

Tumacacori

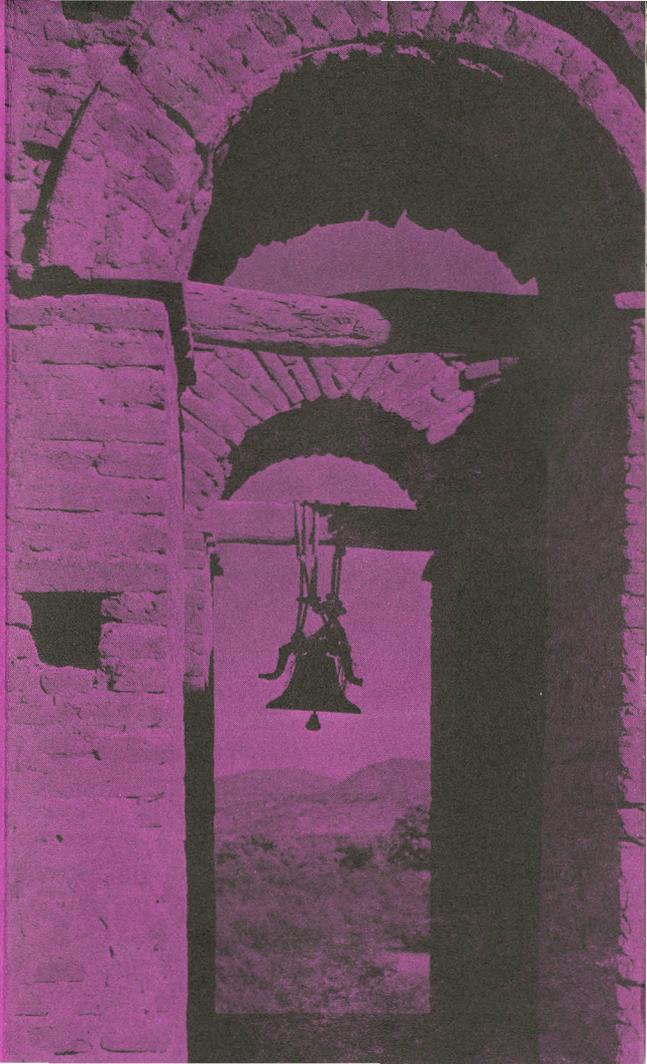
NATIONAL MONUMENT • ARIZONA

*The fruit has fallen
and none to gather it.
Corrals still standing—
not a living thing seen.*

*It has a melancholy
appearance. The walls
of the church still
stand, no roof, and
only the upright piece
of the cross. It looks
desolate indeed . . .*

*built of beautiful
large burnt brick; the
walls inside plastered
with cement, and adorned
with paintings in the
cement. The dome over
the altar covered with
cement which shines white
in the sun; portico in
front, with two tier of
columns; rich and exquisite
carving inside, 4 bells,
one has been taken down. . . .*

*A traveler named Hays wrote
this description of Tumacacori in
December 1849*



RISE AND FALL OF TUMACACORI

Father Kino first came into what is now southern Arizona in 1691, when he visited, at the request of the inhabitants, the small Pima village of Tumacacori, which he called San Cayetano, a few miles from the site of the present mission. He said Mass there under a brush shelter which the Indians built for him.

By 1698, according to Father Kino, Tumacacori had an "earth-roofed house of adobe," fields of wheat, and herds of cattle, sheep, and goats. At every opportunity he and his successors visited Tumacacori to hold services and to encourage ranching and farming. When a missionary was assigned to Guevavi, to the southeast, Tumacacori became a *visita* of that mission; that is, a place where the missionaries occasionally held services. After the Pima Rebellion of 1751, the village was moved to the site where the mission now stands and renamed San José de Tumacacori. A small mission was erected here and a presidio was established at Tubac, 3 miles north of Tumacacori.

In 1767, the Jesuits were expelled from all Spanish dominions and the next year the Franciscan Order took over the Sonora mission chain. About 1772, Guevavi was abandoned because of Apache raids and San José de Tumacacori became the headquarters for the missions of the district. Apparently, construction of the present church was not begun until nearly 1800, but it was definitely in use by 1822.

To the south, important events were taking place. Mexico won her independence from Spain in 1821. This change in government brought about abandonment of most of the frontier missions, for the new government was unable to provide adequate military defense against hostile Indians. Mexico passed laws which tended to weaken the power of the church, and mission churches were required to become parish churches. Mexico ended the Spanish custom of providing government money for mission aid, a change which hastened the end of the mission-building period.

Exactly when the last resident priest left Tumacacori is not known, although this area was under the jurisdiction of a nonresident priest as late as the 1840's. It is known that after the Spanish settlers, soldiers, and priests departed, frequent Apache raids made life here almost impossible. In 1844, Mexico sold the Tumacacori mission lands to a private citizen. When the devout Indians finally left Tumacacori in 1848, they carried the church furnishings with them to the mission of San Xavier, near Tucson. Some of the statues were returned to Tumacacori March 30, 1973.

The church, deserted, slowly began to fall into ruins. Treasure hunters and the eroding elements gradually wrought havoc with the beautiful structure, until only its massiveness preserved it from complete destruction.

THE MISSION AND THE MEN

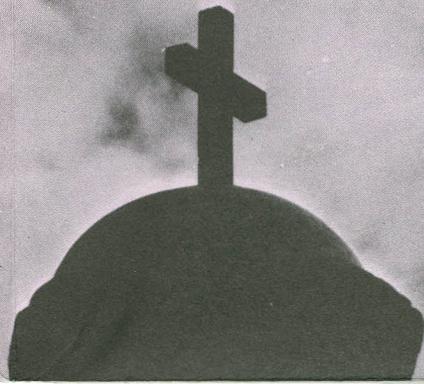
A typical frontier mission church, Tumacacori National Monument illustrates Spanish colonial endeavor and commemorates the introduction of European civilization into what is present-day southern Arizona.

To hold the far-flung frontiers of the Spanish Empire of 250 years ago in South Central America and Mexico and to bring Christian civilization to hundreds of native tribes, Spain sent soldiers and missionary priests into the wilderness. Missions were founded among the settled tribes, and presidios (military posts) were set up on the borders of the hostile tribes. The frontier missions were both churches and centers of European civilization, and by such means, the outlying provinces of Spanish America were extended and secured.

San José de Tumacacori was a northern outpost of a mission chain constructed by Franciscan priests during the late 1700's on sites established by the Jesuits in what was then the Province of Sonora. Today, Tumacacori denotes Spain's activity on the Southwest frontier long before the United States became a nation. It is an in-

spiring symbol of the faith, courage, and vigor of the early missionary priests and of the great loyalty and devotion of the Indian converts.

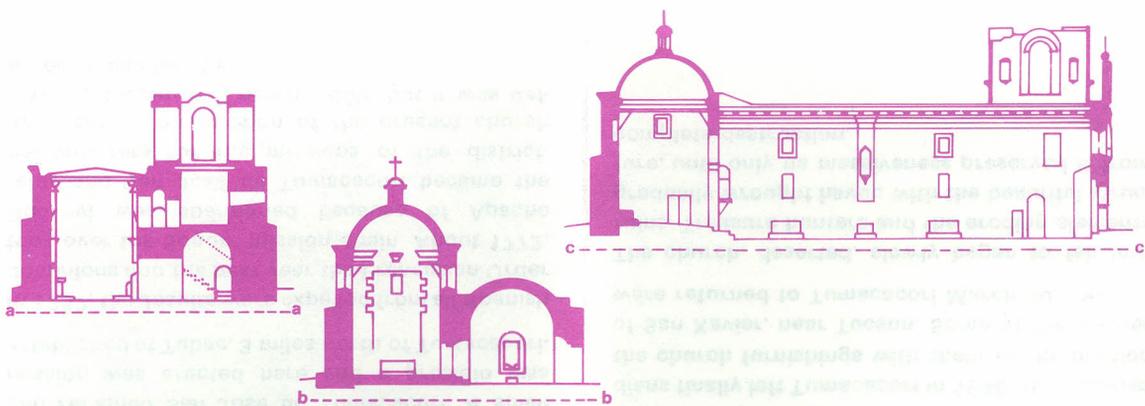
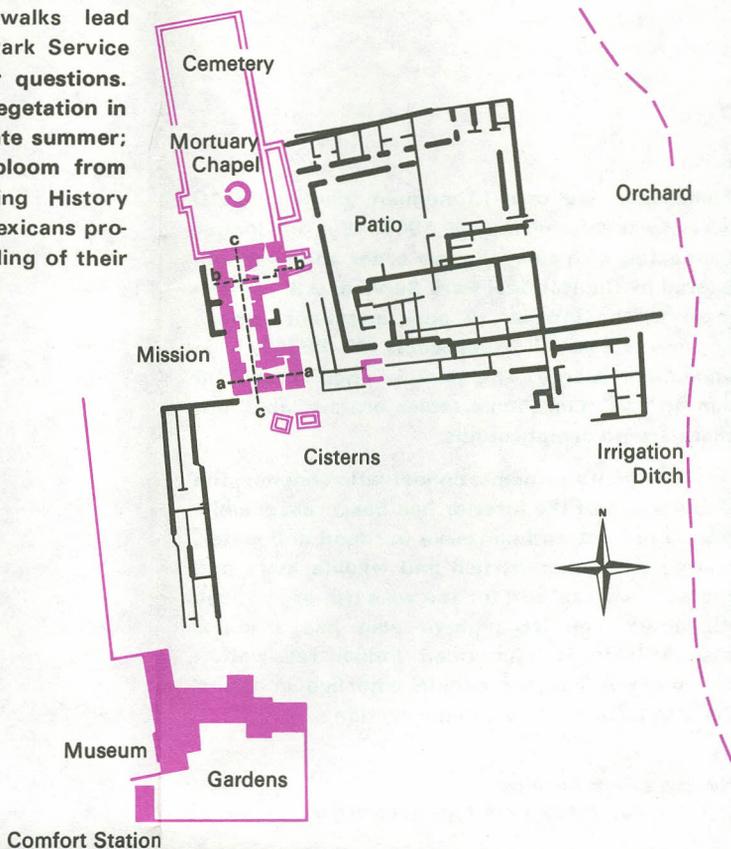
Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, a German-educated Italian Jesuit, extensively explored northern Sonora and southern Arizona. He proved that Lower California was a peninsula and not an island as many believed. He founded his first mission in 1687 and explored and mapped the Upper Pima country until his death in 1711. Father Narciso Gutierrez, a Spanish Franciscan, arrived at Tumacacori in 1794 and stayed until his death in 1820. He helped the Indians obtain clear title to their land and established the legal boundaries of mission land. Finding the church nearly in ruins, he determined to build one as magnificent as San Xavier del Bac. Though his beautiful church was never finished, its ruin stands today as a monument to his vision and enterprise.



TOURING THE PARK

The park office and museum are in a Sonora mission-style building next to the parking area. Exhibits in the museum depict early Indian and Spanish history and portray what life was like at Tumacacori mission. Self-guiding walks lead through the garden and church. A Park Service staff member is on hand to answer questions. During years of normal rainfall, the vegetation in the park blooms in early spring and late summer; most species of cactus and yucca bloom from March through May. Through Living History demonstrations, native Indians and Mexicans provide visitors with a better understanding of their cultural heritage.

- Unexposed Historic Foundations 
- Stabilized Historic Walls 
- Stabilized Historic Structures 



THE MISSION BUILDINGS

Various old descriptions and drawings of Tumacacori show the buildings to have been arranged with the long axis of the church running north and south. To the east was a closed courtyard, surrounded by arcades and rooms; here were the quarters of the priests, storerooms, workshops, granaries, and classrooms.

North of the church is the cemetery where many Christian Indians are buried. An unfinished circular mortuary chapel dominates this area. After abandonment, the cemetery was often used as a corral, and in time the milling cattle, weather, and treasure hunters destroyed the grave mounds of the mission period. Today, the visible grave mounds are those of later burials.

The church still stands, but the courtyard structures fell almost entirely into ruin long ago. In 1921, some repair work was done to the old buildings and walls to protect them against weather, a new roof was placed over the long nave, and lesser repairs were made to other parts. Repair work since then has been limited to preserving existing original construction.

Today, you may examine in great detail the features of this stately old building, seeing the many interesting structural elements of the baroque architecture and the faded but original colors which the Indian workmen applied. The unfinished bell tower of burned brick speaks eloquently of how the last Franciscans tried to complete the church.

FOR YOUR SAFETY

We wish your visit to be a safe one and caution you about the hazards of any unfamiliar area: uneven floors, unexpected steps, low doorways, plants and insects. Please be alert for the safety of yourself and your children.

Tumacacori National Monument, containing 10 acres, was established in 1908. It is no longer connected with any religious order and is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Box 67, Tumacacori, AZ 85640, is in immediate charge. The park is open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Picnic tables are available, but there are no campgrounds.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, park and recreation areas, and for the wise use of all those resources. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

National Park Service

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR