

Unifying Theme

Situated at a historic crossroad between Northern and Southern California, San Juan Bautista State Historic Park offers a window into the roots of California culture, from the contributions of Native People through the influences of the Spanish and Mexican periods up through the Gold Rush and the early days of California statehood in the 19th century.

Primary Theme: California's Native People

The Amah Mutsun people maintain strong spiritual ties to San Juan Bautista and the surrounding San Juan Valley.

Supporting Theme

For countless generations, Mutsun living in the San Juan Valley modified the landscape with fire, pruning, and other techniques to enhance the production of plant and animal resources.

Supporting Theme

Secularization of the mission in 1834 left its Indian population landless and homeless, with most becoming victims of poverty and exploitation in a land where their culture had once flourished for thousands of years.

Supporting Theme

Today's Mutsun continue many aspects of the pre-colonization cultural traditions and, through research and practice, are reviving Mutsun culture.

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Primary Theme: Spanish exploration and colonization of California

As one of the 21 Spanish missions in Alta, California, Mission San Juan Bautista played a crucial role in advancing the Euro-American colonization of California.

Secondary Theme

Mission San Juan Bautista was established as a link in a chain of missions designed in part to help control the California Indian population and secure the permanence of Spanish settlement of the California frontier.

Topics to Cover

The exploratory Anza Expedition bringing Spanish colonists to San Francisco passed through the San Juan Valley in 1776 and today's visitors to San Juan Bautista State Historic Park can hike a nearby section of the San Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

Topics to Cover

The historic El Camino Real (The Royal Road) a portion of which visitors can walk through the north edge of San Juan Bautista State Historic Park – once connected the 21 Spanish missions in Alta California stretching from San Diego to Sonoma.

Topics to Cover

Native labor in the mission's workshops supplied many manufactured goods needed in Spanish California while the mission's native farmworkers and vaqueros produced significant wealth for the colony with crops and livestock.

Topics to Cover

Indian families at the mission initially lived in traditional tule dwellings, but starting in 1815 families began being housed in small rooms within the long adobe buildings built east of the plaza on what is now the State Park owned Taix lot.

Topics to Cover

Whatever the intentions of the Padres, missionization proved disastrous for the Mutsun, who died by the thousands from European diseases and saw their complex culture disintegrate.

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Primary Theme: Californio and the Mexican Rancho Period

The stories of the people who lived, worked, and visited at the Castro Breen Adobe are the stories of different classes of Californios in the mid-19th century.

Source: Castro Breen Adobe Interpretive Plan, Sibbett Group, 2002, pg. 26

Supporting Theme

Don Jose Castro, military leader, politician, ranchero, was one of the key players during the Mexican period.

Primary Theme

Secularization resulted in mission lands being divided among private citizens, launching the Californio Rancho period of California history.

Source: Castro Breen Adobe Interpretive Plan, Sibbett Group, 2002, pg. 30

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Primary Theme: American .Period, Gold Rush and California Statehood

Early American immigrants had a significant influence in California.

Secondary Theme

Patrick and Margaret Breen realized their dream for a new life in the west.

Supporting Theme

Patrick and Margaret Breen, survivors of the Donner Party, were the first English speaking residents in San Juan Bautista.

Source: Castro Breen Adobe Interpretive Plan, The Sibbett Group, 2002, pg. 17

Secondary Theme

The Gold Rush experience of the Breen family reflects the effect the discovery of gold had on the lives of Californians and on the region's economy, population and culture, setting the state for statehood.

Source: Castro Breen Adobe Interpretive Plan, The Sibbett Group, 2002, pg. 18

Topics to Cover

The Breens purchased the Castro-Breen Adobe with money acquired in the Gold Rush.

Secondary Theme

Angelo Zanetta's dream for the city to have the county courthouse was not achieved.

Topics to Cover

Angelo Zanetta was a businessman who built the Zanetta House hoping it would become the county courthouse for the newly established San Benito county. When this did not happen he modified the building to serve as a private residence.

Secondary Theme

More changes happened at San Juan Bautista when California became the 31st state.

Secondary Theme

San Juan Bautista booms as a stageline transportation hub until the transcontinental railroad bypasses the town.

Source: Castro Breen Adobe Interpretive Plan, The Sibbett Group, 2002, pg. 16