



Abundant Harvests: The Archaeology of Industry and Agriculture at San Gabriel Mission

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Mission San Gabriel Arcangél was known as the Pride of the Missions due to its legendary agricultural productivity and its prominence in Southern California as a center of commerce and social interaction during the mission period (1771–1834). This volume, SWCA Anthropological Research Paper No. 11, reports on the first archaeological data recovery undertaken at the mission.

Working within the mission's garden area, the study revealed more than 300,000 artifacts and 45 archaeological features, including a large granary, a reservoir complex, and one of the first industrial properties on the West Coast: Chapman's Mill and Millrace. Using archaeological results to critically examine historical narratives, the project examined the economic and social organization of the mission through detailed analyses of the public architecture and everyday materials left behind by Native American residents in the productive heart of the community, including animal bones, plant remains, ceramics, and tools.

These studies revealed a dynamic and resilient native population that, despite clear hardships, was well-supplied with domesticated meat and locally gathered plant foods. The architectural remains clearly demonstrate the stepwise process through which a European worldview was molded to the unfamiliar California landscape, where self-taught engineers developed techniques of harnessing water that enabled the population explosion that came to characterize the Los Angeles Basin in succeeding decades. Lavishly illustrated and richly detailed, the volume is a resource for archaeologists, historians, and mission scholars alike.

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