

LA PURISIMA MISSION STATE HISTORIC PARK
2295 PURISIMA ROAD, LOMPOC, CA 93436
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INFORMATION: www.lapurisimamission.org

MISSION FOUNDED

Misión La Purísima Concepción de María Santísima (Mission of the Immaculate Conception of Most Holy Mary) was founded by Father Presidente Fermin de Lasuén on December 8, 1787. It was the 11th of 21 Franciscan Missions in Alta California. During the Mission's early years, several thousand Chumash Indians were baptized into the Catholic faith. La Purisima grew and prospered with adobe buildings, a water system, and crops and livestock.

MISSION DESTROYED

A major earthquake struck La Purisima on December 21, 1812, destroying many of the mission's structures. Aftershocks and drenching rains damaged La Purisima beyond repair.

MISSION RELOCATED

Father Mariano Payéras, then in charge of the mission, was granted permission to rebuild four miles to the northeast in "La Cañada de los Berros", the Canyon of the Watercress. This new site had several advantages: a better water supply, better climate, and a closer and safer access to El Camino Real.

MISSION COMMUNITY

In a few years, La Purisima again became a thriving community with approximately 1,000 Chumash neophytes (Indian converts) living on mission lands. Each mission was almost self sufficient with thousands of acres of farms and ranches. At times over 20,000 cattle and sheep roamed the hills along with hundreds of horses, mules, burros and other livestock. The padres developed shops for weaving, pottery, leatherwork and other crafts in addition to conducting the religious activities of the mission settlement.

MISSION SECULARIZED AND PROPERTY SOLD

In 1834, the order to secularize California's Missions was enforced. Mission lands were governed by private individuals, not the Church. The land was to be given to the mission inhabitants, and the neophytes released from supervision. Instead, the Indians were cheated and in 1845, La Purisima Mission was sold to John Temple for \$1,100. By the end of the 19th century, the old mission had seen a variety of owners and uses.

RUIN TO RESTORATION

Buildings and other features of the mission eventually collapsed from weather and long neglect. In 1933 the mission was a complete ruin. The Union Oil Company gave the property to the State of California. Preservation and reconstruction of the Mission complex began in 1934 through efforts of the County of Santa Barbara, California State Parks, the National Park Service and the Civilian Conservation Corps. The buildings and grounds were restored and furnished to appear as they had in 1820.

MISSION NOW A STATE PARK

Today, the restored buildings are part of La Purisima Mission State Historic Park. With an area of 1,960 acres a small but important part of the original 300,000 acre mission property is preserved. Ten of the original buildings have been fully restored and furnished. The aqueduct and water system has also been restored. A four acre garden shows native and introduced plants typical of the mission era. Common mission animals such as burros, horses, longhorn cattle, sheep and goats are displayed. In addition, the park contains a picnic area and approximately 25 miles of hiking trails. Special events and living history days are held throughout the year. A calendar of events can be obtained by calling or writing the park at the above address.

La Purisima Mission is located four miles northeast of Lompoc on Purisima Road. It is approximately 15 miles west of Buellton off of Highway 101, via State Highway 246. If you would like more information about La Purisima, postcards, books and pamphlets are available by writing to or visiting the Gift Shop at the above address. For information about ordering from the Gift Shop, call between 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. daily.