

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo,
Juan Bautista de Anza, and
Richard Henry Dana:
A Review of their Historical Roles
for the Wiseburn Unified School District

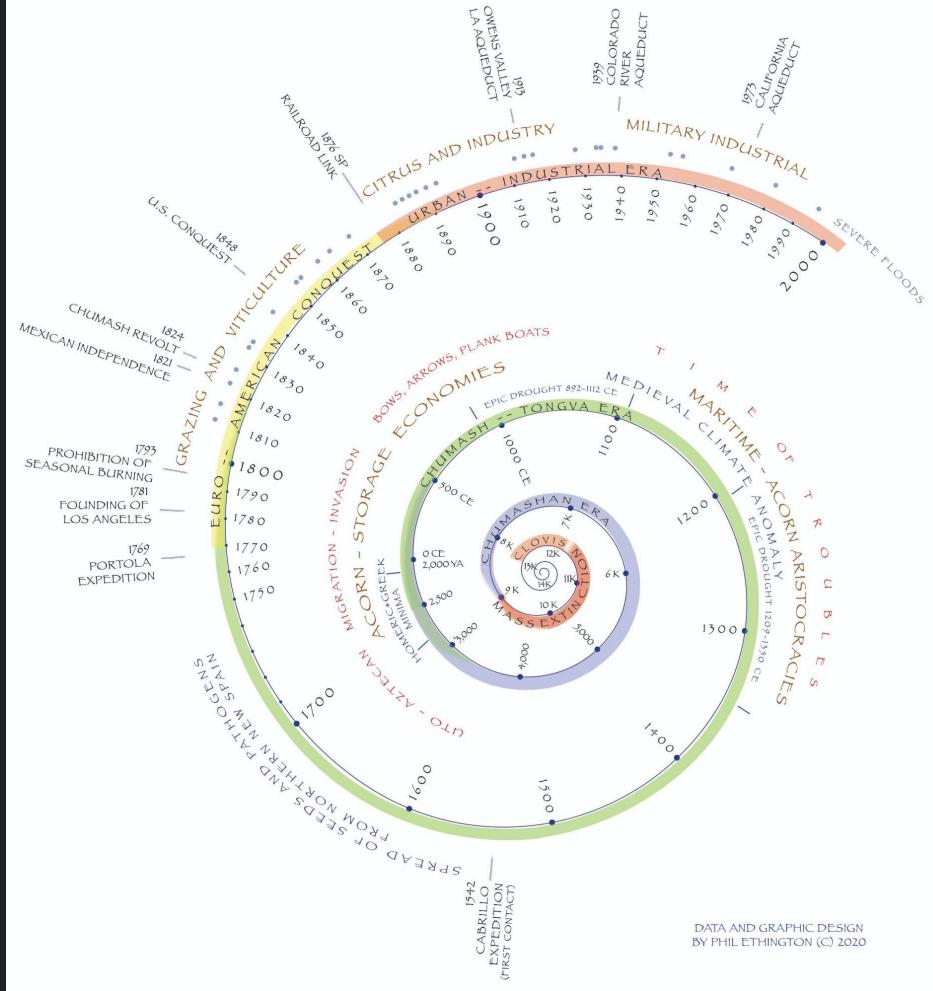
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4 November 2021

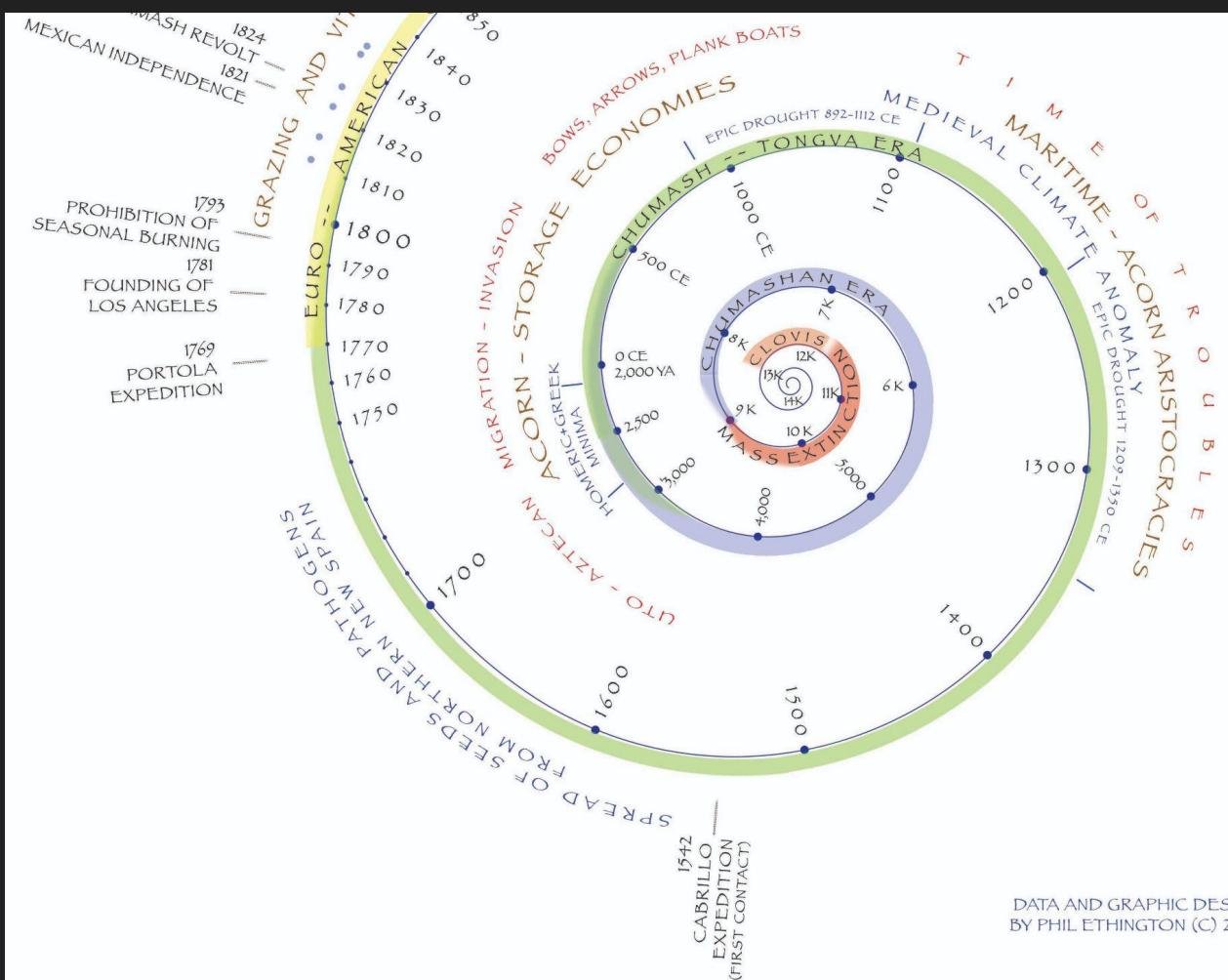


Deep Antiquity of Los Angeles:

Time Spiral showing
10,000 years of human
civilization.

(Graphics and data by P.
Ethington)





Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

Born near Seville, Spain, circa 1498-50.

(It is also claimed that he was born in Montalegre, Portugal)

Died on Limuw (Santa Cruz Island), 3 January 1543

No contemporary portraits survive, so his appearance is unknown.



Cabrillo by Joseph Jacinto
Mora, San Francisco, 1911



Cabrillo National Monument,
Donated by Portuguese
Government, 1939.

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

Principal historical significance for California: Led the first European contact with what is now California, in a voyage of 1542-3.

Overall significance: Soldier in the Spanish conquest of Cuba, Mexico (1519-21), Guatemala, and Honduras

A crossbowman, Cabrillo built the boats for Hernán Cortés to cross Lake Texcoco to conquer the Aztec capital.

Granted *encomiendas* (land grants with right to enslave the native population) for his military service. Grew rich from slave labor in gold mines. By 1530 he was one of the richest men in Guatemala, with a large ship-building operation on the Pacific coast.



Cabrillo National Monument,
Donated by Portuguese
Government, 1939.

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

Voyage to California

In 1540, in the service of the Governor of Guatemala, Pedro de Alvarado, Cabrillo was commissioned to build a fleet for trade by sea across the Pacific. In 1541 Alvarado died, the fleet came under the control of Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, who put Cabrillo in command of the expedition of 1542 to reconnoiter the Pacific Coast of northern new Spain (California). The purpose was to find fabled cities of gold and silver, and a passage to the Atlantic, and to China. The expedition was considered a failure.

Expedition left Navidad in Mexico on June 27, 1542, arrived at San Diego 28 September came ashore there and at San Pedro (Baya de los Fumos: "Bay of Smokes") and visited the Channel Islands before sailing as far north as Oregon, and then returned to the Channel Islands to over-winter there. Chumash had originally greeted him with presents and guidance, but fought with his men when it became clear that the expedition planned to establish a camp on Santa Rosa Island. Died 3 January 1543 of severe injuries suffered during a battle, apparently from a fall on the rocks.



Map: California Frontier Project
<https://www.californiafrontier.net/the-voyage-of-juan-rodriguez-cabrillo/>

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

Life and Career

- Took an indigenous common law wife in Guatemala and had several children with her.
- Returned to Spain to marry Beatriz Sanchez de Ortega in Seville. Presumably abandoned his Indigenous partner.
- Ordered the capture of Indigenous women for enslavement to his men in the shipyards.
- Enslaved whole villages for his encomiendas.



Map: California Frontier Project
<https://www.californiafrontier.net/the-voyage-of-juan-rodriguez-cabrillo/>

Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo

Sources:

The definitive biography to date is

Kelsey, Harry. 1986. *Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo*. The Huntington Library, San Marino. Kelsey was the chief curator for history at the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum.

Almost nothing was known about Cabrillo until Kelsey's investigations. The previous standard was Henry R. Wagner, *Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, Discoverer of the Pacific* (1941).

A excellent summary is provide by the National Park Service:

Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo - A Voyage of Exploration

<https://www.nps.gov/cabr/learn/historyculture/juan-rodriguez-cabrillo.htm>

Juan Bautista de Anza (1736-1788)

Born in Fronteras, Nueva Navarra, New Spain. Now Sonora, Northern Mexico.

Son of Juan Bautista de Anza I (1694-1740), a military officer in the conquest of the Indigenous peoples and the establishment of silver mines.

Married Ana María Pérez Serrano (b 1744) daughter of a silver mine owner.

Both father and son fought to secure and extend the boundaries of New Spain and dreamt of establishing colonies on California coast. Father died fighting Apaches in 1740.



Equestrian statue of de Anza at Lake Merced, San Francisco

Juan Bautista de Anza (1736-1788)

Distinguished Military Career in the service of King Carlos III:

Enlisted 1752 in the army at the Presidio of Fronteras. became Promoted to captain by 1760.

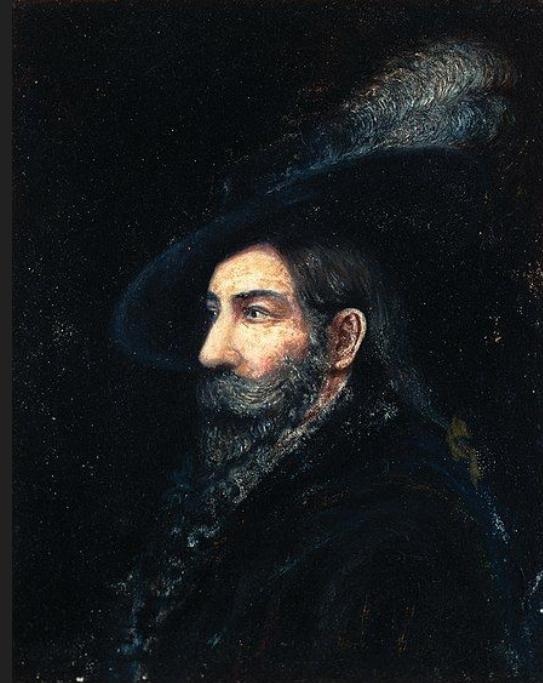
Rose to Lt. Colonel, then Colonel, then Governor during the 1770s.

Carried-out the Expulsion of the Jesuits from Northern Sonora in 1767.

In 1772, as a leading military authority, proposed opening a land route to the Pacific Ocean to fortify the northern frontier of New Spain.

1774-1776, led two successful expeditions to settle California.

1777-1787, Governor of New Mexico



Oil portrait, Fray Orcí, 1774

Indigenous Peoples of Northern New Spain in the 18th Century



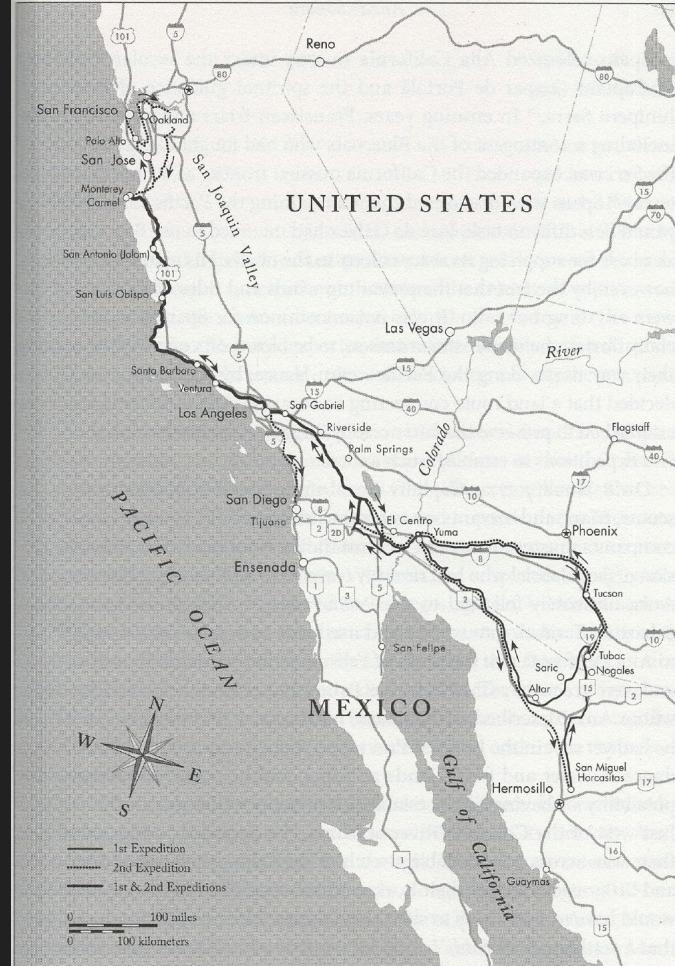
Map: from Donald T. Garate, Juan Bautista de Anza, Basque Explorer in the New World (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003). NOTE: this book is about de Anza I, the father of the New Mexico governor discussed in this presentation.

Juan Bautista de Anza

Commanded two expeditions to California, in 1774 and 1775-6

January 8, 1774, departed from Tubac, in Sonora, with 3 Franciscan fathers, 31 soldiers and servants, and livestock and more than 200 horses, mules, and cattle. **His guide was an Indigenous man from the San Gabriel Mission named Sebastian Tarabal. Tarabal, like all Indigenous in the region, knew the roads and routes that had been used for thousands of years.** De Anza's expedition reached the Yuma Crossing, on 9 February, establishing good relations with the Quechan (also called Yuma) nation, and presented elaborate cloaks and gifts to their chieftain, called Salvador Palma. Later, de Anza traveled with Palma to Mexico City, where he was baptized in the Cathedral, with the Viceroy serving as his godfather. This was a major triumph because an alliance with the Quechan was essential for the success of the land route and expansion of the northern frontier.

The expedition reached Monterey, the capital of Alta California, in April, and returned to Tabac by late May 1774. In October he was rewarded with a promotion to lieutenant-colonel

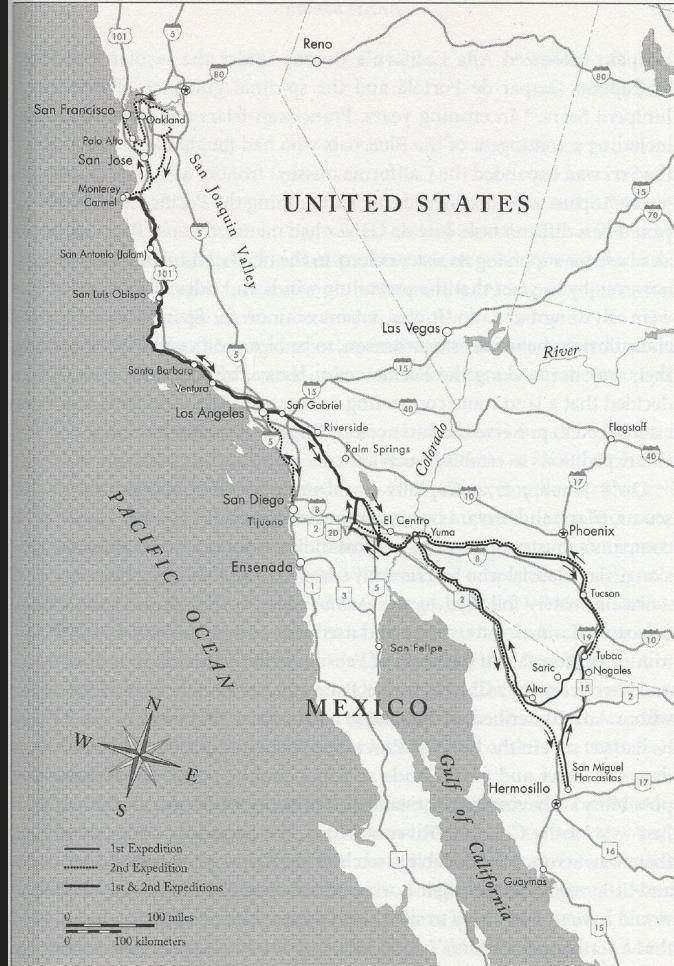


Anza's California Expedition Routes.
From *Anza Trail and the Settling of California*, by Vladimir Guerrero.
Reprinted by permission of Heyday and the cartographer, Ben Pease.

Juan Bautista de Anza

Second Anza Expedition 1775-6

Anza was next entrusted next with an expedition to bring colonists to Alta California. Set out from Tubac on 23 October 1775 with 240 men, women, and children. Reached Yuma on the Colorado River in late November, suffered a severely cold crossing of the Colorado Desert, and arrived at San Gabriel in January 1776, with an enlarged group of colonists, including three newborn babies. Anza continued to Monterey and San Francisco, then returned a hero to Tubac.



Anza's California Expedition Routes.
From *Anza Trail and the Settling of California*, by Vladimir Guerrero.
Reprinted by permission of Heyday and the cartographer, Ben Pease.

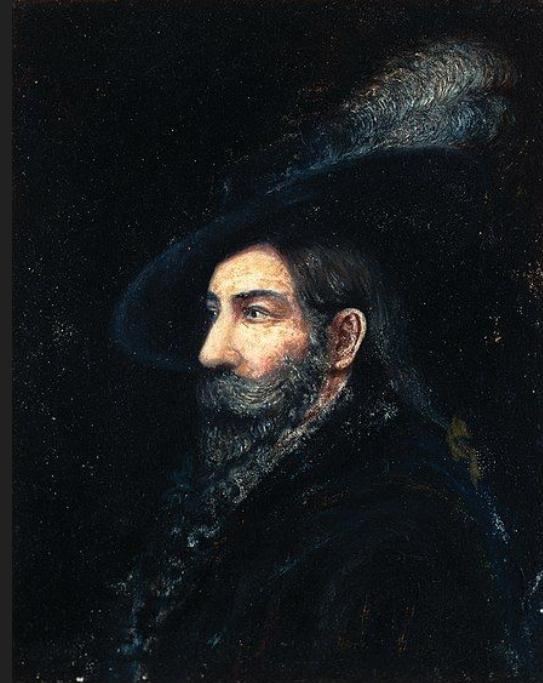
Juan Bautista de Anza (1736-1788)

Governor of New Mexico, 1777-1787

On the basis of these triumphs for the Crown, Anza was appointed Governor of New Mexico, where the Spanish were struggling to suppress constantly raiding on their town and warfare with the surrounding indigenous peoples.

Defeated the Commanche leader “Cuerno Verde” (Green Horn), called Tavibo Naritgant (“Dangerous Man”) in Commanche.

Carried-out a moderate policy of “Peace by Purchase”. After showing the military strength of the Spanish, by defeating Indigenous leaders in battle, he promised peace in exchange for trade relations and an end to raiding Spanish settlements. For this policy he is considered a moderate and a reformer.



Oil portrait, Fray Orcí, 1774

Juan Bautista de Anza (1736-1788)

Sources:

Carlos R. Herrera, *Juan Bautista de Anza: The King's Governor in New Mexico* (Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 2015). This excellent study puts de Anza's career in the context of the overall Spanish strategies for colonial expansion of Northern New Spain, with an account of his two expeditions to California.

Alfred Barnaby Thomas, editor and translator, *Forgotten Frontiers: A Study of the Spanish Indian Policy of Don Juan Bautista de Anza, Governor of New Mexico 1777-1787*. Norman: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1969).

Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Commanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008). This study shows the dynamics and power of the Comanches whom de Anza fought and attempted to bring into treaty relations.



Oil portrait, Fray Orcí, 1774

The Quechan Revolt, July 17, 1781

Angered by failure to receive trade benefits agreed to by the Viceroy of New Spain arranged by Juan Bautista de Anza, and by the trampling of their lands by hundreds of livestock feeding in their fields, the Quechan, Kw’tsa’n, massacred 131 settlers, priests and soldiers, including Captain Fernando de Rivera y Moncada.

Lt. José de Zúñiga had already advanced with Los Pobladores and arrived at Mission San Gabriel on 18 July, equipped to found “Los Angeles.” This massacre and the founding of Los Angeles are fatefully linked. They also brought smallpox, which raged across the Southwest Indigenous during 1781.

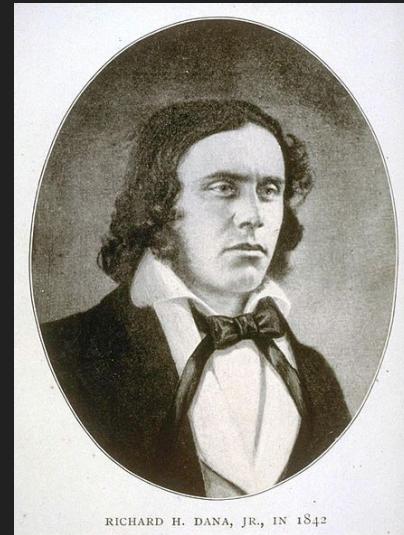
Refusing to deal further with the Spanish, Chief Salvador Palma renounced his Christianity and closed the Yuma Crossing, ending de Anza’s famed land route. The Quechan kept the Colorado crossing closed for another fifty years, until the 1830s.

Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815 – 1882)

Son of Richard Henry Dana Sr. (1787-1879), a prominent poet and literary critic, edit of the North American Review. Dana Jr. attended a secondary shool headed by Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Scion of a wealthy and prominent Boston family (his grandfather had been US Ambassador to Russia), Dana Jr. entered Harvard College in 1831, but trouble with his eyes led him to drop out. He signed-on as a common sailor on the brig Pilgrim in 1834, a merchant ship in the service of Sturgis..., which traded with the Mexican Rancheros and missions in California, bringing New England goods to the Californios in exchange for hundreds of thousands of cow hides, used in the manufacture of shoes.

Upon his return in 1836, he published his diary of the voyage, titled *Two Years Before The Mast: A Persona Narrative of Life at Sea*, in 1840, to immediate acclaim. The book is primarily a sea tale, with harrowing accounts of the rounding of Cape Horn, and shocking accounts of the mistreatment of common sailors, including floggings. The book also includes brief but vivid accounts of the Californios (Mexican ranchers and their families), Native Californians, and Hawaiians working on Pacific trading vessels and in the ports of California processing the cattle hides.



RICHARD H. DANA, JR., IN 1842

Daguerreotype of Dana, 1842

Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815 – 1882)

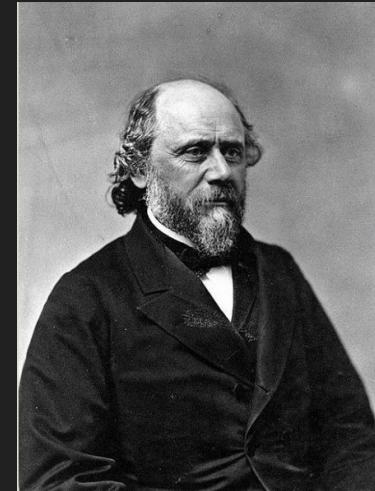
After returning to Boston, Dana entered Harvard law School, and was admitted to the Bar in Massachusetts in 1840, the same year his memoir *Two Years Before the Mast* was published.

He specialized in Maritime law, and published the first treatise on the legal rights of sailors in 1841, *The Seamen's Friend*.

In the 1840s and 50s, Dana was a prominent Abolitionist and helped to organize the Free Soil Party.

During the Civil War, he served as United States Attorney, and successfully argued before the US Supreme Court, President Lincoln's right to blockade the Confederate ports in the *Prize Cases*.

He continued a distinguished career in international maritime law until his death in 1882.



Photograph of Dana, 1868

Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815 – 1882)

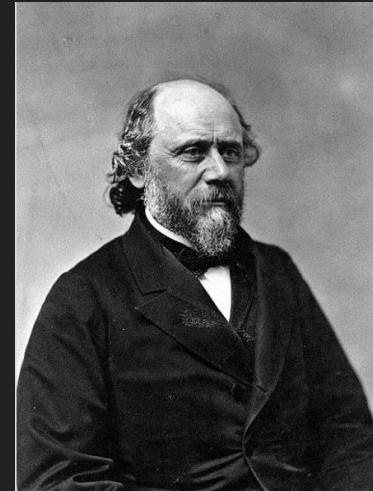
Dana is best remembered for **Two Years Before The Mast**, and because of it, his life and career have been forever linked to California. The book has been widely credited by historian with steering American interest in California, leading to emigration there and serving as a background motivation for the ultima conquest of California from Mexico, in the US-Mexican War of 1846-8.

However, this common linkage has been questioned by some historians, including Tony Stanley Cook, who argues that the book was never received as an account of California, but rather as a searing exposé of the experience and treatment of common sailors.

Insofar as it is a book about California, the content is controversial. On the one hand, he presents glowing descriptions of the beauty and fertility of California.

On the other hand, Dana also castigates and denigrates the Mexicans of California for laziness and failing to exploit the obvious abundance of the California landscape. The most famous line in this regard appears in Chapter 21:

“In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be, we are ready to say.”



Photograph of Dana, 1868

Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815 – 1882)

Chapter 21 of Two Years Before the Mast, “California and Its Inhabitants.”

The full quote at the end of the chapter reads thus:

“Such are the people who inhabit a country embracing four or five hundred miles of seacoast, with several good harbors; with fine forests in the north; the waters filled with fish, and the plains covered with thousands of herds of cattle; blessed with a climate than which there can be no better in the world; free from all manner of diseases, whether epidemic or endemic; and with a soil in which corn yields from seventy to eighty fold. **In the hands of an enterprising people, what a country this might be, we are ready to say.** Yet how long would it remain so, in such a country? **The Americans (as those from the United States are called) and Englishmen, who are fast filling up the principal towns, and getting the trade into their hands, are indeed more effective and industrious than the Mexicans; yet their children are brought up Mexicans in most respects, and if the ‘California fever’ (laziness) spares the first generation, it is likely to attack the second.**” (p. 182, Franklin Library edition, 1982).

Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815 – 1882)

Chapter 21 of Two Years Before the Mast, “California and Its Inhabitants.”

“A general, with titles enough for an hidalgo, was at San Gabriel, and issued a proclamation as long as the fore-top-bowline, threatening destruction to the rebels, but never stirred from his fort; for forty Kentucky hunters, with their rifles, and a dozen of Yankees and Englishmen, **were a match for a whole regiment of hungry, drawling, lazy half-breeds** (p. 181, Franklin Library edition, 1982).

Richard Henry Dana Jr. (1815 – 1882)

Chapter 13 of Two Years Before the Mast, “Trading at Monterey.”

“The Californians are an idle, thriftless people, and can make nothing for themselves..”

“Their complexions are various, depending— as well as their dress and manner— upon the amount of Spanish blood they can lay claim to, which also settles their social rank. Those who are of pure Spanish blood, having never intermarried with the aborigines, have clear brunette complexions, and sometimes even as fair as those of English women....**From this upper class, they go down by regular shades, growing more and more dark and muddy, until you come to the pure Indian, who runs about with nothing upon him but a small piece of cloth, kept up by a wide leather strap drawn round his waist.** Generally speaking, each person's caste is decided by the quality of the blood, which shows itself, too plainly to be concealed, at first sight. Yet the least drop of Spanish blood, if it be only of quadroon or octoroon, is sufficient to raise one from the position of a serf, and entitle him to wear a suit of clothes,— boots, hat, cloak, spurs, long knife, all complete, though coarse and dirty as may be,— and to call himself *Español*, and to hold property, if he can get any.”

(pp. 84-5, Franklin Library edition, 1982).



Why Commemorate?

Cabrillo's "Discovery" of California in 1542? (Chumash had discovered it 10,000 years ago). Or that he was the "First" European to set foot in California. Why does that "first" claim matter?

Anza is credited with opening the land route for the growth of the Spanish Empire, bringing "civilization" and Christianity to the California Indigenous. But he only followed Indigenous roads, they were already civilized, and they already had their own religion.

Dana is credited with spurring American interest in California, leading the United States citizens to seize it from the Republic of Mexico. His narrative is mostly about life as a sailor, but he does go out of his way to disparage the Mexicans and their claim to it, by portraying them as "lazy" and "half-breeds"

Why Commemorate?

What are we commemorating?

All three men, Cabrillo, Anza, and Dana, supported the conquest of a region which did not belong to them. This conquest was widely portrayed as a great thing by the Spanish, Mexican, and US conquerors of California. The horrific violence against the indigenous people, was either ignored or considered a necessary consequence of their backwardness, until our own civil rights movement in the late 20th century.

In the first half of the 20th century, these explorers were celebrated as precursors to the “white” civilization that had come to possess and magnify the riches of California. The cultural leaders engaged in a re-writing of history, to erase the civilization that was already here. Jean O’Brien, in a book called “Firsting and Lasting,” calls this act :“firsting: claiming a new set of “firsts” to re-start history in the image of the conqueror. “Lasting” is to write some people out of the course of history, as in “the last of the Mohicans.” Indigenous of hundreds of tribes still live and thrive in California. They were not wiped out, but continue to make important contributions.

Why Commemorate?

Whom are we commemorating?

Each of these men has left their own record of good and bad deeds: deeds or views or beliefs that may or may not clash with the ideals of our society today; that may or may not offend large groups of people who share California today as their home.

--Cabrillo's past deeds are the least defensible, perhaps because of his role in the brutal enslavement of indigenous.

--Anza served his king more than a century and a half after Cabrillo, and lived a military career fighting Native Americans, making possible the settlement of hundreds and thousands of settlers in California. Many thousands of Californians today are descendants of those very settlers that Anza brought to California under armed guards.

--Dana spent most of his career fighting against slavery and for the rights of sailors. He played a minor, supporting role in the conquest of California, but his words, in his most famous book, disparage an ethnic group who make up a major portion of Los Angeles County.