

San Francisco County – Lake Merced to the Presidio



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**Driving Directions for Auto Route**

Take CA Highway 1 north (19th Avenue). It jogs right through Golden Gate Park and then jogs left to become Park Presidio. After crossing Anza Street, look for Lake Street on the right. Turn right onto Lake Street and look for parking to explore Mountain Lake Park at the ends of the streets to the left. Continue east on Lake Street and turn left on Argüello into the Presidio of San Francisco and Golden Gate National Recreation Area. Turn left at Lincoln Blvd. and continue to the water’s edge and the foot of the Golden Gate Bridge at Ft. Point. As an alternative route to reach the bridge, continue on CA Highway 1 though the Presidio. To visit the Mission, see the next page. Rejoin the route on CA Highway 1/280.

**Hiking/Biking Ideas**

The historic trail enters San Francisco County near Lake Merced. Immediately west of the lake is part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. From either place, walk due north to reach Golden Gate Park. From Mountain Lake Park, walk to the Golden Gate Bridge area and Fort Point on a hiking trail that roughly traces the route of the expedition. All of these parks have bicycle paths.



Photo: Benjamin and Winston Elstob.

The bicentennial reenactment (1976) of Anza's visit has led to festivities each June at the Presidio. It was dedicated on September 17, 1776 when Lt. Moraga took formal possession in the name of King Carlos III of Spain.

The first baby baptized at Mission Dolores, on August 10, 1776, was Francisco de los Dolores Soto y Espinosa, son of expedition members. The first American Indian baptism was in June of 1777. The young man, Chamis of the Yelamu, was from Chuchui. He was given the Christian name Francisco Moraga, Lt. Moraga serving as his sponsor. Entry #7 in the marriage book shows that in April, 1778, he became the first Indian to marry at the Mission, taking Cathalina de Bonónia (native name Paszém) as his bride.

## About Your Visit to San Francisco County

After traveling up the San Francisco peninsula, Anza, Moraga and Font and a small expedition of men made camp at Mountain Lake March 27-28, 1776. They selected the sites for the *Presidio* and Mission, and it was left to Lt. Moraga to return with the settlers on June 27. San Francisco was to become the new home for many of Anza's colonists.

### Sites of Interest

#### A. Lake Merced

The expedition passed to the east of Lake Merced. Adjacent to a portion of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and the San Francisco Zoo, this park is best accessed from Highway 1 via Font Boulevard. The Sutro Library branch of the California State Library is also located nearby (480 Winston Dr.). There, visitors can learn more about the history of the area.

#### B. Golden Gate Park

The expedition passed through what would become this long slender park. The man-made park found there today bears little resemblance to the drifting sand and stiff winds that Anza found there. Biking along its many trails is a good way to see the park. It is several miles from the park through a residential neighborhood and the Presidio to the Golden Gate Bridge.

#### C. Mountain Lake Park and Expedition Camp #95

The exploratory expedition camped here (37° 47' 17" N 122° 28' 12" W) while they investigated the area, selecting the sites for the Presidio and the Mission. They noted lakes, lagoons and springs, since the colony needed a water source. This City of San Francisco park is a good place to stop and consider Anza's trek. There's an interpretive panel describing Anza's visit.

#### D. Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Presidio of San Francisco

Anza stood precariously at the edge of some white cliffs (near Fort Point, 37° 48' 38" N, 122° 28' 33" W) and decided where to build the Presidio for Spain's northernmost outpost. The beautiful forested recreation area is in stark contrast to the bare sand dunes found there in Anza's time. The area includes: Fort Point; the site of the original presidio around Pershing Square; a remnant of the presidio *comandante's* house; many trails; and the Visitor's Center (50 Moraga Ave.).

#### E. Mission San Francisco de Asís (Mission Dolores)

Anza, Moraga, and Font surveyed the area, and Anza selected the future mission site near a spring and lagoon and named it *Nuestra Señora de Los Dolores*. The mission was located near the *Costanoan Ranchería* (village) of Chuchui, and it was the tribes collected at the mission who built the structure seen today. It is the oldest intact building in San Francisco. To reach the Mission (3321 16th St.) from the Presidio, take Van Ness Ave./US-101 and turn right on 16th Street to Dolores Street. Here, and at the California Historical Society (678 Mission St.), visitors can learn of the changes to the city since Anza's time.

## About the Anza Expedition in San Francisco County

*From Father Font's Diary, March 27, 1776*

"I said Mass... We set out from the little arroyo at seven o'clock in the morning, and shortly after eleven halted on the banks of a lake or spring of very fine water near the mouth of the port of San Francisco... We again ascended the sand hills, descended to the arroyo, and crossed high hills until we reached the edge of the white cliff, which forms the end of the mouth of the port, and where begins the great estuary containing islands. The cliff is very high and perpendicular, so that from it one can spit into the sea..."

"We saw the spouting of whales, a shoal of dolphins or tunny fish, sea otter, and sea lions. On this elevation, the commander decided to erect a cross, ordering it made at once so that he might set it up the next day... This place and its vicinity has abundant pasturage, plenty of firewood, and fine water, all good advantages for establishing here the presidio or fort which is planned. It lacks only timber, for there is not a tree on all those hills, though the oaks and other trees along the road are not very far away... Here and near the lake there are *yerba buena* and so many lilies that I had them almost inside my tent..."



*From Anza's Diary – March 29, 1776*

"...At a quarter past seven I packed up our equipage and sent it back by the same route over which we had come with orders to await me at the arroyo of San Matheo. Then, with a party of five soldiers and my father chaplain, I continued to explore the district which I had not covered to the southeast, and the region which overlooks the estuary that runs to the south and inland from the port. I again went to the lake with the spring which I mentioned yesterday, and likewise to the spring which I called Los Dolores..."

(Above) A detail of the map drawn by Father Font, showing the San Francisco Bay and peninsula. He numbered the campsites and indicated the route traveled, as well as the islands, mountains and creeks.

Courtesy of Herbert Bolton, *Anza's California Expeditions*.

(Right) The Golden Gate Bridge and Fort Point during the 1976 Anza reenactment.

[yerba buena translates as "good herb", and is a fragrant wild mint (*Satureja douglasii*).]

*Thursday, March 28 – Here Father Font makes a most prophetic statement,*

"...This mesa affords a most delightful view, for from it one sees a large part of the port and its islands, as far as the other side, the mouth of the harbor, and of the sea all that the sight can take in as far as beyond the Farallones. 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, for it has the best advantages for founding in it a most beautiful city, with all the conveniences desired, by land as well as by sea with that harbor so remarkable and so spacious, in which may be established shipyards, docks, and anything that might be wished."

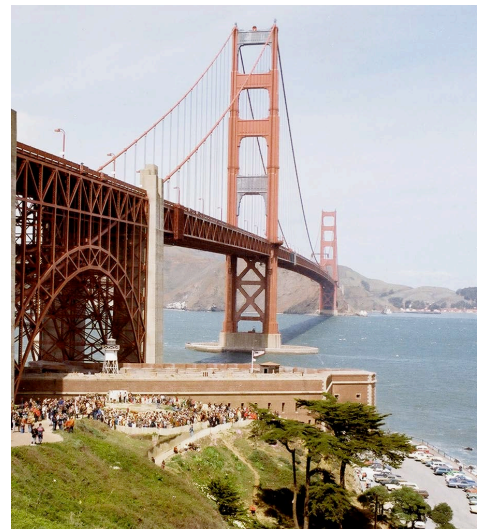


Photo: Benjamin and Winston Elstob

## About the Russians in San Francisco County

Around the time of Anza's expeditions, Russia sent several exploratory, as well as otter and seal hunting, expeditions to the North American coast that Spain had claimed. It was not until 1799, however, that the Russians made a serious effort towards a more permanent base in Sitka, Alaska. The colony at Sitka was not doing well in 1806, and Nikolai Petrovich Rezanov sought help from the Presidio of San Francisco. Entering the port of San Francisco on March 28, 1806, on the "Bostonian" ship *Juno*, he quickly learned that trade was forbidden with anyone outside the Spanish Empire.

He turned his attention to Doña Concepción Argüello, nicknamed Concha, daughter of the *comandante*, Don José Darío Argüello, and Doña María Ignacia Moraga de Argüello, a niece of Don José Joaquín Moraga.

Rezanov wrote to his superiors, "...Associating daily with and paying my addresses to the beautiful Spanish *señorita*, I could not fail to perceive her active, venturesome disposition and character, her unlimited and overweening desire for rank and honors, which, with her age of fifteen, made her, alone among her family, dissatisfied with the land of her birth..."

"I proffered my hand, she accepted... If the Russian government had thought earlier of this part of the world, and estimated adequately its potentialities, and if it had pursued continuously the far-reaching plans of Peter the Great, who, with insignificant resources, dispatched the expedition commanded by Bering, it is safe to say that Nueva California would never have been Spanish territory, the Spaniards having only turned their attention to it since 1760... Should fate decree the completion of my romance... I shall be in a position to serve my country once again, as by a personal examination of the harbor of Vera Cruz, México, and by a trip through the interior parts of America."

Rezanov's proposal of marriage was a shock to Concha's parents. Because of the difference in religions (Russian Orthodox and Roman Catholic), they sought the counsel of the Mission *padres*, and they decided to leave the final decision to the Pope in Rome. Not being able to bring about the marriage immediately, Rezanov did, however, win the approval of house of Comandante Argüello, and the food and supplies he needed were ordered from the *Pueblo* of San José (at the time it was the agricultural center of the area.)

Returning on the *Juno* to Sitka, Rezanov restored the colony to good health, but his plans were cut short by his death in 1807 when he fell from his horse in Siberia. Heartbroken, Concha waited in vain for her suitor to return. She wore the habit of a nun, and dedicated herself to teaching both Spanish and Indian children and comforting the sick. In 1851, when the Dominican Sisters opened a convent nearby, she was among the first novices to join, at the age of 60. She is buried in the convent's cemetery in Benicia, and her father is buried at the Mission Dolores. Their story is told world-wide.



Sea otters, once common on the California coast, were prized for their pelts. The dense fur has up to 10,000 hairs per square inch.

Photo: Monterey Bay Aquarium

### The Russians Are Coming

In 1741, Vitus (Ivan) Bering, a Danish explorer working for the Russian Empire, led a sea expedition that reached the coast of Alaska and opened the eyes of the Russians to fur trade in the area. Over the next several decades, several other Russian voyages to North America were undertaken with an increasing focus on seals and sea otters, whose furs were a valuable trade commodity. News of these voyages, and rumors of Russian advances into the continent, led *Viceroy Antonio Bucareli* of New Spain to write, "I deem it well that any establishment of the Russians on this continent or of any other foreign power ought to be guarded against... to avoid the consequences that would follow from having neighbors other than the Indians."

## About the Early Spanish Settlers in San Francisco County

### A Lonely Outpost

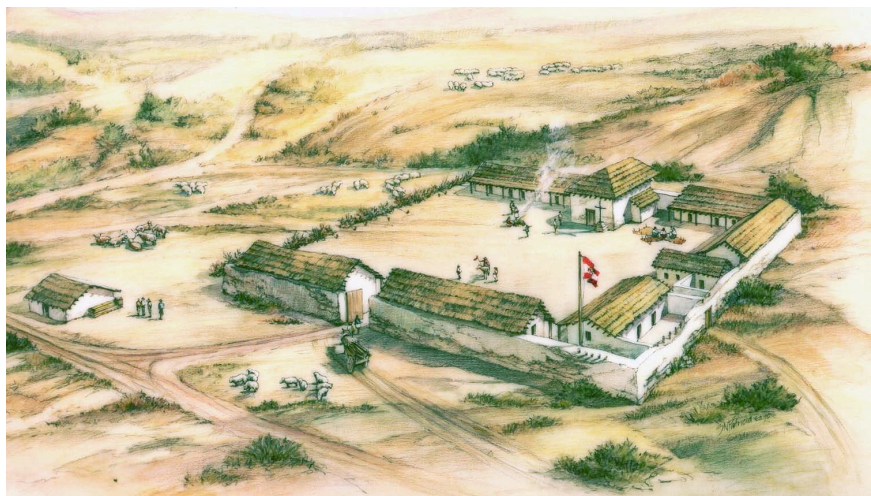
From the Archivo General de la Nación, México comes the following note: Royal *Presidio* and Port of San Francisco, 3 May 1777 I note the families that feel useless in these settlements and wish clearance from my Lt. Col. and Governor Don Felipe de Neve, to wit: Maria Carmen del Valle, Widow of the deceased Juan Salvio Pacheco, Ygnacio Pacheco, Bartolo, María Gertrudis, and Bárbara [her children]; Maria Ángela Chumacero, Widow of Domingo Alviso, Joseph Francisco, Xavier, Ygnacio, [María] Loreta [her children]; Pedro Pérez de la Fuente, and Nicolás Berryessa [both in the capacity of settlers]. These families request your respectful permission to leave these lands because they are lonely all day and do not have anything in these settlements to sustain them; and the last settlers named ask permission to leave, first, because they feel useless; and second, because they have no parents, and are very young and lonely all day.

Josef Joaquín Moraga  
(rubric)

*As it turns out, records show that the families that asked to leave did instead remain in northern California.*

### Founder of a Presidio, a Pueblo, and Missions: José Joaquín Moraga

Captain Anza selected José Joaquín Moraga as his second in command for the 1775-76 colonizing expedition. At the time, Moraga was Alférez or Second Lieutenant at the Royal Presidio of Fronteras. He was about 34 years old when he was ordered to join the expedition as it left *Sonora*, a veteran with over 18 years of service to the king. Lt. Moraga's journey to San Francisco was not straightforward. When the expedition continued onwards from Mission San Gabriel, After the expedition reached Mission San Gabriel, Moraga and a small group of soldiers had to backtrack in search of several deserters. He captured the deserters near the Colorado River and returned them to Mission San Gabriel before hurrying on to rejoin the expedition. Once the colonists were safely in Monterey, Anza took Father Font and Lt. Moraga with him to explore the area of San Francisco and select a site for the presidio and mission. Anza then returned to New Spain to report on the success of the expedition, knowing that Moraga was to stay in Alta California and assume responsibility for bringing the settlers to San Francisco. After considerable delays, Moraga and the colonists left Monterey on June 17, 1776, reaching the future site of Mission *San Francisco de Asís* on June 27, where they began the task of building the mission, the presidio, and their new homes. In time, he also founded the Mission of *Santa Clara de Asís* (January 1777) and the *Pueblo* of San José (November 1777). Moraga's wife, María del Pilar León, and their only son, Gabriel, joined him in 1781. Gabriel enlisted in 1783, marrying Ana María Bernal in 1784. José Joaquín Moraga was commander of the Presidio until his death in 1785. He is buried at Mission Dolores in a marked grave at the foot of the altar.



*Presidio Pasado* (Presidio Past), an interpretive drawing of the Royal Presidio of St. Francis circa 1792. Graphic: NPS Golden Gate National Recreation Area

## Learning On The Trail in San Francisco County



Photo: Phil Valdez

In March of 1776, the Spanish Mission and Presidio sites in San Francisco were selected by Captain Juan Bautista de Anza.

Question: Does the Anza Trail deserve commemoration? What did Anza accomplish?

San Francisco is a name honoring *St. Francis of Assisi*, and was first given to the bay itself. Later, Anza was given the task of bringing colonists to the area, subjects of the Spanish king. This statue of Anza was a gift from the state of Sonora to the City of San Francisco. It is now on display at Lake Merced. An identical one is in Hermosillo in Mexico near Horcasitas, an assembly point for Anza's 1775-76 expedition.

### On the CD: San Francisco

*Waves crashing at Fort Point, and Sea Lions in the bay; Marcha Real; Mission Bells; ¡Ay Susanita!; Cable Car Bells.*

On March 27, 1776, Father Font, Captain Anza, Lt. Moraga and the exploratory group of soldiers arrived in San Francisco and made their way to the area near today's Fort Point. Father Font noted the abundance of sea life and made a prediction that the area would make a beautiful settlement and port. Anza selected the sites for the future Presidio and Mission and then, together with his core honor guard and Font, made his way back to Sonora. He left the rest of the task to Moraga and the colonists. Moraga led a group of colonists and soldiers to the area of today's Mission Dolores on June 27 and there on the 29th, Father Palóu celebrated the first Mass. On September 17, the *Presidio* was dedicated, with the crew of the supply ship *San Carlos* on hand for the ceremonies. These included the singing of the *Te Deum*, accompanied by peals of bells and repeated salvos of cannons and muskets. The Mission was formally dedicated in early October with similar revelry, fulfilling one of the main purposes of the expedition. The Spanish had placed a sign of occupation on their northwest outpost. The *Marcha Real* was their Spanish national anthem. After 1849, sounds of the Gold Rush (e.g. *Oh Susana!*) were heard in San Francisco. The sounds of *Mission Bells* have given way to those of the *Cable Cars*, but those of bygone days still resound.

### Additional Resources

San Francisco Recreation & Parks Dept – McLaren Lodge, 501 Stanyan Street, San Francisco, CA 94117; tel.: 415-831-2700, web: sfgov.org

California State Library, Sutro Library – 480 Winston Drive, San Francisco, CA 94132; tel.: 415-731-4477, web: library.ca.gov

Golden Gate National Recreation Area – Fort Mason, Building 201, San Francisco, CA 94123; tel.: 415-561-4700, web: nps.gov/goga

Presidio Trust – 34 Graham Street, San Francisco, CA 94129; tel.: 415-561-5300, web: presidio.gov

Presidio Visitors Center – 50 Moraga Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94129; tel.: 415-561-4323, web: nps.gov/prsf

Mission San Francisco de Asís (Mission Dolores) – 3321 16th Street, San Francisco, CA 94114; tel.: 415-621-8203, web: missiondolores.org

California Historical Society – 678 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94105; tel.: 415-357-1848, web: californiahistoricalociety.org

Learning On The Trail in San Francisco County

Look at the illustrations below made by artist and historian David Rickman. Which do you think best depicts Anza's travels in the area of San Francisco? What part of the expedition is the other illustration showing then? What can you find in these spots today that Anza could have seen?



Graphics: David Rickman

