



Discovery Road
Presents

ANZA SAGA

Historic Trail Featured in TV Series **Four Heritage Areas Collaborate on Documentary**

Discovery Road is proud to introduce *Anza Saga*, a new documentary that explores the fascinating story about Juan Bautista de Anza and his colonizing expedition in 1775-1776. There are endless tales surrounding the historic route Anza traveled to establish New Spain's overland route to California. This program takes viewers out on the trail to find out who helped guide the party over hot deserts, across rivers and through bad weather.

"The whole group. All 240 plus people and nearly a thousand animals gathered right here in front of the church. And the priest did a blessing, and they finished up loading up all of the mules and then Anza said, 'Mount up and move out!' And they took off from here. 1200 miles to San Francisco." Dan Judkins, President, Tubac Historical Society, said in an interview for the documentary. Judkins says many trails that crisscross the American West connect to

prehistoric days. He outlined research that shows long ago mammoth trails led to watering holes and food stands.



HISTORY ON EVERY STREET-Dan Judkins, past president of the Tubac Historical Society, offers insight and perspective on the Anza expedition. Anza Day is held each year in Tubac, Arizona. -Photo courtesy *Discovery Road*

This half-hour Juan Bautista de Anza Trail story showcases four national heritage areas and brings important Anza history forward from all states that were involved. Each heritage area provided background materials, potential interviewees and overarching themes for the broadcast. The documentary will become part of the ongoing *Discovery Road television* series. The show will be made available for open broadcast on several platforms. In addition, the program will be distributed by each participating heritage area for seminars, discussion groups, special events and Anza Day celebration activities.

The Mormon Battalion which is the only religious unit in American military history makes its way into this *Discovery Road* episode even though their trek was long after Juan Bautista De Anza was out on the trail. Sherman L. Fleek, Lt. Col., U-S Army retired, told *Discovery Road* that the early “frontier highways” had a lot to do with military operations

“In America we have had our frontier highways. And a lot of it dealt with military operations which followed by pioneers and others into certain areas. Especially the west.” Fleek stated.



HISTORY LESSONS – Mt. Pleasant, Utah-Monte Bona, Executive Director of the MPNHA poses for a photo with American Military historian Sherman L. Fleek inside Liberal Hall. -Photo courtesy *Discovery Road*

Fleek likened the abundance of trails throughout America to the arteries and veins in a human body. He says the trails provide blood, growth and nutrition for people and community. He also stated that trails represent a part of commerce and the routes, roads, trails and paths help feed and nourish the nation and people. The magnificent San Xavier Del Bac Mission, also known as the *White Dove of the Desert*, is a place of worship for locals on the Tohono O'odham reservation in Arizona. Self-guided tours are allowed for visitors, and they are a big attraction. The ornate religious structure is where a newborn was baptized as the Anza party traveled on their journey to California. It's also the burial site for the only person who died on the Anza Expedition. In a compelling *Discovery Road* interview with a descendant of the woman who died after giving birth to a baby, viewers will hear about the heart-wrenching story on a long-ago trail in the desert southwest.

“For me, Manuela Lopez Penuela is a very personal feeling. Because she was my cousin six generations removed. And the first cousin of her husband. They were a Creole family from the Sonoran frontier. Probably grew up together. Her parents and grandparents were military. So, she knew what it was like to be a military child and a military wife. She knew the hardships.” Stella Cardoza said during the *Anza Saga* documentary from her home in California.

Manuela Ygnacia Lopez Penuelas was the only member of the Anza expedition that died during the trek. The long night undoubtedly impacted the entire encampment. Showing true leadership Anza pushed onward the following day to Mission San Xavier del Bac where the mother was buried and the child was baptized.



ANZA FAMILY STORY REVEALED- In her California home, Stella Cardoza, descendant of the woman who died on the Anza Expedition, is seen during her interview with *Discovery Road* Associate Producer Austria Nelson. -Photo courtesy *Discovery Road*

Yuma, Arizona is a true crossroads in the American West. In 1775 Anza's party camped in the area and with help from local tribes they were able to cross the Colorado River. *Discovery Road* crews found an abundance of history, culture and heritage in Yuma. The Yuma Territorial Prison, the railroad, a military outpost, wildlife and of course the mighty Colorado river.

"The Yuma Crossing has been critical since prehistoric times and into historic times. So even if you look at the prehistory of the area with the indigenous tribes and the question that have long controlled the crossing there, the indigenous tribes, they explored all over the place and they had this really vast network of trails. And a lot of those trails came through this Yuma Crossing area. And it

was actually that indigenous knowledge that the Spaniards were building upon when they came through this area.” Tammy Snook, historian, Yuma Crossing National Heritage Area said.



YUMA CROSSING-The bridge tells visitors something important happened here. Yuma Crossing is a designated site of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic. -Photo courtesy Library of Congress.

After success reaching California Anza became the Governor of New Mexico and soon was on the trail again. Comanche Cuerno Verde had been tormenting settlers out west. ANZA marshalled a large soldier force and with Native American guides help they found

Cuerno Verde and he was killed. It would be the first step in the eventual settlement of the San Luis Valley.

“In the context of Colorado one of the most sought-after questions is, ‘Where this famous battle against Comanche leader Cuerno Verde took place?’ There are few theories where that might have been. You know, I think what interests me more is the complexities associated with pulling this off at all. So, we talk oftentimes about Anza being the leader of the campaign. And I think he certainly was. But its success really relied upon all of these different groups working together.” Nick Saenz, PhD, professor of history at Adams State University said to *Discovery Road*.



ANZA IN COLORADO-Nick Saenz, Ph.D. Professor of History, is interviewed in the Luther Bean Museum at Adams State University for the Anza Saga program. -Photo credit *Discovery Road*

Discovery Road also takes viewers on a train ride in California. The National Park Service (NPS) Trails and Rails program gives passengers a scenic ride along the historic Anza trail. *Discovery Road* boarded the train and found the NPS *Trails and Rails* program was a big hit. Youngsters scrambled to have a Passport Stamp during the train ride. Adults and other families opened the free colorful ANZA brochure to see the mapped trail and highlights.



ALL ABOARD ANZA -Riders on the Coast Starlight hear National Park Service volunteers tell the story of Juan Bautista de Anza. The informative lecture gives people new appreciation for the landscape, history and people who helped settle California. -Photo credit *Discovery Road*

The train ride is a smooth journey for the passengers as a beautiful America shows off through every window. A simple train ride, a mix of people all of them determined to get to their destination. It all

seemed like a reflection on that long ago traveling Anza expedition. People leaving their homes, taking risks and on the lookout for opportunity. Just down the road where tomorrow is.

Discovery Road producer James Nelson says this documentary is filled with numerous lessons about different people getting along to find a better road. Juan Bautista de Anza led the way.

“An impressive record of humans on the move. The Old Spanish Trail, the Mormon Trail, the Santa Fe Trail, the Mullan Road and so many others. But, none quite like the bold and inspirational Juan Bautista de Anza. Truly a magnificent *Trail through Time*.” *Discovery Road* producer James Nelson said in wrapping up the documentary. “This is a marvelous piece of history with varied perspective on a long-ago trail. We are very proud to have four national heritage areas cooperating on one story. That’s what you call getting everyone involved and getting it done.” Monte Bona, Executive Director of the MPNA said about *Anza Saga*.

It should be noted the Alliance of National Heritage Areas, and the National Park Service are great partners on this *Discovery Road* project and many others from the award-winning ongoing television series.

Discovery Road is an ongoing award-winning documentary series broadcast regularly on Weigel Television and on Utah local and regional cable television stations. In addition, the National Educational Telecommunication Association (NETA) distributes *Discovery Road* programming. Several heritage groups from the Alliance of National Heritage Areas have partnered with *Discovery Road* in producing content for numerous episodes. *Discovery Road* proudly partners with the Mormon Pioneer National Heritage Area on history, culture and heritage elements brought forward in the television series. The heritage shows are part of the ongoing programming television unit that travels all around the American West in search of the next best story.