

# In 1776, the Channel Coast was a very different place.

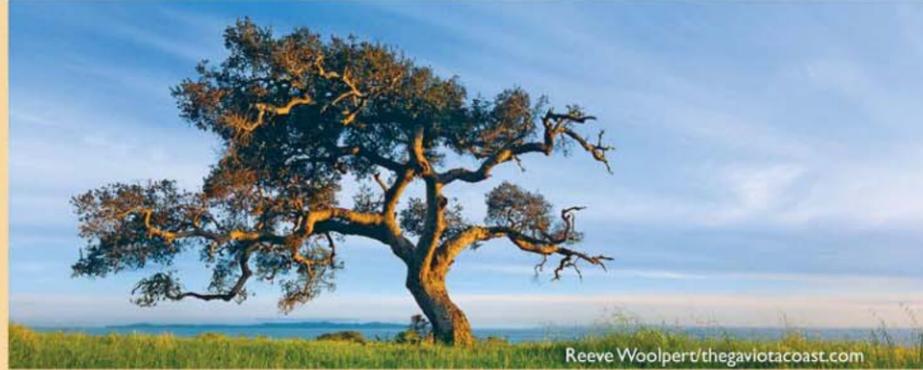
Long before it hosted its diverse population, its agriculture and its oil platforms, even before the Old Mission and the Presidio, the Santa Barbara Coast was a place of wild beauty inhabited by thousands of indigenous people. This was the world encountered by Lt. Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza and Father Pedro Font, in February of 1776, as they led over 240 colonists on the final leg of their 1,200-mile journey from the Sonoran Desert of Mexico.

The colonists, a group made up of men, women, and children, were the first families to emigrate from New Spain and settle the frontier of Alta California. The rugged country and its natives had seen only priests and soldiers scattered to the few existing missions and presidios that marked its occupation by foreigners. With the settlement of families, along with their livestock and worldly possessions, Alta California would be truly and incontrovertibly occupied by Spain.

The Anza Expedition left the desert of Northern Mexico in October of 1775 and made their way, by pack mule and on foot, through harsh terrain with the hope and trust that Anza and his soldiers would lead them to a land of new beginnings. The lives of these families stood to be greatly improved in Alta California, where they would have the opportunity to own land and transcend the racial caste system of New Spain. Made up of people of African, European, and indigenous descent, they would become the multiracial society that formed the cities that we know today.

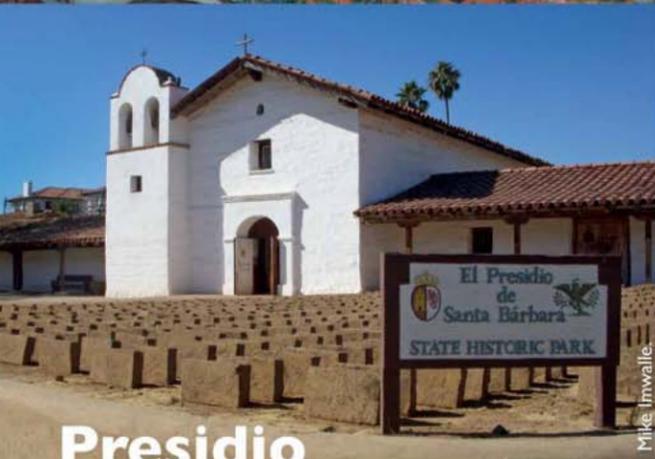
The native people of Alta California, including the Chumash of the Santa Barbara Channel, would also see changes with the arrival of the colonists. As their homelands became populated with newcomers, the natives were subjugated by the institutions of the Mission and Presidio, forcing some to leave their villages forever. This pattern of displacement would play out in the years and on the waves of population to come.

Anza's expedition spent five days traveling along the coast of what is now Santa Barbara County. They walked through the frigid surf along the beach at Rincon, lumbered through



the fog past the Chumash villages at Syuxtun and Helo', and saw whales spouting off the Gaviota Coast. They encountered the Chumash all along the way, admiring their fine boats (*tomols*) and maritime skills, trading beads for fish that had just been hauled in from the sea near Point Conception. They walked along the dunes of the northern coast, seeing what most of us may now only see from the window of a moving train.

Although the expedition came and went in less than a week, Santa Barbara would become an important place to the new Californians in the years to come. Some of the men who walked up the beach that winter would return, as members of the founding garrison of the Presidio. Today we recognize the Anza expedition's journey and its importance to our country through the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. Descendants of those original colonists work with organizations like the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation to honor their pioneering ancestors and to remember a California and a Santa Barbara that was still yet to be.



## Presidio

Founded April 21, 1782, the Santa Barbara Royal Presidio was the last in a chain of four military fortresses built by the Spanish along the coast of Alta California, then a wilderness frontier. Others had been established at San Diego, San Francisco and Monterey. Padre Junípero Serra, well known for his leadership in founding the California missions, blessed the site of the Santa Barbara Presidio four years prior to the establishment of the Mission of Santa Barbara in 1786. El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park encompasses much of the original Presidio site and is located in modern downtown Santa Barbara at the intersection of Santa Barbara and East Canon Perdido Streets.

The presidios played a vital role in the occupation of New Spain. They protected the missions and settlers against attack, provided a seat of government, and guarded the country against foreign invasion. The Santa Barbara Presidio was both military headquarters and governmental center of the entire region extending from the southern limits of present day San Luis Obispo County to and including the Pueblo of Los Angeles.

The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation operates El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park, Santa Barbara's 18th century birthplace, under a unique agreement with California State Parks.

## MORE INFORMATION

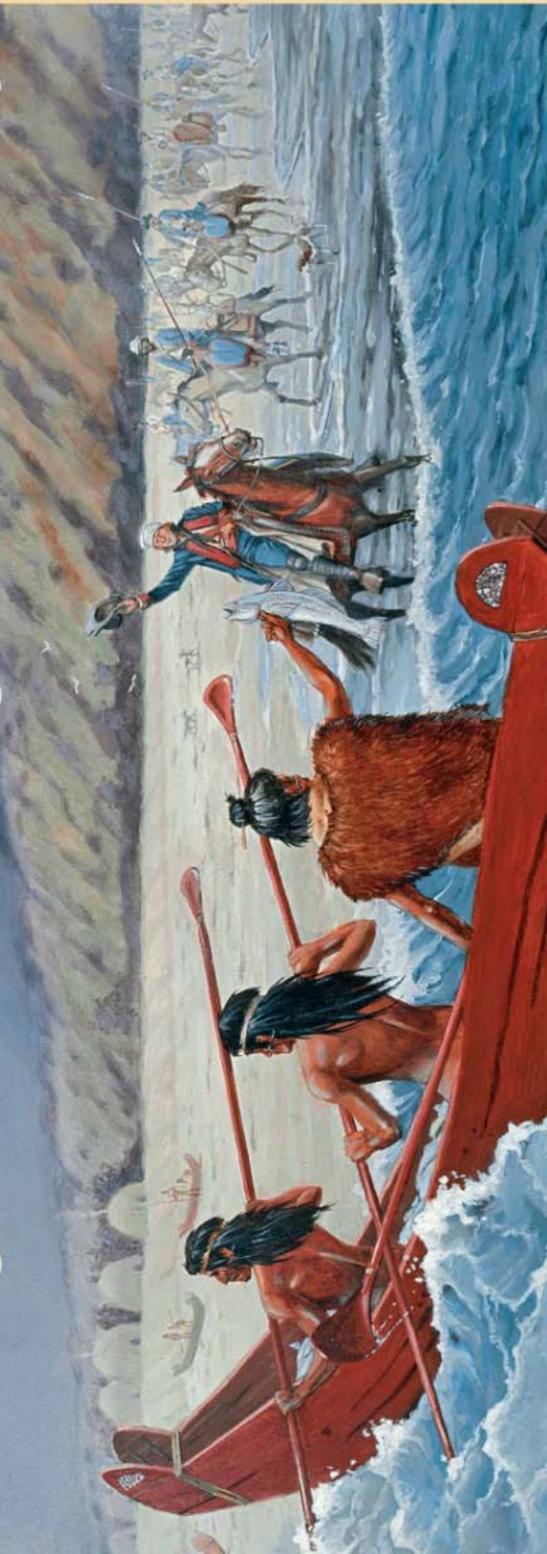
- California Coastal Trail**  
[www.californiacoastaltrail.info](http://www.californiacoastaltrail.info)
- California State Parks (Channel Coast District)**  
[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)
- Chumash Maritime Association**  
[www.chumashmaritime.org](http://www.chumashmaritime.org)
- Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Center**  
[www.dunescenter.org](http://www.dunescenter.org)
- Mission La Purísima**  
[www.lapurisimamission.org](http://www.lapurisimamission.org)
- Mission Santa Barbara**  
[www.santabarbaramission.org](http://www.santabarbaramission.org)
- National Park Service**  
*Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail*  
[www.nps.gov/juba](http://www.nps.gov/juba)
- Santa Barbara County Parks**  
[www.countyofsb.org/parks](http://www.countyofsb.org/parks)
- Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History**  
[www.sbnature.org](http://www.sbnature.org)
- Santa Barbara County Trails Council**  
[www.sbtrails.org](http://www.sbtrails.org)
- Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians**  
[www.santaynezechumash.org](http://www.santaynezechumash.org)
- South Coast Railroad Museum**  
[www.goletadepot.org](http://www.goletadepot.org)
- Trails & Rails/Amtrak's Coast Starlight Route**  
[www.nps.gov/findapark/trailsandrails/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/findapark/trailsandrails/index.htm)
- Vandenberg Air Force Base**  
[www.vandenberg.af.mil](http://www.vandenberg.af.mil)

**Text:** Torie Quinonez  
**Design:** Cindy LaVasseur, Garcin Media Group  
**Map:** GreenInfo Network and NPS  
**Cover Painting:** David Rickman, courtesy of the National Park Service  
This brochure was produced by the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation in partnership with the National Park Service/  
Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) works to protect, preserve, restore, reconstruct, and interpret historic sites in Santa Barbara County. With the help of continuing education programs and exhibits, SBTHP strives to encourage community involvement and foster an appreciation for Santa Barbara County's distinct history. Learn more at [www.sbthp.org](http://www.sbthp.org).

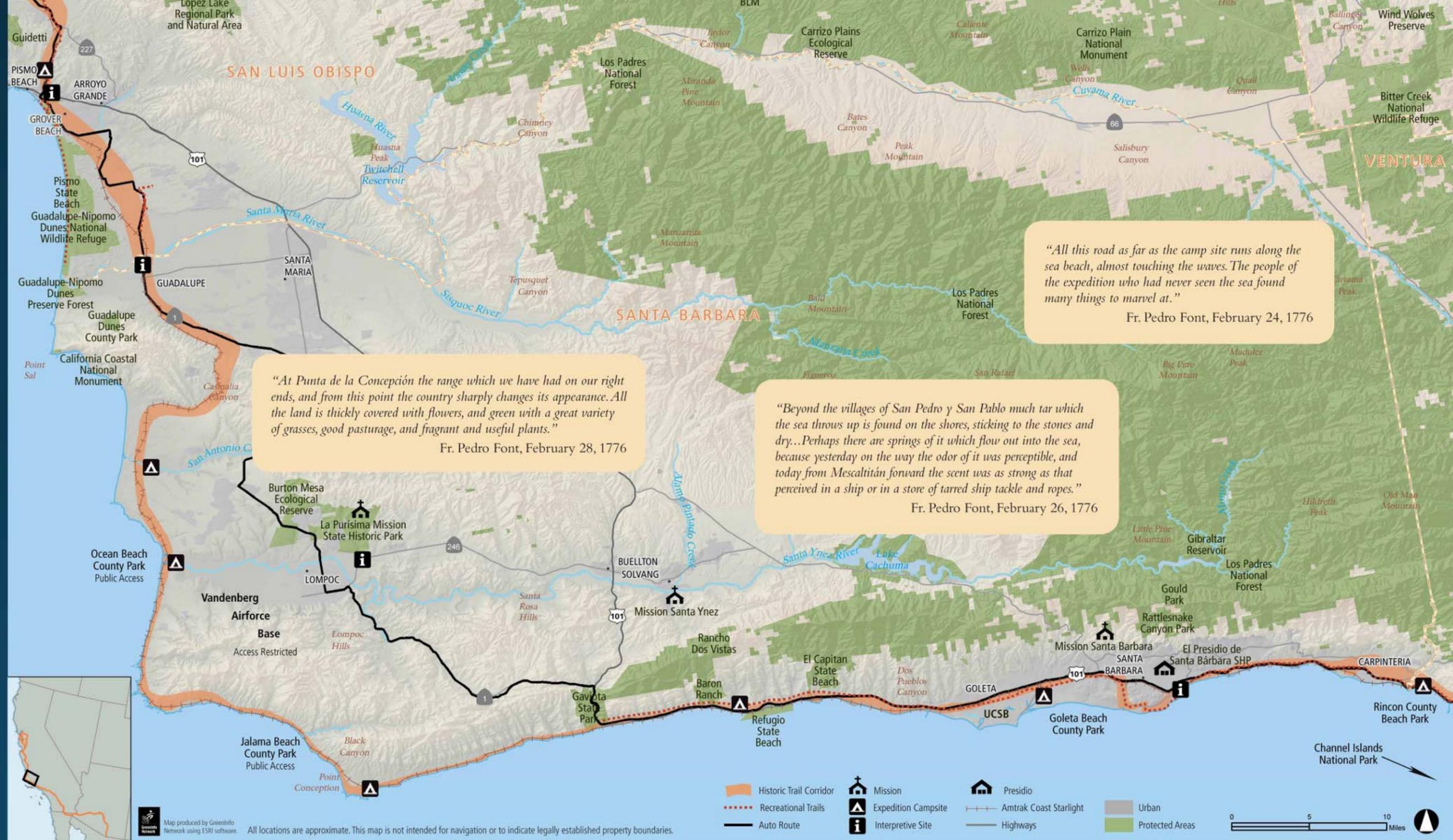
This publication was made possible in part by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Program. The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.

## Following the Anza Trail through Santa Barbara County



# The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

## Santa Barbara County



*“At Punta de la Concepción the range which we have had on our right ends, and from this point the country sharply changes its appearance. All the land is thickly covered with flowers, and green with a great variety of grasses, good pasturage, and fragrant and useful plants.”*  
Fr. Pedro Font, February 28, 1776

*“Beyond the villages of San Pedro y San Pablo much tar which the sea throws up is found on the shores, sticking to the stones and dry...Perhaps there are springs of it which flow out into the sea, because yesterday on the way the odor of it was perceptible, and today from Mescaltitán forward the scent was as strong as that perceived in a ship or in a store of tarred ship tackle and ropes.”*  
Fr. Pedro Font, February 26, 1776

*“All this road as far as the camp site runs along the sea beach, almost touching the waves. The people of the expedition who had never seen the sea found many things to marvel at.”*  
Fr. Pedro Font, February 24, 1776

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail was established by an act of Congress in 1990 as part of the National Trails System. The 1,200-mile trail in the U.S. begins in Nogales, AZ and ends in San Francisco, CA. The trail traces the route of the 1775-1776 Anza Expedition as closely as can be determined by historical research.

The historic corridor through Santa Barbara County traverses beaches, urban areas, rocky coastline, and wind-swept dunes. Visitors may drive the automobile route along the U.S. Highway 101 and California Highway 1. Bicyclists take advantage of much of the historic trail coinciding with the Pacific Coast Bike Route throughout the county. Hikers can experience

the route on foot along the California Coastal Trail, which follows the Anza Trail through those sections accessible to the public. Hikers, cyclists, pedestrians, and even equestrians enjoy the Obern Trail, which connects UC Santa Barbara and Goleta Beach County Park with the City of Santa Barbara. George and Vivian Obern were instrumental in

planning the 1976 bicentennial re-enactment of the Anza Expedition. Unfortunately, most sections of the historic trail corridor from Gavito State Beach to the northern limit of Vandenberg Air Force Base are inaccessible to the public. A spectacular experience of this stretch of coast may be had from Amtrak's Coast Starlight train, running

daily from Los Angeles. Access to several miles of the otherwise restricted areas is available at Ocean Beach County Park and Jalama Beach County Park. Since much of the historic trail runs along the county's beaches, some sections are only accessible at low tide.