

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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### **Santa Ines**

"The Treasures of Mission Santa Ines" by Kurt Baer is a recent publication of the Academy of California Church History of Fresno. We have found the book most interesting and readable, having visited this old mission several times on our way to and from Santa Barbara.

Here is a complete and up-to-the-minute history of the lovely Santa Ines Mission, the story of the planning and building, expansion, rise, and near ruin of the old mission. Its setting in the beautiful Santa Ines Valley has scarcely changed in character and appearance since the Franciscan Fathers set the Holy Cross on the mission site more than 150 years ago.

The tourist or those interested in visiting the California mission chain, should take time to turn off the main highway at the directional sign marked Solvang — a delightful Danish village just a few miles inland, Santa Ines Mission is beautiful part of this unusual community.

Kurt Baer has created a picture story in chronological sequence of the exterior of the mission, from the earliest known drawing in 1851 to the present day. Here, too, is a description of the wall decorations untouched since 1820. He also gives the reader a description of the art objects ranging from the statue of the patron saint to historic copper and woodwork of Neophyte Indians. Each important piece is illustrated photographically. There is also a glossary of liturgical and religious terms, and a brief biography of each saint whose picture maybe seen in the mission, as well as a reference and guide to the mission.

It is interesting to note the comments of the author regarding the paintings in the missions in California. He believes that the remoteness and the fewness of these sparse settlements that were scattered the length of California were probably the reasons that few, if any, of the master works of ranking Mexican artists were sent. There were important "schools" of painting not only in Mexico City, but in Queretaro and especially in Zacatecas. Both of these latter places are a must on the agenda of any visitor to Mexico. They still retain the flavor of Old Mexico.

In another paragraph we noted this comment: "With but a minimum of assistance in the why of plans, the

padres were forced to improvise as the situation demanded. San Carlos was built by four Indians and three sailors. The padres themselves built San Gabriel, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and San Juan. Even the more elaborate of the California churches, particularly Carmelo, Santa Barbara, San Luis Rey, and the Royal Chapel at Monterey, are notable for restraint, in architectural decoration that remains so typical of the Mexican neo-classic churches of the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries."

The author, Dr. Kurt Baer, is eminently qualified by education and background to write such a book of historical and cultural importance as *The Treasures of Mission Santa Ines*. He received his bachelor and master's degree from the University of California at Berkeley and his doctorate at the University of Southern California. He traveled extensively in Europe and Mexico. He is also a lecturer on Spanish Colonial and Mission art.