

Stop 9 – Bricks & Mortar

Welcome to Mission San Francisco de la Espada, or St. Francis of the Sword. The name is somewhat of a contradiction. St. Francis of Assisi was known as a man of peace. As a young man St. Francis was a soldier. After his conversion his weapon became the Word of God. The Spanish Franciscans would help conquer lands not by the force of the sword but by the power of the truth of God's Word.

Along with the message of truth and peace, the missionaries brought a new language, a new religion, and new customs. As you might imagine, communication was a barrier to learning and teaching. While stationed at Mission Espada, Fr. Bartolome Garcia wrote a dictionary translating many native words into Spanish. The *Manual para Administrar Sacramentos*, "Manual to Administer Sacraments," became essential for religious as well as vocational training. Vocations were the true building blocks of the new native life. As you enter the arched doorway notice the thin red bricks called *ladrillos*. Espada was the only mission to make *ladrillos*. Archeologists have located the remnants of several stone kilns outside the mission walls. The rooms surrounding this current entrance were Indian quarters. Look for the red brick here and throughout the mission compound.

A 1772 inventory listed a large thatched *jacal*, a mud and brush building, containing 10,000 bricks and 300 floor tiles. It doesn't list its location; however, the smell of firing bricks is strong. The need for water would place this brick making and storage building near the river or the acequia and outside the mission compound.

The building next to the chapel is the convento. Workshops occupied the first floor during mission times and the priest lived on the second floor. Bricks on this building are from more recent reconstruction work. However, Franciscans still minister from this convento building just as their Spanish colonial counterparts did in the 1700s.