlement. The activities documented in the Pueblo Papers reflect the realities of everyday life in Spanish frontier-California: the relationships between Spanish and Indians, children and parents, missions, presidios and pueblos; elections, the local economy, and military discipline. They provide insight into all aspects of agricultural life in the first pueblo in Alta California, from grazing and water rights, to the timing of harvesting and threshing. Judicial and political procedures are brought to light regarding how city officials were chosen and how the community dealt with allegations of robbery, rape, and child abuse. The community’s links to the Spanish colonial world are also evident in calls from the Vice Royalty of New Spain for San José and other communities of New Spain to support the liberation of Spain from Napoleonic France, and the restoration of the monarchy of Fernando VIII. Pre-1850 documents are in Spanish; after 1850 the documents are in English.
Indexing Terms
San Jose (Calif.)--History
California--History--To 1850