

THE SERVANTS OF PUNTA DE GUIJARROS

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In 1984, Maria del Carmen Velasquez published "Notas Sobre Sirvientes de las Californias y Proyecto de Obraje en Nuevo Mexico" in Jornaladas 105, El Colegio de Mexico. From pages 65 to 77, her article included material on "The Servants of Point Cobblestone."

Punta de Guijarros is the same point of land in San Diego Bay that has been the subject of historical and archaeological research for the past decade. In the interests of sharing the information with the Fort Guijarros Museum Foundation, several passages were translated into English.

The purpose of Carmen Velasquez's paper was to bring forth reports and letters written by contractors who worked for the government of Spain in the Californias. The details recorded in these documents reveal intriguing information on the quality of life in 18th century California.

"Being commissioned in the San Diego Presidio, Antonio Grajera was promoted to lieutenant the 14th of July, 1792 [97]. Five years after, in 1797 he was the commander of such Presidio and reported to Governor Borica of his administrative expenses [98].

According to a 'map of the Port of San Diego in the septentrional coast of the Californias, picked by the second pilot of the armada Don Juan Pantoja,' in the year 1782, the Spaniards built a fort in the tongue-shaped section of land that almost closes the entrance to the San Diego Port. To this tongue-shaped section, they gave it the name of

Punta de Guijarros. The troop dispatched in this fort needed the Presidio of San Diego to supply them with everything: 'water, food and other necessary items to supply the 'petrechos' that they may need [99].'

To carry the water and other 'petrechos' [100] from the presidio to the fort, carts were needed 'to carry the goods to the beach and a flat boat to transport the goods to the punta de Guijarros [101].'

- [97] A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 6, f.287.
- [98] A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 21, ff.369-369v.
- [99] Ibid., f.381.
- [100] Royal Artillery Corps.
- [101] Ibid., f. 382.

I (say), Francisco Arguelles, First Captain of such Royal Corps that I have received from Lieutenant Don Antonio Grajera the items that I express for the service of the fort of Punta de Guijarros that I have under my duty is the following:

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- For 210 corn leaves to make tacos and 'sacos de metralla'.
- For 136 palm petates for the same purpose.
- For 1/2 pound of 'light thread' to sew cannon cartridges.
- For 2 MADEJAS DE HILO DE REATA PARA AMARRAR TACOS.
- For one barrel to contain water and cool off the cannons (just in case it is necessary).
- For two links (eslabones).
- For four small packages of LLESCA to light the cannon fuse.
- Punta de Guijarros, 20 December 1797
Francisco Arguelles (A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 21, f. 378).

	pesos	reales	granos
For 210 corn leaves to make tacos and 'sacos de metralla' I gave Captain of Artillery, Francisco Arguelles, as it is noted in the enclosed receipt number 1. At the rate of four three bunches, total	19	5	6
For 136 palm petates at 1 real each for the same purpose and receipt as above, total	17	0	0
For 1/2 pound of 'light thread', for 1 real and 9 granos, to sew the cannon cartridges I gave the same person	0	1	9
For 2 MADEJAS DE HILO REATA PARA AMARRAR TACOS, etc. . . . at 2.5 reales each	0	5	0
For one barrel to contain water and cool off the cannons (just in case it is necessary)	2	0	0
For 6 ZALEAS for the same purpose at 1 1/2 reales	1	1	0
For two links at 2 reales each and 2 reales of LLESCA to light the cannons fuse	0	6	0
For 730 lard candles, 32 for 1 pesos, consumed at 2 each night all year around	22	6	0
TOTAL	64	1	3



The total cost of all the items above come up to sixty four pesos, one real and three granos. San Diego 31 December 1797- Antonio Grajera (A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 21, f. 377).

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All of which required a lot of servants to do the moving and the artisans to take care of the maintenance of the carts and the flat boat.

The governor had ordered to take advantage of the government's ships visiting the port for the artisans of the crew to do the jobs that, due to the shortage of skilled personnel, were pending on the presidios.

In 1797, Antonio Grajera took advantage of the visit of the frigate Nuestra Senora del Rosario, alias the Princessa, anchored in front of the San Diego port, to ask her commander to order his masters of 'calafates' and carpentry of the frigate to careen the flat boat of the fort. In the careening the artisans consumed the materials that had been stored in the presidio; tar, 'estopa', lead, steel of 'calafate', a ladle to melt the tar, a box of and three sail needles.

[102] Ibid., f. 366.

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Grajera paid the artisans of the fragata at the rate of about half of the salary that they normally made [103].

Also, Grajera took this opportunity during the stay of the frigate Princessa, for the barrel worker of the ship to work and fix the pipes of the castle and the water barrels of the fort [104]. For this work, Jose Marquez, the master barrel worker, charged him 6 pesos for twelve days of work.

There were three carts in the presidio, and to pull them Grajera had bought eight bulls that worked well and adapted very well to the carts, the bulls were bought from Mission San Juan Capistrano for 4 pesos each [105].

[103] 'No. 2 Relation of wages paid for the classes of the frigate Princessa in the repair of the castle esplanade in the San Diego Presidio.

Carpenters	pesos	reales
1. Jare Toris for five days at a medium wage of fourteen reales that he usually makes.	4	3
2. Vicente Ortega for (same as above) twelve reales.	3	6
Calafates -----		
1. Joaquín Cruz for eight days at a medium wage of ten reales that he usually makes.	5	0
2. Jose Camarena for (same as above) six reales.	3	0
TOTAL	16	1

We received from Don Antonio Grajera, commander of this presidio the amounts cited above and as proof of this we give him this paper in the Royal Presidio de San Diego this 8th day of October of 1797.- Because the above artisans did not know how to write I have done this at their request. Salvador Menendez.- (A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 21, f. 371).

[104] Ibid., f. 369.

[105] Ibid., f. 368v.

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A neighbor artisan of the presidio, Maximo Rosas, made two cart wheels this year for eight pesos [106].

Once the flat boat was loaded in front of the presidio, it was necessary to row it by force to Punta de Guijarros. To do this work, Grajera hired four gentile Indians that were in jail at the presidio. For this work, the rowers, from the first of January to the 13th of August, Grajera gave them a blanket for each one of them, and for all four (to be distributed among themselves) six varas of cotton rags and six varas of wide blanket used for covering their bottoms. All these items came up to a total expense of 9 pesos, 4 reales, and 6 granos.

Governor Borica had given orders to the commander of the Presidio de San Diego that when he was short of Indians in the presidio jail to use the flat boat, which was indispensable to maintain and use to provide food, water, and other items for the fort at Punta de Guijarros, as previously cited), to find Indians in the missions paying them the normal wages, and to charge this expense to the fort account [107].

Perhaps the custom to which Borica referred to dated back to Galvez' time, of the dispositions contained in one of the decrees that he published for the California province, in 1769. That year Juan

Gutierrez had fourteen Indians employed in the blacksmith with 'las anclas.' Before finishing the job, Gutierrez asked the president of the missions which were the conditions under which the government could employ Indians from the village, such as 'working on the flat boat, making coal or some other indispensable work [108]'. The minister of the mission replied that 'always you ask some Indian to do any job you will give him more than the daily rate, whichever was just in money according to the days worked and the same for any other Indian of the mission.' Checking Galvez' decree about this matter: 'that to do the original Indians working in the daily routine jobs, such as the one mentioned above rowing the flat boat and working at the blacksmith, should be paid at the rate of 6 pesos a month and in the extraordinary jobs that can be offered in the same Royal service, as well as in the works of the new villages that I have ordered to build in Loreto and Casas Reales for the government and 'intendencia' of the Royal House will have to be occupied and work not only the actual congregation of persons living in Loreto but also anybody that the chief of the peninsula decides according to the division of missions including Indian workers, giving his orders directly wherever and whichever way he thinks is appropriate for he (chief of the peninsula) is the Royal and superior authority which only depends on his Majesty and those that in these dominions represent Him, without the need to compensate the 'Rds. Pes.' administrators of the missions, to whom through the 'Rmo.' president will give them copies of my Superior Resolution for his intelligence and observation, but at the same time I advise to give the Indians the same compensation that I have assigned to every servant and worker in my decree. Galvez [109].'

The Indians that were in jail in the presidio were those generally punished for felonies, stealing and

killing cattle, and if they were hired as rowers they didn't have to be paid [110]. As explained by Grajera, in that occasion there were not enough gentile Indians in prison capable of doing work, he would then ask the mission father for four Indians.

[106] Ibid., ff. 369-370.

[107] Ibid., f. 376.

[108] A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 13, ff. 220-221v.

[109] Ibid.

[110] Ibid., ff. 381-181v.

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These Indians served from the 14th of August until the 31st of December of that year. Grajera paid the the mission father for the wage of the four Indians, at the rate of 1 1/2 reales a day, 84 pesos and 6 reales [111].

Certainly there was a difference between the sum of 84 pesos and 6 reales for four servants from the mission in 113 days, and the 9 pesos four reales and 6 granos for the four Indians, but the benefit of the wage was received by the mission father and not the Indian rowers [112]. In the rations that the gentile Indians from the prisons as well as the Indians from the prison received, a total of 30 'fanegas' 5 'almudes' of corn were consumed at 21 reales per fanega. An 'almud' of corn was reserved daily for the four servants, seven bulls and six small bulls (novillas), with a cost of 4 pesos per animal, which 'one a month has been consumed' by the Indian rowers. The total cost for the rowers, in 1797, was 212 pesos, 4 reales, and 9 granos [113].

[111] Ibid., f. 374.

[112] Don Antonio Grajera, Lieutenant of Cavalry, and Commander of the Royal Presidio de San Diego.

[113] Ibid., f. 374.

'I certify that the account that I carry with the San Diego Mission with respect to this ending year, I pay eighty four pesos, six reales, for the wage, at one and a half reales a day, that one each of the four Indians working as servants of the fort at Punta de Guijarros for 113 working days from the 14th of August until this date. To keep this as a record I sign this document in the above mentioned presidio this 31st of December 1797. Antonio Grajera.

I say, the above mentioned, minister of this Mission of San Diego, that the above account is legal and that I do not have anything else to say and I sign it in this mission on the 8th day of January of 1798. Father Juan Mariner. (A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 21, p. 375).

In 1802, Jose Joaquin de Arrilaga, who succeeded Diego Borica as Governor of the Californias, advised the Viceroy that Don Antonio Grajera, promoted to Captain at the presidio had been transferred and that in his place had been assigned Manuel Rodriguez, Lieutenant of Cavalry, as official resident of the presidio.

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This official encountered many deteriorations in the utility of the Royal House which determined the conservation of the fort and the flat boat of Punta de Guijarros [115]. In October of 1803, Governor Arrillage had communicated to Rodriguez that he had written to the Viceroy informing him that it was necessary to repair the flat boat, or at least careen it, in order to keep it in service another year. As well, as experience had been, he advised that by the end of the year much of the wood would be lost to rot, and they did not have such things as tar or pitch to conserve the wood for very long [116]. He recommended that pending the arrival of the frigate Princesa with the proper materials, they

careen the boat. To lose the occasion would be costly and double the cost to the Royal house of the auxillary station at Punta de Guijarros.

In November of that year, the artisans of the frigate Princessa careened the flat boat. The workers were three 'calafates' and two carpinters, who were paid 25 pesos and one real [117].

[114] Ibid., p. 388.

[115] A.G.N., Californias, Vol. 51, p. 150.

[116] Ibid., pp. 152-152v.

[117] Ibid., p. 153.

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This year as well, Miguel Antonio Guillen, a soldier of the company assigned to repair and govern the flat boat, received 30 pounds of tar in order to coat the boat, barrels and pipes for the water system of the fort, and forty used arms, three lugs of grease, in order to coat the bottom of the boat [118].

Similarly, Felipe Romero, soldier of the armory of the Presidio de San Diego installed the water system of the fort at Punta de Guijarros, for which he used four pounds of iron. There had been four pipes, but two had rotted due to the ocean environment [119].

The rowers that transported the flat boat from the presidio to the fort were to be Indians from the presidio prison [120]. They were given one 'almud' of corn daily and only three little bulls for the quarter. As well, to cover their bodies, each was given one blanket and twelve bolts of cotton, twelve bolts of wide cloth for tarps, and four reales of 'hilo'. In 1803, the force at Punta de Guijarros consumed 730 candles at a ration of 2 each night."

[118] Ibid., p. 158.

[119] Ibid., p. 150.

(A glossary of old Spanish words beginning with the letter 'A,' borrowed from Richard E. Alborn, "Glossary of Material Culture Terms in Documentary Sources: Spanish to English," Southwest Mission Research Center, 1983 (Tucson, AZ: the University of Arizona).

abalorios	glass beads
abrigo	overcoat
acero	steel
acta	act
adobera	adobe-brick mold
adarga	shield, heart shaped
aderezo de	
silla	saddle trappings
aguja	door batten; "eye" spike
agujeta	thong
alambre	wire
alba	alb
albayade	ceruse
alfombra	carpet
algodon	cotton
aljofar	pearl, irregular
almohada	pillow
amito	amice
angaripola	calico
anillo	finger ring
anguera	rump cover for horse
anta blanca	elk hide
anil	indigo
apanada	wool-like
arcabuz	harquebuse
arco	bow
arcon	bin
arma	weapon
armador	jacket
armas	saddletree covers
armella	staple
armero	armorer
arpilladura	sack cloth
arpillera	burlap
arpon	bolt strike
arquilla	bin
arquillo	arch
artesa	trough, dou
asiento	seat
ayuntamiento	town council
azabache	jet
azacon	minimum
azadon	hoe
azafran	saffron
azuela	adz