

✓ BICENTENNIAL - Santa Cruz City

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Santa Cruz's bicentennial bash

City dates its birth from mission's founding in 1791

By Lee Quarnstrom
Mercury News Staff Writer

Two hundred years ago, Father Fermin Lasuen said 8 o'clock Mass in Santa Cruz.

Acting on the orders of the Viceroy, the Count of Revilla Gigedo, Father Lasuen raised the cross on Aug. 28, 1791, not far from the banks of the San Lorenzo River. The *presidente* of the California missions blessed the site of the new Mission Santa Cruz before celebrating the Mass to mark the founding of the 12th of the Alta California missions established by Junipero Serra and his Franciscan successors.

Now, give or take a few days, Santa Cruz is preparing to mark its bicentennial.

Who cares that no one is sure of the location of Father Lasuen's original chapel? Who cares that today's Mission Santa Cruz is just a fake built during the Depression, a pint-size replica of a structure that collapsed in 1857?

Certainly not the good people of Surf City, who have organized a major whoop-de-do to celebrate their town's birthday.

Back in 1791, as Lasuen and his attendant soldiers marked the site of the new mission, the locals — Ohlone Indians — undoubtedly shook their heads as the foolish white men set up shop in what we would these days call a flood plain.

Having other fish to fry, Father Lasuen head-

ed back to his headquarters at Carmel, leaving the new outpost in the hands of Fathers Baldomero Lopez and Isidro Alonso Salazar. The pair formally dedicated the new mission on Sept. 25, the day after they arrived in Santa Cruz.

Just two weeks later, the priests baptized their first convert, an 8-year-old girl named Moslon. They renamed her Micaela.

Soon, with support from the local Ohlone leader Sugert, neophytes, as they were called, were being baptized by the dozen. The priests had 87 new Catholics by New Year's Day.

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Events planned for celebration

These are among the events planned starting this week as part of Santa Cruz's bicentennial celebration. For details on these and other events, call the Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department at (408) 429-3477.

■ Bicentennial procession and Mass: Procession, led by mariachi musicians, will leave Holy Cross Church at 10 a.m. Sept. 15. Mass will be at 10:30 a.m. at the Civic Auditorium.

■ Historical lecture series: At 7 p.m. Thursdays at Loudon Nelson Center. Fees for adults — \$20 for series, \$5 a lecture; fees for students and elders — \$16 for series or \$4.

■ Parade: At 10:30 a.m. Oct. 5 along Cedar Street, across the Water Street bridge to San Lorenzo Park. More than 100 entries.

■ Celebration: San Lorenzo Park, 11 a.m. until 5 p.m. Oct. 5. Ethnic food and drink, heritage craft demonstrations, shuttle bus to Mission Adobe, music and dance and special exhibitions.

■ Fireworks: 7:30 p.m., Oct. 5, Santa Cruz Main Beach.

■ Maidu myths and stories: Readings by William Shipley, retired UC-Santa Cruz professor. Loudon Nelson Center, 7:30 p.m. Oct. 15. Cost is \$5.

Bicentennial celebration planned in Santa Cruz

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That winter it rained heavily and, as usual, the river spilled from its channel, soaking through the wood poles of the palisaded mission structures. Fathers Lopez and Salazar got word to Lasuen that they'd like to move up the hill to the site of present-day Holy Cross Church, away from the flooding waters of the San Lorenzo.

Permission granted, the priests moved lock, stock and barrel to high ground, completing the new flat-roofed, New Mexico-style building on Mission Hill early in 1793. (The flat top would soon give way to a peaked, waterproof roof.)

Although the approximate site of the relocated mission is known, experts are uncertain about the location of Lasuen's original structure. Cabrillo College history teacher Sandy Lydon says it is generally thought to have been at the site of the San Lorenzo Lumber Co., at 235 River St. But local historian Edna Kimbro says the outpost might have been anywhere around the base of Mission Hill near what has become downtown Santa Cruz.

Most of the bicentennial celebration on Oct. 5 will not be on Mission Hill but down on the banks of the river, at San Lorenzo Park. There will also be fireworks at the city's Main Beach that night after the daylong party that will include a parade, live music, historical exhibits and tours, "living history" demonstrations and a ball at the Civic Auditorium featuring the Zasu Pitts Memorial Orchestra.

Up on the hill, the only remaining building from the early days of Mission Santa Cruz will be officially reopened and dedicated after more than a decade of planning and reconstruction. The Mission Adobe, built in 1824, housed Indian converts. These neophytes included local Ohlones as well as Yokut Indians brought to the mission from the Central Valley.

Although the anniversary of Father Lasuen's first Mass was Aug. 28, the bicentennial blowout is being held Oct. 5 to coincide with the

yearly Fiesta Day sponsored by the Adobe Coalition on the first Saturday in October. Organizers note that annual celebrations must be held on consistent dates so marching bands, posses and other groups that participate in parades around the state can plan schedules well in advance.

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After the Oct. 17, 1989, earthquake, Holy Cross Church was abandoned. The landmark white steeple came down in the wake of the temblor, which caused extensive, perhaps irreparable damage to Holy Cross — English for Santa Cruz.

Parishioners worshiped, for a while, in the church hall until it was destroyed by fire. Now they attend Mass in a tent, one of the pavilions erected by local merchants after much of downtown Santa Cruz was destroyed by the Loma Prieta quake.

During the past two centuries, floods, fire and earthquakes have taken their toll on Mission Santa Cruz, which became Holy Cross Church. But always, it has come back.

Pastor Mike Marini, born and raised in Santa Cruz, says reconstruction of the quake-damaged church cannot proceed until engineers and architects agree on plans. Father Marini does not want to speculate on a time frame — or about the cost.

Whether Holy Cross Church is retrofitted and rebuilt or whether it is necessary to put yet another incarnation of the mission atop the hill above the San Lorenzo, the words of Father Francisco Palou describing Santa Cruz more than 200 years ago still ring true:

"The place is fit not only for a town, but for a city, without wanting any of the things necessary. (It has) good land, water, pasture, wood and timber just within reach and in great abundance, and is close to Monterey Bay. The town could be put a quarter league distant from the sea with all the said conveniences."