



HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

William Rich Hutton

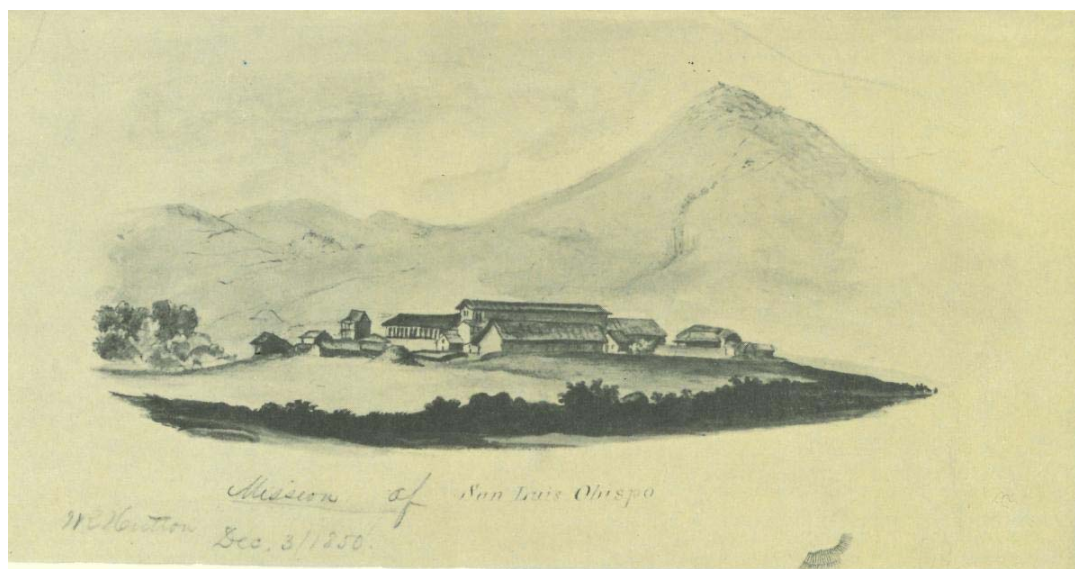


Plate XXIII. SAN LUIS OBISPO MISSION, 1850

This is a print of the painting referred to below. It appears in *California 1847-1852: Drawings by William Rich Hutton*, published in 1956 by the Huntington Library.

In August of 1850, the Court of Sessions authorized William Rich Hutton to survey and lay out the town of San Luis Obispo, directing that the main street should be 20 yards wide and all other streets should be 15 yards wide and that the town should extend to the limit of the lots.

Now, Hutton was a talented and versatile man. He was a surveyor for the United States government but was also an exquisite artist. He has made some beautiful sketches and watercolors of early San Luis Obispo in the 1850s, and the originals are kept at the Huntington Library in San Marino.

On December 3rd, 1850, Hutton did a sketch of



Hutton made many sketches of our area, including this one of Rancho Santa Manuela in Arroyo Grande. Appears in the same Huntington Library publication cited above.

Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa and it is a charming one. The long line of the Mission Church is silhouetted against San Luis Mountain. The convento with its eleven pillars faces on Monterey Street, but did you know in those days it was called, appropriately, Mission Street? The name was not changed until May 9, 1859, by Section 3 of Ordinance Number 2. To the right of the Mission is a long building and there are four smaller buildings shown behind it.

But, and this means so much more to the curator, Captain John Wilson's two story wooden house is shown on the corner of what became Monterey and Broad Streets, and this is exactly where your County Museum stands today. Across from the Mission stand two or three one room adobes and presumably one is Judge Walter Murray's, still standing today for which we fought so hard to save.



La Colonia de Ingenieros as seen on [Google Maps](#).

Well, it was the original of this sketch that the curator discovered in the Huntington Library. It was a charming little watercolor about four inches by eight inches, done in soft faded colors. It had beneath it the baptismal record from Mission San Luis Obispo, dated 1783, with the signature of Fr. Serra and two other founders of California Missions.

Here was this treasure in the same large room with the Gutenberg Bible, and a letter from Lincoln to one of his generals in the Civil War, and "Annabel Lee" written in Edgar Allen Poe's delicate handwriting, and many other treasures.

Well, we named a street for William Rich Hutton - but such a short little street - only two blocks long. It runs from Branch Street to High Street and runs along beside Hawthorne Park.

To go back to 1862 now, William C. Parker, a civil engineer, made a map of San Luis Obispo in February of 1862, following the survey of William Rich Hutton's. The survey included the land northwest of the creek, and the streets nearby as at present. We named a street for Parker and it runs from South Street to High Street. This one is three blocks long.

But in that same area there are three other streets - named Harris, Ward, and Story - all named for engineers and surveyors. Two blocks long (or less), they parallel Hutton Street. The streets in that area make me think of Mexico City, where whole colonias are named for writers, poets, painters, etc. You could call this the colonia de ingenieros.

I passed by the streets this morning, and they are not far from the train station if you want to seek them out. Why don't you look them up and think for a moment of those early engineers of San Luis Obispo who laid the town out for us over a century ago.

Written by Louisiana Clayton Dart in 1978.

May Flowers

We are thrilled to be taking part in Downtown SLO's #TheMayFlowerInitiative. We will be projecting the works of the incredible artist [Liz Maruska](#) onto our windows after dark. Check out [Downtown SLO's website](#) for more information.



Crown of Roses by Liz Maruska

Looking for more to do?

- Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or [Instagram](#). In addition to our regular Theme Monday and Throwback Thursday posts, we'll now be posting every weekday with photos from our collection that will inspire activities you can try in your very own homes.
- Take a [virtual walking tour](#) of historic San Luis Obispo. These video series feature short vignettes about significant local landmarks.

If you have any ideas of content you'd like to see, share it with us! And if you enjoy what we share with you, and if you are able to, would you please consider [supporting us](#)?

Thank you for being a part of our community. Everybody stay healthy and safe.

Sincerely,



Thomas Kessler
Executive Director

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