

Los Angeles County – San Gabriel to Hidden Water





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Scenes from today’s Mission San Gabriel, the mission itself, a *tuna* (cactus) in its gardens and a memorial to Rivera y Moncada and Father Garcés. Photo: NPS and Ron Ory

Driving Directions for Auto Route

Continue west on I-10. As you approach downtown Los Angeles (L.A.), take the New Avenue exit north to S. Ramona St. to visit the Mission San Gabriel, and the *Gabrielino-Tongva* portion of Smith Park (about half a kilometer east of the Mission). To get to the park, turn right at Junipero Serra Dr. to W. Broadway. To continue onward, return to I-10 west to I-5. From I-5, take the Pasadena Freeway off-ramp to the Figueroa St. exit. Turn left onto Avenue 26 to the Los Angeles River Center and Gardens. Get directions to El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument, the birthplace of Los Angeles in 1781. Continue north on I-5, turn west on CA 134 and transition to US 101 north.

Hiking/Biking Ideas

The Los Angeles River Trail (570 West Avenue 26) is an enjoyable way for hikers and bikers to travel from the 4,000-acre Griffith Park to Elysian Park. Along the Rio Hondo and Skyline trails hikers and wildlife collect from within this busy city. Access of the Skyline trail is from the Whitter Narrows Nature Center. Leaving L. A., trails at the Los Encinos and Malibu Creek State Parks, both off 101, can also be explored.



The Anza mural at the Los Angeles River.

Photo: NPS

L.A. People

Near the original San Gabriel Mission were the sites of the Isantgangna and Aquibit *Rancherías*. These were Native American villages of the Gabrieliño-Tongva people who had lived in the area for thousands of years before Father Serra founded the Mission in 1771. One of the first non-native settlers of L.A. was José Vicente Félix, an Anza expedition member. His wife had died in childbirth at La Canoa on the first night out from Tubac, but his large family lived on. Griffith Park is part of the original Los Félix land grant, while the City of Los Angeles is on a large piece of *pueblo* lands granted by Carlos III, King of Spain, in 1781. More than half of the original settlers of the *pueblo* had African ancestors. All the *pobladores* were free to start a new life.

About Your Visit to Los Angeles County

The expedition entered the county from the east past San Dimas and went on to Mission San Gabriel Arcángel. The colonists stayed at the mission for about six weeks while Anza, Font and some soldiers went to San Diego to help quell an American Indian rebellion there. Later, the colonists traveled west from the mission to cross the Los Angeles River, entering the San Fernando Valley and crossing the Simi Hills at Calabasas.

Sites of Interest

A. Mission San Gabriel Arcángel and Expedition Camp #62 (and #71)

On January 4, 1776, the expedition reached the mission, their first outpost of the Spanish empire in (*Alta*) California. Anza had visited the mission at its first site on his 1774 trip, and the current site on his colonizing expedition. He remained January 4-6, 1776, and then went to San Diego. Camps #63 to #70 were therefore during that side-trip. Returning February 12, he continued to Monterey on February 21 with most of the colonists. The mission today (537 West Mission Drive, San Gabriel) is a working parish, with a museum and gardens. Nearby, take the City of San Gabriel historical walk and visit Smith Park (232 W. Broadway) to learn about the Gabrieliño-Tongva people. The Whittier Narrows Recreation Area (1000 N. Durfee Ave. in S. El Monte) features ranger tours and bird-watching walks. Near its southeastern edge at the *Río* (River) Hondo, a plaque (at the southwest corner N. San Gabriel Blvd. and N. Lincoln Ave.) marks the location of the first mission.

B. El Pueblo de la Reina Los Angeles Historic Monument

One contingent of settlers, led by *Fernando de Rivera y Moncada*, used the Anza trail in 1781 to found the pueblo of Los Angeles (L.A.). During that expedition (which was divided into three parties) Rivera and Father Garcés, were killed at Yuma by the Quechan tribe that had been so friendly to Anza. Now in downtown Los Angeles, the site of the original settlement includes the Plaza, Olvera Street, the Ávila Adobe Museum, and other historic buildings (125 Paseo de la Plaza).

C. Elysian Park and Griffith Park to Expedition Camp #72

At Elysian Park (835 Academy Road, L.A.), a plaque (CA #655) placed at the North Broadway entrance to the park indicates that the Portolá party crossed the Los Angeles River (*Río Porciúncula*) at the site of today's Broadway Bridge. It's believed that the Anza expedition crossed here also. Along the L.A. River Trail, a large mural depicts abstract images of Anza and indigenous people along the concrete walls of the flood-control channel. The expedition's camp for February 21, 1776 (#72, Puertezuelo) was inside Griffith Park, where today can be found the The Autry Museum of Western Heritage (4700 Zoo Drive), where the 1772 Joseph María García Manuscript can be found that contains music of Anza's time.

D. Malibu Creek State Park to Calabasas and Expedition Camp #73

Camp was made on February 22, 1776 at *Agua Escondida* (hidden water). Its exact location is uncertain. Today, nearby Malibu Creek State Park is within the Santa Monica Mountains and incorporates Las Virgenes Creek. Places to visit include Juan Bautista de Anza Park (3701 Lost Hills Road), the Sepúlveda Adobe in the State Park and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, which also includes the Satwiwa Native American Indian Natural Area and Culture Center.

Learning On The Trail in Los Angeles County

Questions on the Trail

On March 24, 1776, Fr. Francisco Garcés arrived at the Mission San Gabriel after wandering through the Colorado and Mojave deserts with Sebastián Tarabal. He stayed two weeks, and he presided over the marriage of expedition member Feliciano Arballo to Juan Francisco López on April 7, with Sebastián and Sgt. Grijalva serving as witnesses.



Mission San Gabriel Photo: Ron Ory

On his way back home from Monterey to San Miguel de Horcasitas, Anza returned to Mission San Gabriel on April 29, 1776 with several soldiers and Father Font.

Question: By how many days did they miss Father Garcés? By how many days did they miss the marriage? Question: Could they visit the Los Angeles *Pueblo*?

On the CD: The Morning Hymn of the Missions

El Cántico del Alba and the *Alabado* (on the psaltery)

After much hardship, the Anza party arrived at the Mission San Gabriel on January 4, 1776. Father Font's journal states that he played his *psalterio* (psaltery) on January 6 at the Mass where thanks were given for delivering the colonists safely to California. Anza, Font and several soldiers left on January 7 with governor Fernando de Rivera y Moncada to help deal with an uprising of the local native tribe at Mission San Diego (the Kumeyaay) where a priest was killed. The uprising having been over before their arrival, Anza and his men never fought the natives there, and felt somewhat useless. On February 9, they left San Diego for San Gabriel and, upon their arrival, learned that some deserters had stolen chocolate, mules and other supplies (Moraga went after them and later caught up to them near the Colorado River.) Back at San Gabriel, Anza was understandably depressed about the delays to the expedition, the dwindling supplies for the colonists, the lack of cooperation of Rivera and the deserters. Font played his psaltery for him on February 18 to cheer him up. Perhaps *El Cántico del Alba* was one of the songs Font played. It was well known at all the missions. Both songs can still be heard today during musical performances at missions throughout California.

Additional Resources

Mission San Gabriel Arcángel – 428 S. Mission Dr., San Gabriel, CA 91776; tel.: 626-457-3048, web: sangabrielmission.org

Smith Park – San Gabriel Parks and Recreation Dept 425 S. Mission Drive, San Gabriel, California 91776; tel.: 626-308-2875, web: sangabrielcity.com/

Whittier Narrows Park & Nature Center – L.A. County Department of Parks and Recreation; tel.: 626-575-5523, web: lacountyparks.org

Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles Historic Monument – 125 Paseo de la Plaza, Los Angeles, CA 90012; tel.: 213-625-5045, web: cityofla.org/ELP/

Elysian Park – 835 Academy Rd., Los Angeles, CA 90012; tel.: 213-485-5054, web: laparks.org/

Griffith Park – 4730 Crystal Springs Dr., Los Angeles, CA 90027; tel.: 323-913-4688, web: lacity.org

Los Angeles River Center – 570 W. Ave. 26, Los Angeles, CA 90065; tel.: 323-221-8900, web: lamountains.com/parks.asp?parkid=32

Los Encinos State Historic Park and Malibu Creek State Park; tel.: 818-251-2100; web: parks.ca.gov