

## 1775–1776 Anza Expedition

### Pursuing a Dream

Juan Bautista de Anza's father had a dream. He wanted to find an overland route to Alta California beyond the Spanish frontier, but he died in a battle with the Apaches in 1740 when Anza was three years old. Anza followed in his father's footsteps and joined the Spanish military, eventually becoming a Captain on the frontier at the Tubac Presidio.

Spain had been struggling to secure its outposts in Alta California from Russian and English exploration and colonization. Existing sea routes were dangerous and difficult. Just like his father, Anza requested permission from the Viceroy of New Spain, Don Marie Antonia Bucareli, to prove a safer land route to Alta California was possible. Permission was granted.

Following Indian trading and mission travel routes, Anza identified a route in 1774. This allowed an avenue for much needed livestock and supplies. Upon this success, he was granted permission to recruit and lead a group of settlers to Alta California. Spain's goal was to establish the first colony in a place they called San Francisco. Anza's goal was to safely deliver the settlers, thus fulfilling his father's dream.



Above: Ana Maria Josepha de Soto joins the expedition with her husband, Juan Francisco Bernal, and their seven children (ages 2-17) joined the 1775-76 Anza Expedition. Illustration by David Rickman

Left: Expedition leaving Tubac Presidio on the Spanish Frontier.



### Trusting a Stranger

In September 1775, Anza arrived in small towns such as Culiacán and Horcasitas. He was a stranger in a military uniform. Residents listened to his stories of lush lands and plentiful resources in a place far from their desert homeland. He invited the men to join this expedition as paid soldiers on two conditions; they would not return and they had to bring their families.

When the expedition left the Tubac

Presidio on October 23, 1775, thirty families had joined Anza totaling 240 settlers; men, women, and children. These families put their trust in a stranger who did not guarantee they would reach Alta California. If they succeeded, he promised a better life. It was a risk these families were willing to take.

They were diverse in their heritage with a blending of Indigenous, European, and Afro-Latino ancestry, and

bound by their lower social status. These families did not have many prospects, so when Anza offered an opportunity, they took it.

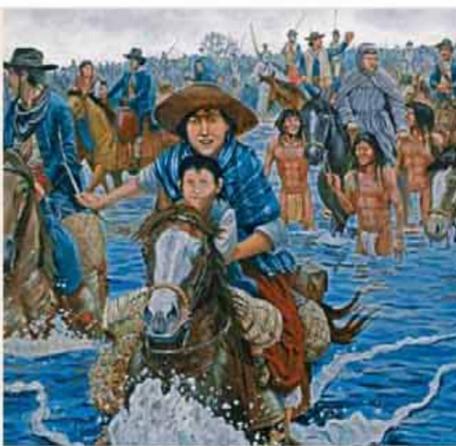
### Traveling Town

With the settlers, their escorts (cowboys, mule packers, and Indian guides), and over 1,000 head of livestock, Anza led the group of almost 300 people into the desert. Moving that many people, their supplies, and livestock resembled a traveling town.

When possible, each day started with mass and singing the hymn

“Alabado.” Franciscan priest Pedro Font was the expedition chaplain. Not only did he provide religious leadership, he recorded latitudes with a quadrant and kept a meticulous journal. Whereas Anza's journal was official, Font was eloquent.

The two journals document the dates, supplies issued, distances, places they visited, people they met, and the struggles and successes of the journey. Without the journals, the details of this epic journey would never be known.



### Success & Impacts

On June 27, 1776, led by Lt. Moraga, the expedition families arrived in what is now San Francisco. Anza succeeded in delivering the settlers and Spain successfully established its first permanent Alta California colony. In the new land, settlers received the better life Anza had promised.

Part of the success was due to Anza's ability to forge alliances with a few of the Indians along the route. Some were generous in their assistance. The

Pima and Chumash provided food, and a Quechan group led them across the Colorado River.

Spain intended to expand their society by acculturating the local Indians into mission life. To Spain, the frontier was full of souls to be saved. Viewed as the beneficiaries, Indians required labor that built missions. Many were forced to accept an unfamiliar lifestyle.

The Spanish believed this lifestyle would elevate the Indians in their new society. In reality, rapid and



intense contact significantly altered the tribal world. Indian populations declined and their traditions were disrupted. Ultimately, Spanish colonialism spelled the end of the tribal world as it had existed.

### Living Legacy

Descendants of the expedition live today. Family names such as Berryessa, Bernal, Peralta, Moraga, and Alviso can be found on streets, towns, counties, and landscape features throughout California. Native people continue their traditions today.

Public presentations of Indian lifeways occur in places such as Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center and Coyote Hills East Bay Regional Park.

The 1776 Anza Expedition changed the course of California history. Today, descendants and native people are all a living legacy within the population.



Cover “On the Trail” illustrated by David Rickman.

Illustrations from left to right: “Llano Grande.” Illustrated by Bill Singleton; “Crossing the Colorado.” Illustrated by David Rickman; “The Pima.” Illustrated by David Rickman.

Watermarks by Wade Cox.



### Exploring the Anza Trail

In 1990, Congress established the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail as a part of the National Trails System. The 1200-mile trail in the United States traverses from Nogales, AZ to San Francisco, CA. There is another 600 miles of the historic corridor in Mexico. The trail traces the route of the 1775-1776 Anza Expedition as closely as possible. Portions of the trail can be explored by car, foot, horse, bicycle, or train.

**More information**  
Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail  
1111 Jackson Street  
Suite 700  
Oakland, CA  
94607-4807  
(510) 817-1438  
[www.nps.gov/juba](http://www.nps.gov/juba)

“Mass having been chanted. . . all its members being present. . . at eleven today the march was begun toward the north.”

—Juan Bautista de Anza  
October 23, 1775

### ¡Vayan subiendo!

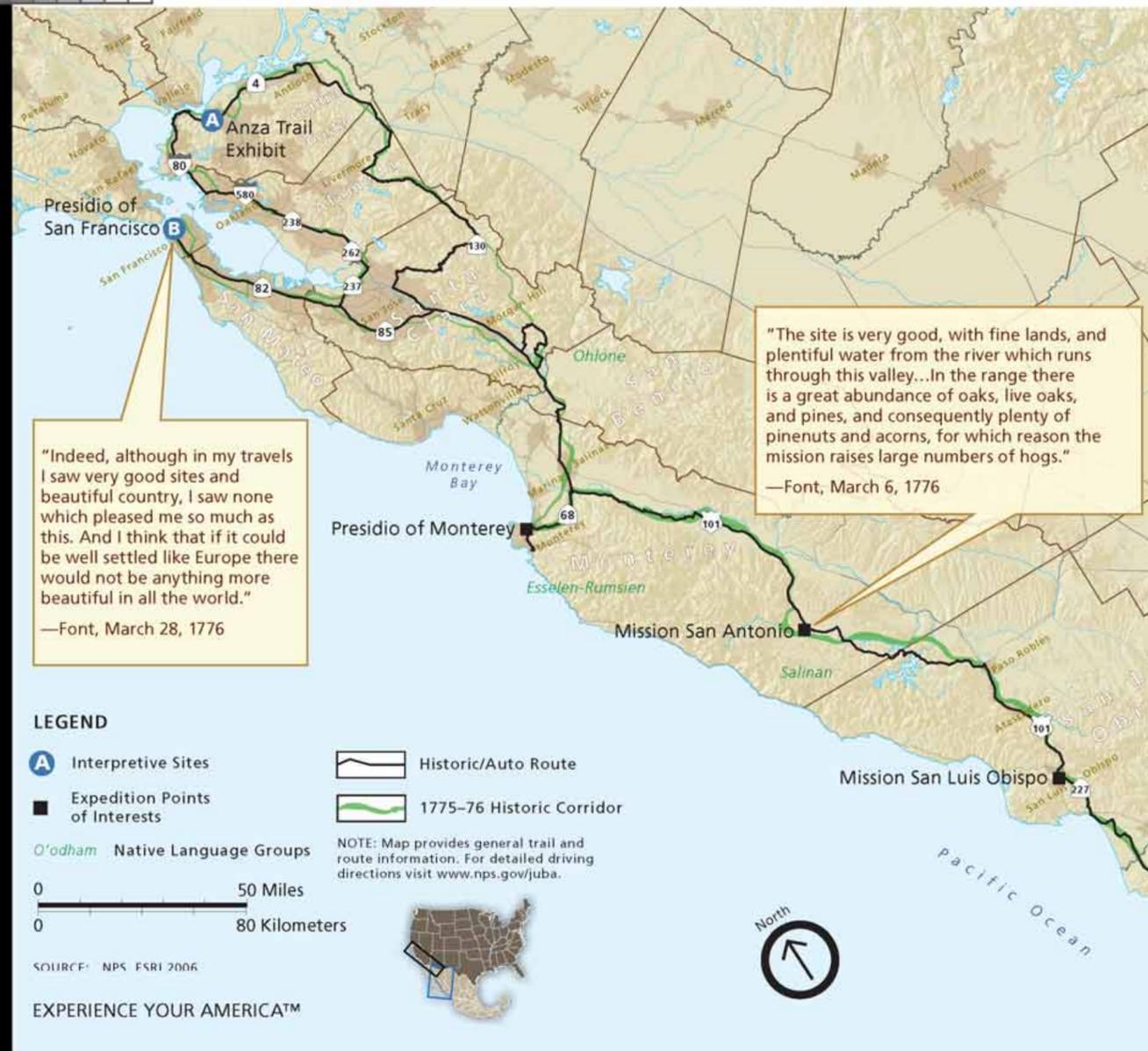
“Everyone mount up!” This became a familiar call from Spanish Lt. Col. Juan Bautista de Anza. In 1776, as Americans fought for their independence in the East, Anza led almost 300 people over 1600 miles to settle Alta California. It was the first overland route from New Spain (Mexico) to colonize San Francisco.



Juan Bautista de Anza

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Historic Trail  
Alta California





**Historic Sites Along the Anza Trail Route**

"...it was decided in Mexico to make this second expedition and journey, the better to explore the country, and especially to conduct thirty families of married soldiers to the port of Monterey, in order by means of them to settle and hold the famous port of San Francisco."

—Font, remarks opening his journal

The National Park Service administers the trail through partnership with other federal, state, county, and municipal parks and agencies, local volunteer groups, non-profit organizations, and private landowners. If an area belonging a private landowner is not open to visitors, permission must be obtained to enter their property.

The auto route approximates the areas where the expedition traveled. Several communities and parks offer recreational opportunities for walking, hiking, horse riding, and bicycling. A variety of historic sites provide experiences related to the Spanish Colonial era. Riders of Amtrak can also follow the section of the trail from Los Angeles to Oakland on the Coast Starlight. At certain times of the year, Trails & Rails Program guides present programs.

Quotation are from the only existing journals written about the expeditions. Lt. Col. Juan Bautista de Anza was the military leader and Father Pedro Font was the religious leader.

"The site is very good, with fine lands, and plentiful water from the river which runs through this valley...In the range there is a great abundance of oaks, live oaks, and pines, and consequently plenty of pinenuts and acorns, for which reason the mission raises large numbers of hogs."

—Font, March 6, 1776

"Indeed, although in my travels I saw very good sites and beautiful country, I saw none which pleased me so much as this. And I think that if it could be well settled like Europe there would not be anything more beautiful in all the world."

—Font, March 28, 1776

- LEGEND**
- A** Interpretive Sites
  - B** Expedition Points of Interest
  - O'odham Native Language Groups
  - Historic/Auto Route
  - 1775-76 Historic Corridor



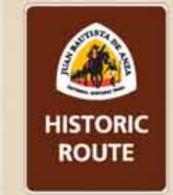
NOTE: Map provides general trail and route information. For detailed driving directions visit [www.nps.gov/juba](http://www.nps.gov/juba).



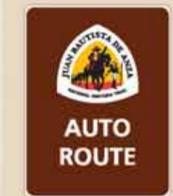
SOURCE: NPS ESRI 2006

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Two signs appear along the roadways:



**Historic Route**  
These signs indicate the roadway is within the corridor used by the expedition.



**Auto Route**  
These signs indicate the roadway deviates from the historic corridor, but provides for a continuous driving route.

**A Anza Trail Exhibit**  
John Muir National Historic Site  
4202 Alhambra Ave.  
Martinez, CA  
(925) 228-8860  
[www.nps.gov/jomu](http://www.nps.gov/jomu)

**B Presidio of San Francisco**  
50 Moraga Ave.  
San Francisco, CA  
(415) 561-4323  
[www.nps.gov/prsf](http://www.nps.gov/prsf)  
[www.presidio.gov](http://www.presidio.gov)

**C Anza-Borrego Desert State Park**  
200 Palm Canyon Dr.  
Borrego Springs, CA  
(760) 767-4205  
[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

**D Tubac Presidio State Historic Park**  
Burrue Street at Presidio Drive  
Tubac, AZ  
(520) 398-2252  
[azstateparks.com](http://azstateparks.com)

**E Tumacacori NHP**  
1891 E. Frontage Rd  
Tumacacori, AZ  
(520) 398-2341  
[www.nps.gov/tuma](http://www.nps.gov/tuma)

**F Anza Trailhead Room**  
1904 Nogales Courthouse  
21 E. Court Street  
Nogales, AZ  
(520) 287-5710  
[www.nps.gov/juba](http://www.nps.gov/juba)

"...she [Gertrudis Rivas, wife of Ignacio Linares] happily gave birth to a boy...which makes three who have been born between the presidio of Tubac and this place...These and three others who were born before reaching San Miguel de Horcasitas make a total of eight, all while on the march..."

—Anza, December 24, 1775

"...they [Quechan or Yuma] invited all members of the expedition to eat, giving them in abundance beans, calabashes, maize, wheat and other grains which are used by them, and so many watermelons that we estimated that there must have been more than three thousand."

—Anza, November 28, 1775

"About three leagues from here there is an edifice of the ancient Indians, and I decided to go see it for the purpose of making an observation of its latitude..."

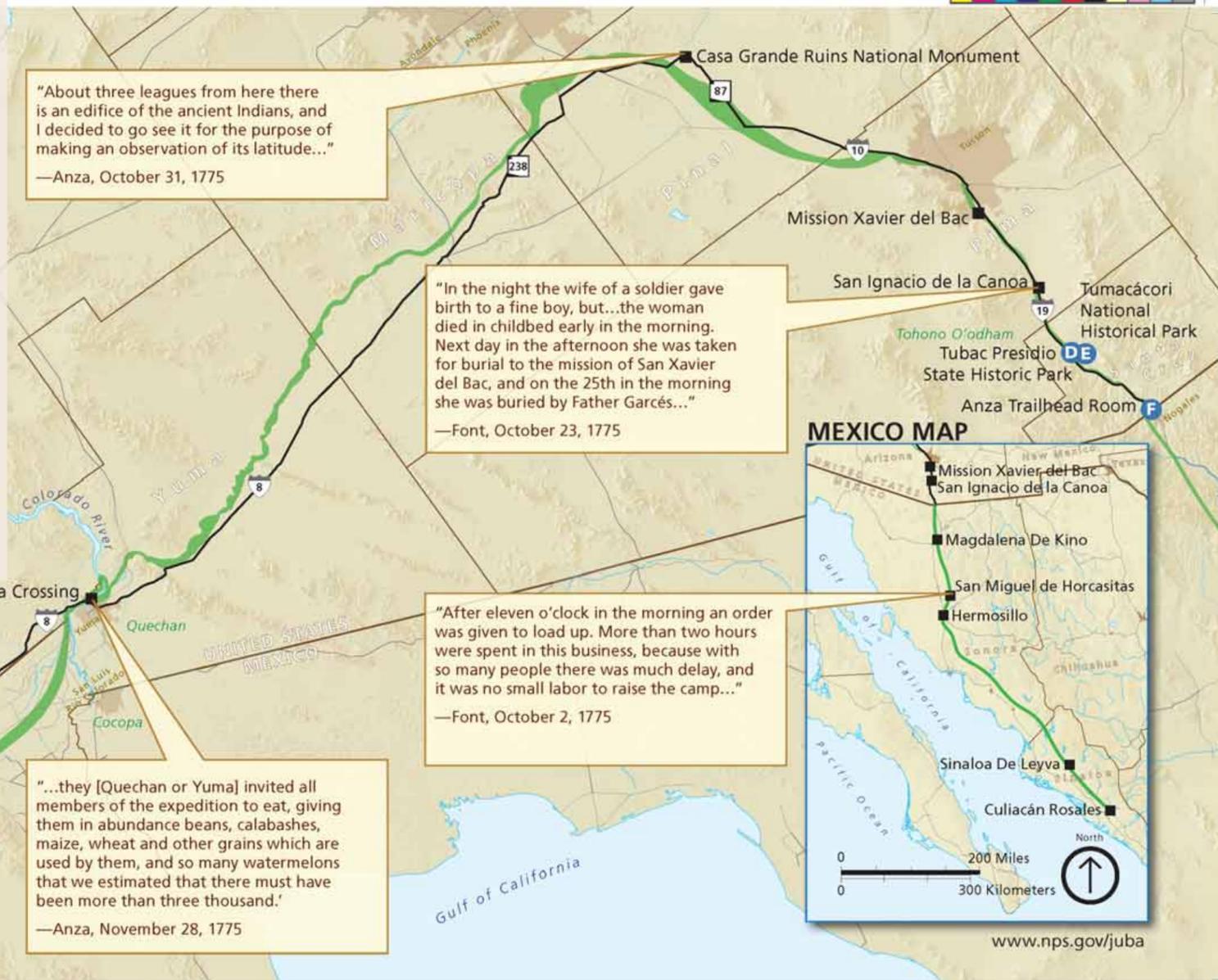
—Anza, October 31, 1775

"In the night the wife of a soldier gave birth to a fine boy, but...the woman died in childbed early in the morning. Next day in the afternoon she was taken for burial to the mission of San Xavier del Bac, and on the 25th in the morning she was buried by Father Garcés..."

—Font, October 23, 1775

"After eleven o'clock in the morning an order was given to load up. More than two hours were spent in this business, because with so many people there was much delay, and it was no small labor to raise the camp..."

—Font, October 2, 1775



**MEXICO MAP**



[www.nps.gov/juba](http://www.nps.gov/juba)