

Portola Expedition Timeline

1500 – Population of Native Americans in California was approximately 300,000.

1542 – Spanish explorer Juan Cabrillo claimed what is today California for the Spanish empire.

1579 – English explorer Sir Francis Drake landed north of San Francisco Bay and claimed land for England.

1767 – King Carlos III of Spain appointed Gaspar de Portola governor of California and sent Portola to explore California and set up a system of missions.

1769, January – Portola Expedition began in Baja, California.

1769, July 1 – Portola's group arrived in present-day San Diego.

1769, July 16 – Junipero Serra founded Mission San Diego, the first of 21 Spanish missions built in California.

1769, October 30 – Portola Expedition arrived in the San Francisco Bay area.

1769, November – Portola Expedition began return trip to Mexico.

1776 – Spanish Mission founded on San Francisco Bay.

1812 – Russians established Fort Ross, approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco Bay.

Visual Analysis Questions

Image A

- 1) Sourcing:
Who made this picture?

When was it made?

Why might it have been made?
- 2) What do you notice about this picture? Consider the following: the people, the setting, what the people are wearing, and what the people are doing.
- 3) How does this image help you understand what life was like for Native Americans in California in 1816?
- 4) What are the limitations of this picture as evidence of what life was like for Native Americans in California in 1816?

Document A: Miguel Costansó (Modified)

Miguel Costansó was a Spanish mapmaker and engineer. He was part of the Portola Expedition and he kept a diary of his travels. Published in 1770, his diary was distributed widely.

We broke camp in the morning and headed west-southwest. We reached the coast and came in sight of a real town. It had the most people and was the best arranged of all we had seen up to that time. We counted as many as thirty large houses, **spherical** in form, well built, and **thatched** with grass. We judged from the large number of people that came out to meet us that there were about four hundred people in the town.

These natives are well built and of a good **disposition**, very **agile** and alert, **diligent** and skillful. Their canoes were made of good pine boards, which are joined together and **caulked** well. The canoes have a good shape and will hold eight to ten men. The natives use the canoes with skill. Three or four men go out to sea in them to fish. They use long double-bladed paddles and row with great agility and swiftness.

All their work is neat and well done. They gave us some baskets or trays made of reeds, with different designs, and wooden plates and bowls of different forms and sizes in exchange for strings of glass beads. They gave us a large quantity of fish, particularly the kind known as bonito, which tastes as good as fish caught in Spain.

Vocabulary

spherical: round in shape

thatch: a roof covering

disposition: a person's personality

agile: able to move quickly

diligent: hard working and dedicated

caulk: to seal a crack or seam with waterproof filler

Source: Miguel Costansó, diary entry, August 14, 1769, close to present-day Ventura, California, which is 70 miles north of Los Angeles.

Document B: Juan Crespi (Modified)

Juan Crespi was a Spanish priest and missionary. He served as the chief diary writer of the Portola Expedition and focused on locating sites to build missions.

After traveling seven hours, we arrived at the camping place, which is in a small valley with a good village of **heathen**. They received us with much friendliness. They are fair, well formed, and some of them bearded. They have their village near the beach, about half a **league** from our camping place; but they also have their little houses in this valley, and live in them. The valley has a great deal of land, much of it good. In the middle of it there is an **arroyo** with plenty of running water, which goes to the beach.

I believe the place is a good site for a mission so the **conversion** of this village may **proceed**.

The **heathen** gave us many tamales made of black seeds, which are not so bad, so the soldiers say, for making **atole**.

Vocabulary

heathen: a disrespectful term for a person who does not follow one of the major religions of the world

league: a measure of distance equal to about three miles

arroyo: a steep sided valley cut by running water

conversion: persuading someone to change their religious beliefs

proceed: move forward

atole: corn-based hot beverage

Source: Juan Crespi, diary entry, October 24th-25th, 1769, San Gregorio Creek, 40 miles south of present-day San Francisco.

Guiding Questions

Document A

Answer questions 1-3 before reading the document.

- 1) (Sourcing) Who wrote this diary entry?

- 2) (Sourcing) Where was this entry written?

- 3) Use the map of California tribes to answer this question: Which Native American tribes do you think the author is describing in this diary entry? Explain your answer.

Answer the following questions after reading the document.

- 4) (Corroboration) How does this document compare to Image A?

- 5) (Close reading) How does this document describe interactions between Native Americans and the Spanish? Use evidence from the document to support your answer.

- 6) (Close reading) What evidence does this document provide about the lifestyle of the Native Californians the Spaniards met? (For example, what they ate or the types of houses they lived in). Cite 2 or 3 examples.

7) (Close reading) What does the author seem most interested in describing in this diary entry?

8) (Contextualization) The purpose of the expedition was to establish a series of missions. How might this have influenced what the author focused on in this diary entry?

Document B

Answer questions 1-3 before reading the document.

1) (Sourcing) Who wrote this diary entry?

2) (Sourcing) Where was this entry written?

3) Use the map of California tribes to answer this question: Which Native American tribes do you think the author is describing in this diary entry?

Answer the following questions after reading the document.

