

11.1 San Diego DANP22_C_2Mb

We are at Mission San Diego de Alcalá. It is the second site where the mission was established. It was the first mission to be founded by Father Junipero Serra, the first of nine that he personally founded. And the first of 21 that were founded by the Franciscan padres. It is basically, the seeds of what is now the state of California.

And the padres came here originally with the intention of evangelizing the Indians. When Father Serra came to California, July 1, 1769, he was part of a strategy of the King of Spain to colonize the Californias. Father Serra had in mind, in his objective in coming to the Californias, as Father Presidente or Father President of all the Franciscans was to evangelize the Indians.

Of course, the formula worked pretty good for Spain because as the padres converted the Indians, the Indians became subjects of the crown of Spain. Therefore, it was baptism and citizenship, even though the Padres didn't intend that. The government of Spain was very happy to make that assessment and take the benefits of that. And that's basically, what happened when the Padres got here.

San Diego de Alcalá is east of downtown San Diego, a few miles. And is the second location for the mission. The first was on Presidio Hill on the coast overlooking the bay.

It was the birthplace of Christianity on the West Coast of the United States and continues as an active parish church. The structures have gone through several transitions over the years. This is the fifth church built on the site. The original was destroyed in an Indian attack in 1775.

In 1812, the fourth church here was under construction. Unlike many of the other missions, it survived that earthquake.

During secularization, when Mexico gained independence from Spain, the properties were sold off, but returned to the church by a proclamation by Abraham Lincoln in May

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of 1862. By that time, the property was in shambles, with very little left of the earlier church. It was rebuilt in 1931, modeled on what the architects believed was the 1813 church.