Near this site on March 31, 1776, Lt. Colonel Juan Bautista de Anza, Father Pedro Font, and a small group of settlers and soldiers passed through on their way to investigate the place now known as the San Francisco Delta. These men had recently left the Presidio in Monterey, California, where Anza brought 240 people 1,800 miles from Sonora, Mexico to colonize the Bay Area. By 1777 the newcomers had helped establish three Spanish-controlled settlements in San Francisco, Santa Clara, and San Jose.

On March 31, Anza and his men encountered several Indians. Some fled, others waited for them, one offered food. At Alameda Creek, they heard an unfamiliar language. At San Lorenzo Creek, they surprised and terrified a lone man. For local tribal peoples, these encounters led to decades of disruption, dislocation, suffering, and change; first under Spanish rule, then under the Mexican and American governments.