

HISTORY CENTER

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

Jose de Jesus Pico



By Joe Carotenuti

When Jose de Jesus Pico was born in the Presidio of Monterey in 1806, the waning days of Spanish rule in the Americas and the mission settlements in California loomed on the horizon. Born a citizen of Spain (his family came with the heroic de Anza Expedition in 1776), he became a Mexican national after the separation from the Iberian Peninsula in 1821, but by his mid-40s, of America. Before his demise in 1892, he almost joined a fourth nation and, for four years, had no recognized citizenship!



Recalling some of his life for H. H. Bancroft's massive *History of California*, one prominent event was in 1836, when he supported his friend from childhood, Juan Bautista Alvarado, who threatened to secede from Mexico. In the convoluted history of Mexican authority, various political appointees came to the frontier of Alta. Alvarado was the first Californio to have the position. Rather than relinquish it, he and an influential group of friends, including Jose, planned to secede. A



constitution was prepared and a new flag designed whose sole star still graces the official state flag. Finally, when invaded by American forces in 1846, he was told he was no longer subject to Mexican rule...but wasn't officially joined to the Union either.

Jose benefitted from his lifelong friendship and alliance with Alvarado as he was appointed administrator of Missions San Antonio, then San Miguel and, finally, San Luis Obispo. It was in the latter settlement he raised his family along with his wife with an ornate name, Francisca Javiesa Trinidad Antonia Gabriela Villavicencio. Born in Monterey in 1813, she survived the rigors of childbearing (at least 11 children) and family life until 1869.



A major gift to them in 1840 was the granting of the 48,805-acre Rancho de la Piedras Blanca (Ranch of the White Rock). In a tale for another time, the spectacular site with 14 miles of coastline eventually was sold to George Hearst whose son, William Randolph, built his own Casa Grande overlooking the ocean.

In this brief panorama of his life story, next month will detail his fast friendship with Lt. Col. John C. Fremont, who initially ordered him executed by a firing squad. Together, they made a substantial contribution to the ending of the Mexican American War in California and together made an astonishing horseback journey from Los Angeles to Monterey...and back...in 75 hours.

Joe was the recipient of the History Center's 2020 Award for Historic Preservation Advocacy. You can read more about Joe's research on Jose de Jesus Pico in the May 2021 edition of the Central Coast Journal, found online at www.slojournal.com



June Carnegie Lecture

La Loma de Nopalera Adobe: A Historic Treasure of San Luis Obispo

Together with "Friends of La Loma Adobe," the History Center presents our Spring 2021 Carnegie Lecture, with three of the "Friends" who work to preserve the La Loma Adobe.

Our Friday late-afternoon lecture kicks off a weekend of hosted site visits at the Adobe in its historic setting near the City's Reservoir Canyon Natural Reserve.

Spanish settlers may have set the first bricks for the Adobe around 1782, making it perhaps the oldest residence in SLO. For the latter half of the 19th Century, it was a prominent home in town, occupied by the eminent Don Jose Maria Muñoz and Doña Maria Concepcion Boronda and their nine children.

Our FREE Carnegie Lecture takes place on Friday, June 4th at 5:30 pm.

[Click here for more information or to register](#)



The wait is almost over!

The Dallidet Gardens are reopening for the season. We are so excited!

Starting May 29th and 30th - also known as Memorial Day Weekend.

Saturdays and Sundays, from Noon to 4:00 pm, experience this jewel of tranquility in the heart of downtown San Luis Obispo.

1185 Pacific Street
12:00 - 4:00 pm
Saturdays and Sundays

Also available for private events. Call 805-543-0638 or email info@historycenterslo.org for rental details.

Looking for peace in nature?

If a visit on the weekend isn't enough and you need more time to come to peace in the gardens, we have just the thing.

For the third year in a row we are excited to offer Mindfulness in the Gardens. Join expert teachers Kelli Schonher and Leslie Bullock for an opportunity to engage your senses and reconnect to nature.

Tuesdays and Thursdays in June
Dallidet Adobe & Gardens
8:30 - 10:00 am

[Click here for more information or to register.](#)



Sun., June 20th, 2-3:30 p.m. History



Center Walk: Old San Luis Cemetery. Guided stroll past gravesites of pioneers like Myron Angel (Cal Poly founder), Walter Murray (Tribune founder), Robert Jack, Civil War vets, and the landmark pyramid. Learn the compelling stories of the founders of San Luis Obispo. Free; no reservations needed. Park and meet in south parking lot adjacent to the pyramid at 2890 S. Higuera St. County covid regulations apply. Leader: Joe Morris, 805-549-0355.

Thomas Kessler
Executive Director



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