

■ Cowboy Culture

S **San Luis Obispo de Tolosa, 1772.** The fifth mission built, San Luis Obispo de Tolosa had only a small herd of cattle.

F **San Francisco de Asis, 1776.** The sixth mission, San Francisco de Asis, was established the same year as the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

CA **Mission San Juan Capistrano, 1776.** Father Junipero Serra's home base, Mission San Juan Capistrano didn't escape the big California earthquake of 1812 and suffered severe damage. In its prime, it had more than 10,000 cattle.

SA **Mission Santa Clara de Asis, 1777.** Originally built near San Francisco Bay, this mission was relocated after a flood. At one time, it was second only to the Mission San Gabriel Arcangel in cattle holdings.

B **Mission San Buenaventura, 1782.** This mission had an amazing seven-mile aqueduct system that supplied water to its fields.

g **Mission Santa Barbara, 1786.** The "Queen of the Missions," Mission Santa Barbara was founded two years after the death of Father Serra. It was built during the dawn of the "Golden Age" of mission culture. Today it's the only mission that remains under Franciscan control.

o **Mission La Purisima Concepcion, 1787.** A day's ride north of Santa Barbara is the Mission La Purisima Concepcion. Having fallen into ruin, in 1935 the California Conservation Corps began rebuilding it to its original form.

A **Mission Santa Cruz, 1791.** Through the years, this mission suffered a series of unfortunate incidents ranging from looting by pirates to earthquakes and tidal waves.

b **Mission Nuestra Senora Soledad, 1791.** This small mission suffered when disease, floods and the epidemic of 1802 brought havoc to its population.

J **Mission San Jose, 1797.** This mission and its more than 10,000 cattle were located at the western-most approach to California's fertile Central Valley. Its location proved to be strategic in both military and agricultural operations.

A **Mission San Juan Batista, 1797.** Unknowingly built on top of the infamous San Andreas Fault, this mission was damaged by many earthquakes. Properly engineered restoration has since returned it to its former glory.

3 **Mission San Miguel, 1797.** In its prime, the mission tended several thousand cattle. After the missions were secularized in the 1830s, one of the Mission San Miguel buildings was sold and became one of El Camino Real's most popular saloons. The mission, located just north of Paso Robles, is being rebuilt today.

4 **Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana, 1797.** At its height, Mission San Fernando Rey ran more than 20,000 cattle. A ready market in Los Angeles soon had the mission producing hides, tallow, soap and cloth.

3 **San Luis Rey de Francia, 1789.** The last mission to be founded in the south, the "King of the Missions" came to be the largest and richest of all. In 1832, its herd numbered more than 27,000 cattle.

h **Mission Santa Ines, 1804.** Just north of Santa Barbara, in the heart of the Santa Ynez valley, sits Mission Santa Ines. The birthplace of bridle-horse culture, at its peak the mission had more than 7,000 head of cattle.

g **Mission San Rafael Arcangel, 1817.** Known as the first sanitarium in California, San Rafael Arcangel became a full-fledged mission in 1823. Originally, it was an asistencia or outpost chapel of the San Francisco mission. This mission never had herds exceeding 4,000 head.

F **Mission San Francisco de Solano, 1823.** This structure was the last mission to be built and was the farthest north in Sonoma. It always had its own troubles with earthquakes, yet due to its northerly location the mission benefited from the Russian fur traders who, at the time, had advanced down the California coast. 🐾



COURTESY BILL REYNOLDS

Mission Life, a 1926 illustration by Maynard Dixon, portrays the Spanish spread of Christianity to the natives living in California.

Bill Reynolds is a writer based in California's Santa Ynez Valley. He is the author of *The Art of the Western Saddle* and co-author of *The Faraway Horses* and *Believe: A Horseman's Journey*, both collaborations with Buck Brannaman. This installment of *Out West* concludes the column.