

SISQUOC CHURCH AND SAN RAMON CHAPEL CEMETERY



LANDMARK NUMBER: 1

KNOWN AS: San Ramon Chapel and Cemetery

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: None

LOCATION: Foxen Canyon Road and Sisquoc Ranch Road
in the Santa Maria Valley

TYPE OF SITE: Church and Cemetery

RESOLUTION NUMBER: 66-357; 87-352

LANDMARK DATE: July 5, 1966; July 27, 1987

**DESIGNATION
OBTAINED BY:** For the church, a letter was submitted by Winston
Wickenden & Francis Calderson dated January 7, 1966
For the cemetery, an application for Designation as a
Historical Landmark was submitted by Alex R.
Ontiveros

PAST OWNERS: Wickenden family
Security First National Bank
Santa Maria Cemetery Association

CURRENT OWNER: San Ramon Chapel Preservation Committee

CHANGES/
ALTERATIONS: None

CONDITION: Very Good

DESCRIPTION:

In 1875, Frederick Wickenden, resident owner of the nearby Rancho Tinaquaic and husband of Ramona Foxen Wickenden, contributed redwood material for the construction of the church and the establishment of a cemetery on land donated by Mr. Wickenden and his family. Father J.B. McNally, a priest at the Diocesan Seminary of Our Lady of Guadalupe at Santa Ynez drew up the plans. Construction on the Chapel is thought to have been done by Frederick Wickenden, Tomas Foxen, Frederick Foxen, and Chris Larson.¹

The church was consecrated as the Chapel of San Ramon. For many years, monthly services were held in the church by a priest who travelled by horse and buggy from the Santa Ynez Mission. Buried in the cemetery is Benjamin Foxen an early pioneer to the canyon bearing his name.²

Services were held monthly in the church for families in the area from 1895 to 1908 when services became irregular. By 1910, only funeral services were held at the church. Then on July 29, 1933 a rededication service was conducted by priests from Mission Santa Barbara. The service marked the conveyance of title for the cemetery from Security First National Bank to the County Cemetery Association.³

In 1950, the Santa Maria Parlor of the Native Daughters of the Golden West erected a plaque near the church dedicating the site "in memory of community pioneers," and naming the structure "Foxen Memorial Chapel."⁴

Over the next several years, vandalism and time took their toll on the church. In 1958, with Winston Wickenden at the helm, a committee was formed to restore the property, and the following year the work was completed at a cost of \$1000 including the addition of a concrete foundation.⁵ It was also this committee that initially recommended the county consider the church an historical monument.

The Sisquoc Church was declared an historical monument by the Board of Supervisors on July 5, 1966 (Resolution # 66-357). A dedication ceremony as the county's first historic landmark was held at the chapel on Sunday April 30, 1967. Then on July 27, 1987, the supervisors declared that the San Ramon Chapel

¹ Chapel of San Ramon, A Brief History

² Winston Wickenden letter (January 7, 1966) & Santa Maria Times article (April 22, 1967)

³ Santa Maria Times article (April 22, 1967)

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

Cemetery was to be part of and included in the historical landmark known as the Siquoc Church, County Historical Landmark No. 1.⁶

March 26, 1976 the San Ramon Chapel Preservation Committee was officially incorporated in the state of California for the purpose of maintaining and preserving the Chapel of San Ramon, a California State Historical Landmark Number 877. The Articles of Incorporation were amended March 19, 1984 to include the operation, maintenance and preservation of the adjoining cemetery as an endowment care cemetery. On August 2, 1984, the county board of supervisors ratified a resolution adopted by the Board of Directors of the Santa Maria Public Cemetery District authorizing the transfer of its ownership of the cemetery and church to the San Ramon Chapel Preservation Committee.

RESOURCES:

Undated and unsigned history titled Chapel of San Ramon (Foxen Memorial Chapel): A Brief History in the Siquoc Church and San Ramon Chapel Cemetery file housed in the county's planning and development department

Letter written to the Santa Barbara County Advisory Committee on Historical Landmarks to the Board of Supervisors of Santa Barbara County of California by Winston Wickenden and Francis Calderon (January 7, 1966)

Resolution No. 87-352 of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California (July 27, 1987)

Gaylord Jones, "Foxen Canyon Church To Become A Landmark," Santa Maria, Calif., Times (Saturday April 22, 1967)



⁶ Board of Supervisors Resolution #87-352

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RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

A RESOLUTION DECLARING THAT THE)
SISQUOC CHURCH IS AN HISTORICAL)
LANDMARK WORTHY OF PROTECTION)
UNDER ORDINANCE NO. 1716 AND)
PRESCRIBING CONDITIONS TO PROTECT)
AND PRESERVE THE SISQUOC CHURCH.)

RESOLUTION NO. 66-357

WHEREAS, the Sisquoc Church located near Sisquoc in
Barbara County has great historical significance and interest
the general public as a landmark and reminder of pioneer days
Santa Barbara County; and

WHEREAS, on May 12, 1966, the Santa Barbara County
Advisory Landmark Committee declared the Sisquoc Church to be
historical landmark pursuant to the provisions of Ordinance No.
1716 of the County of Santa Barbara; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the County of S
Barbara deems the Sisquoc Church to be worthy of protection and
preservation as such historical landmark,

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Board of Supervisors, having duly set a public
hearing for July 5, 1966, has heard all interested parties and
closed said public hearing, adopting the conditions set out in
paragraph 2 of this Resolution.

2. The Board of Supervisors hereby declares the Sisquoc
Church to be an historical monument pursuant to Ordinance No.
and hereby imposes the following conditions on the Sisquoc Church
pursuant to said Ordinance:

- a. Demolition, removal or destruction, partially
or entirely, is prohibited unless express
consent in writing is first had and obtained
from the Santa Barbara County Advisory Land-
mark Committee. Such consent may impose all

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE SAN) Resolution No. 87-352
RAMON CHAPEL CEMETERY TO BE)
PART OF LANDMARK NO. 1 TO)
PRESERVE AND PROTECT THE)
CEMETERY AS PART OF THE)
SISQUOC CHURCH LANDMARK)

WHEREAS, the Sisquoc Church located near Sisquoc in Santa Barbara County has been declared to be an historical monument pursuant to Ordinance No. 1716 of the County of Santa Barbara by Resolution No. 66-357 adopted July 5, 1966; and

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark Advisory Committee has by Resolution adopted June 3, 1987, determined to recommend that the Board of Supervisors make the San Ramon Chapel Cemetery a part of Historical Landmark No. 1; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara finds the San Ramon Chapel Cemetery to be adjacent to and an integral part of the history of the Chapel and worthy of protection and preservation as an historical landmark;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED as follows:

1. The Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, having duly set a public hearing for July 27, 1987, has considered the presentation made by each interested party wishing to address the Board on the matter of making the San Ramon Chapel Cemetery a part of Historical Landmark No. 1.

2. The Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara hereby declares the San Ramon Chapel Cemetery, more fully described on the attached Exhibit A, to be part of and included in the historical landmark known as the Sisquoc Church, County Historical Landmark No. 1, protected under the provisions of Ordinance No. 1716, and subject to the following conditions:

(a) Demolition, removal or destruction, partially or entirely, is prohibited unless express consent in writing is first had and obtained from the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark Advisory Committee. Such consent may impose all reasonable conditions deemed appropriate by the Committee to accomplish the purposes of Ordinance No. 1716.

(b) No alterations, repairs, additions or changes (other than normal maintenance and repair work, and work and additions normal to interments) shall be made unless and until all plans therefor have first been reviewed by the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark Advisory Committee and approved, or modified and reasonable conditions imposed as deemed necessary, and all such work shall be done under the direction and control of the Santa Barbara County Historical Landmark Advisory Committee or other qualified persons designated by such Committee.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California, this 27th day of July, 1987, by the following vote:

AYES: David M. Yager, Thomas A. Rogers, William B. Wallace, DeWayne Holmdahl, Toru Miyoshi

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: None

William B. Wallace
William B. Wallace, Chairman
Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:
KENNETH A. PETTIT
COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER

By [Signature]
Deputy

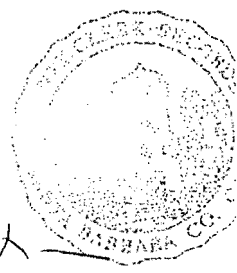
APPROVED AS TO FORM:
KENNETH L. NELSON
COUNTY COUNSEL

By [Signature]
Robert W. Pike, Deputy

This is a true certified copy of the original document on file or of record in my office. It bears the seal and signature, imprinted in purple ink, of the County Clerk-Recorder.

[Signature]
COUNTY CLERK-RECORDER, SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

DATE: 8/5/87 BY DEPUTY: [Signature]





The San Ramon Chapel

History

"It was a dry year of 1875. Grandfather Frederick Wickenden had 5,000 sheep and there was no grass. To save them he started driving them north. In the Salinas Valley they found grass and they had their lambs. Grandfather continued on to Redwood City where he sold the 5,000 sheep for a dollar apiece. With the money, he purchased redwood boards at the mills and shipped them to Port Harford. He had purchased enough to add eight rooms to the Wickenden Adobe and build a chapel." (Winston Wickenden, great grandson of Benjamin Foxen, shares a "Foxen Family version" of how it all came about.)

1872: The property where the San Ramon Chapel and cemetery is located is purchased from the US Government by Frederick and Ramona (Foxen) Wickenden, and donated for the church site.

1875: Frederick Wickenden sells 5,000 sheep to purchase redwood boards to add on to his house and build a chapel. The chapel is constructed by Fred Foxen, his brother Thomas and Chris Clausen, a carpenter from Los Alamos.

1876: The coffin containing the remains of Benjamin Foxen is moved to the chapel cemetery.

1879: The chapel is placed under the patronage of Saint Raymond Nonnatus (San Ramon), patron of agriculture and farming, by Bishop Francis Mora. The chapel is dedicated as the San Ramon Chapel. Services are held once a month.

1908: The San Ramon chapel is turned over to the newly established Saint Mary's Parish in Santa Maria. Father Terns discontinues regular services. From 1908 until 1933 the San Ramon chapel is used only for an occasional funeral or baptism.

1936: After being reroofed and painted the chapel is rededicated by a group of Santa Barbara citizens led by R.E. Easton.

1950: A Plaque is erected by the Daughters of the Golden West (Santa Maria Parlor # 276). They designated the chapel the Benjamin Foxen Memorial Chapel.

1958: A Project is initiated by Winston Wickenden to restore the chapel. The original wood post footings are replaced with a concrete block foundation.

1959: The Benjamin Foxen Memorial Chapel committee reports that the restoration work has been completed.

1966: The Benjamin Foxen Memorial Chapel becomes the first historical landmark in Santa Barbara County.

1972: A Group of local citizens, concerned with deterioration and vandalism, formed the San Ramon Preservation committee. Lighting is installed.

1974: A chain link fence is erected around the chapel and cemetery to deter vandals.

1975: On Sunday August 31, the San Ramon Chapel (renamed) is dedicated as California State Historical Landmark #877. The Santa Maria Cemetery Association which holds the title to the property paints the outside of the chapel before the dedication. Mass is celebrated by Father Bertin Foxen, the great grandson of Benjamin Foxen. In December a steel gate closing the road to the chapel is installed and dedicated the John W Woolsey Memorial Gate.

1976: In March the San Ramon Chapel Preservation Committee is incorporated as a non-profit organization with Winston Wickenden as president. On November 14, at 10:30 a.m. Father Anthony Runtz resumes weekly mass at the San Ramon Chapel.

1978: The Chapel is reroofed. Replacement frames and new glass for the top arches of all six windows are installed.

1979: The first BBQ combined with the Rancho Sisquoc Winery Tour is held at the Sisquoc Grange. Proceeds from the BBQ go to the preservation committee.

1983: The preservation committee agrees to restore the chapel at a cost of \$12,154. The chapel is raised and a new concrete foundation is installed. The original church benches are replaced and the old benches sold. The Santa Maria Cemetery Association approaches the San Ramon Preservation Committee about leasing the chapel and cemetery grounds for a period of 99 years for \$1.00. The San Ramon Preservation Committee turns down the offer.

1984: The Chapel is painted inside and out, the road graded and windows are replaced. Wrought iron bars are purchased and installed on all windows and doors. Light fixtures are donated by Myron and Lorraine Bettencourt. The deed to the property is transferred to the San Ramon Preservation Committee from the Santa Maria Cemetery District.

1985: An electric heater is installed in the chapel. Charles Maurer, an eagle scout, maps the cemetery. The map is framed and hung at the back of the chapel.

1986: Blacktop is installed on the entrance road to the chapel. Stations of the cross are donated by Drew Crosby.

1987: The chapel is painted by David McNeil. A letter is drafted and sent to Father Garcia at Saint Louis de Montfort Church offering ownership of the chapel and cemetery.

1988: The Catholic Cemetery Archdiocese of Los Angeles indicates that they will not be responsible for the chapel and cemetery. Linda Ontiveros agrees to write a book titled "San Ramon Pioneers And Their California Heritage. Proceeds to go to the preservation committee. A water well is drilled at the chapel site.

1990: The Santa Barbara Foundation awards a grant of \$5,000 to go toward the publication of The San Ramon Chapel Pioneers and Their California Heritage.

1994: The San Ramon Beautification Project is OK'd by the preservation committee. Parts

of the fence are replaced with a decorative steel fence. White crosses are placed at all unmarked grave sites. Broken grave markers are repaired and the cemetery is thoroughly cleaned. A permanent bathroom facility is installed. A birthday party is held at the chapel celebrating Erlinda Ontiveros's 100th birthday.

1996: The parking lot of the chapel is paved. A Memorial Rose Garden is planted.

1999: The chapel is reroofed. Three prior layers of shingles are removed (including the original wood shingles), the roof is sheeted and a new roof installed. The top four feet of the two towers are replaced. Two new crosses are installed. The chapel is repainted by David Mcniel.