

Suggested Activities

Before your visit:

- Discuss what a natural resource is. Guess what kinds of natural resources might be found in San Mateo County.
- Discuss who has lived in San Mateo County.

Who were the first people to live in the area?

Who brought the missions to California?

What animals were raised on a Mexican ranch?

What event brought many Americans to California in 1849?

After your visit:

- Review the above questions.
- What new resources were brought into the county by the Spanish? How did the new resources change the way people lived?
- When the Americans came after the Gold Rush, what changes occurred in the way people lived?
 - What new uses for natural resources did Americans find?
 - What city did resources from the Peninsula help build?
 - What resources did Americans use that other groups has also used?
- Take a walk around your home or school. List at least five natural resources that you see. How can they be used? Did the Ohlone, Spanish, Mexican or early American use them?
- To save the environment, we no longer use some of the resources that used to be gathered from the Peninsula. Do we still use the following resources? Why or why not?
 - Abalone (a shellfish used by the Ohlone), Corn, Cows, Oysters, Redwood, Whales and Water



Providing Plenty:

The Natural Resources of San Mateo County

Teacher's Guide

In this two-hour, interactive program your students will discover the different ways local residents have used *Nature's Bounty*. First, students will explore the *Nature's Bounty* exhibit. Then, the students will share what they have discovered as the docent leads them on a tour of the exhibit. Finally, we will do several hands-on Ohlone activities such as grinding acorns, making shell jewelry and playing games.

To help your students make the most of this program, we suggest that you review the history of the area and some of the natural resources found in the county. We have also listed some activities you might want to do before or after your visit.

This is a docent-led program. There are some variations in the tour format depending on which docent is leading the program.



San Mateo County History Museum

2200 Broadway * Redwood City, CA * 94063
(650) 299-0104 * www.historysmc.org

A Natural Resource is anything found in nature that people can use.

Nature's Bounty in San Mateo County

Acorns were one of the main foods eaten by the Ohlone. They were ground with a mortar and pestle and leached with water.

Corn was introduced to the area by the Spanish. Both the Spanish and Mexicans ground corn for food.

Cows were introduced to the area by the Spanish. Some of the meat was eaten. The fat or tallow was used for making candles and soap. The Mexican ranch owners used hide and tallow for trade. The Americans raised cows for milk.

Deer was eaten as food. The Ohlone used the hides in clothing and blankets. Bone was made into tools such as saws.

Oysters were eaten as food. The Ohlone used the shells as jewelry, made it into beads and used it in trade. The Americans used fossilized oyster shells to make cement.

Redwood had been used in some buildings by the Spanish and the Mexicans. The Americans used it in buildings, as shingles, in fences, as firewood and in water pipes.

Sheep were introduced to the area by the Spanish. The wool was used for making clothing.

Tule was used by the Ohlone in clothing such as women's skirts, to build houses, to make boats and some baskets.

Whales were hunted by the Americans for the fat and bones. Whale oil was used in lamps and whale bone was used in tools.

Wheat was introduced to the area by the Spanish. It was used for food by the Spanish, Mexicans and Americans.

The People of San Mateo County

San Mateo County has been inhabited by four major groups of people. Each group has found their own way to use natural resources to support daily life. In more recent times, residents have also used Peninsula resources to build and support San Francisco, the most important city in the West in the mid-nineteenth century.

Arriving about 10,000 years ago, the *Ohlone* were hunters and gatherers who had a rich material culture. They used all parts of the animals they hunted — meat for food, hides for clothing and blankets, sinew for string and bones for tools. As gatherers, they used plants for food, clothing, building houses and making tools.

Spanish explorers looking for a great bay came to the Peninsula in 1769. The Spanish brought agriculture and domestic animals such as horses, cows and sheep to the area. Later, Spanish missionaries established mission outposts where Ohlone worked to provide food and clothing for Mission San Francisco de Asis (Mission Dolores).

During the *Mexican* period (1822-1846), ranch owners raised cattle for their hides and tallow. The hide and tallow could then be traded for luxury goods. Ranch owners also made use of crops such as corn and wheat that the Spanish introduced.

Americans arrived in great numbers during the 1849 Gold Rush. Although gold was not discovered in San Mateo County, resources from the area went to support the booming city of San Francisco. The bay and ocean provided seafood, salt, shells for cement and whale oil. Redwood built houses in the city. Water from the Peninsula watershed supported daily life in San Francisco. Dairy products and produce from the county were sold in the city.