

= Santa María de Óvila =

Santa María de Óvila is a former Cistercian monastery built in Spain beginning in 1181 on the Tagus River near Trillo , Guadalajara , about 90 miles ( 140 km ) northeast of Madrid . During prosperous times over the next four centuries , construction projects expanded and improved the small monastery . Its fortunes declined significantly in the 18th century , and in 1835 it was confiscated by the Spanish government and sold to private owners who used its buildings to shelter farm animals .

American publisher William Randolph Hearst bought parts of the monastery in 1931 with the intention of using its stones in the construction of a grand and fanciful castle at Wyntoon , California , but after some 10 @, @ 000 stones were removed and shipped , they were abandoned in San Francisco for decades . These stones are now in various locations around California : the old church portal has been reassembled at the University of San Francisco , and the chapter house is being reassembled by Trappist monks at the Abbey of New Clairvaux in Vina , California . Other stones are serving as simple decorative elements in Golden Gate Park 's botanical garden . To support the chapter house project , a line of Belgian @-@ style beers is being produced by Sierra Nevada Brewing Company under the Ovila Abbey brand .

In Spain , the new government of the Second Republic declared the monastery a National Monument in June 1931 , but not in time to prevent the mass removal of stones . Today , the remnant buildings and walls stand on private farmland .

= = History = =

= = = Foundation = = =

The monastery of Santa María de Óvila was founded in 1175 by a grant of land from King Alfonso VIII of Castile to the Cistercian monks of Valbuena Abbey in Valbuena de Duero , Valladolid Province , Castile @-@ Leon , Spain . In this endeavor , the king was following a general strategy of establishing Catholic institutions on land he had recently won in battle from the Moors of Iberia . The Cistercian " white monks " ( wearing undyed habits ) first chose a site in Murel ( now called Carrascosa de Tajo ) on the Tagus , but after a few years , had to relocate to more fertile zone a few miles nearer to Trillo , Guadalajara , where a flat hilltop by the river commanded a modest view .

The construction began in 1181 . The monastic quarters and the church were built over the following three decades . The central cloister was bordered on the north by the church , on the west by a barrel @-@ vaulted great nave , on the east by the sacristy , the priory cell , and the chapter house , and on the south by the kitchen , the pantry and the refectory ( dining hall ) . Some of the buildings were given seven @-@ foot @-@ thick ( 2 m ) walls with slit windows , to serve as a refuge in case the Moors returned to the area . The church was built in the shape of a Latin cross with a nave divided into four sections , and a sanctuary with three square apses . Its presbytery had a central square topped by a pentagon .

In 1191 , the king confirmed the monastery and its surrounding fields as belonging to the Cistercian Order . The aged abbot of Santa María de Huerta , bishop Martín de Finojosa ( later canonized ) , consecrated the church in September 1213 and died days later . The surrounding area of Murel and Trillo along the Tagus prospered , giving tithes and gifts of land to the monastery . The cartulary , Cartulario de Óvila is preserved at the University of Madrid .

The first buildings were completed in the Gothic style , including the church . The refectory ( dining hall ) shows an architectural style in transition between earlier Romanesque and contemporary Gothic . A fine High Gothic chapter house was built of best quality hard limestone . The church was rebuilt sometime before 1650 in a late Gothic style with a prominent vaulted ceiling . The cloister was rebuilt around 1617 , and is of a simple design with little adornment surrounding a High Renaissance arcade . The final phase of building took place around 1650 , with a new doorway for the church , completed in late Renaissance and Plateresque style full of detail . Because of its

prosperity and the repeated expansion projects , Santa María de Óvila exhibited examples of every Spanish religious architectural style used from 1200 to 1600 . However , even at its height , Óvila remained one of the smallest Cistercian monasteries in the region of Castile .

= = = Decline = = =

From the 15th century , changes to the areas surrounding Santa María de Óvila initiated a slow decline . Civil wars depopulated the villages of the upper Tagus valley . The monastery 's land holdings passed one by one into the hands of the new regional aristocracy : first the Count of Cifuentes , followed by Rui Gomes da Silva , Duke of Pastrana , and the Spanish Army . Neighbors looted more lands .

A fire destroyed part of the monastery during the War of the Spanish Succession . During the Peninsular War , French troops looted the buildings and used them as barracks . The monks were forced to leave in 1820 because of confiscations by a new liberal government , but they returned in 1823 after King Ferdinand VII restored conservative institutions . However , the nearby villagers denied support to the monastery despite its protection by the king . The monastery ceased to operate in 1835 : the Ecclesiastical Confiscations of Mendizábal enforced a law declaring that minor religious holdings housing fewer than 12 residents were to be forfeit to the state ; the monastery had only four monks and one lay brother , who were cast out .

= = = Vacancy = = =

After the Confiscations , many of the furnishings and artistic treasures of Santa María de Óvila passed to the surrounding parish churches , especially Ruguilla , Huet , Sotoca de Tajo and Carrascosa de Tajo . Other valuables , such as books and historic documents , were stolen and sold . The remaining contents were auctioned , including wine @-@ making equipment and an oxcart . The precious 328 @-@ pages cartulary of the monastery ( Spanish : libro tumbo de Santa María de Óvila ) went to a private owner but was donated in 1925 to the Monastery of Santa María la Real of Oseira . The thick manuscript that hold copies of royal privileges granted to the monastery throughout its history and the Abadologio , a comprehensive and thorough history of the Cistercian abbots and monks who lived in the monastery , was written from March 1729 to February 1730 by Father Gerofoe , a Cistercian monk of the monastery of Valparaíso ( Zámora ) .

The new owners of Santa María de Óvila were well @-@ to @-@ do farmers who cared little for the buildings . For a brief time , the former monastery was used as a hostel , but mainly , the buildings were subjected to hard agricultural use as barns sheltering livestock . The chapter house served as a manure pit . Other buildings were used as storage . In the early 20th century small trees were seen to be growing in the dirt packed atop the monastery roofs ? the protective roof tiles had long since been taken down and sold .

= = = Removal to California = = =

In 1928 , the Spanish state sold the monastery to Fernando Beloso for a little more than 3 @, @ 100 pesetas , roughly \$ 600 to \$ 700 at the time . Beloso , director of the Spanish Credit Bank in Madrid , was the owner of Coto de San Bernardo in Óvila , which included expansive irrigated grain fields and forests surrounding the monastery .

Arthur Byne , an art agent living in Madrid , whose biggest client was American newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst , was working for Hearst to acquire an old monastery in 1930 . In 1925 , Byne had bought Hearst the monastery of Santa María la Real de Sacramenia which was dismantled , crated and shipped to New York where it was stored in a warehouse in the Bronx . ( In 1954 it was re @-@ assembled in Florida as a tourist attraction , and was subsequently acquired by the Episcopal Diocese of South Florida and called the St. Bernard de Clairvaux Church . ) Byne signaled Beloso to help him locate one ; Beloso invited him to see the old Óvila monastery in December 1930 , and Byne subsequently sent photographs and sketches to Hearst for approval .

Byne listed specific elements , mostly architectural details , to be removed , such as vault ribs , door frames , window embrasures , columns and capitals . Some entire walls of fine facing stones were recommended for removal . He referred to the proposal as " Mountolive " , possibly to misdirect the Spanish authorities who were in charge of protecting historical artifacts .

After Hearst conveyed his enthusiasm for the project , Beloso sold Byne the stones for \$ 85 @, @ 000 , including the cloister , the chapter house , the refectory and the dormitory for novices . With Byne 's commission , Hearst was to pay \$ 97 @, @ 000 , a price roughly equivalent to \$ 1 @. @ 34 million as of 2016 . Byne started immediately on the project , organizing men and materials , and beginning the removal of stones . Hearst 's main architect Julia Morgan sent her associate architect Walter T. Steilberg who arrived on March 9 , 1931 . Steilberg recommended that Hearst buy the old church portal , which he did , at Byne 's price of \$ 1 @, @ 500 . Under the direction of Byne and Steilberg , the monastery was carefully labeled as it was dismantled stone by stone . Antonio Gomez , the local foreman praised by Byne and Steilberg , numbered the blocks on architectural drawings and painted the number in red on the back of each stone .

To move all the stones , Byne and Steilberg had a road built to the Tagus , and a barge attached to a fixed cable was assigned to ferry stones across . An old World War I trench railway was brought in to transport stones from the monastery to the ferry ; its rails could be laid into any of the buildings . Men pushed the small rail cars along the narrow gauge tracks ; the stones were then lifted into the ferry by crane , and another crane lifted them out of the ferry into trucks . One of the biggest problems that Byne encountered was that Spain 's three excelsior factories could not make enough packing material to keep the crate @-@ packing crew supplied . At one point , realizing that the stones were likely to be used in California as external cladding for structural steel walls , Steilberg suggested the facing surface of each stone be sliced to a " veneer " of the thickness of 6 inches ( 150 mm ) for easier packing and shipping , but Hearst wanted to retain the authenticity of the full @-@ sized stones . Byne and Steilberg judged certain walls and utility buildings worthless and left them in Spain . Steilberg returned home at the end of March .

Byne rushed the project in fear that it might be halted at any time by the authorities ? Spanish law prohibited the removal of historic artifacts . However , the Spanish government was at that time in disarray and did not enforce the law . Government officials " simply looked the other way " as trucks hauled 700 @-@ year @-@ old stones through Valencia to the docks . When King Alfonso XIII abdicated in April 1931 , leaving the government in the control of the Second Republic , the new officials stopped the project . Byne 's lawyer persuaded the Minister of Labor to allow the work to continue on the grounds that the project employed more than a hundred men and put money into the severely depressed economy .

Doctor Francisco Layna Serrano of nearby Ruguilla had for years tried to save the monastery but had failed to interest the government in the expensive preservation proposal . Realizing that this was his last chance to document the place as its stones were being removed , he wrote a monograph of its history and included a site plan of the layout of buildings , written from memory . As a result of his efforts , on June 3 , 1931 , Santa María de Óvila was listed as a National Monument of Spain , or Bien de Interés Cultural ( Cultural Property ) . Layna Serrano published his monograph in 1932 . In 1933 , the monastery 's historic cartulary was brought to the University of Madrid and published ; the original was archived at the University of Oviedo .

By the time the dismantling was finished on July 1 , 1931 , some 10 @, @ 000 stones weighing a total of 2 @, @ 200 short tons ( 2 @, @ 000 t ) were shipped on 11 different freighters traveling through the Panama Canal to San Francisco . In 1931 currency , the monastery project had cost Hearst about one million dollars .

= = = Spanish ruins = = =

Today , a few buildings remain of the original monastery in Spain . These include the winery or bodega , now the oldest surviving building on the site . This was built in the 13th century during the reign of Henry I of Castile , with the upper floor built as a dormitory 27 by 90 feet ( 8 @. @ 2 by 27 @. @ 4 m ) with a long barrel @-@ vaulted ceiling . Outside of the bodega , crumbling walls , open

yards and part of the Gothic roof of the church are visible . The double arches in the walls of the Renaissance @-@ era cloister are still standing , but the arched roof is lost . The foundation of the church can be seen .

= = California = =

= = = Wyntoon = = =

Hearst first bought the monastery intending to replace the family retreat at Wyntoon , on the bank of the McCloud River near Mount Shasta in remote Northern California . The original building was his mother 's Bernard Maybeck @-@ designed fantasy chalet which burned down in 1929 . Hearst wanted to replace it with a great stone building fitted with towers and turrets ? an eccentric castle folly that was to be larger than its predecessor . To prepare for the arrival of the Spanish stones , Morgan drew up plans with the monastery 's chapter house serving as the castle 's entrance hall , and the large church enclosing a swimming pool . Other stones were designated as cladding for walls and rooms on the ground floor .

At the Port of San Francisco , Steilberg inspected each shipment of stones , several thousand crates in all . The Haslett warehouse , between Fisherman 's Wharf and the Hyde Street Pier , was used for storage . With groundbreaking set for July 1931 and the last freighter carrying stones still in transit , Hearst stopped his grand plan for Wyntoon because his fortunes were too far reduced from the Great Depression . The stones stayed in the warehouse , incurring annual storage fees of \$ 15 @,@ 000 in 1930s dollars .

= = = Golden Gate Park = = =

In 1940 , Hearst decided to give the monastery away . The government of Francisco Franco requested that it be returned to Spain , but Hearst refused . In August 1941 , Herbert Fleishhacker , director of the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum , convinced Hearst to give the stones to the City of San Francisco in exchange for the city 's payment of his \$ 25 @,@ 000 storage debt . Hearst stipulated the stones be used to construct a group of museum buildings adjoining the de Young Museum in Golden Gate Park . The city moved the crates from the warehouse to store them outdoors behind the museum and the Japanese Tea Garden , allotting only \$ 5 @,@ 000 for trucking and for building rough sheds and protective covers . The museum plan was estimated to cost \$ 500 @,@ 000 , but that amount was not available . Morgan prepared several layouts for the city to approve , each with a different arrangement of the buildings than in Spain . However , in December 1941 , the U.S. was drawn into World War II and the museum plans were shelved . Picking up the project in 1946 , the city paid Morgan to construct a scale model of the complex of buildings which was to be the Museum of Medieval Arts , a West Coast version of The Cloisters in New York .

The city was unable to raise money to build the museum , and the stones were damaged in five fires . The first came soon after the crates were set down in Golden Gate Park . Morgan said that " piles of burning boxes were pulled over and down by the Fire Department , many hurled over a hundred and fifty feet . " Hearst died in 1951 , and Morgan died in 1957 ; neither of them saw anything built with the stones . Two fires in 1959 appeared to be arson , and many of the fire @-@ heated stones were weakened or cracked from sudden cooling by water . In 1960 , Steilberg was hired to inspect the stones once again ; he used a ball @-@ peen hammer to lightly strike each stone and listen for a solid ringing tone or a dull thud which indicated cracking . He found that a little more than half the stones were sound .

In 1965 , the Museum Society raised \$ 40 @,@ 000 to mount the grand portal of the old church . It was installed in the de Young Museum , the centerpiece of Hearst Court , the main exhibit hall . The rest of the stones were abandoned by the museum in May 1969 when they announced that there would be no reconstruction . After this , stones were occasionally taken by park workers and used to

decorate Golden Gate Park .

In 1989 or 1990 , a San Francisco city worker dumped an unused granite bollard amid the monastery stones ; the 4 @-@ foot ( 1 @.@ 2 m ) tall bollard was once used as a traffic barrier . Some self @-@ styled Hindu park users led by performance artist Michael Bowen , calling himself Guru Baba Kali Das , began to worship the phallus @-@ shaped bollard as a lingam ; they wrestled some of the monastery 's stones into a religious circle , calling the circle Shiva Linga . The city sued to reclaim the area in 1993 , but lost the battle in court . In January 1994 the city arranged to move the traffic bollard to Bowen 's garage , serving as his temple . Bowen later offered the granite bollard for sale and admitted that the whole episode was a performance piece .

In 1999 , some of the stones were used to construct an outdoor reading terrace adjoining the Helen Crocker Russell Library of Horticulture , part of the Strybing Arboretum and Botanical Gardens in Golden Gate Park . Other stones were used for various purposes around Golden Gate Park and the Japanese Tea Garden , taken unofficially by park workers as they saw fit . Some of these ended up in the park 's AIDS Memorial Grove , others on a scent @-@ based flower walkway named Garden of Fragrance .

= = = University of San Francisco = = =

In 2002 , the old church portal was donated by the de Young Museum to the University of San Francisco ( a Jesuit university ) , and in 2008 it was associated with the construction of Kalmanovitz Hall . It serves as the backdrop of the outdoor Ovila Amphitheater ( 37 @.@ 7757 ° N 122 @.@ 451 ° W ? / 37 @.@ 7757 ; -122.451 ) , near an older Romanesque portal from Northern Italy .

= = = Abbey of New Clairvaux = = =

The Abbot @-@ Emeritus of the Abbey of New Clairvaux , Fr.Thomas X.Davis , OCSO , first saw the stones and pictured them reassembled as a monastery on September 15 , 1955 ? his first day in California . He arrived that day in San Francisco to serve as a new monk in Vina , California , at the monastery of Our Lady of New Clairvaux . The monastery belonged to Trappists of the order known as Cistercians of the Strict Observance . The monks farmed and worshiped on land once used by Leland Stanford to grow wine grapes . Davis 's superior met him at the airport and drove him through Golden Gate Park where he stopped to show Davis the stones sitting among the weeds . From time to time in subsequent years , Davis inspected the stones only to find them in increasingly poor condition .

In 1981 , architectural historian Margaret Burke began working under a grant from the Hearst Foundation to inventory the remaining stones . She said it was " an excavation project " because of the weeds , blackberry brambles and tree roots growing over them . Burke identified about 60 % of the stones belonging to the chapter house , a rectangular building originally spanning 31 by 46 feet ( 9 @.@ 4 by 14 @.@ 0 m ) . She separated the chapter house stones , surrounded them with a fence and began creating templates for rebuilding the arched entrances . During 1980 ? 1982 the museum board sought \$ 45 million for an expansion project that included \$ 3 million for rebuilding the chapter house . Meanwhile , Davis asked a museum staff member for permission to take several truckloads of stones to Vina to be used for architectural decoration . Park workers helped him load the most ornate pieces he could find , and they were hauled away . Not told of the arrangement , Burke discovered that Davis had taken some of the chapter house stones , and the museum board insisted these be returned . Davis was left with 58 stones from other monastery buildings .

In 1983 and 1987 , Davis made unsuccessful requests for all of the chapter house stones . After the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake , the de Young museum was to be rebuilt , and the future of the stones was reconsidered . In September 1993 , museum director Harry Parker joined with Davis to sign an unconditional permanent loan of the chapter house stones to New Clairvaux . In 1994 , the city approved the loan with the stipulation that the building be restored accurately and that it be occasionally open to the public . The stones were transported in 20 truckloads to Vina . Inside an old brick barn built by Stanford to make brandy , the stones began to be fitted together , laid flat on

Burke 's plywood templates .

Ground was broken in 2003 on the site of an orchard ( 39 @. @ 9372 ° N 122 @. @ 0632 ° W ? / 39 @. @ 9372 ; -122.0632 ) next to the main cloister building . Architect Patrick Cole of Arcademe , overseeing the rebuilding project , said that there were more than half of the required stones for the chapter house . Of the missing stones , more than 90 % were repeating @-@ pattern stones with available templates to carve replacements . Stonemasons Oskar Kempf and Frank Helmholtz used modern hydraulic lime as mortar rather than making their own as was done in the Middle Ages . Helmholtz said of the opportunity offered by the project that it was " something most stonemasons don 't do in all their career . "

The strength of the building is twice what it was in Spain , with the stones supporting their own weight as designed , augmented by a framework of steel and concrete to hold them together when the California ground shakes . Contractor Phil Sunseri said that the building foundation was earthquake resistant as well ; with a three @-@ foot @-@ thick ( 1 m ) mat of concrete and steel underneath , " the entire building will move as one unit . " When completed , the building will be the largest example of original Cistercian Gothic architecture in the Western Hemisphere , and the oldest building in America west of the Rocky Mountains .

Nearby Sierra Nevada Brewing Company partnered with the monks of New Clairvaux to make a series of Belgian @-@ style beers under the Ovila Abbey brand . In late 2010 , the beer producer launched a website to tell about the making of the beer product line and the story of the restoration of the stones . Sierra Nevada founder Ken Grossman said he had long been interested in making a line of Belgian beers , and the abbey 's project provided a good opportunity . The first product , a Dubbel , was released in March 2011 , followed in July by a Saison and in November by a Quadrupel . Sierra Nevada has dedicated a percentage of the beer sales to assist in funding the rebuilding project .