

THE HISTORICAL AND ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES OF THE SANTA CRUZ RIVER VALLEY, ARIZONA

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In southern Arizona and northern Sonora there is a harsh desert region connected by river valleys and ancient cultures. In the midst of this harsh desert, these river systems fed by springs and summer rains create oasis areas for rich agriculture and provided routes to travel north and south from deeper in Mexico. Contact between peoples in the regions is thousands of years old. In the Tucson area some of the oldest corn agriculture is to be found north of central Mexico going back 3,000 years. Major irrigation canals large enough to divert the entire course of the Santa Cruz River were constructed over 1,000 years ago. What is true of Tucson is also true of many sites along the Santa Cruz River

domesticated animals such as horses, cattle and sheep. This added considerably to the indigenous diet and created year round agriculture. As missionaries moved north so did other Hispanics, soldiers, miners, ranchers and merchants. By the 1750's a company garrison of troops was established at Tubac and in 1775 the Tubac presidio was moved to Tucson.

In the mid 1600's Apache Indians moved in from the northeast and conflicts between these raiding peoples and the O'odham, Opata, other native peoples and Hispanics defined much of the history of the Spanish and Mexican periods. The establishment of Spanish missions and government also created the opportunity and reason for native tribes in the



Where water was dependable agricultural settlements were dense. The river was not always dependable and some of its flow was at times subsurface. In the Tucson area this meant additional dependence on springs on either side of the river.

In the 1680's Jesuit missionaries led by Eusebio Francisco Kino moved north into the land of the northern Pimas or O'odham. Missions and visitas of missions were established beginning in 1687 at Misión Dolores in Sonora south of the current border followed by San Ignacio 1687, Guevavi early 1690's, and San Xavier near Tucson in 1700. The missionaries brought new plants, especially wheat and fruit trees and

area to travel throughout Sonora in search of work. By the middle of the 19th century the region was a mixture of several varieties of Hispanic (Catalan, Basque, Castilian, etc.) others from Europe, many native people and after 1853 people from the United States with roots in northern Europe. The modern Southwest of United States and Northern Mexico was born.

The ancient trade routes that brought native people north from central Mexico were basically the same routes used by Spanish explorers and missionaries. These routes became the Camino Reales or royal roads. Even today modern highways are close to the original routes.

The term Los Caminos Reales refers to a relatively well traveled route guarded by presidial troops. They were not exactly the same in all times of colonial history but generally followed similar routes. A Royal Road came north from the state of Sinaloa through the towns of Alamos and San Miguel de Horcacitas where it split, one route going northwest to the Santa Ana area and then along the Magdalena river to Altar and north from Altar, eventually reaching Tucson.

Another route went north along the San Miguel river to Misión Dolores then north through the town Santa Cruz a little further north it split, one route crossing the mountains and going to the Santa Cruz valley and north to Tucson the

other route went east to join up with the camino real that stretched from Santa Fe, New Mexico south through Chihuahua and on to Mexico City. See circa 1780 map Arizpe to Chihuahua. From Tucson the route went north and then went to the California coast. There it continued north to San Francisco

Los Caminos Reales de Arizona

A series of sites are currently being developed to preserve and interpret the history and ecology along the north/south Camino Real in Arizona from Tucson to just north of the border with Mexico

Tucson

Downtown Tucson is undergoing a major revitalization effort under the name of Rio Nuevo. This effort includes the development of an historic park comprised of the Misión

San Agustín on the west side of the Santa Cruz river and the *Presidio de Tucson* in what is now the center of downtown Tucson. Neither of these sites have standing structures and both sites are undergoing extensive archeological investigation. Both sites also contain significant pre-Hispanic indigenous houses, storage pits and irrigation canals. The *Misión San Agustín* site has irrigation canals and habitations going back 3,000 years which includes evidence of some of the earliest agriculture in the southwestern United States. The project is in the historical research phase with a major study being done to both review

18th and 19th century documents and books looking for information about everyday life and create a visual archive of 18th and 19th century paintings, drawings and artifacts. The goal of which is to provide an interpretive base for what is to be known as the Tucson Origins Historic park. The archaeological excavations and historic research will be finished in December. A computer model based on historic photos and paintings of the Mission site and other archaeological and historic evidence is being created to give the mission a three dimensional visualization. Beginning in the fall of 2002 an interpretive plan will be created with the hope of opening the historic site in five years. This site is directly on the Camino Real. There is strong political pressure to reconstruct the chapel and convento site. This probably will happen.



Excavation of the San Agustín granary



Mission San Agustín circa 1855

San Xavier del Bac

This mission was established in the last part of the 17th century by Jesuit Father Eusebio Francisco Kino and the current church was constructed at the end of the 18th century. It was built in the Mexican baroque style and is the best preserved church in northern Mexico and the southwest part of the United States. It still is an active church for the people who built it, the Tohono O’odham. It was rapidly deteriorating when a major conservation project was begun about 10 years ago. The conservation process is nearing completion. An important feature of the process was that the four members of the Tohono O’odham nation were trained as conservators to enable continued maintenance of the mission after the conclusion of the project.

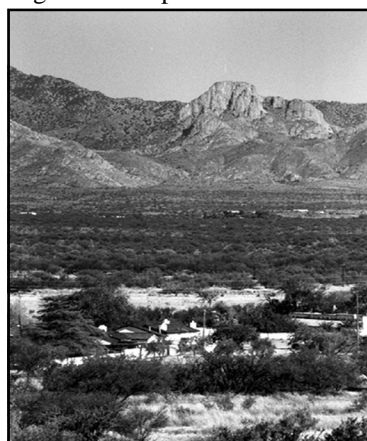
San Xavier del Bac



Main Altar, San Xavier del Bac

Canoa Ranch

The county of Pima owns a large part of this ranch which was an active ranch from the Spanish colonial era until the 1960’s. A number of structures have survived from the 19th and 20th centuries. The ranch borders the Santa Cruz river and like Rio Nuevo in Tucson contains many archaeological sites going back thousands of years. The county is preserving the surviving structures and beginning to develop an interpretive plan for its use. The county has just created an oversight committee for the site to begin developing interpretation and management plans. An historic adaptive use plan is just going to bid. It is an important site that has not been developed. It has great potential to interpret ranching, water use and environmental studies in a largely undamaged landscape.



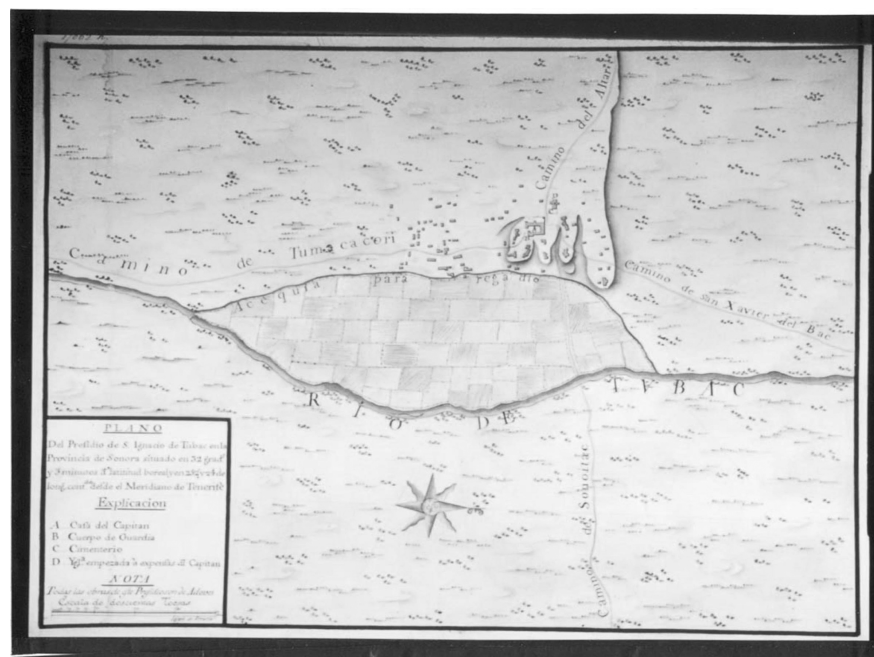
Canoa Ranch

Tubac

Tubac is the location of one of the presidios established in the mid eighteenth century to protect Spanish and Indian settlements from raids by the Apache as well as to quell any possible native uprising. Like the Tucson presidio, it is an archaeological site. Part of the site has been interpreted as part of an Arizona state park. The rest of the site which contains the majority of presidio period housing has been acquired by a non profit group and will be interpreted to the public. An interesting aspect of the site is that archaeological excavations have revealed that there is an exact correlation between the foundations of structures found and a mid eighteenth century manuscript map of the presidio. The setting of the site is also good. No modern structures are close to the site and it is possible to experience the land much as it was in the eighteenth century. Work is beginning to interpret the presidio. "Tubac map and site plan"



Excavation at Tubac



Tubac, 1768

Tumacacori National Historic Park

Tumacacori has as its purpose the interpretation of the northern missions of Mexico. This mission was established at the beginning of the 18th century by the Jesuit priest Eusebio Francisco Kino. The present church was built in the early 1800's by O'odham and Yaquis labor. The mission was abandoned in 1848 and the remaining O'odham families went to San Xavier del Bac. Later the area became used for ranching and in 1904 became a national monument. The park has received funding to make a new interpretation of the mission and has been expanded to include two more mission structures. One, Calabasas, was a visita (branch mission) of Tumacacori and the second is Guavavi, at times a visita of Tumacacori and other times a mission in its own right.

The addition of these two sites expands the Historical Park to within a few miles of the border with Mexico and completes an almost continuous line of historic and archaeological sites extending from Tucson to the frontier with Mexico, a distance

of 55 miles. Tumacacori is also in the process of adding several hundred acres of land to buffer the park from encroachment and to reclaim land previously used by the mission for fields and orchards. This will greatly enhance the ability of Tumacacori to interpret the mission in the context of its environment.

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

The Anza trail celebrates the expedition made in 1775 that went from Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico north through Sonora and Arizona and founded San Francisco, California. This trail is the same route as the Camino Real. The trail has been established as a national historic trail and is in the process of developing interpretation and programs for its entire length. A recent planning phase has located original campsites in Pima County which include Canoa Ranch to the north of Tucson. Plans are in process to create non motorized trails for horseback and hiking throughout the county.

As can be seen there is a wealth of historic sites, on the Camino Real from Tucson to the border with Mexico. All of these sites while differing in emphasis share a number of things in common. They all have evidence of a long and complex history beginning with indigenous people who developed agriculture in the region. They all share a river environment, they were all on a north/south trade route over 1000 years old and they all show the interaction between humans and the environment.

The next phase of the project is to create an interconnection between all of these sites and projects. In the United States such an interconnection would be the creation of an Heritage Area. In the U.S. "a National Heritage Area is a place designated by the U.S. Congress where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. These patterns make National Heritage Areas representative of the national experience through the physical that remain and the traditions that have evolved in the areas. Continued use of the National Heritage Areas by people whose traditions helped to shape the landscapes enhances their significance." The Santa Cruz River valley between Tucson and Nogales, Sonora is a perfect example of just such an area. Tied together by routes that became a camino real and by the river environment the various peoples whose movements and migrations created a cultural mix which continues to this day. The designation of a National Heritage Area creates the mechanism for the interrelationship coordination of the sites to present a cohesive and complete interpretation of the area. This in turn will promote cultural and ecological tourism and increase the preservation and presentation of significant aspects of history and the environment. Besides the content in common, each site in the region has a different and unique focus that combined with other sites will present the complex and complete understanding of the region. In order for the heritage area to be established the county of Pima is taking the lead in creating a committee of stakeholders and interested people to work on an area plan. The first task will be to create an inventory of the cultural and natural features of the landscape. Once this is done the definition of this area will have a concrete form which will enable it to be classed as a National Heritage Area.

Even before the creation of a National Heritage Area

educational programs are being developed. The almost simultaneous development of all these sites creates a great opportunity to provide an important interpretation of an important part of the history of Sonora and Arizona. It provides the possibility to coordinate the interpretation of eight different locations with different aspects of the same history.

These sites run for 55 miles from Tucson to just north of the international boundary with Mexico. In addition, Sonora is currently developing its tourism with a focus on the Spanish mission chain within Sonora. Work is occurring between the U.S. National Park Service and the Institute of Anthropology and History in Mexico to restore and stabilize these missions. At some time it should be possible to connect efforts in Sonora and Arizona in a larger heritage area. Because of the nature of the sites in Arizona (only two have major architectural features that are not ruins) the focus is education.

Education Programs Now in Place

Anza Trail Website – Web de Anza

This website created by the Center for Advanced Technology in Education at the University of Oregon is an experiment in the creation of curriculum material using internet technology. It is text based that uses transcriptions in both Spanish and English of diaries and letters from the Juan Bautista de Anza expeditions of 1774, 1775. These expeditions explored and then settled San Francisco California. The website is a resource in understanding the history of the Spanish colonial experience of the U.S. west and southwest. Along with the transcriptions of text are maps, illustrations and links which explain the texts. Teachers use this material to create curriculum material for use in their classes. Many of these curriculum plans are also put on the website. Classes in Spanish and social studies are the predominate users. The site is binational, at least one middle school in Hermosillo Sonora has created curriculum material posted on the web. The website directly relates to the physical sites in the Santa Cruz River Valley and is arranged by daily diary entries. It is an extraordinary merging of school and historic sites. Many of the schools use field trips to the actual location as part of their study.

Archaeological Training Session for Teachers

Tucson as part of the development Tucson Origins Historic Park through the auspices of Desert Archaeology and the Arizona Historical Society has created a series of 2 day workshops and in-service programs that instruct teachers how to use the current archeology being done on the historic sites to develop and use this curriculum in grade school classes. In Arizona fourth grade is required to teach state history. This project will hopefully train teachers to use local historic sites for that requirement.

Projects involving students

Also as part of the Tucson Origins Project three grade schools

are working with the Arizona State Museum to create oral histories, and local histories involving the mission San Agustín and the Presidio de Tucson. One of the schools is creating an exhibit exploring the Misión San Agustín and the presidio. These schools are multicultural whose students are Native American, Hispanic, Anglo, Chinese, etc.

Festivals and period interpretations

Tumacacori National Historic Park has several festivals during the year that involve the bringing together of many cultures in celebration of history and tradition in performances, crafts, and food. Demonstration of traditional foods occurs on weekends.

Tubac Presidio Historic Park interpretive programs involves costumed interpreters, period foods, and crafts.

This focus on education both adult and school oriented is now being worked into the interpretive plans of Tucson, Canoa, and Tubac. During the next few years as these facilities are fully developed and opened, the Santa Cruz valley between Tucson and Nogales Sonora will become a

showcase of regional history that will increase cultural and ecological tourism and local participation and appreciation of the preservation of our heritage.

Further interactive interpretive projects are being developed for Tucson Origins Historical Park, Canoa Ranch and the Tubac Presidio. The interpretive goal is to have sites that are visited repeatedly by local citizens as well as tourists

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