

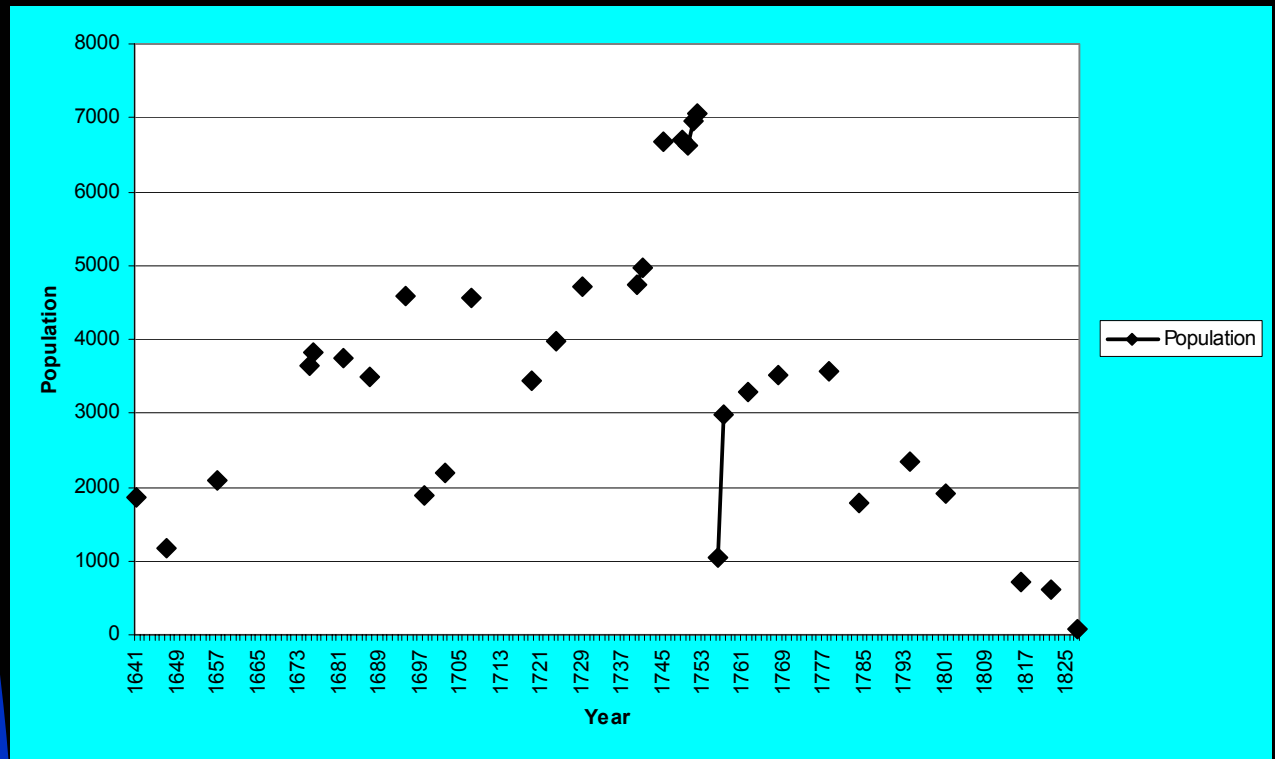
San Miguel Mission to the Guarani

Robert H. Jackson

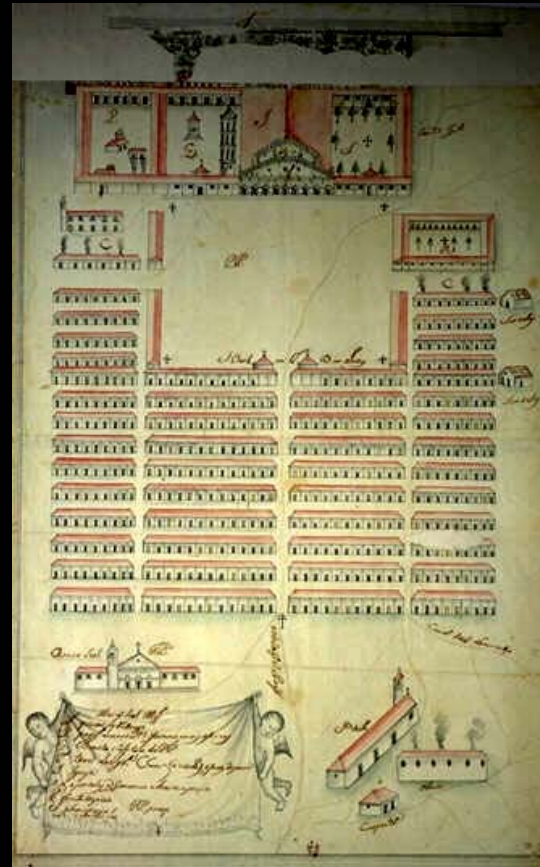
The Jesuits established San Miguel Mission during the eastward expansion between 1610 and 1630 into the western sections of the modern Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul. In response to raids by the bandeirantes, slave traders from Sao Paulo, the Jesuits relocated San Miguel to a site in what today is Misiones, Argentina.

In 1680, the Portuguese established Colonia do Sacramento across the Plata estuary from Buenos Aires in what today is Uruguay. In the decade that followed the Jesuits relocated five missions to the east of the Uruguay River, and established two new missions. San Miguel was located to its present site in 1687, and later contributed population to establish San Juan Bautista.

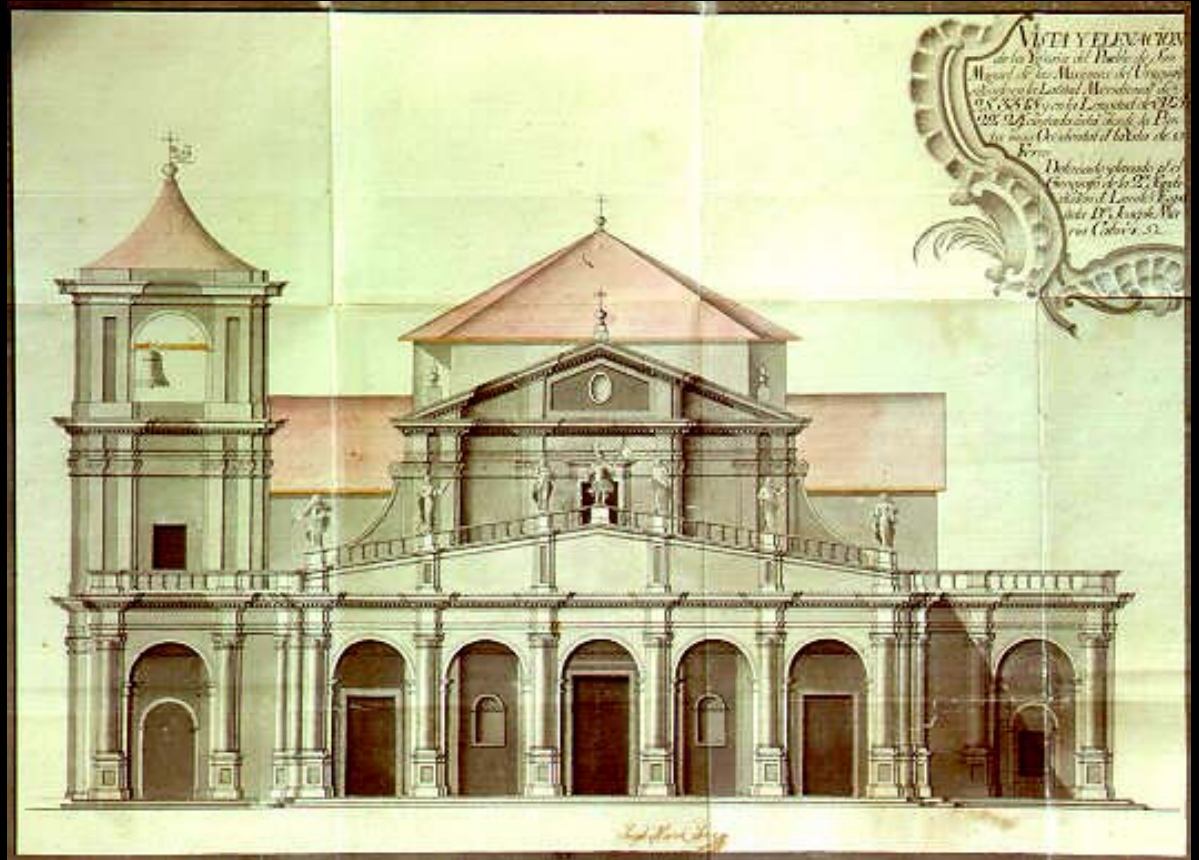
Population of San Miguel Mission, 1641-1827.



c. 1756 Diagram of San Miguel.



1784 Diagram of San Miguel Church, built between 1735 and 1745.



Ruins in the 1840s



Ruins of church today.



Ruins of church.



Aerial view of ruins.



Aerial view of ruins.



Aerial view of ruins.



Aerial view of ruins.



Aerial view of ruins.



Aerial view of ruins.



Ruins of cloister.



Ruins of neophyte housing.



Ruins of neophyte housing.



Ruins of neophyte housing.

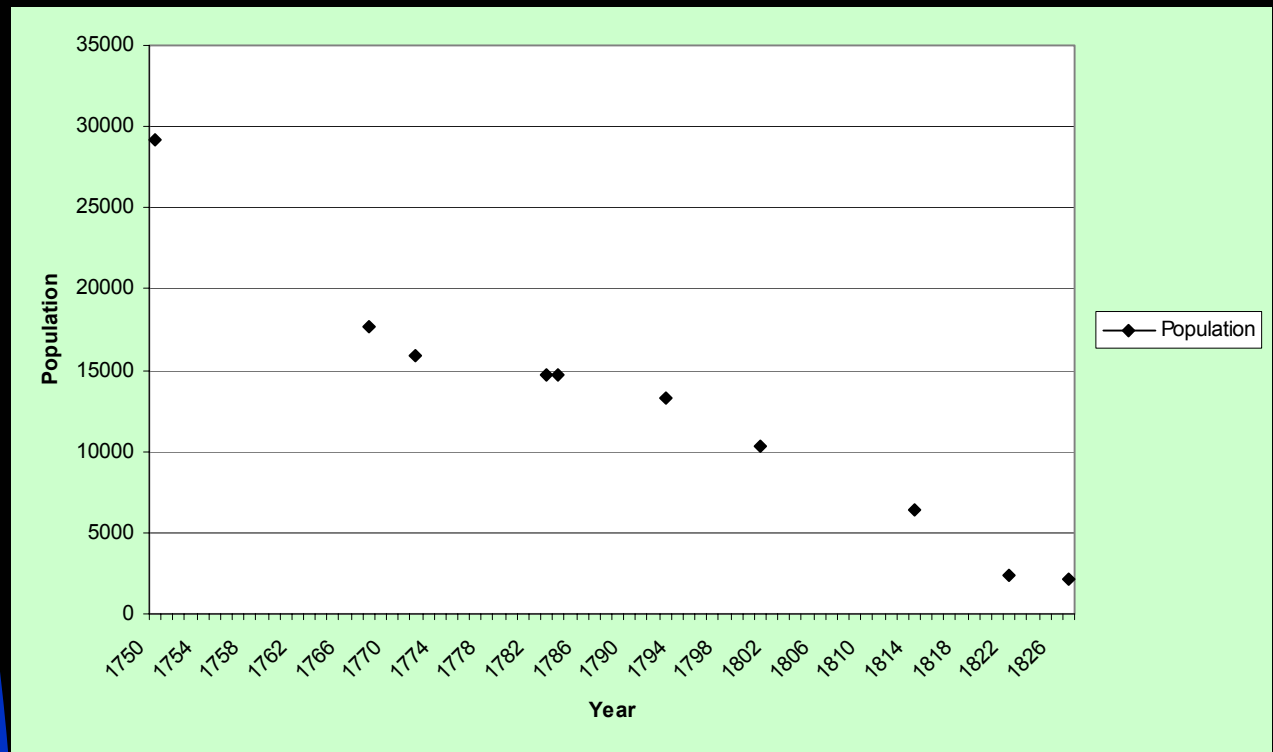


In 1750, Spain and Portugal signed the Treaty of Madrid to establish boundaries in South America. Under the terms of the treaty, Spain would transfer to Portugal the territory east of the Uruguay River, the lands of the seven missions. The Guarani neophytes were to be relocated to new sites west of the river.

The Guarani neophytes rose in rebellion in response to the plan for forced relocation. The so-called Guarani war ended in 1756 with a decisive defeat of Guarnai forces by a Spanish-Portuguese army. The Spanish-Portuguese occupied the missions, which sustained considerable damage to the buildings as well as estancias and farms.

Spain later abrogated the Treaty of Madrid, and Portugal returned the seven missions to Spanish jurisdiction. The missions never returned to the prosperity of before 1750.

Population of the Seven Trans-Uruguay Missions, 1750-1827.



The once large mission herds were greatly reduced.

Livestock	S Lorenzo	S Borja	S Luis	S Juan	S Nicolas	S Miguel	S Angel
Cattle	4,557	11,926	7,016	2,535	19,353	18,728	3,003
Oxen	264		1,193	1,475	2,257	1,560	1,000
Sheep	1,056	13,425	2,012	731	2,351	1,691	440
Horses	140	707	359	237	600	1,451	313
Mares	311	753	465		436	1,048	186
Mules	181	124	161	108	206	164	200
Mares for Mules		339					
Burros	6	42	15		89		3

The population of San Miguel rapidly declined following the Jesuit expulsion, and the buildings slowly fell into ruin.