

The Mural Room

Historic Santa Barbara Courthouse

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The Mural Room is the jewel of the Courthouse! The room was originally designed as the assembly room for the County Board of Supervisors, where they presided for more than 30 years. There are four main elements of the Mural Room: furniture, tile, ceiling and murals. It is the 6,700 square feet of hand painted Groesbeck murals that capture everyone's interest. The intricately painted ceiling is just as capturing and represents the most detailed hand stenciling in the courthouse. The room is 40' wide by 70' long with a ceiling height of 25' to 30'. Large, highly decorated sets of double doors provide the main entrance from the second-floor lobby at the top of the main staircase. The inside surface of these doors are covered in rich brown leather and painted with a diamond pattern overlaid with a large painted ceremonial shield that represents the unification of Spain under Ferdinand V (of Aragon) and Isabella (of Castile).

Each of the wrought-iron chandeliers weighs over 1000 pounds; a very tall ladder must be used for maintenance. The dais (where the Board sat) is hand carved oak and elevated 12" above the main floor of the Mural Room.



Front and Inside Wall



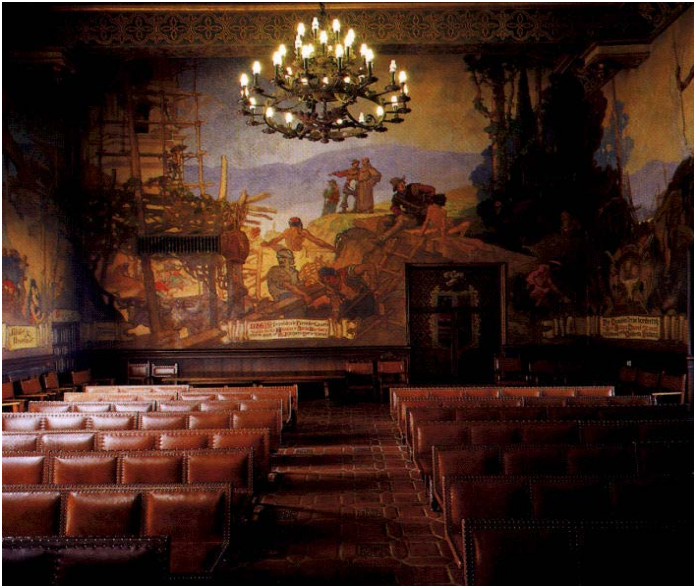
Inside Entry Doors



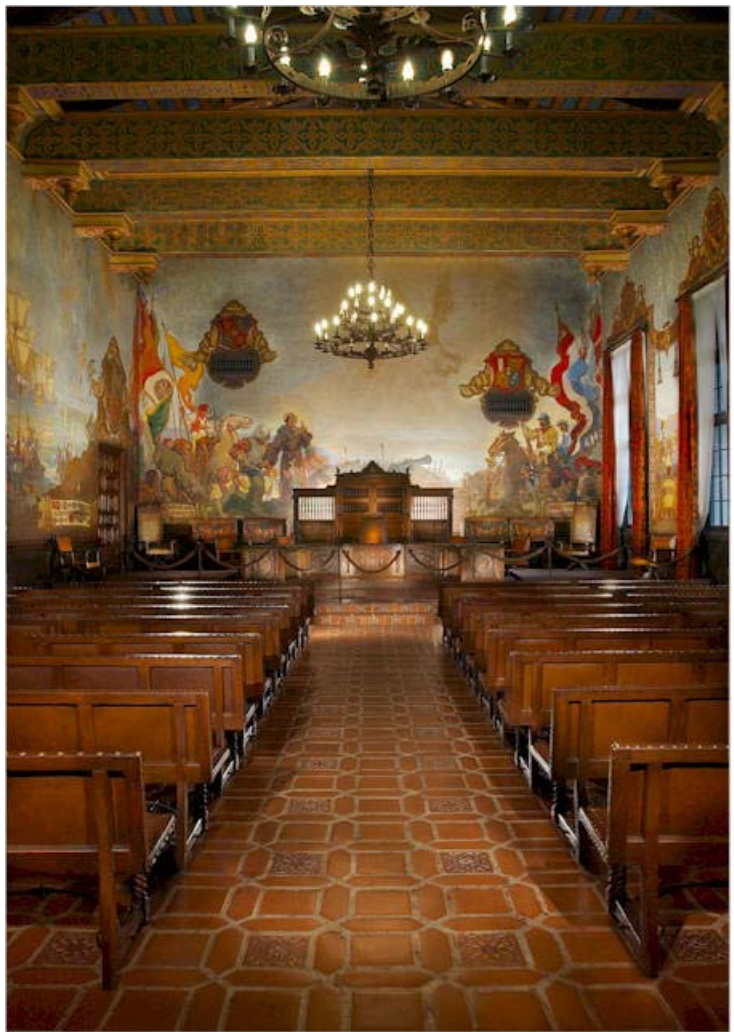
Vargueños (*Escritorios or Desk*)



Mural: Mission



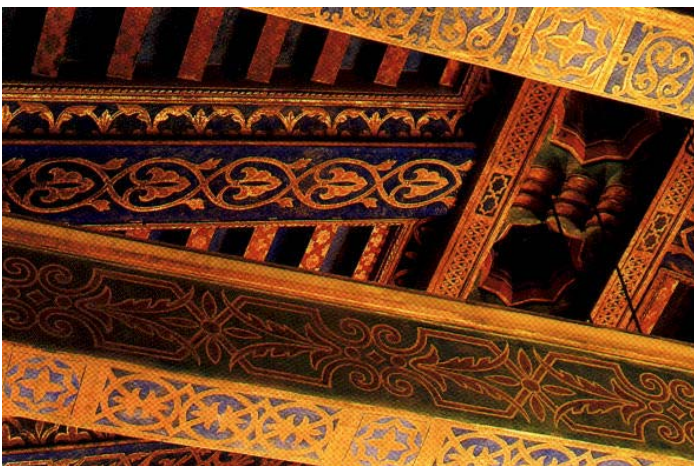
Rear Wall



Stage View (photo take by Russ McConnell)

The murals depict scenes from California's history from the native Indians to the construction of the Mission. The murals along the window wall depict renderings of leading industries, agriculture, minerals and live stock.

The canvas was glued to the walls, then painted. The final touch was to apply a finish coat or sealant to the paint. The artist did not apply this final step, he had already left the country for work in England.



Ceiling Detail: Smeraldi

The paint technique is referred to as "Dutch- Metal", which means the artist mixed zinc and copper to get that "gold" effect.



