

Grandma's Lesson

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CHARACTERS: Narrator #1, Narrator #2, Grandma, twins Michael and Miquela, Young Juan Bautista de Anza Jr., Juan Bautista de Anza Jr. (adult), Señor Gonzales, Señora Gonzales, Soldier #1, Soldier #2, Soldier #3, Muleteer #1, Muleteer #2, Mule #1, Mule #2, Mestizo, Mulatto, Padre Font, Indian #1, Indian #2

PROPS: cookie jar and cookies, pad and paper, miniature *adobera* (frame for making adobe bricks), two muleteer sticks, three soldier shields, three stick horses, cross, quadrant, ribbons

SOUND EFFECTS: mules braying, baby crying

Narrator #1: The day is Monday and school for the neighborhood children has been dismissed.

Narrator #2: Grandma has just gotten up from her afternoon nap and is wondering what she would like to do next. (KNOCK, KNOCK)

(Grandma answers the door and finds her grandchildren Michael and Miquela there.)

Grandma: Why, what a nice surprise! I never expect to see you at this time. Isn't today the day you usually have chess club after school?

Michael: Hi Gram. *(gives her a hug)* You're right, we usually do go to chess on Mondays, but today we decided we didn't want to go.

Miquela: We wanted to see you instead.

Grandma: Oh really? Now tell me, what's up? Come in. *(extends her hand in a welcoming fashion)* I made your favorite cookies yesterday. *(points to a cookie jar on a table nearby)* The cookie jar is full. Help yourselves.

Michael: Perfect! *(They each put down their backpacks and take a cookie from the jar, then sit down.)* Well, we'll get right to the point.
We decided not to wait to get Mom and Dad's advice first.

Miquela: They don't get home until much later this evening. We need to get started right away! Tonight!

Grandma: On what? Get started on what? You seem anxious.

Michael: Well, our teacher gave us a BIG assignment today, and we have only this week to work on it. We don't even know where to start, and this is going to count on our next report card as a good part of our social studies grade. She told us to be creative too.

Miquela: Ms. Jensen was really nice and told us that we could work on a project together, but that means we have to do more. We know we can do it.

Grandma: Now tell me, what advice do you need from me? Certainly, I'll be happy to help you, if I can.

Michael: I am so glad you have come to live next door to us. Your moving here was the best thing ever!

Miquela: Well, we are supposed to do a project on some person in history that made a big contribution to our country.

Grandma: That should be interesting.

Michael: My friend Vic says he is going to do Thomas Edison.

Miquela: Sonya picked Clara Barton, founder of the Red Cross, but we don't have **any** idea who to do. So that's the advice we need. We like the idea of working together.

Grandma: Oh I see.

Michael: We want to get on the Internet tonight to start doing research. Who do you think would make a really good topic for us? We'd like to do something kinda different. Got any ideas Grandma?

Grandma: Hmmmm. . . *(scratching her head and looking up thinking)* Let me think. Hmmmm. . . *(All of a sudden she looks like she has an idea.)* Do you know about Juan Bautista de Anza? I don't think I have ever told you about him, have I?

Michael: Never heard of him. Are you sure he's important?

Grandma: Oh yes, and his story does need to be told. He was a commander in the Spanish cavalry, who was the first one to bring settlers from New Spain into Alta California by an overland route. That's around the San Francisco Bay Area. This was long before there ever was a California Gold Rush. Some of our ancestors came with him on his colonizing expedition.

Miquela: That must have been a long time ago.

Grandma: I learned about him from my grandmother, and she told me that *her* grandmother had told her a lot about Juan Bautista de Anza Jr.

Michael: Juan Bautista de Anza? Why is he a good topic for our project?

Grandma: You'll see. Let me tell you what I remember. Use your imaginations to picture some of the things I am going to tell you about him and his colonizing expedition.

Michael: Sounds good! Should I take notes?

Grandma: I think you should. I have a writing pad and pencil on that table. *(points to it)* There is a lot to tell.

(Michael gets the pad and pencil from the table and prepares to listen.)

Grandma: Well, I guess it starts because the King of Spain wanted to have Spanish-speaking people settle in the province of Alta California. He was worried that Russians were starting to come down the West Coast and wanted to start settlements of their own. He was concerned about the English, too.

Miquela: Russians? When was this?

Grandma: It was sometime in the 1700's. Juan Jr. had a dream. *(All three "freeze" as they watch Juan.)*

(Young Juan Bautista de Anza enters carrying a miniature adobera and goes to the opposite side of the stage.)

Young Juan: *(Looks up as though talking to his deceased father)* You know Papá, today I was out making some little adobes. I used the miniature *adobera* you made for me *(holds up adobera and shows the audience)*, and then I got an idea while I was doing that.

I want to be just like you. I know you wanted to prove a land route from Sonora to Alta California so that you could take settlers there. But you got killed in that Apache attack before you could do it.

(Then looking up, he speaks emphatically as though to his father.) Papá, I am going to make you proud. You'll see. The Anza name **will** go down in history. **I** will find a way to get to the San Francisco Bay by a land route. I promise! *(Young Juan leaves the stage.)*

Scene 2

(Grandma, Michael and Miquela "unfreeze.")

Grandma: Juan Jr., who later became Captain of the Presidio in Tubac, finally got permission from the Viceroy to take settlers to Alta California. He had found a way to get there on his first expedition. The second expedition wasn't going to be an easy trip with all the people and supplies, but it would be a better way to go than by sea.

Miquela: Why didn't they want to go up the coast to get there?

Grandma: The winds made the journey by ship impractical. It just took too long to get there. Sometimes they blew in the opposite direction, and ships would be blown halfway towards Hawaii. In those days the islands were called the Sandwich Islands.

Michael: That would be hard sailing!

Grandma: Not only that, sometimes the winds would die down completely, and they couldn't travel forward. That's why the King of Spain wanted an overland route for this colonizing expedition for settlers willing to live on the far northwestern frontier.

Miquela: Were any Spanish-speaking people already in Alta California?

Grandma: Well, yes, there were a few, but it was really hard to keep them supplied with the things they needed.

Michael: Where did Anza start the trip? *(takes notes)*

Grandma: Well, the first members of the expedition were recruited in Culiacan. Mostly they were poor people who were desperate for a better life. Then they assembled and started out from a place called Horcasitas in the Province of Sonora. It was part of New Spain in those days. Today it is part of Mexico.

Miquela: How did he recruit them? What did he tell them? *(They "freeze" again as Anza enters. With him are a couple who are considering going on the colonizing expedition. They listen as Anza speaks. Sr. Gonzales takes off his hat.)*

Anza: You will have better opportunities in the new land. It is a beautiful place and you will like it there.

Señor Gonzales: But we don't have much food of our own to take. How will we survive on the way? It's going to be a long journey over the desert, and I know there will be other hardships.

Anza: We will supply you with what you need to be healthy and fed on the journey. You will have things to help you be safe, too. Now your children will have shoes and your wife will have beautiful ribbons.

Señora Gonzales: Ribbons?

Anza: Yes, ribbons. *(Señora's face lights up.)* You will be able to use them however you like, or you may want to save the ribbons to wear for the celebration we will have, when we found the new settlement. A most festive occasion that will be. Maybe you will use the ribbons to decorate things once you are in your new home. *(Anza pulls out some ribbons for them to see.)* They will be yours to use and keep. *(He sets them down somewhere.)*

Señora Gonzales: Oh my, I have never had ribbons in my life, much less such beautiful ones! But will we ever get to come back here to visit our relatives?

Anza: *(shakes head)* No, probably not. The truth is that it will be a very hard journey. You will have to travel by horseback, mules or maybe on foot. You will be saying good-bye to everything here. I know it is a very serious decision on your part.

Señor Gonzales: *(looking at his wife)* We shall go. *(Looks back at Anza.)* We shall make history with you. We are not afraid to go to the northernmost province of New Spain. We do want a new life in Alta California. *(Señor Gonzales looks at his wife and she nods in agreement.)*

(Anza, Señor and Señora stand centerstage to sing “Joining the Anza Expedition” with chorus and then leave.)

Joining the Anza Expedition

♩ = 108 © 2011 Dolores Valdez de Pong

1. We must leave this life here, a [#]life so poor,
 2. We must say good-bye to, all we have here.
 3. We will join - oin - oin - oin Juan Bau - tis - ta

3 A7 D min

1. We must leave this life here, a [#]life so poor,
 2. We must say good - bye to, all we have here,
 3. de must An - za and his ex - pe - di - tion,

5 A7 D min A7

1. [#]so poor. We will have a new life,
 2. good - bye. We will have a new life,
 3. yes, join.

8 D min

a bet - ter life [#]than here.

Grandma: And that’s how it all started. More people joined the expedition after it traveled 600 miles north to Tubac. Today that is in southern Arizona. Tubac was the official start of that colonizing expedition. Anza had convinced more settlers to go. I think there were about 240 settlers who went. Would you believe 115 of them were children? But when you added the others who went along, the expedition all together had about 300 people.

Michael: Who else went on this expedition? *(takes more notes on his notepad)*

Grandma: Soldiers had to go along to protect the people. Everyone was always afraid of Apache attacks. I remember a lot that my grandmother told me. I listened to her story so many times. I am glad to finally tell you these things. Why, I can still see them clearly in my imagination. Can you?

(They look off in distance and “freeze” as three soldiers on horseback come through with their shields. They march in unison.)

Soldier # 1: *(in loud voice) ¡Adelante!* Forward.

Soldier #2: Stay together!

Soldier #3: Don't lag behind! It's dangerous.

(Soldiers march off the stage.)

(Then Grandma and the twins "unfreeze" again.)

Michael: I think I would have liked to be a soldier. I bet it was exciting!

Grandma: Well yes, but it wasn't what you would call fun. It was a big responsibility, and everyone went through many hardships getting to the presidio at Monterey. Everyone and everything traveled on horseback or on mules. The expedition started in late September and ended the following March. That was many many days of rugged traveling.

Miquela: No wagons?

Grandma: No wagons or carts at all. There were no roads, maybe an Indian trail sometimes. Men called muleteers had to load and unload all the supplies every single day. Can you imagine? That included everything for the long trip. The muleteers were Indian men who were in charge of the mules and everything they had to carry.

(Grandma and twins "freeze.")

(Indians carry sticks. They enter with mules. Mules are crawling on all fours.)

Muleteer #1: Am I glad the day is over! Everything is finally unloaded. For some reason the mules were extra hard to handle today. *(mules bray or mule sound effect comes on)*

Muleteer #2: I am very tired, too. It has been a hard day with these mules. I even got kicked twice.

(Indians and mules cross stage and disappear.)

(Grandma and the twins "unfreeze.")

Michael: Can you tell us more about these settlers?

Grandma: They were such an interesting group of people. Though they had different heritages in the New World, they had a common goal and that was to start new lives in Alta California. Some were *criollos*, people born in New Spain whose parents had been born in Spain. Others were people of mixed blood, mestizos.

Michael: Mestizos? I think I've heard that word before. *(looks up and freezes as a mestizo enters)*

Mestizo: I am a person of mixed blood, Spanish and Indian. Some of us were part of the Anza Expedition too. (*leaves*)

(*Grandma, Michael and Miquela “unfreeze.”*)

Grandma: Other people of mixed blood were part of this true story, too. They were mulattos and played a part in this expedition as well.

Miquela: Mulattos? What do you mean?

Grandma: Mulattos were another kind of people with mixed blood. They were people who had an African heritage. These people were descendants of black slaves brought to Mexico a long time ago.

(*A mulatto enters wearing mask.*)

Mulatto: We also joined the Anza Expedition because we wanted a better life. Many of us *mulattos* were willing to leave so that we could have better opportunities in Alta California.

(*Mulatto leaves.*)

Michael: Is that all the people who went with Anza? Were they all looking for a better life in Alta California?

Grandma: Well, one was a Spanish Franciscan priest, Padre Pedro Font. He was in charge of the spiritual needs of the people. He stayed with them all the way to Upper California. He gave masses along the way and led the people in prayers and singing, too.

Michael: I bet everyone was relying on God to help them.

Grandma: They most certainly were, and they prayed to the Virgin of Guadalupe and also some saints. Can you imagine some of the things the priest must have told the people?

(*Priest comes out carrying a cross.*)

Padre Font: We must rely on God to see us through this perilous journey.
We must always set a good example to the Indians we meet along the way.

(*Priest, soldiers and Sr. and Sra. Gonzales clasp their hands in prayer and sing “Spiritual Song,” then leave. Chorus in background or somewhere at side sings along too.*)

Spiritual Song on the Anza Trail

sing reverently

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♩ = 96

D_{min} C D

1. God in Hea - ven, we praise your name. We praise
 2. God in Hea - ven, we need your help. Pro - o - o -
 3. God in Hea - ven, we praise your name. Hear - o - us.

3 C D_{min} C D_{min}

1. your name as we tra - vel on.
 2. te - ct us as we tra - vel on.
 3. He - lp us as we tra - vel on.

Scene 3

Grandma: Padre Font, the priest, even knew how to use a quadrant, an instrument used to record latitudes. That way they knew where they were and could even make maps for themselves or other travelers. He was a valuable person on the expedition.

(Padre Font comes out with a quadrant and pretends to use it to determine their latitude.)

Padre Font: I will record today's latitude in the careful journal I am keeping about this expedition. *(He leaves.)*

Miquela: I would have liked that job I think!

Grandma: Oh, I mustn't forget to tell you about all the animals they took along with them. Some were for eating along the way, but the others were for livestock once they got settled in their new places.

Miquela: About how many animals, do you remember?

Grandma: Why about 1000 animals like cattle, horses and other livestock were taken on this expedition too. It was a very long journey, about 1200 miles of traveling from Tubac, Arizona to Alta California.

Michael: Did they all make it? I mean the ones that weren't for eating?

Grandma: Why no, some died along the way from thirst, extreme cold or other things. Every animal that died was a great loss.

Michael: Did any of the people die?

Grandma: There was a woman who passed away after giving childbirth. That was sad for everyone, but it was also amazing that everyone else survived. When the expedition finally arrived, they actually had more people than when they started.

Michael: How was that?

Grandma: That's because some babies were born along the way. They heard the cry of a newborn baby more than once.

(Newborn crying baby sound effect)

Miquela: I think I can hear what that must have sounded like.

Grandma: Now I must tell you that there were other natives besides the muleteers who played an important part in this expedition. Some of them helped along the way.

(The three freeze as two natives walk in.)

Indian #1: I am one of the native interpreters who helped the Anza Colonizing Expedition. We helped get information from local natives about the routes that the expedition was taking.

Indian #2: My tribe, the Chumash, provided food to the travelers. We were one of many tribes along the way who gave food to the expedition. Now you know, that was a big help.

(Natives leave.)

(The three then "unfreeze.")

Michael: Well this all is very interesting, but back to Juan Bautista de Anza. Why is he an important historical figure?

Grandma: Because of the expedition that he led and the settlers he took to the San Francisco Bay area, life around there changed forever. Not only did new people and animals arrive, but also new kinds of foods were introduced by them and other things. The people were very happy to finally finish their long journey and start their new lives.

Miquela: Didn't the Indians around there eat a lot of fish, because they lived by the water?

Grandma: Why yes, before this they did. After Anza came, they learned to eat many new things that came from plants. Today his route is called the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. California started to grow. Anza made the way for all this to happen. It is a very important part of American history in the West.

Michael: This is all so interesting.

Grandma: However, life for the natives around there changed a lot, too. Things were never the same for them once California opened up for more Spanish-speaking settlements.

Michael: I think Juan Bautista de Anza and his expedition in the 1700's will be a great topic for us.

Grandma: It certainly will be. There is *a lot* more to the story. My favorite part is about how the Quechan tribe, the Yumas, helped the settlers cross the mighty Colorado River. It was cold and dangerous. There are even some watermelons that are part of this true story. But I am not going to tell you everything. Now you go home and start doing your research.

Miquela: Grandma, you sure have gotten me excited. I can hardly wait to start on the project.

Michael: I bet ours is going to be one of the most interesting ones in the whole class, because it is not a very familiar story. I can see now why you say that information about the Anza Expedition needs to be told. Now *we* get to be some of the people who tell it.

Grandma: What's more, now you know something about how one of your ancestors came with Juan Bautista de Anza to Alta California in 1776. That was the same year that the American colonies on the eastern shore of our country declared their independence from England.

Michael: I never knew that!

Grandma: This all happened before July 4th that same year of 1776.

Miquela: You just gave us quite a lesson Grandma. We learned a lot!

Michael: Grandma, you really helped us! Thank you, thank you! We **did** learn a lot, and now we're ready to learn more. We sure can imagine how the people felt when they finally arrived.

(All travelers come out to sing "Arrival Song" with the chorus.)

Arrival Song at the End of the Anza Trail

♩ = 110 ©2011 Dolores Valdez de Pong

G

1. We have come far. We have sur -
2. A big ri - ver did -
3. We had some fears of e - ne -

3 D7

1. vived. We did not give up.
2. cross, and but a des - ert too
3. mies, but they did not take

5 G **Chorus** D7 G

1. We have come to Mon - te - rey. Now we'll start a new life.
2. and we lived through a snow - storm.
3. a sin - gle soul.

8 D7 G **Ending**

Now we'll start a new life. We have come far.

11 D7

1. We have sur - vived, and now some will go

14 **slower** G D7 **slower** G

to San Fran - cis - co. to San Fran - cis - co.

Narrator 1: Yes, Anza's expedition of 1775-1776 was a successful one. They safely arrived at the Royal Presidio of Monterey on March 10, 1776. The first people to join the expedition 600 miles south of Tubac had been traveling for 165 days. The colonists doubled the number of settlers in California, as well as greatly increased the number of horses and cattle there.

Narrator 2: However, it was not until months later in the summer, that people moved from Monterey to the San Francisco Bay area. The colonists waited in Monterey, while Anza set out to explore the area and to select a site for settlement. By September, the permanent Spanish colony was a reality. Many people began to move into Upper California.

Narrator 1: The Anza Expedition, whose people were of mixed descent and had traveled courageously over 1200 miles from Tubac to the San Francisco Bay area, brought the introduction of new plants and animals as well as new land uses to the Upper California area. Other changes took place also.

Narrator 2: Traditional ways of the native peoples were never the same after the arrival of the Anza Expedition. Because of the Juan Bautista de Anza Expedition of 1775-1776, life along the trail named after him was changed forever.

(All sing the ending of the song once more.)

We have come far, we have survived,
And now some will go to San Francisco, to San Francisco.

THE END

List of Props for “Grandma’s Lesson”

1. cookie jar (to be provided by group producing the play)
2. writing pad & pencil (to be provided by the group producing the play)
3. recruiting ribbons
4. 3 soldier shields
5. 3 felt stick horses
6. 2 muleteer sticks
7. 2 student backpacks (to be provided by the group producing the play)
8. miniature *adobera* (frame for making adobe bricks)
9. cross

List of Costumes for “Grandma’s Lesson”

1. Grandma (modern clothes provided by the group producing the play)
2. Miguel (modern clothes provided by the group producing the play)
3. Miquela (modern clothes provided by the group producing the play)
4. Young Anza
5. Juan Bautista de Anza in dress uniform
6. Señor Gonzales
7. Señora Gonzales
8. Soldier #1
9. Soldier #2
10. Soldier #3
11. Indian #1
12. Indian #2
13. Mule #1
14. Mule #2
15. Muleteer #1
16. Muleteer #2
17. Mestizo
18. mulatto
19. Padre Font

Historical Notes for “Grandma’s Lesson”

Juan Bautista de Anza Jr. led two expeditions into Alta California. (In Spanish, this means “Upper California.”) Alta California was the northernmost province of New Spain. The First Expedition in 1774 was exploratory with the purpose of finding an overland route to Alta California.

The King of Spain had been concerned that the English might attempt to establish permanent settlements along the West Coast. The Russians had already done so further north. It was important to maintain Spanish control of the area, but it was very difficult to keep the few people living in Alta California supplied with necessities. Communication to the area was also very slow.

These problems existed because the only way to get there was traveling by sea from Baja California. This was a very slow means of travel as the prevailing winds and coastal currents made traveling quite difficult and extremely slow going. The King knew that an overland route was an absolute necessity in order for the Spanish Crown to maintain control of the area.

The establishment of an overland route from Tubac, (now in present day southern Arizona) to Alta California would be quite a challenge. There was more than 500 miles of unexplored territory to travel through, the Colorado River to cross, deserts to cross and encounters with potentially hostile native tribes. It all would be quite a risky undertaking, but the man who was up to the challenge was a *criollo*, Juan Bautista de Anza Jr.

His own father had wanted to lead an expedition into Alta California years earlier, but he had been killed in an Apache attack. Juan Bautista de Anza Jr. knew of his father’s desire and wanted to carry out his father’s wishes by being the one to lead a successful expedition. He submitted a proposal in 1772 to the Viceroy of Spain asking for permission to lead such an expedition. The King of Spain granted his request, and by 1774 he did indeed lead the first successful overland expedition into Alta California.

This opened the way for him to lead the Second Expedition. At the time he was commander of the Royal Presidio at Tubac, Sonora and was age 39. He would take settlers who would establish a permanent Spanish speaking settlement in Alta California. He had to recruit brave souls who were willing to take all the risks of getting there. Soldiers with families joined the expedition as well as some other settlers. They were motivated by the possibilities of a better life as they generally were from lower and middle economic groups. Anza equipped them with what they needed for clothing, food and safety on the expedition.

The first phase of the expedition began as some settlers assembled in Horcacitas, Sonora. They traveled on north to Tubac (southern Arizona) where they gathered with more members of the expedition. It was from here that the official expedition departed in Oct. 1775. It arrived at the presidio of Monterey six months later.

Anza led about 300 people on this colonizing expedition. Two hundred-forty of them were settlers. Over one hundred of these were children. Various kinds of people played roles in this expedition. Some had European ancestors and were *criollos*. Others were mestizos with indigenous roots in Mexico or mulattos who were descendants of

African slaves brought previously to the New World. Indian muleteers were in charge of all the mules. Vaqueros (cowboys) were part of the expedition, too.

About a thousand animals were part of the expedition. These included cattle, mules, horses, and a few burros. Some were eaten along the way, some did stray or perish on the journey, or some were traded off. The remaining animals helped with the establishment of a permanent settlement.

All travel was done by horse, mule or on foot. There were no roads to travel upon, and wagons were not part of the expedition. Mules were the beasts of burden. All supplies had to be loaded and unloaded every day and night.

Native tribes along the way helped in various ways. Some supplied food. Others gave information to Indian interpreters about the route ahead, etc. Chief Salvador Palma of the Quechán tribe, was instrumental in getting his people to help the travelers cross the frigid Colorado River at Yuma.

The Spanish Franciscan priest, Padre Pedro Font, who served as chaplain and geographer, also kept a detailed journal of the expedition, which has shed much light on various aspects of the journey. In addition, he was skilled at using a quadrant, a modern instrument of the day, which was used to measure latitudes. This helped determine positions along the way and was useful for map making.

Though the expedition was fearful of Indian attacks, the only life lost along the way, was a woman who died in childbirth. The expedition arrived with more people than it had left with, due to the birth of babies to some settlers as they traveled.

Upon arrival at Monterey, the settlers stayed there for a few months. During this time Juan Bautista de Anza, with some other men, traveled on to explore the San Francisco Bay area. While there he selected a site for the new presidio and settlement. He also selected the site for Mission San Francisco de Asís. Many settlers then left Monterey. The Second Expedition of 1775-1776 led to the successful founding of San Francisco.

The distance traveled by the settlers from the official start in Tubac to San Francisco was 1200 miles.

When it came time for Anza to leave the settlers, it was a time of sadness for them. They were sorry to say good-bye to their leader, who had brought them safely through perilous territory in order to reach a new land and a better life.

Anza had led a successful colonizing expedition for the Spanish Crown, which had doubled the Spanish speaking population in Alta California in 1776. Thereafter, he was named Governor of the Province of New Mexico as a result.

In 1990, the significance of the Anza Expeditions was acknowledged by Congress when it established the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

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