

Anza Expedition of 1776



“...Their Generosity We Have Seen Verified...”

Anza's diary, April 1, 1776

In 1775 and 1776, Lt. Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza, Father Pedro Font, along with 240 settlers, soldiers, and others traveled 1,800 miles from Sonora, Mexico to Monterey, California. Anza then led a smaller group to choose sites for a mission and presidio in San Francisco, and to explore the East Bay. They camped a few miles from here on the Antioch shoreline.

During the journey in the East Bay, Anza and his men passed through the homelands of Ohlone, Bay Miwok, and Northern Valley Yokuts peoples from several tribes, whose ancestors had lived in the East Bay for some 13,000 years. Native peoples responded to the newcomers with surprise, fear, and hospitality, including gifts of fish, seed “cakes,” and other foods. In return the Spanish gave them glass beads.

The diaries of Anza and Font are among the very few firsthand accounts of life in this area prior to Spanish colonization.



Objects from New California, by von Langsdorff 1814, courtesy of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley

Ceremonial and utilitarian objects seen at Mission San Francisco de Asís in 1806. Ceremonial regalia: feathered headdress, likely magpie feathers (upper left); flicker quill band with shell ornamentation (center); clamshell disk bead and abalone pendant necklaces (lower left and center right). Utilitarian objects include coiled gift baskets with shell ornamentation, quail topknots, and red acorn woodpecker feather tufts (upper right); reflexed, sinew-backed bow and obsidian-tipped arrows (bottom).



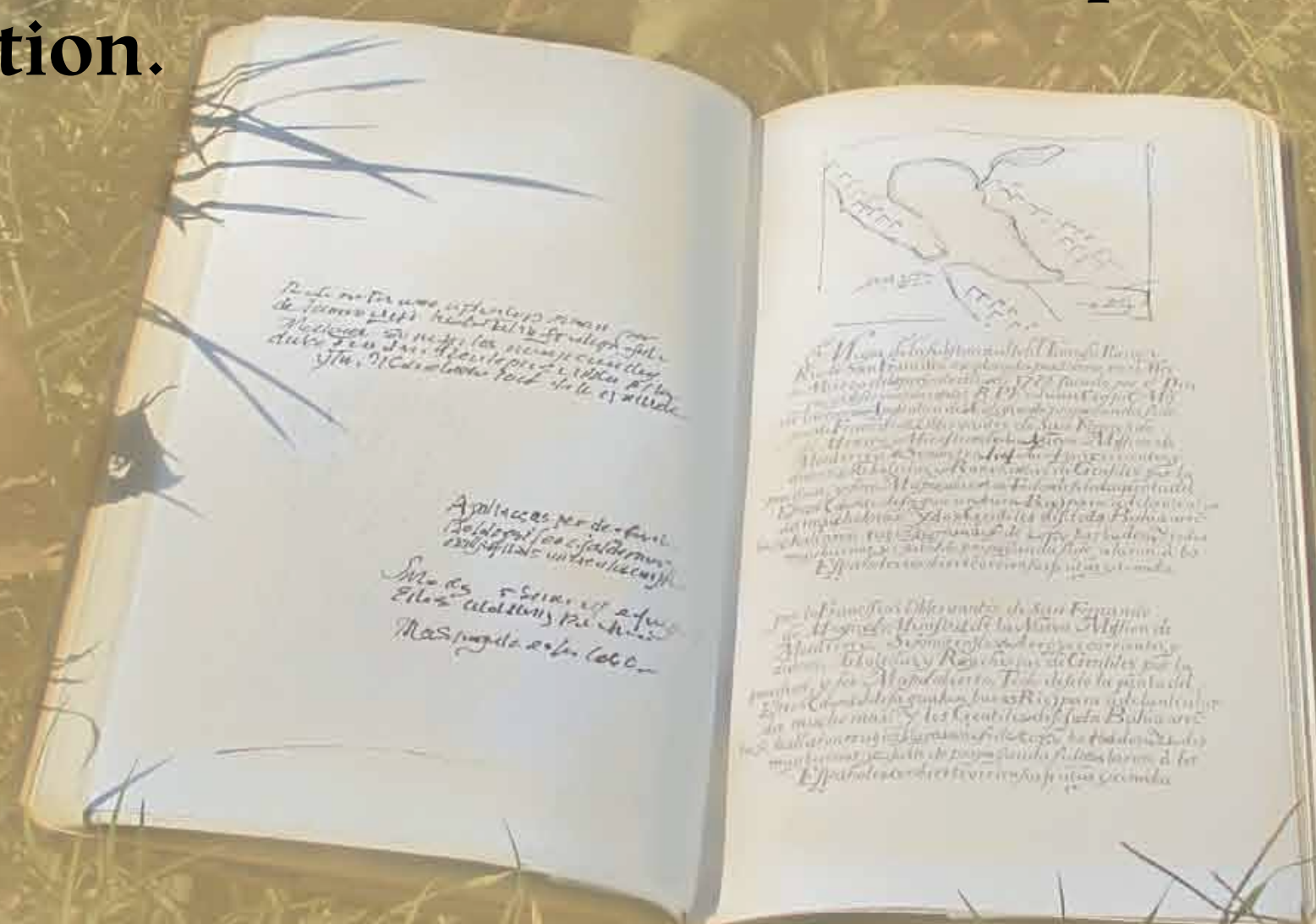
Illustration by Doyle Wegner

They presented us with many cacomites, which is a little bulb...and likewise with a good string of roasted amole...all well cooked and roasted. I...liked the taste... It is the food which most abounds, and the fields along here are full of it.

Father Pedro Font's diary, April 1, 1776

Amole is the Old California Spanish name for the slow roasted bulbs of soap plant, a type of lily. In addition to this delicious food, local tribal peoples ate the tender, young leaves, and used the bulbs for soap and to kill fish. To clean mortar rocks and baskets, they made, and continue to make, small brushes from the bulb and its protective fibers.

Pedro Font



Juan Bautista de Anza

This panel funded in part by the National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program in partnership with the East Bay Regional Park District.

Welcome to the homeland of the Julpun, a Bay Miwok-speaking tribe.



Font painting by David Rickman, courtesy of the National Park Service. Anza painting, unknown artist, from the New Mexico Governor's Palace.

Dates and stories taken from the diaries of Anza and Font, courtesy of the Center for Advanced Technology in Education, University of Oregon, www.anza.uoregon.edu.

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