
Finding Aid for the Collection of California Missions inventories, reports, and other material 0374

Finding aid prepared by Sue Tyson
USC Libraries Special Collections
Doheny Memorial Library 206
3550 Trousdale Parkway
Los Angeles, California, 90089-0189
213-740-5900
specol@usc.edu
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Title: Collection of California Missions inventories, reports, and other material

Collection number: 0374

Contributing Institution: USC Libraries Special Collections

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description: 0.42 Linear feet1 box

Date: 1791-1846, undated

Language of Materials: Materials are in Spanish. The collection includes one document in English and some English-language notes.

Abstract: The twenty-one documents in this collection, primarily inventories, account books, and annual reports from five California missions, show economic and social aspects of life at the missions. The documents, written in Spanish and dated from 1791-1846, provide information about the people living and working at the missions, including numbers of baptisms, marriages, births, and deaths; number and kinds of livestock and crops; descriptions of property and buildings; and accountings of debits and credits. The collection also includes documents reflecting financial and social transactions at multiple or unspecified missions.

Historical Note

As part of their colonial designs on Alta California, the Spanish founded missions, presidios, and pueblos in order to secure and develop this territory; these California missions thus served as the engine for the region's economic and political development. The missions were conceived as self-sufficient entities that, in enlisting a Christianized Native American population as their labor force, would receive minimal financial and material support from the Viceroyalty in New Spain. As the missions grew more productive and supply lines from Mexico dwindled, their goods and labor increasingly supported each other and the needs of the presidios and pueblos. In the years prior to Mexican independence (1821) and secularization (1834), many of the missions were very productive in agriculture, artisanal production, and trade, as the Native Americans grew and harvested crops, tended livestock, and manufactured goods in mission workshops. As part of their duties, the Franciscan Fathers heading the California missions kept detailed records about the missions and their inhabitants, sending inventories, account books, and annual and biennial reports to their affiliated presidios and to the administrators in Mexico City. After secularization, inventories were also conducted before missions were leased or sold.

Preferred Citation

[Box/folder# or item name], Collection of California Missions inventories, reports, and other material, Collection no. 0374, Special Collections, USC Libraries, University of Southern California

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Arrangement Note

This collection is arranged first by named missions, in order of quantity of documents, and then by documents that either do not specify a particular mission or that name multiple missions; these latter are arranged in chronological order. Within these groupings, folders are arranged in chronological order.

Acquisition note

This collection was purchased from the Historical Society of Southern California in 1988; according to acquisitions documentation, the Historical Society of Southern California had owned the documents since 1899. Also acquired with this collection was a Los Angeles election manuscript, entitled Los Angeles Justice of the Peace Election Results, dated November 4, 1850; this document has been included in the General Historical Manuscripts and Ephemera collection, #6004, Special Collections, University of Southern California.

Processing Note

The collection was presumably arranged and rehoused at purchase in 1988. In 2010, Sue Tyson processed the collection, re-arranging, describing, and refolding its documents. Ivan E. Calimano provided translation assistance.

Scope and Content

The California Missions collection consists of twenty-one documents, primarily inventories, account books, and annual reports (informes), dated 1791-1846. The majority of the documents were created at five of the missions: Santa Cruz (eight documents), San Buenaventura (four documents), and one document each from San Gabriel Arcangel, Santa Clara, and

Santa Ines. The remainder of the documents describe conditions at more than one mission, or refer to financial or social transactions at unidentified missions. All but one of the collection's documents are in Spanish; one undated document, a descriptive introduction to and translation of an annual report from the Santa Cruz Mission from 1791, is written in English. About half of the documents are dated prior to the secularization of the missions in 1834, and about half are dated post-secularization.

Though limited in size, the collection shows economic and social aspects of life at the missions. Account books, inventories, and annual and biennial reports (informes) provide information about the people living and working at the missions, including numbers of baptisms, marriages, births, and deaths; number and kinds of livestock and crops; description of property and buildings; and accountings of debits and credits. Some of the documents provide a great deal of detail: for example, a set of annual and biennial reports from 1791-1833 (Folder 3) and an account book for 1792-1818 (Folder 4) each offer views of the Santa Cruz Mission's economic activities over many years.

Along with documents about the missions named above, the collection includes other types of documents that attest to various social and legal practices. These include a conversion statement, promissory notes, and documents concerning marriage. Many documents refer to Native Americans as Indios; one document mentions Coras, Yuma, and Apache.

The collection contains many signatures of figures that played a role in the history of the California missions, including Andrés Pico, Estevan Tapis, Thomas de la Pena, and Pablo Vicente de Sola; people charged with conducting inventories of the missions, such as Juan Manso; and lessees or purchasers of the missions, including Narciso Botello and José Arnaz. Other signatures found in the documents are mentioned in the Scope and Content notes for individual folders in the collection. In addition, names mentioned in the documents include Juan B. Alvarado, Narciso Duran, and Concepcion Arguello.

Subjects and Indexing Terms

Alvarado, Juan Bautista, 1809-1882 -- Archives
Arguello y Morago, Maria de la Concepcion Marcela, d. 1857 -- Archives
Arnaz, José -- Archives
Botello, Narciso -- Archives
Duran, Narciso, 1776-1846 -- Archives
Manso, Juan -- Archives
Mission San Gabriel Arcangel (San Gabriel, Calif.). -- Archives
Pena Saravia, Tomas de la, 1743-1806 -- Archives
Pico, Andrés -- Archives
San Buenaventura Mission. -- Archives
Santa Clara Mission. -- Archives
Santa Cruz Mission. -- Archives
Santa Ines Mission (Solvang, Calif.). -- Archives
Sola, Pablo Vicente de, b.1761 -- Archives
Tapis, Estevan, 1754-1825 -- Archives
Account books
Annual reports
Baptismal certificates
California--History--To 1846--Archival resources
Indians of North America--Missions--California--Archival resources
Informes
Inventories
Legal documents
Missions, Spanish--California--History--Archival resources
Missions, Spanish--Economic aspects--California--Archival resources
Promissory notes

Box 1, Folder 1

[Santa Cruz Mission Inventory Fragment] undated

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

A single sheet of two pages completely full of text.

Scope and Content

Undated inventory fragment that mentions Rancho del Taino [?], Rancho del Refugio and Rancho de la Punta ano Nuevo.

Box 1, Folder 2

[Santa Cruz Mission Translation of First Informe written by Father Baldomero Lopez] 1791

Language of Material: English

Physical Description

The document consists of six legal-sized pages.

Scope and Content

Undated translation into English of a 1791 informe [annual report] concerning the Santa Cruz Mission, and an introduction to this translation. The author of the introduction and translation is not named. The introduction comprises pages one through three of the document, and the translation pages four through six. Based on the fact that it is on legal-sized paper, it is assumed that this document was created in the 20th century.

The introduction mentions the Mission Dolores [Used for: San Francisco de Asis Mission (San Francisco, Calif.)] and hundreds of neophytes residing there; it also mentions Native American populations at Aptos and Santa Cruz. The introduction describes the founding of Santa Cruz Mission, the construction of its church, its dedication ceremony, and its partial destruction, and the dedication of a second church, by Bishop Amat [Thaddeus Amat]. Other names mentioned in the introduction include Thomas Pena, Hermenegildo Sal, Fathers Crespi and Gomez, and Fathers Alonso Salazar and Baldomero Lopez.

The translated informe, a copy of the report sent on December 31, 1791 and written by Father Baldomero Lopez, describes the condition of the Mission of Santa Cruz from 1791. The informe recounts baptisms; marriages; deaths; numbers of Native Americans living in the mission and where they were baptized; number and type of cattle, horses, and mules; amount and type of grain sown; descriptions of the buildings and yards; and provision of tools and household goods.

Box 1, Folder 3

[Santa Cruz Mission Annual Reports (Informes)] 1791-1833

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

Thirty pages of documentation with some sides blank or nearly blank; taped at binding with scotch tape.

Scope and Content

Santa Cruz Mission Annual Reports (Informes). Annual and biennial reports from the mission for the years 1791, 1792, 1794, 1795, [?], 1796, 1803-1804, 1804, 1806, 1809, 1817, 1820, 1822, 1829, and 1833. Accounting includes headcounts of inhabitants in addition to baptisms, marriages, deaths, livestock, saddle animals, and crops. Signatures include those of Domingo Carranza, Baldomero Lopez, Antonio Rodriguez, and Jayme Escude.

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- Box 1, Folder 4 **[Santa Cruz Mission Account Book] 1792-1818**
Language of Material: Spanish
Physical Description
Fifty pages bound together, not necessarily in order, plus one small loose sheet with writing, mostly numbers, on both sides.
Scope and Content
Account book with some description of inventory, dated variously between January 13, 1792 and 1818 and written by various people; and slip of paper with gross salary information. Signatures include those of Estevan Tapis, Marcelino Marquino, Antonio Rodriguez, Abonado Ti Carranza [?], Domingo Carranza, and Pedro Peralta.
- Box 1, Folder 5 **[Santa Cruz Mission Marriage Contract] 1797**
Physical Description
One sheet, two pages, mostly blank on page 2.
Scope and Content
Marriage contract, dated December 11, 1797. Document includes descriptions of the people to be married and signatures of witnesses (including cross marks).
- Box 1, Folder 6 **[Santa Cruz Mission Letter Stating Requirements for Marriage] circa 1804**
Physical Description
One sheet, two pages, page 2 blank.
Scope and Content
Letter from the mission stating the requirements for marriage, dated circa 1804.
- Box 1, Folder 7 **[Santa Cruz Mission Court Document regarding Village of Branciforte] 1817**
Language of Material: Spanish
Physical Description
One sheet, folded to make four pages; writing on three pages, with fourth page blank.
Scope and Content
Document regarding passage between the Village of Branciforte ("Villa de Branciforte") and Mission Santa Cruz, dated May 31, 1817 and June 4, 1817. Document includes writing by several people and is signed by Pablo Vicente de Sola, Marcelino Marquinez, and Jayme Escude.
- Box 1, Folder 8 **[Santa Cruz Mission Order of Payment] 1825**
Language of Material: Spanish
Physical Description
One sheet, blank on page two.
Scope and Content
Order of payment of 2,767 pesos to pay for troops, dated 1825 and signed by [?] Martinez.
- Box 1, Folder 9 **[Santa Clara Mission Conversion Statement] 1839**
Language of Material: Spanish
Physical Description
One folded sheet of four pages, each filled with writing.
Scope and Content
Conversion statement of Henrique Gilte, Santa Clara Mission, 1839. Document consists of two parts, each written by a different person, and includes several signatures, including those of Henrique Gilte, Antonio Rodriguez, Antonio z. rel Real [?], and José Maria de Jesus Gonzales. The document describes Gilte's conversion to Roman Catholicism from the Protestant faith of his parents.
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Box 1, Folder 10

[San Buenaventura Mission Promissory Note, Inventory, and Account Book] circa 1839

Physical Description

Documents consists of two sheets.

Scope and Content

Promissory note, account book, and inventory dated circa 1839. Inventory covers animals, supplies, and property, including furnishings and a description of the principal building. Names mentioned in the document include José Antonio Aguirre, José Noriega, Juan B. Alvarado, Rafael Valdes, Carlos Antonio Carrillo, Narciso Duran, and Concepcion Arguello.

Box 1,
Folder 11-12

[San Buenaventura Mission Inventory and Account Book] 1845

Physical Description

The document in Folder 11 consists of a folded sheet of four pages, with page 4 blank. The document in Folder 12 consists of a single sheet (two pages), with the second page blank except for the signatures and English-language note.

Scope and Content

Folder 11: Inventory dated July 15, 1845. Signatures on the document include those of Juan Manso and Andrés Pico. The document inventories the carpenter's shop, the kitchen, furniture of the house, seeds and grain, and animals. Folder 1 of 2.

Folder 12: Inventory dated July 15, 1845. Final page of the real and personal property found at the mission. Signatures on the first page are those of Juan Manso and Andrés Pico; signatures on the second page are of Narciso Botello and Dolores Valdez. Also on the second page is an English-language note in pencil, undated, ostensibly describing the document. Folder 2 of 2.

Box 1, Folder 13

[San Buenaventura Mission Inventory] 1846

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

Twelve pages, hand-sewn and numbered.

Scope and Content

Inventory dated March 24, 1846, detailing property in the main building and the main house, winery, barn, shoemaker's shop, mill, kitchen, and more. On the last page are several lines of English-language notes [undated] describing the document, stating: "Inventory of the real and personal property turned over by Ramon Valdez, keeper, to the commissioners Narciso Botello and José Arnaz." Signed by all three.

Box 1, Folder 14

[Santa Inés Mission (Solvang, Calif.) Inventory] 1846

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

The document consists of twenty-two pages, with hand-sewn binding; some pages have separated from the binding and some are blank.

Scope and Content

Inventory of goods and furnishings, dated 1846. Inventory covers the main house, the shoemaker's and metalsmithing shops, the gardens, croplands, livestock, farm and field tools, household goods, and more. The document lists the names of circa eighty people. Signatures include those of Miguel Cordero, Joaquin Carrillo, Augustin Davila, and José Sinares [?]; José Maria Covarrubias is also mentioned. The last page of the document includes an undated, unattributed English-language description of the document.

Box 1, Folder 15

[Mission San Gabriel Arcangel (San Gabriel, Calif.) Inventory] 1846

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

One folded sheet of four pages, with page 4 blank.

Scope and Content

Inventory dated March 25, 1846. An inventory of San Gabriel Mission (Mission San Gabriel Arcangel). Document includes signatures of Bernardino Guirado [?] and Manuel Liveira.

Box 1, Folder 16

[Report on the Condition of Four Missions--Fragment] 1794

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

Written on both sides of fragment.

Scope and Content

Fragmentary sheet of an inventory and report on four missions in 1794, including some comparison with 1792. Along with Mission San Juan Capistrano, names mentioned include missions in Sonora and Baja California: Mission Santo Domingo and Mission Santa Rosalia [de Mulegé]. A mission Altamira [?] is also mentioned. The report includes headcounts of people at these missions, including of each mission's cabinet and church council, and contains figures concerning numbers of Indians and Spaniards in 1792 and 1794. The document also details number of marriages, baptisms, and deaths of Indians and Spaniards, and discusses the education of Indians. Native American cultures mentioned include Coras, Yumas, and Apaches.

Box 1, Folder 17

[General Accounting of the Missions] 1800

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

One sheet, blank on page 2.

Scope and Content

A general accounting of missions' debits and credits, dated 1800 and signed by Fray Thomas de la Peña. Missions named include La Purisima Concepcion; Mission de San Antonio; Santa Cruz Mission; Mission San Gabriel Arcangel; Nuestra Señora de la Soledad; Mission San Carlos Borromeo; San Buenaventura Mission; San Juan Bautista; Mission San Miguel Arcangel; San Luis Rey Mission; San Fernando Mission; Mission de San Joseph; Santa Barbara Mission; San Diego Mission; Santa Clara Mission; San Francisco de Asis Mission; Mission San Juan Capistrano; and Mission San Luis Obispo.

Box 1, Folder 18

[Promissory Notes (Two Items)] 1825, 1832

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

Each documents consists of one sheet, blank on verso.

Scope and Content

Folder contains two promissory notes. Promissory note of September 26, 1825, details funds promised by the Casas Nacionales de la Ciudad de Chihuahua to the Colegio Apostolico de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas; this document contains several signatures, including those of José Antonio de Anzar and José Rafael de Torres. Promissory note of 1832 also contains several signatures, including those of Juan Antonio Aragon and José Sandobal.

Box 1, Folder 19

[Promissory Note] 1833

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

One sheet, blank on verso.

Scope and Content

Promissory note dated July 24, 1833, Monterrey. Document begins with stamped text that includes the names Figueroa and José Rafael Gonzalez and is dated 1831. The document is signed by José Rafael Gonzalez.

Box 1, Folder 20

[Certificate of Baptism] circa 1840

Language of Material: Spanish

Physical Description

One sheet with writing on both sides.

Scope and Content

Certificate of Baptism, circa 1840. The document includes the Mexican seal, with its image of an eagle and a serpent. Names mentioned or appearing in signatures include Antonio Maria Orio [?]; José Maria Suarez del Real, and José Maria Aguilar, as well as the Colegio de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Zacatecas.