

The museum was opened in 1913 and it is perhaps the oldest museum in Los Angeles County. This is the museum as it looks soon after it opened in the early 20th century:



A century later, the museum was very much the same. Mission San Gabriel Museum on the eve of the fire before deinstallation in Jun 2020. The museum was a jumbled clutter of miscellaneous materials. There was no curation, no labels, and objects were presented in a manner that was physically harmful. Books were jammed in cases and splayed open. Paintings hung high up near the ceiling were being damaged by environmental conditions and a failing HVAC system.



Nearly every inch of wall was covered with some sort of image. There was on narrative flow to the museum. And the only items that called attention to the Native history at the mission were a few metates on the floor and some images of Natives selling baskets at the mission in the early 20th c.



Items were piled up out without any real interpretation or concern for their safekeeping.

