Juana Briones y Su California

An exhibit at the California Historical Society celebrates a Californio woman, Juana de la Trinidad Briones y Tapia de Miranda, but it goes beyond describing the life of one 19th century woman; the exhibit is a long overdue recognition of the trials and tribulations of the whole community to which she belonged.
The California Historical Society (CHS) describes its exhibit, *Juana Briones y su California: Pionera, Fundadora, Curandera*, as being about the life and times of a “remarkable Californian of Spanish and African descent” who rose above adversity to survive family strife and tumultuous times.

As a descendant myself of several *Californio* families (Bernal, Sibrian, Peralta, Pacheco, Archuleta, Sanchez and Higuera), I think the exhibit is well worth seeing and draws you into a world that has been neglected in the popular view of the history of the west.

Juana was born in 1802 or 1803 to Maria Ysadora Tapia y Hernandez, who had arrived to California as a young child on the Anza colonizing expedition of 1775-76.

Juana’s father, Marcos Joseph Briones y Padres, may have greeted his future wife as the Anza expedition passed through Mission San Luis Obispo or Monterey in March of 1776. Marcos would have been a teenager at the time; he had come to *Alta California* earlier, likely with the 1770 expedition of Gaspar de Portolá. An early California census lists both of Juana’s parents as *mulatos*.

Following the death of Juana’s mother in 1812, the Briones family moved to the site of El Polín Spring, on the grounds of the modern-day Presidio of San Francisco.

This was one of the area’s first Spanish homesteads outside the presidio boundary. In 1820, she
married Apolinaro Miranda y Gutierrez, a soldier whose mother, Maria de los Santa Gutierrez y Osuna, was also an Anza expedition member. Both of Apolinaro’s parents were Indians whose tribal origins were from Sinaloa and Sonora.

Life on the frontier was harsh and unforgiving. Juana and Apolinaro buried at least four children. Juana made numerous complaints to government officials regarding domestic abuse, and in a somewhat rare example, the church and state granted her an ecclesiastic separation from Apolinaro.

Juana was a curandera, a person who knows how to use herbs, wisdom, and knowledge to treat those around her. This brings her closer to me, since my grandmother’s grandmother, Encarnacion Cáceres de Escobar, was a curandera who lived near San José’s New Almaden mines.

Like many curanderas of her time, Juana treated diseases such as smallpox and scurvy. She delivered babies and set broken bones. One of her medicinal herbs was abundant in the area; yerba buena is a mint native to California. It was so popular, the area where Juana settled — the young town that would become San Francisco — was named Yerba Buena.

In 1844, Juana purchased 4,400 acres, entering into
Juana Briones, continued

cattle ranching in what is today Los Altos and Palo Alto. The rancho would have been a refuge far away from her past troubles and the growing town of San Francisco. More land would also give her children opportunities to earn a living. Juana Briones did all this without her husband. He died in 1847, and it is clear she had separated from him several years before.


One thing visitors can see is unique among all others, and it comes from Juana’s rancho.

Visitors to the exhibit can touch a wall saved from her house. It has a unique construction called encanjado that uses a frame of redwood into which mud is placed for insulation.

Juana’s encanjado wall represents characteristics from both Hispanic and American building traditions, perhaps as a result of Juana’s well-documented work as a curandera for people from many backgrounds that came through her life.

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail runs through the site of the Presidio of San Francisco, where Juana spent part of her childhood and early adulthood; the trail is also near the site of Juana’s rancho. Visitors to Esther Clark Preserve, managed by the City of Palo Alto, can find a plaque commemorating Juana, her life and her house.

The CHS exhibit will run until June 8, 2014, and there are many special events organized in connection to it. The society’s web site provides photos of many of the items displayed at the exhibit: http://www.californiahistoricalsociety.org.

About the Author
Greg Bernal-Mendoza Smestad, Ph.D., is a Californio descendant and author of the Anza Trail Guide. A link to Greg’s photos of the California Historical Society exhibit and to her dismantled home is available through the online version of this story at http://www.AnzaHistoricTrail.org/blog.
Sonora Enlightens Anza Society Conference

On March 8, 2014, the Anza Society, in conjunction with Mayor Vidal Vasquez Chacon of Arizpe, Sonora, and other Mexican community leaders made history while holding the 19th annual Anza Society Conference in Banámichi, Sonora, Mexico.

Phil Valdez Jr., president of the Anza Society, along with the board, Anza Society members and scholars attended ribbon cutting ceremonies in nearby Arizpe and La Piedra Lisa. Under blue skies, approximately 115 people were on hand to see the unveiling of historic Anza Trail signs in front of Arizpe’s old adobe church, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, which was begun in 1646 by Jesuits and completed in 1756.

Arizpe was Anza’s home and the place where he is buried (inside the church currently undergoing major art conservation and
construction repairs). Local students from the Alvaro Velazco Rodriguez Elementary School performed Sonoran dances at the outdoor event.

Later that afternoon, the officials, in the presence of locals and Anza Society members, unveiled two more signs mounted in a beautiful stand-alone rectangular rock wall at La Piedra Lisa. This area in the local mountains was where Anza and his troops were attacked by Apaches from above while traveling in a narrow canyon along an arroyo trail.

Locals and tourists stood on top of the spectacular historic viewpoint to see where Anza survived being shot with an arrow en route to Tubac (present-day Arizona).

The conference sessions brought together Mexican and American scholars for further study and understanding of Anza and his contemporaries in the Sonoran region.

**Dr. Piñeda Pablos** (a Director at El Colegio de Sonora in Hermosillo), spoke about the changes over time among the indigenous populations and the Spanish colonists who initially focused on mining and later moved into ranching. Piñeda Pablos showed charts which demonstrated the decline of indigenous populations, mostly due to European diseases, loss of communal lands and poor working conditions in the area.

**Dr. María del Valle Borrero Silva**, history professor at El Colegio de Sonora in Hermosillo, spoke on the topic of soldiers and presidios in protecting Spanish colonial settlements in the region and the problems
and obstacles faced by Anza and others because of Apache and other tribal raiding. Insufficient resources constantly tested Anza and others while they tried to maintain security, soldier morale and survival. The professor also discussed Bourbon reforms implemented during Anza’s time to improve military operations along the entire Spanish frontier, including a controversial policy to relocate certain presidios to other areas.

**Dr. Julianne Burton-Carvajal**, Yale scholar and professor emeritus at UC Santa Cruz, and **Rita Vega-Acevedo**, VP of programs and education of GSHA-SC, presented “15 Momentous Encounters in the Life of Anza” which impacted history and the development of settlement and culture, especially in *Alta California* and New Mexico. One momentous encounter was the coming together of the Yumas (Chief Salvador Palma) and the Spanish, along with Palma’s friendship with Anza and their subsequent trip to Mexico City where Palma requested that he and a few other Yumas receive baptism. Palma also officially petitioned the viceroy and king for missions to be established at Yuma. Another momentous encounter included the historic meeting of Anza and Father Junipero Serra at a Chumash village near Point Conception in April, 1774.

**Dr. Ronald D. Quinn**, professor emeritus of biology at Cal Poly, discussed “Father Font’s Greatest Trial” based on three letters he discovered and Font’s life returning from the Anza Expedition. Quinn described the complexity of Font’s personality and his superiors’ inability to place him in a more secure area resulting in Font’s close call with death during an Apache raid and fire at his home in Magdalena.

**Dr. Michael Weber** spoke about the Spanish culture during the Spanish colonial period, including music and dress. He also discussed fashions of the time, including the use of *rebozos* worn by women and the versatility of fashions available through merchant’s ships to Mexico.

To further enhance understanding of the culture and area, two resident chroniclers, **Sra. Dalia Figueroa** and **Heriberto Corella** spoke about the traditions of Banámichi, including the fact that Sonora remains famous for its beef, agriculture and religious processions and practices.

**Dr. Lourdes Gabikagojeaskoa**, professor of Santa Clara University, was the conference’s keynote speaker. The professor, a Basque, spoke about the importance of Anza and other Basques in the development of Sonora and the expanding Spanish economy and culture in New Spain. She showed the origin of Basque names which became part of the historic and geographic landscape in Sonora. Additionally, Basques became instrumental in mining and other commercial ventures, including providing loans and other funds for expeditions and supplies loaded on ships or pack mules destined for missions and presidios as far as Monterey, *Alta California* and elsewhere.

Rather than see the Anza Trail as two separate fragments divided by borders, the Anza Society Conference in Banámichi marked an international effort to have individuals see the trail as one continuous route which can bring people together, foster international understanding, and encourage more travel to Sonora and other sites in the United States along the trail. The long-envisioned goal to make the Anza Trail a living collaboration with our neighbors in Mexico is a major step initiated by Phil Valdez Jr. and the National Park Service under the leadership of Superintendent Naomi Torres.

In the closing day of the conference, **Stella Cardoza** was elected to be the new president of the Anza Society in the coming year. The site of the 2015 conference is pending.
Sonora Creates Anza Tourism Trail

Officials in the Mexican state of Sonora have developed a *Ruta Turística de Anza*, a companion to the Anza Trail’s Auto Route in the U.S.

The Mexican route links communities tied to the Anza Expedition, like Horcasitas, with other sites notable in Anza’s life, including his burial site in Arizpe.

In addition to a map (next page), our Mexican counterparts have developed a logo for their trail (see top left) and have installed interpretive waysides.

These bilingual panels include one in Arizpe and one marking a spot where, in 1767, Anza barely escaped an Apache raid. The panels were inaugurated during the 2014 Anza Society Conference in Banámichi (see article on page 5).

Stay tuned for more updates on the Anza Trail in Mexico.
A great deal of work goes into preparation and planning for a day of data collection in the field. This story will recount a typical day for the Yuma interns during last year’s inventory of the Anza Trail with the Bureau of Land Management’s Yuma Field Office. Hopefully, our work will one day yield an official Anza Recreation Trail through the area.

5:30AM The work day begins, and our team of four interns gets to the BLM Office. The first one in disables the security system. One person fills out a tracking report and signs everybody out from the front board. Another person checks out an office radio. We grab any electronic equipment that may have been charging overnight and change into hiking boots. One last check around the desks, then we’re out of the office until our workday is over.

We load a cooler with ice, bottled water, and Gatorade while taking turns filling 3-liter bladder bags with water from the reverse osmosis filter in the engine bay. Yuma’s tap water contains extra salts and minerals, the kind that can build up in kidneys. Having an RO system in the office reduces the number of plastic bottles we go through on any given day. After gathering enough water to be prepared for an emergency situation, we pile into the truck.

6AM An ID badge opens the equipment yard gate, and we’re off! The Anza Trail inventory has begun…with a two-hour drive east.

8AM We arrive at the Painted Rock petroglyph site campgrounds. The daily application of sunblock begins. Everybody turns on their Juno to begin communication with the satellite signals. These Junos are the main devices used for data collection and storage while in the field. The goal for today is to find a way up the first bluff heading west from the campgrounds. We had previously found an easy way up, but after discussions with BLM, we think that route followed an old toll road with historical significance.

The 1.5 mile hike to the bluff is an easy one in soft sand. The day is still cool with temperatures only in the 80s. At the bluff we choose four different hill climbs to explore individually. The slopes are steep with large, black volcanic rocks. Now I can feel the heat; it’s rising off the rocks.

I keep my face pointed towards the ground watching for signs of snakes or unstable footing. I am also thinking about aspects of this route to relay to the team when we discuss the different hill climbs: aspects such as ground cover, vegetation density,
slope grade, presence of cultural features, compatible and incompatible uses (hiking, biking, equestrian, OHV), overall scenic qualities, landscape features, and associated settings. I try to imagine the time, complexity, and cost of work needed to establish a recreational trail traversing this part of the bluff.

9AM We discuss each of our routes at a meeting spot on top of the bluff. We’re all drenched in sweat from climbing; I’m wishing our discussion was taking place in the shade. After a long discussion and a couple of short arguments we agree upon the route we think is best. Or is it more like a long argument with a couple of short discussions?

We name the hill climbs accordingly in our Junos to keep track of the chosen route when we return to the office. We drink heartily from our water supplies to keep up with the heat and exertion.

10AM The hiking continues west, on top of the bluff now. The temperature is rising closer to the 100’s. The setting on top of the bluff looks similar for the final four miles of the day; weathered black rocks, clearings of sand, and creosote bushes dominate the view. Saguaro, Ironwood, and Palo Verde trees make up the intermittent canopy cover. Short stops are made to designate observation points. At each observation point we record data on the resources, values, and associated settings of the envisioned trail. A GPS point is recorded on the Junos. We take four photos; one in each cardinal direction.

11AM We startle a group of deer browsing and relaxing under the trees. Nobody was quick enough with the camera to capture photos. We stop for lunch; making this spot the farthest west we will inventory today. The hike back to the work truck is faster, but water breaks in the shade are necessary at this point. The temperature is in the 100’s, nearing 110. If the highs surpass 110 degrees we will have to cancel the inventorying plans for the rest of the week due to heat related safety concerns.

We reach the work truck with the reward of cooled water and Gatorade. The drive back to the office is uneventful. One of us may have drifted off to a deserved siesta in the back seat. The rest of us discuss the discoveries of the day and plan for tomorrow. When we park the truck in the equipment yard of the office our work is not completed. We unload our gear, water the grass with the melted cooler ice, put the cooler in the engine bay, and head into the office. We return and sign in the office radio, we erase our names from the checkout board, and we download the Juno data collected during the day.

3PM The last thing is to change out of the hiking boots. Now we can head home and get ready to do it again tomorrow.

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**Gear List to Conduct an Inventory of the Anza Trail**

- Hand-Held Office Radio
- Cooler Full of Ice
- Water and extra water in case of emergency
- Moleskin
- Long-Sleeved Shirt
- SPOT Unit
- Compass
- Gatorade (1 for every 3 waters)
- Sunscreen
- Long Pants
- Trimble Juno
- Field Map
- Packed Lunch
- Wide-Brimmed Hat
- Pocket Notebook
- Geo-Referenced Digital Camera
- Hiking Pack with Full Water Bladder
- High Energy Snacks
- Sunglasses
- Pen/Pencil
- First-Aid kit
- Hiking Boots
- Gloves
- Bright Flag Markers/Nylon Tape
- Hand Sanitizer
- Pain Reliever/Anti-Inflammatory
- Extra pair of socks
- Bug Spray
- Binoculars
You know that wayside exhibit panel you’ve been toiling over the past year?

The one that captures your passion and love for history? The one that recounts every day of the epic 1775-76 Anza Expedition, its impact on California, and the family tree of every descendant?

It’s too much.

In fact, your sign will be lucky to have 45 seconds to spend with its average visitor.

But your panel is important. Our wayside exhibits are the most enduring tools for sharing the story of the Anza Trail. So how do we make them effective?

The National Park Service has just produced the Anza Trail Wayside Exhibit Style Guide, a resource for the public agencies, volunteer organizations, parks, and other partners who wish to share their unique place along the Anza Trail.

The Style Guide includes suggestions for themes and relevance of your wayside’s content, as well as standardizing design elements and best practices for its layout.

NPS does not dictate design guidelines for partner sites and communities. Rather, the Anza Trail Wayside Exhibit Style Guide shares ideas that reflect the National Park Service’s experience in creating effective interpretive signs.

Patrick Johnston of the National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program developed the style guide with input from the trail’s interpretive specialist, Hale Sargent, and Lynne Mager, interpretive specialist at the National Trails Intermountain Region office.

A new wayside developed by the Anza Trail Foundation and Mission San Gabriel became the model for the style guide (see detail on next page).

Download a copy of the Style Guide on the Anza Trail’s administrative website: http://www.nps.gov/JUBA

A wayside template in Adobe InDesign is available upon request.
A detail from the new Anza Trail Wayside Exhibit Style Guide. The guidance and templates offered by the Style Guide standardize best practices and design elements for new waysides along the trail.

**Wayside Tips from the Style Guide**

**DO:**

- Say it all in 100 words or less
- Grab your audience with your first sentence
- Use text to support an image, not an image to support text
- Honor the Tribal community that encountered the Anza Expedition at your wayside's location
- Translate your sign into Spanish. This is the story of Spanish-speaking Arizona and California.

**DONT:**

- Try to tell the whole story
- Overwhelm with logos
- Be afraid of different perspectives on history
The Presidio of San Francisco is a major landmark along the 1,200-mile Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail. It was here that many of the families of the 1775-76 Anza Expedition settled after the grueling, eight-month-long trip from Sonora, establishing the outpost that would grow into the city of San Francisco.

The Anza Trail in the Presidio highlights California’s Spanish heritage and honors its pioneering spirit. Working under the Trails Forever initiative, the Presidio Trust, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and the National Park Service opened an improved span of the Anza Trail in the park this January. This trail’s completion underscores the importance of partnership and collaboration in keeping history alive along this centuries-old route.

Early settlers in *Alta California* contended with the elements, isolation, and the unknown. Today’s visitor to the Presidio of San Francisco encounters...
unmarked intersections, heavy traffic, and urban infrastructure. Presidio Trust Project Manager Amy Deck gathered input from planners, natural and cultural resources experts, neighbors, residents, and even passers-by, who shared concerns about traffic and a gap in the Presidio’s trail network in the area. The redesigned section of the Anza Trail in the Presidio lets visitors connect with the past, while traveling a safe route from a busy entrance gate up to a sweeping overlook of the Golden Gate Bridge.

Deck’s team moved the trail away from the road where possible and installed speed bumps and a crosswalk at a blind intersection. The new trail section also guards the area’s natural resources: builders altered standard trail construction techniques to protect the sensitive roots of historic trees, and the trail prevents trampling damage by concentrating foot traffic in a durable corridor.

The highlight feature is a solid-looking, curving wooden boardwalk and set of box steps that leads to the highest point on the trail.

Improvements to this trail were made possible by a lead challenge grant from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and by many donors who contributed match funds through Trails Forever for the revitalization of Presidio Trails, Bikeways and Overlooks.

Trails Forever brings together staff and volunteers from three partner organizations – National Park Service, Parks Conservancy, and Presidio Trust – to guide the construction and maintenance of a cohesive trail system throughout the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

Since 2002, this team has built and maintained 125 miles of trail, and the work is far from finished. With the Anza Trail upgrade complete, planners at the Presidio are already making strides to complete a three-mile accessible loop around the western third of the park. The loop will ensure gentle slopes and a firm surface so that it can serve people with disabilities, as well as strollers. Once complete, the loop will provide visitors with access to the bay, ocean, forest, Golden Gate Bridge, and scenic overlooks.

The Anza Trail upgrade is a key link in the Presidio’s extensive trail network, and an important development here at the focal point of a significant 1,200 mile, trans-national route.

Traveling in Anza’s footsteps through a forested, developed landscape that looks so different from the one encountered by the settlers is a surprisingly powerful experience. You can see the weight of centuries of human impact on the land, even as you cover the same ground and feel the same exhilaration that the earliest explorers felt while gazing across the Golden Gate.
Discover California’s landscape and history on board Amtrak’s Coast Starlight and Pacific Surfliner*. Volunteer Trails & Rails docents will be your guides on one of the most beautiful train routes in North America.

Book your ticket today:
www.amtrak.com or 800-872-7245

27 Trails & Rails docents shared the story of the Anza Trail with more than 39,000 Amtrak passengers in 2013!
Explore the same coastline where Anza encountered the Chumash on his way to establishing San Francisco in 1776. The Anza Expedition was California’s first overland colonizing expedition.

Schedule is subject to change. In California, the Trails & Rails program is a partnership between Amtrak, the National Park Service, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, and the South Coast Railroad Museum. If you live near Santa Barbara and are interested in becoming a docent, please contact:

South Coast Railroad Museum
300 North Los Carneros Road
Goleta, CA 93117
805-964-3540 | www.goletadepot.org
This is an exciting time for the Anza Trail Foundation. We want to reach out to many more people with our new interactive online Anza Trail experience. You can see the website’s many new features at www.AnzaHistoricTrail.org.

Your help will allow the Foundation and its partners to share the legacy of the more than 240 men, women and children who followed Lieutenant Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza to Alta California in 1775-76.

By the way, 1776 was the year that the Anza Expedition reached the area known today as San Francisco, the story behind our campaign name – $17.76 for 2014!!

The epic journey along the Anza Trail spanned some 1,200 miles from Nogales, Arizona, to the San Francisco Bay Area. Through it all the colonists endured severe shortages of food and water, inclement weather, and treacherous terrains that often seemed impassible. Anza and his group of colonists were diverse in their heritage with a blending of indigenous, European and African ancestry and received much needed support from Native American tribes along the route.

With help, the travelers were able to complete their odyssey to San Francisco. Here, they founded a settlement that expanded Spain’s American territory to its northernmost region. Perhaps more important, the efforts of the Anza Trail colonists have contributed to the rich and diverse cultural landscape of Arizona, California and beyond.

Their story – a true American story, is worth telling and worth your generous support!

Give $17.76 (or more if you can) and help us make history come alive! Your tax-deductible contribution of $17.76 will sustain the website which links all of us to the Anza National Historic Trail.

To donate, visit www.anzatrailfoundation.com/donate, or mail your tax-deductible donation payable to “The Anza Trail Foundation” to The Anza Trail Foundation, 1180 Eugenia Place, Suite 200, Carpinteria, CA 93013.

Give $17.76 to Sustain AnzaHistoricTrail.org
Join the Anza Trail Foundation (it’s Free!) to receive a monthly email of expanded Anza Trail News & Events. Sign up at www.anzahistorictrail.org

April

Sat 5  San Gabriel, CA: Dedication of Anza Trail interpretive panel, Mission San Gabriel, 1PM
Sat 26  Santa Barbara: Founding Day at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara, 12PM - 3PM, 805-965-0093
Sun 26  Martinez, CA: Earth Day Birthday fair at John Muir National Historic Site (and Anza Trail exhibit), 10AM - 4PM, 925-228-8860
Sun 27  Los Angeles: Heritage Day at El Pueblo de Los Angeles Monument, 11AM - 4PM

May

Sun 4  Moraga, CA: Cinco de Mayo community fair, Hacienda de las Flores, 2PM - 6PM
Fri 16  Atascadero, CA: Anza Trail community presentation. Time TBD; contact 415-623-2344
Sat 17  Paso Robles, CA: Dedication of Anza Trail exhibits along Salinas River Trail, 10AM - 12PM; contact 415-623-2344
Sat 17  San Francisco: Walk with Anza through the Presidio of San Francisco, 2PM; Walk departs from the Golden Gate Bridge Visitor Center, (415) 561-4323

June

Sat 14 - Sun 15  San Juan Bautista, CA: Early Days, San Juan Bautista State Park, 11AM - 4PM each day contact 831-623-4881
Fri 27  San Francisco: Pasados del Presidio Kid’s Event and Los Californianos Commemoration
Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell hiked with youth from El Pueblo de Los Angeles Monument to LA State Historic Park on March 10, 2014. The Anza Trail is working to certify additional segments of the trail in this corridor and along the LA River.