Pablo Cota Documents MS-42

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation. Presidio Research Center
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Certified copies of military service records for Pablo Cota from 1787-1798

The documents detail Cota's service record at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara in Alta California and indicate various posts and ranks he held. The documents are signed by Felipe Goycoechea, Pedro Fages, and others.

Certified copies of 9 documents received from the Archivo General de Simancas in Spain. The documents detail Cota's service record at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara in Alta California and indicate various posts and ranks he held. The documents are signed by Felipe Goycoechea, Pedro Fages, and others.

Existence and Location of Originals
Archivo General de Simancas, Spain

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Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of Ignacio Cota

Biographical / Historical
Pablo Antonio Cota was born in 1744 at Loreto in the California territory of New Spain. On July 4, 1768 he enlisted as a soldier at the age of 24. In March of 1769 he traveled with the historic Gaspar de Portolá expedition to establish a settlement and mission in San Diego. Cota was with the second land party that discovered the Port of Monterey in May of 1770.

Pablo Cota was stationed at Monterey from 1771-1774. In 1774 he was transferred to Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa as a cabo (corporal). He witnessed the arrival of the Anza expedition, which came overland from New Spain in March of 1776, at San Luis Obispo. In November of 1776 Pablo Cota married Rosa María Lugo at the Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa.

Pablo Cota was cabo de la escolta (corporal of the mission guard) in 1778 at Mission San Antonio de Padua. Felipe de Neve promoted Cota to Sergeant at San Gabriel in 1781 and listed him as one of the soldiers destined for Santa Barbara. Pablo was one of the original soldiers, along with Francisco de Lugo, his wife Rosa's father, who founded the Pueblo de Los Angeles.

Cota was in charge of the escolta at Mission San Buenaventura from its very beginning. In 1782 he was formally listed as Sargento de Compañía Presidial de Santa Bárbara (Sergeant of the Presidial Company of Santa Barbara).

In March of 1788 Sergeant Cota established the new mission La Purísima Concepción in what is now Lompoc. He was promoted to Alferez that same year. He continued to supervise work at Purísima and served as paymaster at the Santa Barbara Presidio in 1792. In 1793 Cota supervised the construction of a crossing on the Pajaró River (near Watsonville). He inspected escoltas at various missions and served as acting commandant of Santa Barbara in 1797. He headed a survey party for Mission Santa Inés in 1789.

Alferez Cota died December 30, 1800, and was buried at the Presidio of Santa Barbara. He was 55 years old at the time of his death having served as a presidio soldier for 32 years.


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