

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

January 11, 1952

### **The Hard-riding Captain**

Anza's leadership from Mexico to California in 1776 had been superb according to many historians, including Dr. Herbert Bolton of the University of California, who translated from the original Fray Pedro Font's complete diary, a chronicle of the founding of San Francisco. Anza stands out in the double capacity of pathfinder and colony leader. He had previously earned the title of "the hard-riding captain" on his first expedition to California in 1774.

On Anza's first trek to the West Coast he had opened a route from Sonora, Mexico, to the sea. As soon as he returned to Mexico, he was appointed to raise a colony and lead it back to California over the road he had opened. Two hundred and forty persons made the journey with him, including Fray Font, the chaplain, who kept the diary and took the observations.

A comparison of the mode of travel today to that of 1776, and a comparison of the equipment and provisions which are carried today and which were carried in the years of the Anza expeditions covering thousands of miles from Mexico to Monterey, is worthy of note here.

At the Presidio of Tubac, in Arizona, which is still a small and highly interesting settlement on the way to Nogales, Mexico from Tucson, the expedition paused to prepare for the long journey ahead to Monterey, California. At this presidio was finished the assembling of all the men and families who were to go to the new settlement of the port of San Francisco, and here also was completed the collection of all the provisions necessary for the journey, the pack animals, riding animals, and cattle.

The persons included the lieutenant colonel and commander of the expedition, Don Juan Bautista de Anza; Fray Pedro Font, the chaplain of the College of the Holy Cross of Queretaro, three other fathers, the commissary of the expedition, Don Mariano Vidal; Lt. Don Joseph Joachin Moraga; a sergeant, eight veteran soldiers taken from the presidio of Sonora, 20 soldier recruits for Monterey, 10 veteran soldiers from the Presidio of Tubac who went as guard and escort of the expedition; 29 women, wives of the sergeant and 28 soldiers; 135 persons of both sexes belonging to the

families of the soldiers, and four other volunteer families, who were going to remain in Northern California or Monterey; muleteers for three pack trains and the baggage of the commander, the cook, etc.; three vaqueros for the cattle; three servants for the three fathers, three Indian interpreters, making a total of 240 persons. What a sight it must have been to see this group travel over the desert to California and the coast to Monterey.

There were taken 140 mules loaded with provisions, munitions of war, the baggage of the commander and all members of the expedition, other effects belonging to it, and presents in the name of His Majesty for the heathen on the way. In addition to the above there were about 25 pack loads belonging to members of the troop, 500 horses and saddle mules belonging to the expedition and to some individuals and some 30 mares, colts and burros, making a total of 695.

Three hundred twenty-five beeves for provisions on the way, those left over were designed for stock cattle for the new settlement and missions at the Port of San Francisco, and about 30 beeves belonging to individuals were also in the herd.

From Tubac the expedition started the march on Oct. 23, 1775, in the following order, which was carried out through the entire journey: "At a suitable hour an order was given to drive in the cavallada (the herd). While they were being bridled and saddled Mass was said. As soon as the pack trains were ready to start Anza would say 'Everybody mount,' whereupon we all mounted our horses, forming a train in this fashion. Ahead went four soldiers, as scouts to show the road. Leading the vanguard went the commander and then I came (Father Font). Behind me followed the people, men, women and children, and the soldiers who went escorting and caring for their families. The lieutenant with the rear guard concluded the train. Behind him the pack mules, after them came the loose riding animals; and finally all the cattle, so that altogether they made up a long procession.