

Life in a California Mission 1790

friars lived simply with few possessions; they wore habits woven at the mission, and slept on beds of cord, covered with cowhide. A barracks provided quarters for the soldiers stationed at the mission. the most important building was the Church, which was richly decorated. The friars regarded the Indians as their children—to be educated and cared for, but from whom they demanded total obedience. When disease brought by white travelers reduced the Indian population, the missions dwindled, and when Mexico won its independence from Spain, the power of the missions ended.

Discussion topics

Who owned California in 1790? How was it governed? What did the Indians gain from the missions? What did they lose? If you had been a California Indian of the 18th century, would you have preferred to be part of a mission community, or to live in the woods? Why? What traces of the mission period still exist in California?

Suggested activities

If you live within reach of any of the old missions, visit one and report on what you saw. Go to a museum to see exhibits on the Indians of California, how they lived, and the things they made. Read about the missions, the men who founded them, and the Indians of the area. For older students, two excellent books are Theodora Kroeber's *Ishi in Two Worlds*, and Willa Cather's *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

Overview

The life of Spanish missionaries and of the Indians they controlled in the California missions in the late 18th century is shown through scenes and objects photographed in an authentic mission. It was established in 1763 by Franciscan friars from Mexico, in a fertile canyon near Monterey. The Indians of the area were gathered inside the mission walls and made subject to the discipline of the friars. They were converted to Christianity, taught new skills, and completely separated from their old life of hunting and wandering. They learned to raise livestock and raise food plants. They became proficient in working with leather and metal. The Indian women worked together in the larger kitchens, and were taught to bake and roast in quantities for the entire mission community of friars and Indian workers. The mission was a self-sufficient community—it produced pottery, woven cloth, building bricks of adobe as well as food. The

Related titles also available

Life in the Woodlands Before the White Man Came
Life in America 1800
Life in a Gold-Mining Camp 1850
Life in an Eastern Seaport Town 1870
Life in a Midwestern Small Town 1910

Catalog number

4116SG

Length

14 Minutes

Audience levels

Intermediate-Junior High, Adult

Subject areas

U.S. History, The American West,
American Indians

Discussion Guide

Life in a California Mission 1790

Had You Lived Then Series

Objectives

- u To portray one aspect of life in the West in the 18th century
- u To show how a self-sufficient community was established and run
- u To demonstrate the role of the mission friars in the settlement of California.



AIMS Media

9710 DeSoto Avenue
Chatsworth, California
91311-4409 USA

Tel 800-367-2467
Tel 818-773-4300
Fax 818-341-6700



Thirty-five years of quality media