

## 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 an Apache ambush 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.

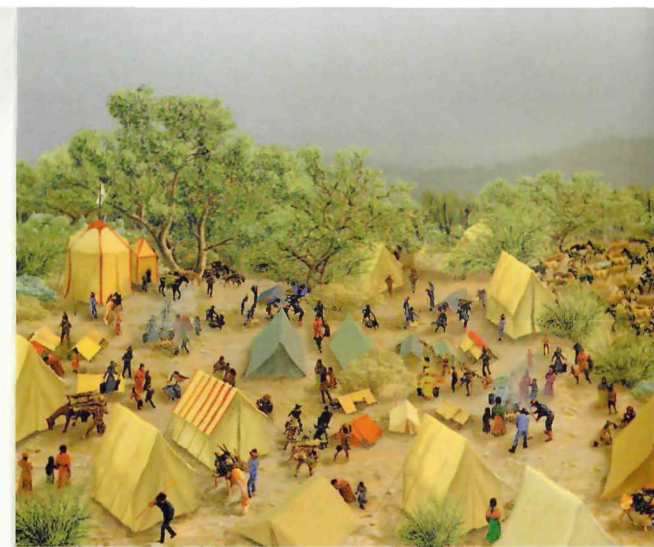
Spain had been struggling to secure its outposts in Alta California from Russian and English exploration and colonization. Existing sea routes were dangerous and difficult. Just like his father, Anza requested permission from the Viceroy of New Spain, Antonio Maria Bucareli, to prove a land route to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

Following Indian trading and mission travel routes, Anza identified a path 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 el Río San Francisco. Anza's goal was to safely deliver the settlers, thus fulfilling his father's dream.



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

Left: Expedition leaving Tubac Presidio on the Spanish Frontier.



### Trusting a Promise

In September 1775, Anza arrived in places like Culiacán in Sinaloa and Horcasitas in Sonora. Residents heard a call from this military man who told stories of lush lands and plentiful resources in a place far from their desert homeland. Anza 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 about 240 settlers; men, women, and children. These families put their trust in a promise for a better life, from a man who did not guarantee they would reach their destination, Alta California. However, 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. Most of the families did not have many prospects, so when Anza offered an opportunity, they took it.

### Traveling Town

The settlers, with their military escorts and support workers (cowboys, mule packers, and Indian guides) comprised an enormous group of over 300 people and more than 1,000 head of livestock. Led by Anza, the people, their supplies and livestock resembled a traveling town

making their way through the desert.

Most days started with mass and the alabado, a hymn of praise, led by Franciscan priest Pedro Font, the expedition chaplain. Not only did Font provide religious leadership, he recorded latitudes with a quadrant and kept a meticulous journal. Where the tone of Anza's journal was official, Font's was eloquent.

These two journals document dates, supplies issued, distances traveled, places visited, and people encountered, covering the struggles and suc-



cesses of the journey. Without the diaries, details of this epic journey would never have been known.

### Success & Impacts

On June 27, 1776, led by Lt. Moraga, the expedition families arrived in what is now San Francisco. Anza ensured the settlers reached their destination, and Spain successfully established its northernmost colony in Alta California. In the new land, the colonists obtained the better life Anza had promised.

Part of the journey's success was due to Anza's ability to forge alliances with a few

of the Indians along the route. Some were very generous in their assistance. The Pima and Chumash provided much needed food. A Quechan group, led by Chief Palma, helped them cross 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 were the 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, the approach 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 landmarks throughout California.

Native people encountered throughout the expedition route remain and 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.



Left to right: The expedition was like a small town with people and livestock all traveling together. One local Quechan group helped the expedition members successfully cross the Colorado River. Many Indian groups such as the Pima, assisted the travelers with food.



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

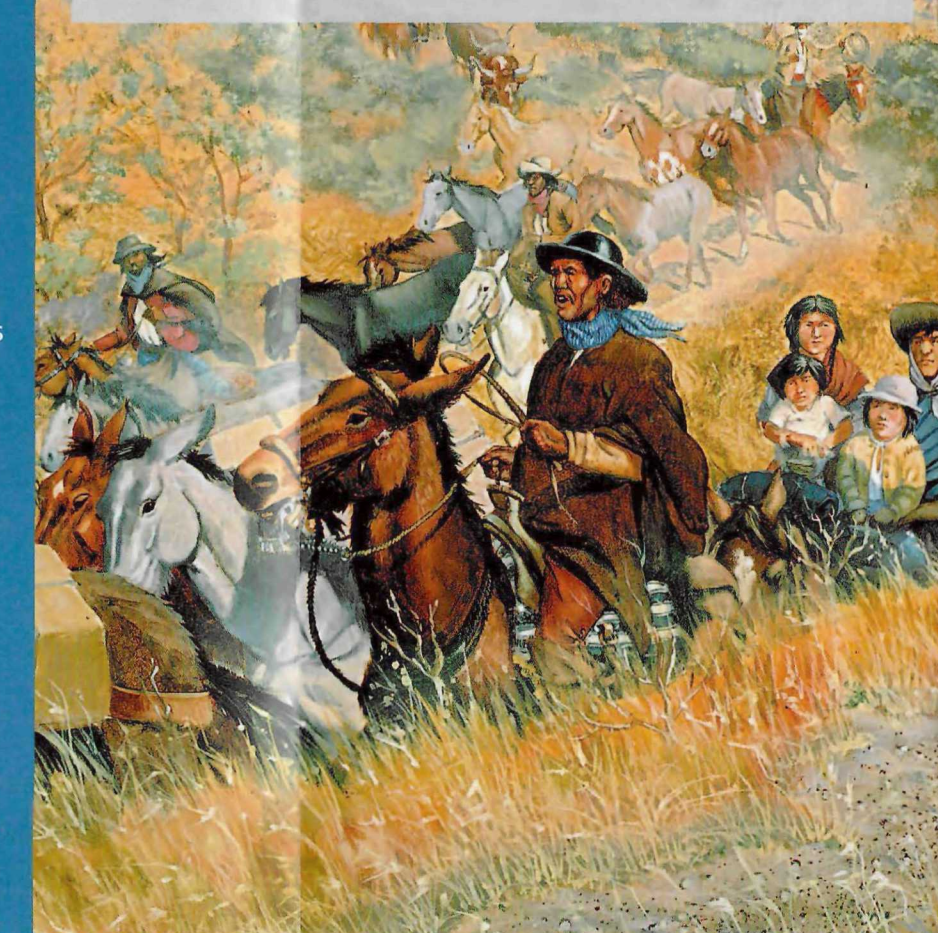
Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail  
1111 Jackson Street  
Suite 700  
Oakland, CA  
94607-4807  
(510) 817-1438  
[www.nps.gov/juba](http://www.nps.gov/juba)

*"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!

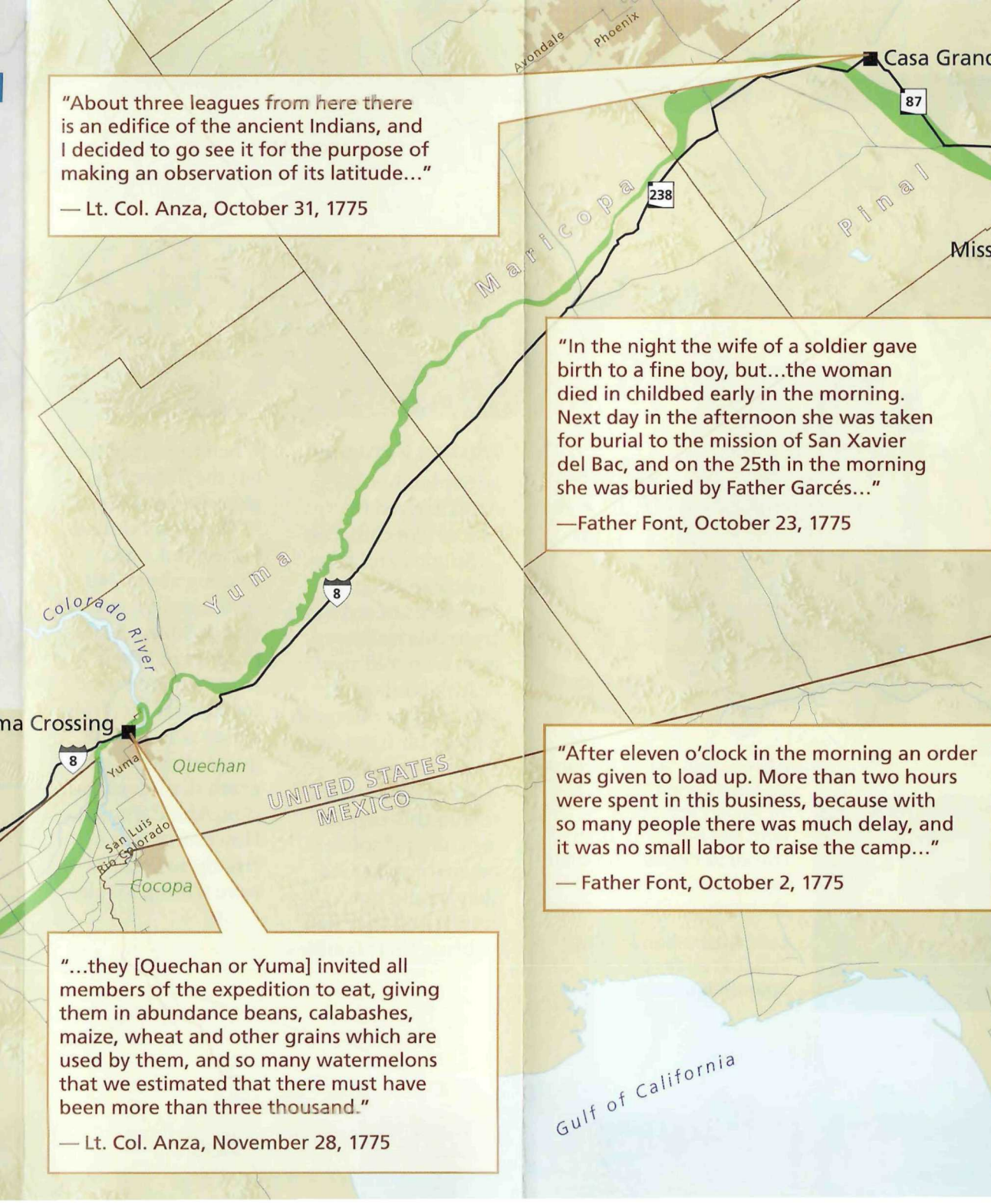
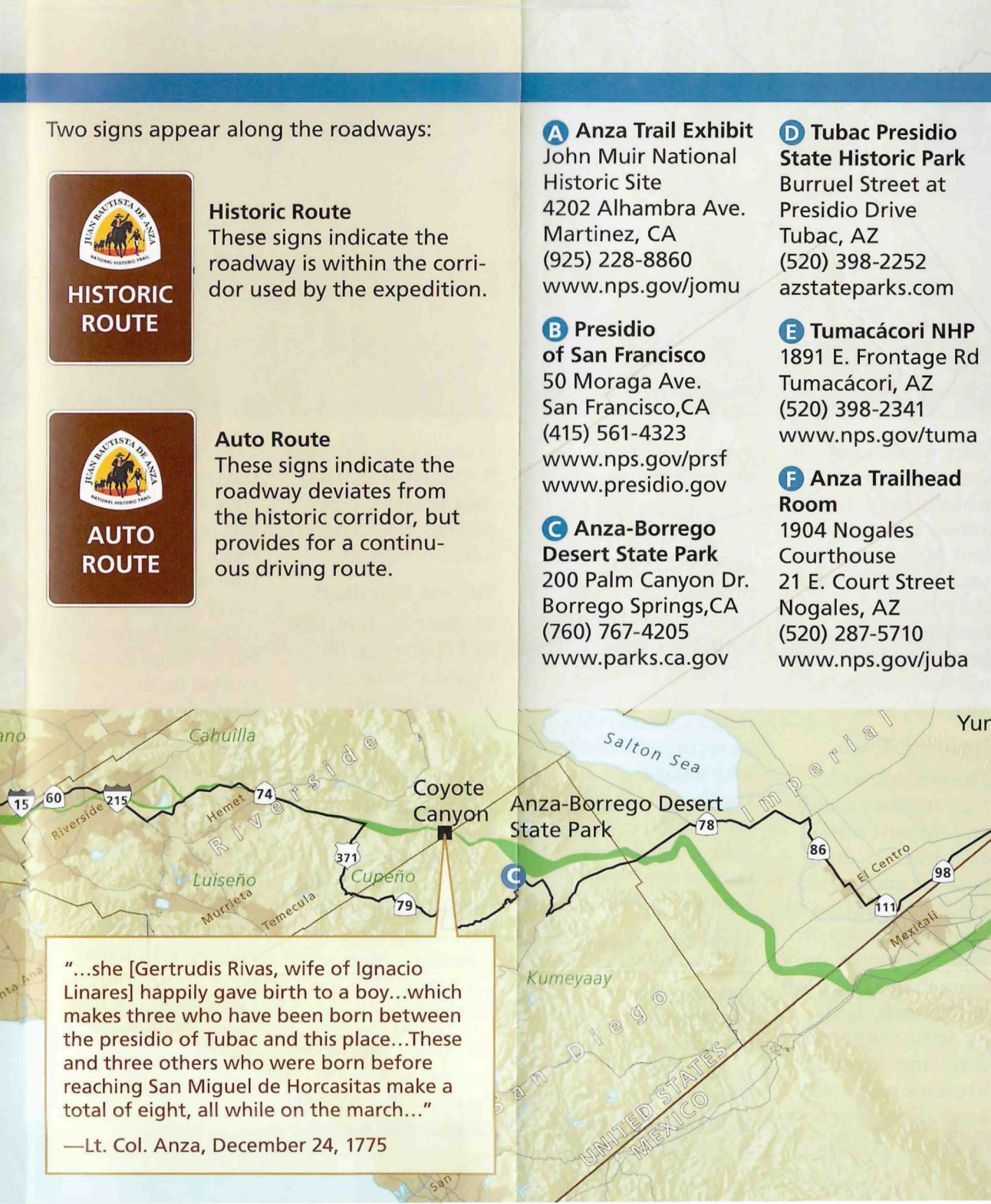
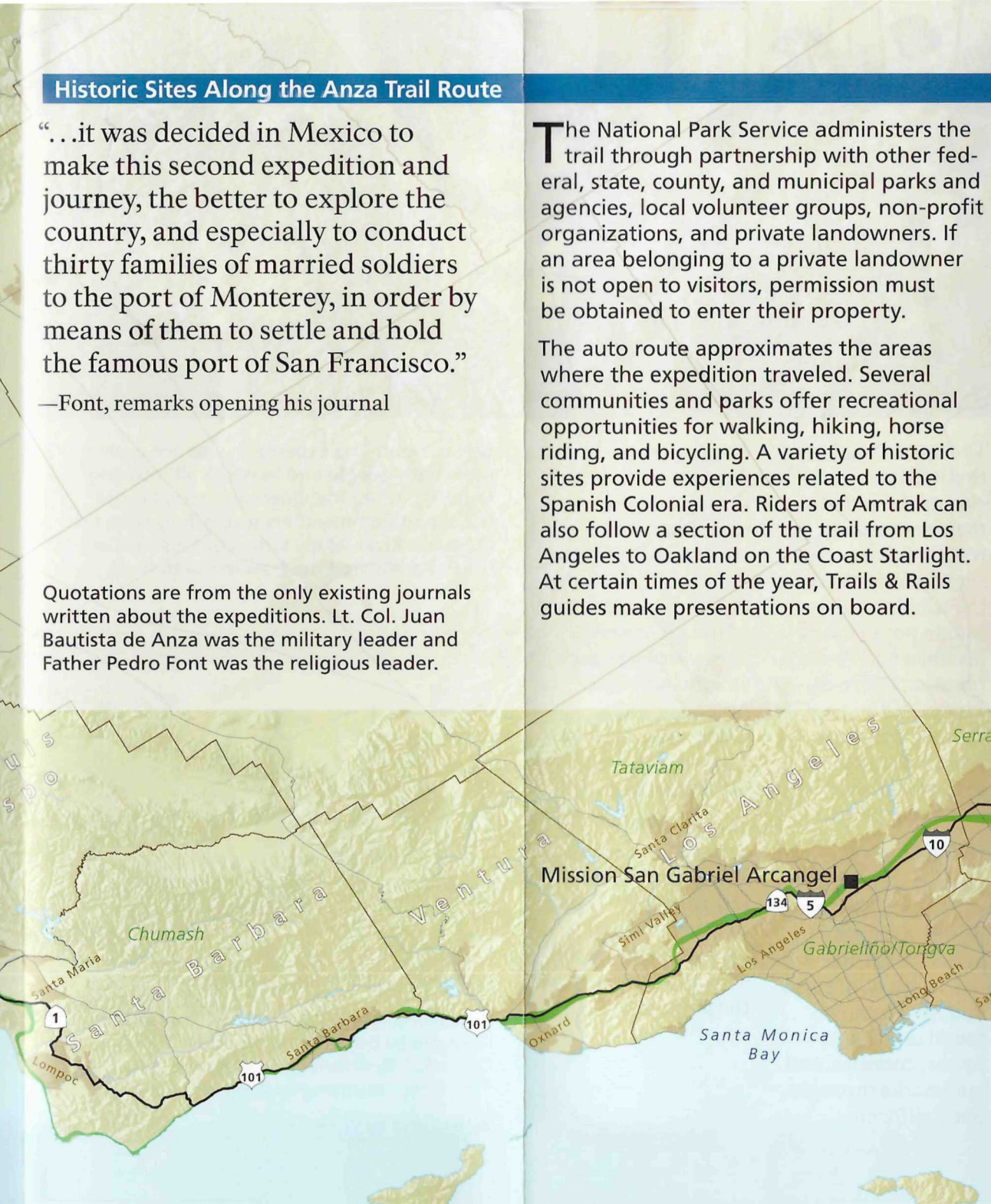
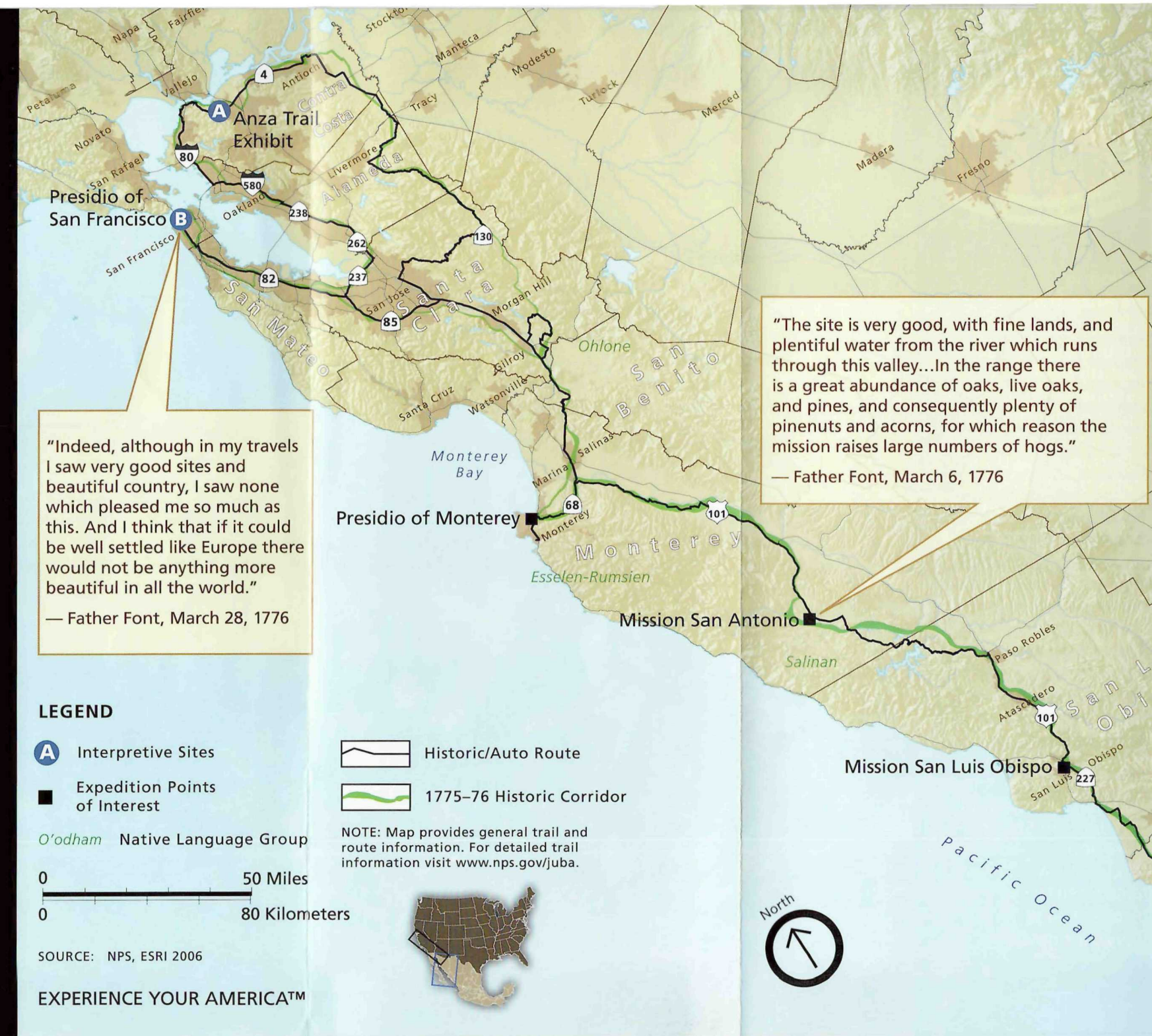
"Everyone mount up!" This became a familiar call from Spanish Lt. Col. Juan Bautista de Anza. In 1776, while American patriots fought for their independence from England, Anza led about 300 people over 1600 miles to settle Alta California. It was the first overland route from New Spain (Mexico) to colonize San Francisco.



Juan Bautista de Anza

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Historic Trail  
Arizona • 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.”

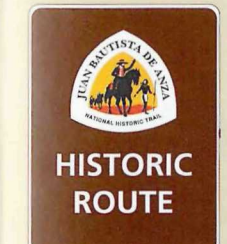
—Font, remarks opening his journal

Quotations 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.

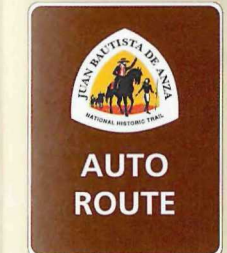
The National Park Service administers the trail through partnership with other federal, state, county, and municipal parks and agencies, local volunteer groups, non-profit organizations, and private landowners. If an area belonging to a private landowner is not open to visitors, permission must be obtained 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 a section of the trail from Los Angeles to Oakland on the Coast Starlight. At certain times of the year, Trails & Rails guides make presentations on board.

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 Tumacácori NHP**  
1891 E. Frontage Rd  
Tumacácori, 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)

“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...”

— Lt. Col. 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...”

— Father 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...”

— Father Font, October 2, 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.”

— Lt. Col. Anza, November 28, 1775

“...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...”

— Lt. Col. Anza, December 24, 1775

