



California Council for  
the Social Studies  
[www.ccss.org](http://www.ccss.org)

# OCCASIONAL PAPERS

Volume 5, Number 1 Spring 2017



## TEACHING ABOUT THE ENDURING LEGACY OF NORTH AMERICA'S SPANISH COLONIES: JUAN BAUTISTA DE ANZA

By

Maggie Beddow, Ph.D., California State University, Sacramento

Mimi Coughlin, Ph.D., California State University, Sacramento

Cheyenne Powell, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Shirley Rominger Intermediate School, Winters

Octavio Melchor, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher, Shirley Rominger Intermediate School, Winters

**T**his paper looks at one collaborative “work in progress” in which educators, drawing upon the resources and support of the National Park Service and the California Geographic Alliance, are working together to develop new curriculum for 5<sup>th</sup> graders related to the Juan Bautista de Anza Expedition, 1775-1776. This specific under-told story in American history was shared by the authors of this article at the recent 2017 California Council for the Social Studies conference in Sacramento, providing teachers and students an opportunity to explore a larger overarching inquiry - “What is the legacy of the continent’s colonial histories on modern North America?”

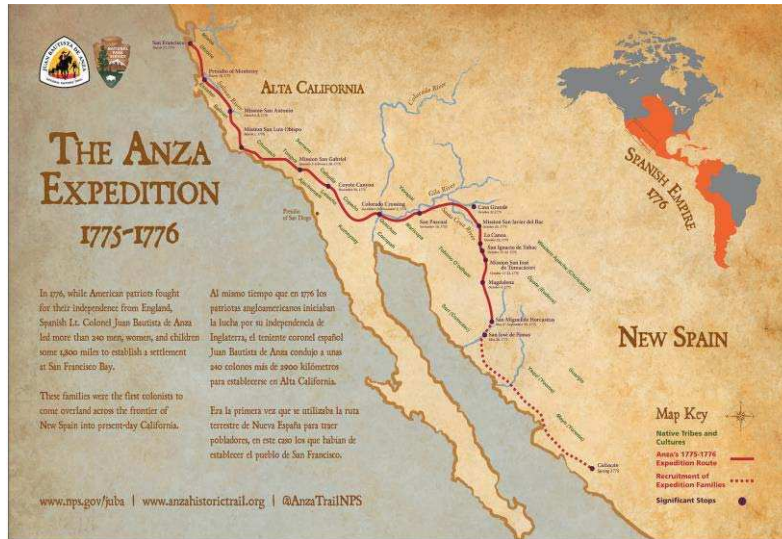
The breadth and depth of this guiding question can be investigated with sources that require a variety of skill sets and disciplinary lenses that are developed over time. Age appropriate sub-questions can be addressed as students build upon their understanding. While the focus at the 5<sup>th</sup> grade is primarily on developing a concrete understanding of the people, places, and ideas involved in the Anza Expedition, the same source

materials can be examined with increasingly complex interpretations as additional layers of the central inquiry are explored in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.

Juan Bautista de Anza was a soldier of Basque-Spanish origins who was stationed in North America at the height of the Spanish Empire in the 1770’s, just as the British Empire was facing the prospect of losing control of her colonies on the Atlantic coast of what is now the United States. Analogously, Spain was seeking to extend and strengthen colonial control on the Pacific coast of what is also now the United States of America.

In his first expedition, while traveling initially with a small group of experienced trailblazers who had gained knowledge from native communities, Juan Bautista de Anza identified a viable overland route from northern Mexico to the missions on the California coast. This trail provided a useful link between the two areas of Spanish control. Based on this success, Anza was then directed by the Spanish crown to launch a second expedition bringing settlers to establish permanent communities in

Northern California. He thus recruited a multi-ethnic group of 300 men and women, along with their children, acquiring 1,000 head of cattle and pack animals to make the arduous and treacherous 1,800-mile journey with him and his group (see below the map of The Anza Expedition, 1775-1776.) Anza felt confident that he could lead this group, with all the supplies they would need to start a new life, across rivers, through deserts, and over mountains using the same trail that he had previously scouted. The story of this expedition is at the heart of the lessons developed and presented here.




Map of the Anza Expedition 1775-1776.

Source: National Park Service and Anza Historic Trail

### Why Teach About Juan Bautista de Anza?

With shifting demographics in California, teaching about Spanish colonization in classrooms is particularly relevant. A quick glimpse at the 2015-16 table below shows that 54% of K-12 students in California’s public schools identified as Hispanics/Latinos, a four percent increase since 2009-10 (CDE DataQuest, 2016).


 California Department of Education  
 Educational Demographics Unit

---

Select Year

Select Report

Ethnicity	Number of Students	Percent of Total Enrollment
Hispanic or Latino of Any Race	3,360,562	53.97%
American Indian or Alaska Native, Not Hispanic	34,704	0.56%
Asian, Not Hispanic	551,229	8.85%
Pacific Islander, Not Hispanic	30,436	0.49%
Filipino, Not Hispanic	156,166	2.51%
African American, Not Hispanic	361,752	5.81%
White, Not Hispanic	1,500,932	24.10%
Two or More Races	192,146	3.09%
None Reported	38,810	0.62%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,226,737</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: CDE DataQuest, 2015-16

Shortly after the CDE released its 2015-16 DataQuest K-12 demographics statistics, the Sacramento Bee published a story on July 29, 2016 entitled “California’s new public school history standards reflect state’s diversity” (Magagnini, 2016). Although the title was a misnomer in that the state’s History-Social Science Framework was indeed updated but not the History-Social Science standards themselves, Magagnini stated,

“After 10 years, thousands of public comments and contentious debates, the California Department of Education has rewritten the history curriculum for California’s more than 6.2 million public school students. The new History-Social Science Framework for grades K-12 was adopted by the state school board on July 14, 2016. It reflects the struggles and progress of LGBT Americans in the United States and California. It also contains more detail on Latino history, along with the role Filipinos played in both World War II and the United Farm Workers movement. It includes sections on the impact of the missions on California Indians and the challenges faced by Chinese and Japanese immigrants, including the Asian Exclusion Act of 1882 and the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans in World War II” (p. 1).

Magagnini then quoted Thomas Adams, Deputy Superintendent for Instruction and Learning in the California Department of Education, who acknowledged, “We want students to understand that California and this country developed in part because of people like them. At the same time, it’s never been a smooth story of progress. It’s one in which people have had to struggle for equality.” Similarly, editors Bigelow and Peterson of *Rethinking Columbus – Expanded Second Edition* (2017, p. 17) stated, “Students are asked to explore the impact [of Columbus’ legacy] on this indigenous population of the Spanish imperial system and its three basic institutions: the mission, the presidio, and the pueblo... According to a Library of Congress-produced curriculum that exemplified this seemingly neutral inquiry, ‘The story of the Americas, more than any other area of the world, is the story of peoples and cultures coming together,’ resulting in ‘a cultural mixture.’” And this story must be told accurately, unlike what occurred recently in Texas in 2016. According to a November 29, 2016 *TakePart* article entitled “Textbooks Are the Education Ground Zero of America’s Culture Wars: A fight in Texas is the latest battle over what the nation’s students are being taught,” the author states, “At issue in Texas is a push to include Mexican American history in the state history curriculum; more than half the state’s 5 million students are Latino, and most are Mexican American. Given that Texas history is intertwined with Mexico’s, some educators say it makes sense...” However, after adopting a textbook called the *Mexican American Heritage*, the State Board of Education was forced, under pressure from public protests, to pull the textbook due to its inaccuracies and what many called a racist and stereotypical portrayal of Latinos. Sadly, this is not the only controversial instance of a public school textbook adoption debacle and in fact, it was reported in 1991 that “In California, the State Education Department last year rejected social studies textbooks from seven publishers because they did not meet the state’s rigorous new standards for cultural diversity” (Celis, 1991, p. 1).

Hence, as Adams alluded, teaching about the Anza Expedition helps Latino students to know that the development of California was due to people “like them.” It builds knowledge about the ‘cultural mixture’ of the Spanish and native indigenous during the early colonization of Alta California – an important historical event that was occurring on the heels of the American Revolution against the British on the Atlantic coast. It explains the Spanish influence over the shared heritage between the United States and Mexico, as well as the Spanish influence on its geographical names and sites, language, traditions, religion, and other commonalities that have endured over centuries.

## Teaching About Juan Bautista de Anza

In this section, we share teaching resources and lesson ideas that can be used by educators who want to incorporate the Anza Expedition into their teaching. We also share some specific ways in which two 5th grade teachers - Cheyenne Powell and Octavio Melchor from Shirley Rominger Intermediate School (Winters Joint Unified School District) - implemented lessons with their students. They discuss the Anza Expedition five-day curriculum unit they piloted including lesson objectives and goals, planning, implementation, and learning evidence based on student work samples. As you read about this unit, consider how you might modify and/or apply teaching about Anza in your own practice.

### Cheyenne and Octavio's Experiences

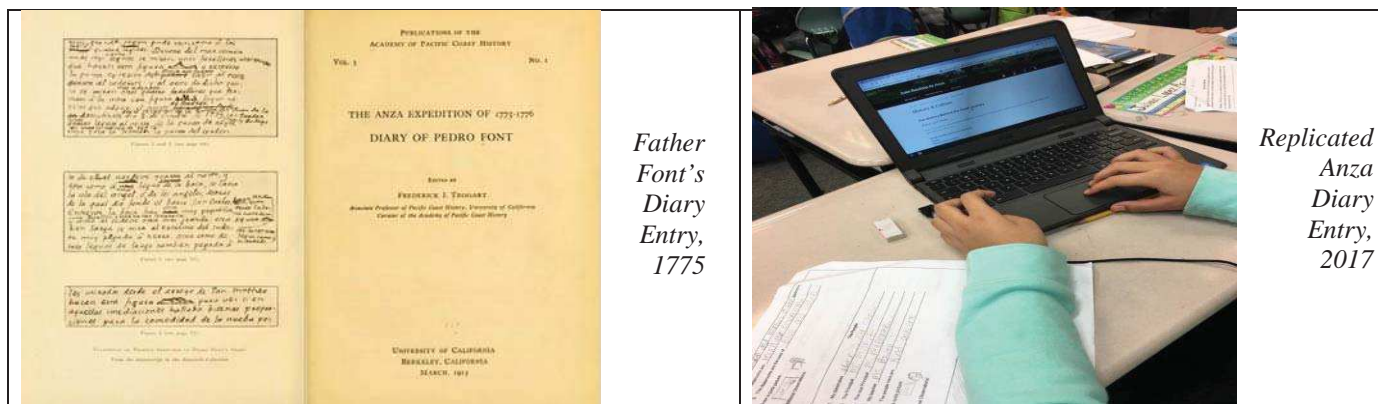
The goal of this curriculum project was to provide our 5<sup>th</sup> grade students, many of whom are Latino, with the background and the history of the Anza Expedition. We set out to teach students about the motivations the Spanish had in securing their land from potential Russian and English encroachment, and to provide students with an alternative perspective of historical events that occurred in 1776 during the early development of what is now the United States. We collaborate with each other and with social studies methods professors, Drs. Mimi Coughlin and Maggie Beddow, to create and implement a five-lesson unit that is designed to help students build background knowledge about the history of the Anza Expedition while making connections to their own lives.

The broad goals and objectives of the Anza unit were to:

1. Discuss and expose students to details about Anza's expedition from Mexico to San Francisco.
2. Learn about the hardships, the route the explorers took, and the role Father Pedro Font played as geographer, chronicler and minister.
3. Produce a journal and map of their school to apply what they learned about being an explorer.

### Implementation

Here we provide a detailed account of each lesson that we taught, with links to some of the resources that we used. We begin by sharing two juxtaposed photos below – a 1775 primary source excerpt from Father Pedro Font's Diary from the Anza Expedition alongside a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student using her Chromebook to create her own diary entry in 2017. This unit allowed students to analyze primary source documents and to link the past to the present. They discussed their experiences and the value that careful observation notes provide as evidence.



*Father  
Font's  
Diary  
Entry,  
1775*

*Replicated  
Anza  
Diary  
Entry,  
2017*

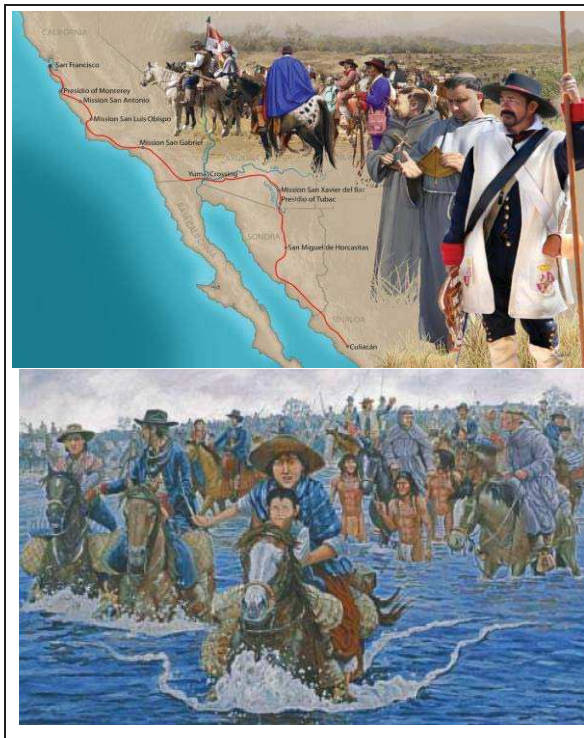
Source: Diary of Pedro Font, Teggart (Ed.) (1913). UC Berkeley

Source: Cheyenne Powell's 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Student, Rominger

### *Lesson 1: Introduction and Overview*

In lesson one, a useful way to begin is with the high-quality 25-minute video about the Anza Expedition produced by the National Park Service which is available in English (“The Anza Expedition, 1775-1776”), and in Spanish (“La Expedición de Anza, 1775-1776”) with English subtitles. The video features re-enactors who bring to life the key figures of Juan Bautista de Anza and Father Pedro Font. The boys and girls who accompanied their families are also depicted in some of the geographic locations along the trail. This gives students a feel or sense for the sights and sounds of the expedition – including the more than 1,000 animals that also made the journey. The film introduced the students to key facts and details that were critical in understanding the scope and risk involved in the overland route from Northern Mexico to the San Francisco Bay Area. As students watched the video, they were required to complete video observation notes. The template would later be submitted at the end of the unit quiz. Students were very engaged and motivated, and were especially interested in the details about the children's experiences on the journey.

An additional way to build interest for students would be to have them review the "Roll Call of Anza Expedition Participants.” Hispanic or Latino students in particular will relate to this video as many will undoubtedly share the same or similar names as a number of the Anza participants. Students will learn that many of the place names in California are also derived from the surnames of people who made this journey, as well as their ancestors or descendants who established permanent homes in California.



Left: This image is taken from the NPS video and shows the people and the places along the Anza trail. In the front are Juan Bautista de Anza and Father Pedro Font.

Information in the video is derived from the daily journals that both Anza and Font kept that described in detail what they saw, did, ate, etc. There are also many descriptions of the interactions they had with the native people and their encounters including how they met, and the challenges posed by the weather and the terrain. A further exploration of Font's records of the expedition is the basis for Lesson 2.

Left: This image is taken from the NPS video and shows the arduous challenges along the Anza trail with the Spanish and Native peoples, along with children.

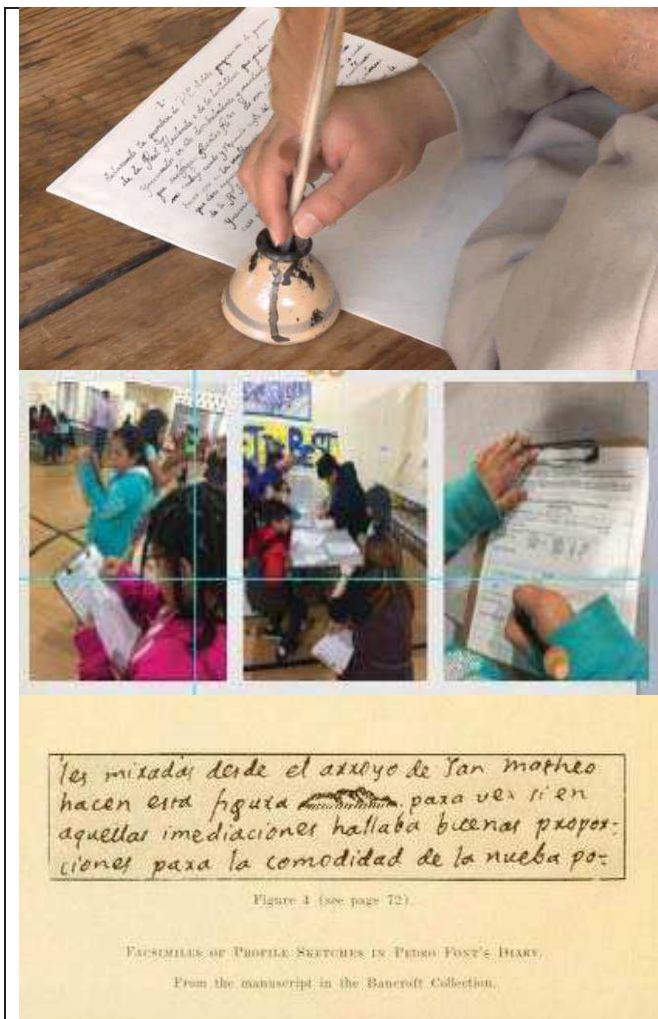
### *Resources referenced in Lesson 1*

- NPS video (English): <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=F89E22B8-C247-E258-6E6D10C2F8CD5828>
- NPS video (Spanish): <https://www.nps.gov/media/video/view.htm?id=4769F7EC-1DD8-B71B-0BFEE9E6D12A5F84>
- Roll Call of Anza Trail Participants: [http://www.solideas.com/DeAnza/TrailGuide/Anza\\_Roll\\_Call.html](http://www.solideas.com/DeAnza/TrailGuide/Anza_Roll_Call.html)

*Lesson 2: Father Pedro Font's Diaries and the Power of Close Observation and Note-taking*

In lesson two, students listened to direct quotes translated from Spanish to English from Father Pedro Font’s diaries. After this reading, students put themselves in Father Font’s shoes to complete a detailed observation note template that described their school. These detailed observation notes serve as a rich source of evidence and the central reason why we know so much about this expedition. An interactive Anza Trail web resource allows teachers to choose excerpts from Font's diaries that correspond to particular locations along the trail. Here is an example below:

“Diary of Pedro Font: April 6. – Camp 104 - We set out from the Cañada de San Vicente at a quarter to seven in the morning, and, at four in the afternoon, halted on a small eminence near the Arroyo del Coyote, which we followed from its source the entire way, having travelled some ten leagues of worse and more rugged road than yesterday, principally to the south, though with some variation. As soon as we set out we encountered rugged mountains everywhere, and in front of us a very narrow, deep ...”.



Left: The top image is a replication of Father Font writing in his diary with a quill pen (taken from the NPS video).

Left: The middle images are of 5<sup>th</sup> grade students taking their own observation notes about the environment around them (unfortunately the rainy day kept them inside.)

Left: The bottom image from Font's actual diary (replicated in *The Diary of Pedro Font, 1775-1776* Edited by Fredeick J. Teggart, University of California, 1913)

Resources used in Lesson 2

- The Anza Historic Trail: <http://www.anzahistorictrail.org/visit/explorer>

### *Lesson 3: Font's Role as Navigator and Geographer*

In lesson three, students learned about the vital role of measuring distances when traveling by role-playing how to successfully navigate the journey through what was largely unmapped territory (note that the Native people who joined the expedition were very familiar with the areas, having traveled through them for trade and other purposes). Along with being with an ordained priest who led Catholic ceremonies on a daily basis, Father Font was also a very well educated mathematician and geographer who was charged with recording locations and distances for the purpose of map making to give Anza the information he needed to make decisions about the direction and pace of each day's travel, as well as when and where to stop for rest breaks.

The ability to accurately measure distance as walked by the group was the key to success. The basic unit of measurement used was the Spanish *vara* (approximately 33 inches and considered a soldier's stride, for example, the size of a step forward). Another measurement was the *league* (which is approximately 5,000 varas and is considered the distance a soldier can cover in an hour of steady marching).

A *vara rod* (similar to a yardstick) was used to draw varas on the sidewalk. Students practiced matching their stride to this distance (which was in most cases much bigger than a typical stride of a child). Once the students were familiar with the size of a *vara*, students were led in a steady march using vara-size strides for one minute.



Left: Father Pedro Font's map of San Francisco Bay.

Made in 1777, it shows the route taken by various Spanish expeditions around the bay. Image: Bancroft Library (brk00012360\_24a)

Source:

[http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=%20The Spanish Presence at Mission Bay, 1775-1833](http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=%20The%20Spanish%20Presence%20at%20Mission%20Bay,%201775-1833)

### Resources used in Lesson 3

The Spanish Presence at Mission Bay, 1775-1833: [http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=%20The Spanish Presence at Mission Bay, 1775-1833](http://www.foundsf.org/index.php?title=%20The%20Spanish%20Presence%20at%20Mission%20Bay,%201775-1833)

*Lesson 4: Vara Maps*

In lesson four, students were grouped together to create maps of various areas on the school campus using yardsticks to measure varas. Because yardsticks are 36 inches instead of 33 inches which is the length of a vara, the groups used a variety of methods to calculate the correct measurement of their area. These maps were collected along with the observation note templates as a way to create a class diary of Shirley Rominger Intermediate School, with the purpose that 200 years from now someone could look at their detailed observation notes to get a glimpse of what life was like for a Rominger student during this time period.



Left: This image shows two versions of maps using vara calculations that were created by two 5<sup>th</sup> grade students to demonstrate how to measure a specific area of their school campus., using vara calculations. These two maps, which were created by Ms. Powell’s students were then added to the documents that were to be included in their diaries.

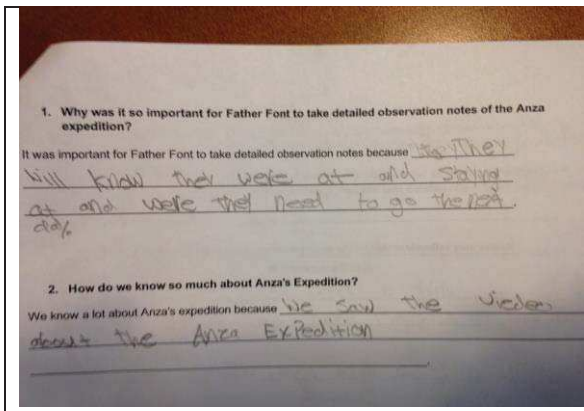
Source: Vara maps drawn by Ms. Powell’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade students

Resources used in Lesson 4

- Observation notes template and vara maps created by students

*Lesson 5: Conclusion and Assessment*

In lesson 5, students began with a review and discussion on what they learned in the previous four lessons. They reflected on their diary notes and what life was like during the Anza Expedition. Students compared historical events occurring on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, and implications on the development of the United States. The lesson culminated with an assessment, giving students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge about concepts related to the Anza unit. The majority of students passed with flying colors!



Left: Image is an excerpt from the final assessment quiz. Below is a partial list of the assessment quiz prompts:

- 1) Why was it so important for Father Font to take detailed observation notes of the Anza expedition?
- 2) How do we know so much about Anza’s Expedition?
- 3) Why did the Anza Expedition travel to their destination?
- 4) How many people all together traveled with Anza on the expedition?
- 5) Why did the group of people travel by walking instead of by boat?

Source: Quiz responses from a student in Ms. Powell’s 5<sup>th</sup> grade classroom

Resources used in Lesson 5

- Final Assessment created by 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers



### Teaching Reflections

#### *Cheyenne Powell:*

Based on my 5<sup>th</sup> grade students' verbal and written responses during the multiple lessons, it's clear that a majority of my students enjoyed the Anza unit and were able to recite multiple accurate facts about the Anza expedition. My students demonstrated basic comprehension of why it was important for Father Font to take detailed observation notes of the Anza expedition. For example, one student noted, "so they will know they were at and staying at and where they need to go the next day." This is clearly in reference to Lesson when students learned about the tools used to navigate the trip. This student was referring to Father Font's role as the recorder of their trip, making maps and taking notes to keep track of their path from Tubac to San Francisco. Another student stated, "it is a very important part of history." While this doesn't necessarily discuss Father Font's role, it does highlight the idea that the Anza expedition was a critical event in the history of California. Finally, a third student described, "People in our time know what happened in their time." This student touched on the idea that the reason why we know about the Anza expedition is because of the detailed observation notes that were taken by Father Font. And in actuality, this was the consensus by the majority of students, affirming how important it is to maintain precise notes which can later be useful for interpretation by historians through the use of primary source documents.

Overall, this unit was an enjoyable one that provoked high engagement levels from my students. Many students shared their enthusiasm for the lessons, and one student wrote on their quiz, "I really liked learning about this and I hope we do it again." This positive feedback is wonderful motivation to continue with the Anza unit for years to come.

#### *Octavio Melchor:*

Fifth-grade students in my class were motivated and eager to learn about the Anza Expedition. It was significant for the students to see people who traveled from current day Mexico to current day California. Students demonstrated their understanding of reasons that prompted the Spanish to populate the northernmost boundaries of the Spanish territory. Students related to the geographic location of San Francisco because we recently went on a field trip on which we walked across the Golden Gate Bridge and had great views of the city of San Francisco.

In response to the question "Why did the Anza Expedition travel to their destination? How many people all together travelled with Anza on the expedition?" one student noted, "The Anza expedition traveled because they wanted to started a new life. 300 people traveled with Anza." Another student noted, "The Anza expedition traveled because they needed to get over to more places. Get people traveled with Anza." Further, another student noted, "The Anza expedition traveled because they wanted to start a new life and secure San Francisco. 300 people traveled with Anza." In response to another question, "Why did the group of people travel by walking instead of by boat?" one student noted, "Because they were too many people to go on the boat and the waves were too dangerous." In another response, a student concluded "They went by walking because the waters were big and strong. But also because they wouldn't have enough space for the livestock and they wasn't enough room for everybody on the boat for the people." Finally, another student noted, "They went by foot because they had too many supplies, animals and it was too heavy." The general response from students was enjoyment and excitement. Students enjoyed learning about the Anza Expedition and most importantly, history. At the end of the unit, students asked "When we will do more!"

---

### *Next Steps for the Anza Project*

The California Geographic Alliance (CGA) is supporting the expansion and sustainability of this Anza project as a way to continue to promote global understanding and interconnectedness through geography education and literacy among California teachers, students, and the public. The lead authors of this article will be collaborating with CGA in the future to further develop and disseminate Anza curriculum. In addition to following the CCSS website, we encourage you to regularly visit the CGA website at <http://www.calgeography.org/> for updates, and as a way to learn more about geography education.

### References

- Bigelow, B., & Peterson, B. (2017). Rethinking Columbus – Expanded Second Edition. [https://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/columbus/columbus\\_intro.shtml](https://www.rethinkingschools.org/publication/columbus/columbus_intro.shtml)
- California Department of Education Data Quest (2015-16). Retrieved on February 18, 2017 at <http://data1.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/EnrollEthState.asp?Level=State&TheYear=2015-16&cChoice=EnrollEth1&p=2>
- California Department of Education History-Social Science Framework and Content Standards, 2016/1998. Retrieved on February 20, 2017 at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/hs/cf/>
- California Geographic Alliance. Retrieved on March 1, 2017 at <http://www.calgeography.org/>
- Celis, W. (1991). *In truth, Hispanic groups aim to rewrite history*, Retrieved on April 12, 2017 at <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/07/31/education/in-truth-hispanic-groups-aim-to-rewrite-history.html?pagewanted=all>
- National Park Service, Juan Bautista de Anza. Retrieved on January 9, 2017 at <https://www.nps.gov/juba/index.htm>
- Magagnini, S. (July 29, 2016). *California's new public school history standards reflect state's diversity*. Retrieved from the Sacramento Bee on March 24, 2017 at <http://www.sacbee.com/news/local/education/article92446782.html>
- TakePart (November 29, 2017). *Textbooks are the education ground zero of America's culture wars: A fight in Texas is the latest battle over what the nation's students are being taught*. Retrieved on April 9, 2017 at <http://www.takepart.com/article/2016/11/29/textbooks-education-ground-zero-americas-culture-wars>
- Teggart, F. J. (Ed.) (1913). *The Anza expedition of 1775-1776; diary of Pedro Font*. University of California, Berkeley Publishers.



CCSS Occasional Papers is a peer-reviewed newsletter that is published biannually, generally in September/October and January/February. The copyright on this peer-reviewed publication is held by the California Council for the Social Studies. The article is designed for use by K-12 and pre-service educators in classrooms and professional development meetings. Republication for sale is not permitted. If you are interested in submitting an article on a research-based topic of importance to K-12 social studies curriculum leaders, pre-service teacher candidates, university educators, and/or classroom teachers, contact the CCSS Publications Chair at [pubs@ccss.org](mailto:pubs@ccss.org) or the Occasional Papers Editor at [info@ccss.org](mailto:info@ccss.org) for submission specifications and deadlines.