

SONOMA STATE HISTORIC PARK NOTES

By Kim Muratore, PIS, June 23, 2022

Why was Mission San Francisco Solano built?

- There were two reasons that the Church built a string of missions in California: (1) Spain was heavily Catholic and felt that it was its duty to actively seek out non-Christians and teach them about Christianity; and (2) Spain wanted to populate California so that other countries would not try and claim this land for their own countries.
- Why build Mission San Francisco Solano in Sonoma? (1) The cold and foggy weather at the San Francisco mission was not healthy for the natives who were used to living in warmer areas and they were getting sick and dying. (2) There wasn't enough land in San Francisco that was good for growing crops and raising cattle and the climate limited what you could grow. (3) Mexico wanted to create a populated area to serve as a buffer to discourage Russia from moving any farther south than its location at Ft. Ross and Bodega Bay. Spain discovered California in 1542 (Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo), while England arrived soon after in 1579 (Sir Francis Drake). Neither country settled California until Spain did in the 1700s. Spain was spurred to do this because it had discovered that Russia had a base in Sitka, Alaska, and was working its way down the West Coast and Spain wanted to settle the area to keep intruders out. (G-1)

Mission San Francisco Solano's claims to fame:

- The mission is named after the patron saint of Peru--San Francisco Solano (Saint Francisco Solano). It was not named after the city of San Francisco which itself was named after a different Saint Francisco—San Francisco de Assisi. The bottom line is that when you name a lot of places after saints and there are a lot of saints, it's inevitable that some of those saints will have the same first names.
- Mission San Francisco Solano is the last Catholic mission built in North America and the second to last Catholic mission to be built in any of the Americas. (There was one mission built later than ours in Baja California in 1834—Mission de Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe del Norte.). Of the three hundred years of missions in at least 12 U.S. states (CA, AZ, NM, TX, LA, MS, FL, VA, AL, GA, SC, NC) and in South America, ours is the last mission in the U.S., and operated as a mission from 1823-1834. Mission San Francisco Solano is the only mission in what became the U.S. that was under Mexican rule (the rest were built under Spain). Mexico became independent from Spain in 1821 and two years later this last mission located in what became the United States was founded.
- Mission San Francisco Solano is the farthest north mission.

Why was Alta California (the part of California that became part of the United States) important to Spain and Mexico?

- Its coastal ports were a jumping off point for trade with China which desired the sea otter pelts that could be obtained along the West coast. Trade with China was important

because Spain and Mexico needed China's mercury which was used in South American silver mines to separate out the precious metals from the rest of the ore.

- Spain first settled Alta California in 1769, after having explored the area in 1542. Spain wasn't in any particular hurry to settle the area until they learned that the Russians were moving into Alaska and working their way down the coast.

Blue Wing Inn:

1834: Originally a small, two-room adobe, supposedly built by General Vallejo during the last year of the mission's operations to house emigrants and travelers.

1836: Vallejo grants ownership to Antonio Ortega, who served as majordomo during secularization for one year before being fired by Vallejo.

1836-

1848: Antonio Ortega sells alcohol at a shop in the adobe. The building size at that time corresponds to the 2 eastern rooms of the present structure (i.e., the two rooms on the left as you face the building).

1849: Ortega sells the adobe to Thomas Spriggs and James Cooper who add a second story and balcony. General Persifor Smith headquartered the U.S. Army of the Pacific in Sonoma and brought with him officers who frequented the hotel, including several who would become famous during the Civil War—Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, Fighting Joe Hooker, and Phil Sheridan.

1852: A two-story western addition is built, bringing the size of the structure to that which exists today. The building later became a gambling casino, saloon and hotel. Following this, it served as a grocery store and then as a winery. Famous and infamous visitors stayed there including John Fremont, Kit Carson, members of the Bear Flag Revolt, the bandit Joaquin Murrieta and 3-fingered Jack.

1968: The Blue Wing Inn's ownership is transferred to the State.

2001: The last tenant moves out.

2010: The Blue Wing Inn Adobe Trust is founded in this year.

2014: A new roof is installed and the building is seismically strengthened.

Barracks History:

1835: Construction begins on the barracks and on Casa Grande. The house was completed in 1840 while the barracks were completed in 1836.

1835-

1844: Nearly 100 military missions are led to quell native groups. Most of the missions are led by General Vallejo or his brother Salvadore, and/or his friend, chief Solano. During this time, the number of soldiers at the barracks varied from 17-40. Mexican soldiers served 10 year-long enlistments and were paid roughly 25 cents a day, from which salary they had to buy and maintain their uniforms, weapons, and horses.

1844: Vallejo dismisses his troops and tells the Mexican Governor that he can't afford to financially support the troops garrisoned in Sonoma. Although he could certainly afford to support his troops, he said this so that he could not be ordered into a conflict between the Governor and the settlers who wanted to take over California because they felt that they were being treated poorly by the Mexican Government and Mexican soldiers. Vallejo agreed that the settlers were being ill-treated. The Governor issues a proclamation saying that foreigners owning or buying land have to become Mexican citizens, speak Spanish, and convert to Catholicism, or forfeit their lands and risk being kicked out of the country. Vallejo retires from military service this year, although he is still the administrative commander.

1846: The barracks serve as the HQ for the members of the Bear Flag Revolt. Lt. Joseph Revere (Paul Revere's grandson) is sent to Sonoma to raise the U.S. flag in front of the barracks. Following this, the US military uses the barracks.

1852: American occupation forces leave the barracks and Sonoma.

1857: Vallejo operates a winery in the barracks.

1878: Solomon Schocken purchases the barracks and uses them as a store and warehouse.

1957: The State of California acquires the barracks.

Ft. Ross and the Russians:

1812: The Russian American Company travels down from its base in Sitka, Alaska to hunt otter and seals for their fur and to raise grains and cured meat to send back to Alaska.

1836: Russia wants to expand its holding in California by purchasing land from San Francisco east to Sacramento, and then north to Oregon. This deal falls through when Mexico declines to sell the land. (D-1) [I need to do more research to verify this.]

1839: Baron Ferdinand Von Wrangel, governor of lands held by Russia in Alaska, travels to Mexico City to try and buy more productive land but that deal falls through when Czar Nicolas I will not deal with a Mexican revolutionary government. Mexico was willing to grant the land if Russia would recognize the independence of Mexico from Spain.

[Note: I need to do more research on this to verify this information as most info sources do not discuss any attempt by Russia to purchase additional land.]

1841: Russia sells the Ft. Ross assets to John Sutter and abandons the fort. (Ends 30 years of Russian colonization of a portion of California.) Sutter transfers the movable assets of his purchase back to Sutter's Fort and to Rancho New Helvetia (Sacramento), including the wooden walls of the fort. He claims that he also purchased the land but in addition to the fact that Sutter cannot produce a notarized bill of sale covering the land, the person he claims sold him the land did not have the Russian Governmental authority to do so. Additionally, Mexico said that the Russians did not own the land and therefore, no Russian had the authority to sell it. The Russians claim to have purchased the land from the Kashaya Pomo tribe for the price of 3 blankets, 3 pairs of pants, beads, two hatchets, and three hoes. However, Mexico claimed that the natives did not own the land and therefore did not have the authority to sell it. (G-2)

John C. Fremont:

- He was an American army officer and explorer. In the Spring of 1846, Fremont arrived at Sutter's Fort with a small group of soldiers. It is unknown whether he was sent to encourage an American rebellion; he was supposedly there to make a scientific survey of the best route to the Pacific and he would be leaving for Oregon in Spring, as he explained in January 1846 to Thomas Larkin, who was an American diplomat in Monterey. On 3/5/1846, Fremont was ordered out of California by Commodante General Jose Castro. In defiance of the order, Fremont and his men occupied a mountain peak for four days, then withdrew and headed to Sutter's Fort, where he stayed across from the fort for 3 days before heading up towards Oregon. Marine Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie, who was purportedly traveling under secret orders from the U.S. Navy Secretary, carried personal letters for Fremont. Fremont was by then in Oregon but came back to California after reading the letters. Fremont said that the letters told him to quit his exploring duties, and along with verbal communication from Gillespie that supposedly came from President Polk, he was supposed to act as he saw fit with respect to the future of California. Fremont returned to Sutter's Fort and encouraged some of the settlers to form militias and prepare for a rebellion against Mexico, egging on the Bear Flaggers. On July 5, 1846, following the end of the Bear Flag Revolt, Fremont took command of the Bear Flaggers, renaming them the "California Battalion". He took over Sutter's Fort from John Sutter against his will, renamed it Ft. Sacramento, and forced Sutter to keep General Vallejo held there as prisoner following the Bear Flag uprising. Although the war between the U.S. and Mexico had been declared by Congress back on May 13, 1846, people living in California (including the Bear Flaggers at the time of the Bear Flag Revolt) do not yet know that the war has already begun. (A-8, C-4)
- When Commodore Sloat sailed into Monterey and claimed California for the U.S. on July 7, 1846, he sent for Fremont, as he was anxious to see the orders that had authorized Fremont to take up arms against Mexico. He was shocked and appalled to learn that there were no such orders. For his part, Fremont had hoped that Sloat would after-the-

fact approve of the actions that he had taken and would muster the “California Battalion” into regular service. Sloat would not do this. Fortunately for Fremont, Sloat became ill and left California, leaving Commodore Stockton in charge. Stockton promoted Fremont to major and placed him in command of the “California Battalion of United States troops”. (A-9)

- General Stephen Watts Kearny arrives in California in December 1846. Kearny had seized New Mexico and was sent to capture California. Kit Carson met Kearny en route on Carson’s way east and told Kearny that California was already captured, so Kearny sent over half of his troops back to New Mexico, only to find that there was still fighting going on over California. Kearny’s remaining troops had to be rescued by Commodore Stockton, who had named himself Governor of California, but Kearny’s orders from the White House named Kearny as Governor. When Stockton left California, he named Fremont as Governor, but Kearny ultimately prevailed in the fight to become Governor. He ordered Fremont back to Washington to face court martial for his Bear Flag Revolt actions and for Fremont’s failure to defer to Kearny as Governor. Fremont was convicted of mutiny, disobedience to a superior office, and bad conduct, but President Polk dismissed the charge of mutiny and pardoned him from his dismissal from service penalty. Fremont refused the pardon and resigned from service. (A-10)
- John C. Fremont was one of California’s first 2 U.S. Senators in 1850 (along with General Vallejo), the year that California became a state. He served one year and then gave up his seat. In 1856 he became the Republican Party’s first-ever presidential candidate (but lost to Democrat James Buchanan). He later served as territorial governor of Arizona from 1878-1881. (C-4) (E-1)

John Sutter:

- He was of German-born Swiss heritage. (C-1)
- He was only a lieutenant in the Swiss Reserves, contrary to his claims of extensive service in the Swiss Guard and claims of extensive European military exploits. (C-2)
- He acquired Mexican citizenship and was given a land grant of almost 60 square miles at what has become Sacramento. (A-4)
- Vallejo’s nephew, Governor Alvarado, gave Sutter authority to grant lands to settlers.
- Sutter claimed that in 1840 Russia sold him both the moveable assets and the real (land) property of Ft. Ross and Bodega Bay. However, he could produce no notarized document of any land transaction and the Russian who purportedly signed the deed would not have had the authority to do so, since Mexico claimed the land as its own. He moved all the assets that could be transferred over to Sutter’s Fort and to New Helvetia (which became Sacramento). (C-3) (D-1)
- In August 1846, after the U.S. war with Mexico started, Sutter became an American citizen and was given a commission as a lieutenant of volunteers. (C-5)

Natives’ Experience:

- Although Mexican law forbade slavery, native Americans were often treated like slaves, in that they could not freely leave the mission and were not paid. Even after the mission

period, as late as 1846, natives who were not employed could be arrested and forced to work. They were not paid and only received food and clothing.

- The natives were taught Christianity and Spanish, made to eat Spanish food, taught trades to keep the mission functioning, and had to learn Spanish culture and mission rules, including governing their activities according to the mission bell.
 - The types of work that the native Americans were trained for at the mission included the following: stone cutting; brick/tile/adobe making and laying; wood carving; herding; blacksmithing; metal working; milling and baking; olive and wine pressing; tallow and soap making; hide skinning and tanning; harness and saddle making; sowing/reaping/picking crops; irrigating and plowing fields; sheep shearing and sheep dipping.
 - The Native Americans were provided with foods that they weren't used to such as dairy products and wheat (which likely made them sick), and caught diseases from the Spanish (measles, mumps, smallpox and VD).
 - There were members of many tribes in the area; primarily Wappo, Miwok, and Pomo.
- 1924: A law is passed which grants full U.S. citizenship, including the right to vote, to all Native Americans born in the U.S.

La Casa Grande:

1835: Construction began in 1835.

1837: The Vallejo's move into La Casa Grande.

1840: The house is completed.

1843: A three-story tower is added.

1851: The Vallejo's move to Lachryma Montis.

1853: Vallejo rents Casa Grande to a school teacher who runs a boarding school for girls.

1856: The school is closed and Casa Grande is rented out as offices and apartments.

1867: Casa Grande burns down, although the servants quarters remain.

- 11 of Vallejo's 16 children were born at La Casa Grande.

General Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo:

- During his lifetime as a Californio, he became a citizen of four different countries (Spain, Mexico, the Republic of California, and the U.S.).
- At one time he owned almost 300 square miles of land (equivalent in size to 6 San Francisco's) but after the U.S. won the war with Mexico he lost much of his land. The U.S. said that Mexicans who had owned land before the war could keep their land if they could prove ownership in American courts, but this was hard to do and expensive. Ironically, a lot of landowners lost their land because they had to mortgage the land to get

the money to pay for proving that they owned the land. Also, squatters took over some of Vallejo's land and stole his cattle and horses.

- Vallejo was given a huge land grant from which he was supposed to give new settlers land. This land grant cancelled much of the mission's land claims.
- General Vallejo was never a military general. He was appointed administrative general, but being as the orders were written in Spanish, speakers of English saw the word "general" and thought that this meant that he was a military general.
- He served as one of the first two State Senators in California and was twice mayor of Sonoma.

Petaluma Adobe:

- Ranching headquarters for Vallejo's 66,000 acre Petaluma Rancho grant. His brother Salvadore is put in charge.

1836-

1846: The Petaluma Adobe is constructed but never completed.

1857: Vallejo sells the Petaluma Adobe.

1951: The Petaluma Adobe is acquired by the State of California.

Bear Flag Revolt and the U.S./Mexican War:

1821: Following Mexico's gaining independence from Spain in 1821, several hundred American were allowed/encouraged to colonize the Mexican state of Coahuila y Tejas, the only requirements being that they become Mexican citizens and convert to Catholicism. The American settlers decide to break away from Mexico and in 1836, they defeated a Mexican army that was sent to stop them from doing so. They declared themselves a republic and on 12/29/1845 (9 years later) they became the 28th state of the US.

1823: Monroe Doctrine: A U.S. policy, originated by President James Monroe, that said that any intervention by external powers in the Americas was going to be perceived as a potentially hostile act against the U.S. In practice, what this doctrine meant was that European countries were forbidden from colonizing additional territories in America, and in exchange, the U.S. promised not to interfere in European matters.

1845: The Monroe Doctrine went hand-in-hand together with the concept of Manifest Destiny, which was the belief that the U.S. had the right to expand throughout the American continents, and that such expansion was inevitable. President Polk, who was President during the U.S. war with Mexico from 1846-1848, was a big proponent of Manifest Destiny. At the end of 1845, the Republic of Texas officially becomes a part of the United States. However, the U.S. and Mexico cannot come to agreement as to where the border should lie between Texas and Mexico. (A-6)

1846: President Polk determines to go to war with Mexico and uses the border dispute as a rationale for the war. Abraham Lincoln, who was only a Congressman at the time, gets into political hot water because he held the minority opinion that this dispute could be worked out diplomatically and that there was no need for a war. President Polk was an avid proponent of the war as he knew that the United States could easily prevail militarily and then could take all of the land that Mexico owned in the north, which extended from the Colorado Rockies over to the Pacific Coast (excluding the areas of Oregon and Washington).

4/25/1846: Mexican cavalry attack U.S. troops in the border dispute area of Texas.

5/13/1846: Congress declares war on Mexico.

6/14/1846: About one month before people living in California get word that the U.S. war with Mexico has started, 33 American settlers living in California who are unhappy with the way that Mexico has been treating them, decide to take over California. They can't even agree on what to do with it should they succeed. Some of the Bear Flaggers (so called because of the picture of a grizzly bear on their flag) want to basically gift wrap California and give it to the United States once the war starts. The other faction of the Bear Flaggers want to emulate Texas and form their own country. One of the Bear Flaggers, Robert Todd, is Abraham Lincoln's nephew by marriage, through Mary Todd Lincoln. He is no artist however, and the grizzly bear on the flag he designed looked like a pig. The Bear Flaggers used a grizzly bear as their symbol because back then grizzly bears were plentiful in the Sonoma area. The Bear Flag (which is still our State Flag albeit with a better picture of a grizzly bear) incorporated a lone star, which was a nod to the Republic of Texas and its lone star. It also mimicked the Texas Flag in that instead of the words "Republic of Texas", the California Flag says "California Republic". (F-2)

The Bear Flaggers come to Sonoma to take over California because that is where General Vallejo is stationed. As general administrator and military commander of California, Vallejo is a key figure for Mexico in California. While he was military commander, he kept roughly 40 soldiers stationed in Sonoma. The Bear Flaggers come to Sonoma to fight it out with Vallejo only to find that there is nobody to fight as Vallejo let his troops go two years earlier. Instead, at Fremont's direction, Vallejo and several other are imprisoned for three months at Sutter's Fort, where he catches malaria and almost dies. The Bear Flaggers raise their flag in the town square over the barracks and California is a self-proclaimed "country" for 25 days (June 14 – July 9). Following the takeover of Sonoma, Fremont takes command of the Bear Flaggers on July 5, creating the "California Battalion", with his headquarters at Sutter's Fort, which he renames Fort Sacramento. (A-8)

July

1846: Commodore Sloat is patrolling off the coast of California, waiting for word that the war has started so that he can swoop into Monterey and claim California for the United States. He gets the word and sails into Monterey and claims California. Up in Sonoma, the Bear Flaggers have also claimed California. On the ship with Sloat is Paul Revere's grandson, Lt. Warren Revere, and he is directed to go to Sonoma to inform the Bear Flaggers that the U.S. has claimed California, and directs them to take down their Bear Flag and replace it with the U.S. flag and the Bear Flag Revolt comes to an end.

1846-

1848: The war between the U.S. and Mexico lasts two years.

1848: The Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago is signed in 1848, just days before gold is discovered near Coloma on John Sutter's property. As part of the treaty, Californians have one year to decide if they want to remain as Mexican citizens or whether they want to become U.S. citizens. After one year, if they have taken no steps to remain Mexican citizens, they automatically became U.S. citizens.

- The treaty gave the U.S. nearly 40% of Mexico's territory, including all or parts of AZ, CA, NM, TX, CO, NV, UT, and WY for \$15M and the U.S. assumption of Mexican debts to American citizens up to \$5M total. A separate settlement with England in 1846 gave the U.S. what became the states of Washington and Oregon, and most of Idaho. Between the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hildago and the Oregon Treaty with Britain, the U.S. almost doubled in size. (E-2)
- The State's population grew fast following the war and the discovery of gold. At the end of the war, there was apx. 6,500 Californians (non-native Americans) and fewer than 800 non-native Americans. By 1850, the non-native population was 92,000. Two years later, it was 250,000.

Misc Info:

- Jose de Jesus, Mariano Valley's older brother, was sent by Mexico to secularize Mission San Jose.

Comprehensive Chronology:

1523-

1823: The mission trail is built over 300 years, from Central America up to North America.

1542: Spain first explores the California coast and claims California.

1579: English explorers claim California for England but take no steps to maintain their claim.

- 1591: Spain begins establishing missions in North America (but not yet in California). There are missions in at least 12 states along what became the southern border of the United States, from Florida across to California. (CA, AZ, NM, TX, LA, MS, FL, VA, AL, GA, SC, NC)
- 1769: Spain first settles in northern California (200 years after its first exploration). Spain wasn't in any hurry to settle California until it learned that the Russians were moving into Alaska. The first California mission (in San Diego) is established by Father Junipero Serra. He goes on to establish the first 9 of the 21 California missions.
- 07/04/1807: Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo is born in Monterey, CA which was at that time part of Mexico which itself was ruled by Spain, so he was a Spanish citizen.
- 1812: The Russian American Company builds a stockade at Ft. Ross.
- 09/27/1821: Mexico gains its independence from Spain (and Vallejo, now a teenager, becomes a Mexican citizen).
- 1823: Father Jose Altimira founds Mission San Francisco Solano. The first church (of wood) is built on the left(west) side of the mission.
- 1825-
- 1826: The convento (padres' building) is constructed. It was originally twice the width that it is today as the wall that today leads into the courtyard was an inside wall back in the days of the mission.
- 1827-
- 1832: The large adobe church is built. (B-1)
- 1833: Vallejo is military commander at the S.F. Presidio. The Secularization Act is passed by Mexico this same year. Under the Act, the missions' lands are to become available to settlers under a land grant process. Vallejo is given a huge land grant to carry this out for Mission San Francisco Solano and this claim effectively cancels the mission's rights to the land. The first adobe church is built on the right side of the mission and the old wooden church is used for storage. (A-1)
- 1834: Lt. Colonel (not General) Vallejo is appointed mission comisionado (administrator) and is sent over from San Francisco by the Mexican government to (1) secularize the mission (change it from church rule to civil rule by turning the mission church into a local parish church, taking and dispensing the mission lands, and replacing Spanish missionaries with parish priests); (2) lay out and start building the town of

Sonoma; and (3) provide a military presence near the Russian outpost of Ft. Ross to prevent further incursion into California by Russia. Russia's base was in Sitka, Alaska, and it used its Ft. Ross outpost to hunt for otter and seal fur, and grow crops and raise cattle for use back in Sitka. Vallejo's brother Salvador is to be his assistant. Vallejo brought 35 soldiers plus their families along with him to the mission. Vallejo receives the 66,000 acre Ranch Petaluma land grant. Work on the Petaluma Adobe begins and will continue until 1846, but it is never completed.

As administrator for the mission, Vallejo was supposed to distribute half of the mission assets for use in building the town of Sonoma and half of the assets were supposed to go to the mission neophytes. In general, few Native Americans at the missions received their share of mission assets. The head of each family and each person over 20 years old was supposed to have received a plot of land between half of an acre and two acres, plus livestock, tools, and seed. Without native labor to maintain the mission, its buildings fell into disrepair. Some of the mission buildings were taken over by settlers and the Mexican military (until the barracks were built). Within a few years, the large adobe church was abandoned and its building materials were scavenged for other uses. Ownership of lands that were granted to the Native Americans passed quickly into the hands of non-Natives. (A-1)

- 1834-
1840: The old wooden church is used as a store. (B-1)
- 1835: Vallejo is appointed director of colonization for Alta California and resigns his commission as administrator for secularizing the mission. He lays out the town of Sonoma. This is the last year that the priest's house is occupied permanently. It is occupied on a sporadic basis until 1842. (A-2) (B-6)
- 1836: Baron Wrangel, the Russian governor of its American colonies, desires to extend Russia's holdings, from Fort Ross and Bodega Bay, south to San Francisco Bay, east to the Sacramento Valley, and north to Oregon. The Baron travels to Mexico City where he proposes the purchase of this property. This purchase does not come to fruition. (D-1) [More research is needed to verify this.]
- 1836-
1844: Lt. Vallejo is promoted to colonel of calvary in 1836 and on that same day is appointed military Commodante General of Alta California, a post which he held until 1844. He brings 35 soldiers and their families over to Sonoma. (A-3, F-1)
- 1836-
1845: Texas breaks away from Mexico and forms a republic. It serves as a role model for the Bear Flaggers, who take over California for 25 days in 1846 and form a republic.

1837-

1838: The large adobe church collapses after Father Quijas takes off the roof in order to raise the church height by six feet. An unexpected rainstorm caused the walls to crumble. Much of the mission is in deterioration, although the priest's house still has some livable rooms. (B-2)

1840: Vallejo arranges for the current adobe church to be built on the left side of the mission where the old wooden church used to be, using building materials from the old adobe church that was on the right side that had fallen into disrepair. Vallejo puts in plain wooden bench pews. At this time, the priest's house and the chapel are joined together. There was a doorway that led from this joining room to the outside. (B-3, B-6)

1841: The new chapel opens. The Russians leave Ft. Ross. Captain John Sutter purchases Ft. Ross' inventory (not including the land, which Mexico says that Russia never owned).

1844: Vallejo disbands his 30-40 troops and retires from military service. He did this so that he couldn't be ordered to take part in an ongoing conflict between Mexico and unhappy settlers who felt that the Mexican military had treated them badly. The highest rank he obtained was Colonel (not General). (A-7)

December

1845: Texas officially becomes a part of the United States. (A-6)

04/30/1846: California's military Commodante General Jose Castro issues a proclamation which says that foreigners owning or buying land there have to become Mexican citizens, learn Spanish, and convert to Christianity. The alternative is for foreigners forfeiting their land ownership and risk being kicked out of the country.

05/13/1846: The U.S. war with Mexico begins. However, this news apparently does not reach folks in California until after the Bear Flag Revolt.

06/14/1846-

07/09/46 : Bear Flag Revolt lasts between 23-25 days, depending on whether you consider the end to be when U.S. forces take over Monterey, California and raise the U.S. flag, or whether you consider the end of the revolt to be when U.S. forces reach Sonoma and raise the U.S. flag.. With the encouragement of John C. Fremont (who was at that time an American Army officer and explorer) a group of 33 Americans invade Sonoma with the intent to take over control of Alta California. Some of the Bear Flaggers thought that they were taking control of California as a placeholder action

until the U.S. began its war with Mexico at which time they expected the U.S. would take control of California. This belief was apparently based on the involvement and encouragement of U.S. army officer Fremont. Another faction of the Bear Flaggers wanted to emulate Texas' (until recent) status as an independent republic and create a similar Republic of California. Sonoma was chosen as the seat of the revolt because it had the largest military outpost in Alta California. The Bear Flaggers came to Sonoma, expecting a battle with Vallejo's garrison, only to find that Vallejo had dismissed his troops some two years earlier and there was no one to fight. Instead, the Bear Flaggers took Vallejo, his brother Salvadore, and two others prisoner and they were imprisoned at Sutter's Fort for a few months where Vallejo almost died of malaria. During the period of the Bear Flag Revolt, California was a self-proclaimed country called the Republic of California. The bear in the flag's design was chosen because it was common to the area and represented strength, while the lone star on the flag was a nod to Texas's flag's lone star which signified its sovereignty while it was a republic. Interesting fact: Mary Todd Lincoln's nephew William Todd was one of the bear flaggers and he helped create the bear flag. On July 9, 1846, Lt. Joseph Revere (the grandson of Paul Revere) raised the U.S. flag in front of the barracks and the Bear Flag came down.

- 1848: The U.S. wins the war with Mexico and acquires all or part of what became 8 U.S. states.
- 1850: California becomes a State. Bishop Joseph Alemany arrives at the mission. He was in charge of the Catholic Church's interests in the State. He begins to have the mission repaired and the chapel turned into a full parish church, installing pews (paid for by Vallejo) and assigning a priest to be in residence and hold regular services. Vallejo starts work on his new home.
- 1851: The Vallejo's move into their new home and live out the rest of their lives there.
- 1852: American occupation forces leave the barracks and Sonoma.
- 1853: Archbishop Alemany files a claim to the mission property. Title is confirmed in 1855 and the property is restored to the Catholic Church in 1857, at which time it becomes a local parish church. (B-3)
- 1853/1854: Sonoma County's native American population is driven north to Lake County onto reservations. General Vallejo was the Indian Agent at this time and thought that moving the natives away from Sonoma would be to the Indian's advantage so that they stop being mistreated.
- 1857: Vallejo sells the Petaluma Adobe and remodels the barracks to serve as a winery.

- 1859: Part of the large adobe church ruins are still standing, 30 feet high. (B-2)
- 1862: The immediate mission property (2 acres) is deeded by U.S. patent to the Archbishop through an ongoing effort by President Lincoln to return the missions back to the Catholic church.
- 1865: In March, President Lincoln signs a bill that returns the missions back to the Catholic Church. [I need to do more research on this.]
- 1871? Shocken builds two houses where the large adobe church had previously been located.
- 1874: The sacristy is added onto the church in this year or shortly thereafter. The small room that joins the priest's house to the chapel collapses and creates a breezeway between the two structures. (B-4) (B-6)
- 1881: Railroad tracks are laid right out in front of the mission. The noise scares the horses and the vibrations are causing the walls to shake and threaten the integrity of the building so the parisheners petition the diocese to move the church. The mission is sold to Solomon Shocken and the proceeds are used to build a new Catholic church on 3rd St. The chapel is used as a warehouse for his store in the barracks. The breezeway roof is shingled in. (B-6)
- 1903: The California Landmark League is formed. The Sonoma Valley Women's Club receives permission from Shocken to make repairs to keep the mission buildings from deteriorating any further than they already have. The League raises funds to buy the chapel, priest's house, and immediate acreage.
- 1906: The mission is acquired by William Randolph Hearst (as trustee of the California Landmarks League) and Joseph Nolan (two well-known newspaper owners) who donate it to the State of California. The saloon is moved away from the front of the church and repairs are begun.
- 1911-
1913: Further repairs are made. (B-9)
- 1914: The mission opens on 6/14/1914 as a museum. (B-7)
- 1957: The State acquires the Toscano Hotel, Casa Grande servants' quarters, and the Barracks.
- Aug
2012: Ground penetrating radar is used on the grassy lot behind the mission.

Secularization (disestablishment) of the Missions:

- Spain's original plan with the missions was that after 10 years of operation, each mission was to be closed, with the padres moving on to new geographic areas. The idea was that within these 10 years, the natives were to have been converted to Christianity and trained in various occupations that would allow a town to be developed. The mission churches were supposed to transform into local parish churches. That did not happen and some of the missions operated for more than a century. In 1813, a law was passed that all missions 10 years and older be immediately secularized. This law wasn't enforced in California.
- In 1833, Mexico passed a secularization law covering the missions in California. Agents for secularizing each mission were appointed by the Governor to take charge of the mission properties. In April 1834, a law was passed that said that each mission was supposed to be secularized within 4 months (by August 1834). In August, the Governor signed a regulation that said that half of each mission's assets were to go towards developing towns and in support of a local parish church and parish priest., and half of the assets were to be distributed to the neophytes. The head of each family, and all neophytes over 20 years old, was to be given a plot of land between 7 and 28 acres, livestock, tools, and seed. In most instances, the natives did not receive the mission assets as specified in the law.

Mission Features:

- The mission bell that is outside was found in the old Sutro Museum in San Francisco.
- Three peals of the bell was a call for prayer (3x daily)
- Adobe tiles were made of the same mix as adobe bricks and were formed over tree trunks, left until dry, and then fired.
- Overlapping inverted roof tiles were used to make drains. (B-8)
- Adobe bricks were 22" x 11" x 4"
- Plaster was made using oyster shells
- Buildings at the mission included: church; priest's quarters; tannery; granary; weaving and sewing rooms; kitchen; ovens; storerooms; library; music room; blacksmith shop; carpentry shop; tool room; and guardhouse.
- Typical day at the mission: The bell rang and neophytes attended morning mass, followed by a breakfast of atole (gruel of roasted corn or grain). Young girls and single women went to work in the spinning and weaving shops while the men and boys worked in the fields, shops, and doing construction. At noon the bell rang for lunch (dinner) of pozole (a gruel or broth of beans, peas, lentils, and perhaps meat), followed by a siesta until 2:00 p.m. Back to work until the bells pealed at 5:00, and then back to church for evening services. Supper of atole at 6:00 p.m. and then free time until the 8:00 p.m. bell which signaled bedtime. The neophytes had days off on Sundays and on holy days.
- Only 17 of the 21 California missions were painted by Chris Jorgensen. Four of the missions (San Rafael, Santa Cruz, Santa Clara, and San Jose) had disintegrated into the ground and there was nothing left to paint as of 1903.

- The first wooden mission church was made out of the same materials and construction as outside under the eaves.
- The priest's quarters used to be twice as wide as it is now, but the outer wall in the courtyard fell down. There used to be a tile walkway along this second row of rooms, similar to what is in front of the mission, complete with an overhand extending from what was an A-frame roof. The area under the A-frame roof formed a second story that was likely used as a dormitory. (B-5)
- The prickly pear out front is over 110 years old.
- The mission floor tiles were installed in 1943-1944.
- The 4 missions that are not painted include San Rafael Arcangel, Santa Clara, San Jose, and Santa Cruz.
- Animals kept at the mission include cattle, sheep, burros, horses, dogs and cats.
- The chapel walls were painted in 1943-1944, and were copied from other missions that had been painted earlier by native Americans.
- The dining table is not old (1983) but was made using the 1930 blueprints from mission La Purisima.
- Crops and animals were raised on over 10,000 acres (16 square miles) surrounding the mission. (16 square miles is the equivalent of 1/3 of the size of San Francisco)
- As of 1832, the mission had 27 rooms around the quadrangle. Only 5 rooms remain today.
- When Solomon Schocken purchased the mission in 1881, the chapel was used as a warehouse for his store in the barracks.
- After the mission period ended, the chapel was used to store feed and hay. The mission was also used for liquor storage, a cooperage (barrel building), winery (Schocken's Old Sonoma Winery), chicken house and wagon shed, with a saloon steps outside the front door of the chapel.
- Between 1912-1920, the priests' quarters are connected to the chapel by an enclosure.

Abraham Lincoln and the missions:

- Before he died, Lincoln signed legislation turning the California missions back over to the Catholic church.
- The missions at Sonoma and La Purisima are the only two California missions that are owned by the State Parks. This occurred because the Catholic Church sold the missions to private parties and they eventually became part of the State Park system. This is the reason why these two missions do not hold church services. The mission in Santa Cruz is a hybrid—the Church owns the church and the State Parks owns the mission portion of the building.

Misc. History:

- For almost 200 years, from 1591-1765, Jesuits were responsible for establishing missions in North America. In 1765, the Jesuits were kicked out and the Franciscans took over

mission management and mission expansion into Alta California. This lasted until 1834 when Mexico closed the missions.

- The Monroe Doctrine in 1823 says that the U.S. forbids European powers from colonizing additional territories in America and in exchange commits the U.S. to not interfering in European matters.

The Padres at Mission San Francisco Solano:

1823-

1826: Padre Jose Altimira: Founding priest of Mission San Francisco Solano. His goal was to close both Mission Dolores in San Francisco and Mission San Rafael and move their operations to a new mission, situated in a warmer climate. Instead, the two missions were kept intact and this new mission was added to the chain of missions in California. Father Altimira was not good at working with the Native Americans and they gave him trouble. After just three years he asked to be relocated, and then in 1828 he left for Spain unexpectedly, supposedly because he didn't want to sign an oath of loyalty to Mexico.

1826-

1833: Padre Buenaventura Fortuny: He was very successful, working well with the natives, and was known as the Builder Padre.

1833: Padre Jose de Jesus Maria Gutierrez: He was successful at conducting the operations of the mission but was not good with the Native Americans, feeling that flogging was the best way to reprimand them. He served barely a year at the mission.

1834-

1835: Padre Jose Lorenzo de la Concepcion Quijas: He was described as kindhearted and was not afraid to stand up for his rights and those of whom he was in charge. As the last padre of the mission and the first post-secularization, Father Quijas did not get along with the major-domo Don Guadalupe Antonio Ortega nor with Salvador Vallejo. The way in which these men treated the natives did not sit well with him, inspiring him to write a letter of complaint to the church hierarchy. He moved permanently to Mission San Rafael in June of 1835, which he was also in charge of. He travelled to Sonoma only to conduct periodic religious services, including baptisms. He baptized five of the Vallejo children between 1836-1841, which was after the mission closed in 1834.

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