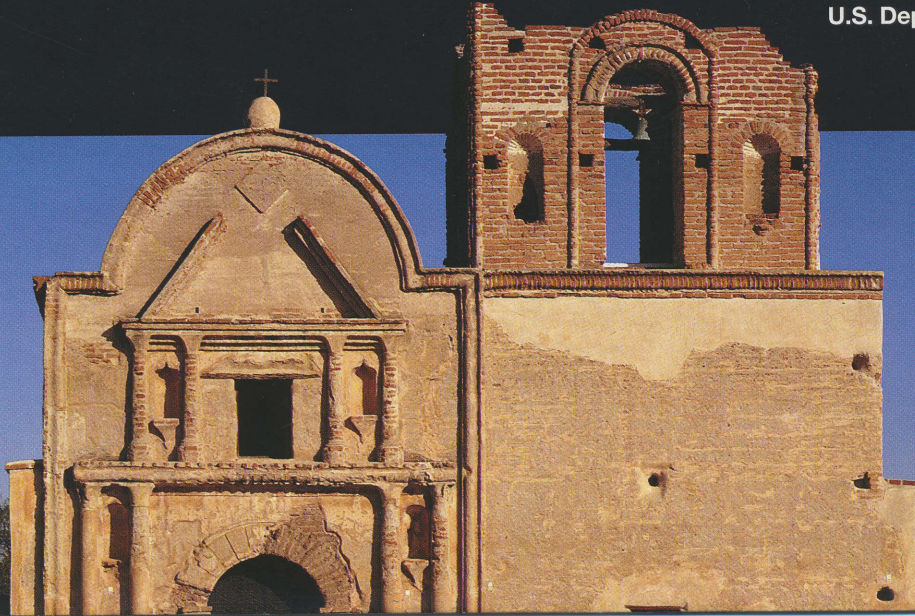


Tumacacori

National Historical Park
Arizona

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Mission to the Pimas

Edward McCain

When the Jesuit Eusebio Kino and his party approached the Pima settlement of Tumacácori in January 1691, they were riding the wave of a century of expansion northward along New Spain's west coast corridor. The Jesuits had reaped tens of thousands of baptisms and made themselves the most powerful social and economic force in the region. But the tide carried them no further north than the Pimería Alta, home of the upper Piman Indians.

It was here that Kino founded mission San Cayetano de Tumacácori on the east bank of the Santa Cruz River. The next day Mission San Gabriel was founded at Guevavi, 15 miles upriver. After Guevavi was made mission headquarters in 1701, the priest there periodically traveled to preach at Tumacácori and other *visitas* without resident missionaries.

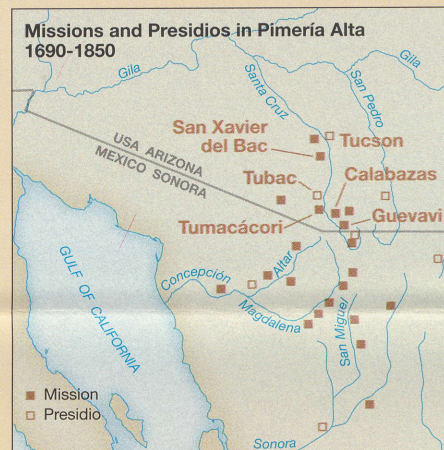
In 1751 some Pimas in the Altar Valley, southwest of Tumacácori, attacked the Spanish settlements there. Fearing retaliation from

Spanish soldiers, those at Tumacácori fled to the hills. As a result, a 50-man presidio was founded at Tubac, and the mission at Tumacácori was resettled on the west bank.

In 1767 King Charles III of Spain, for political reasons, abruptly banished the Jesuits from all his realms. The Franciscans, who took over the missionary effort in Pimería Alta, inherited the woes that had frustrated the Jesuits: restless neophytes, Apache hostility, disease, encroaching settlers, and lack of government support. The Tubac garrison was transferred to Tucson in 1776, and by 1786 only a hundred Indians remained at Tumacácori. The next year an 80-man Pima company reoccupied Tubac, but as Apache pressure mounted, the nearby missions Calabazas and Guevavi were abandoned.

About 1800 Fray Narciso Gutiérrez began building a large church to replace Tumacácori's modest Jesuit structure, but his mission's poverty and the Mexican wars for independence slowed construction. When all Spanish-born residents were forced by a Mexican decree to leave the country in

1828, Tumacácori lost its last resident priest. Scaffolding still clung to the bell tower. The Indians and a few settlers, with the aid of visiting native-born Mexican priests, hung on for another 20 years, but a series of Apache raids and the hard winter of 1848 drove the last residents from Tubac and Tumacácori. The 157-year thread of continuity begun by Father Kino was severed.



The mission at Tumacácori was sustained for a century and a half by members of two religious orders. Jesuit "black-robos" laid the foundation and Franciscan friars carried on their work with the same courage and perseverance. In a climate of exploitation, they were often the only ones to have the Indians' interests at heart.

Illustration by Richard Williams

Padre on Horseback

Though he was never a resident priest at Tumacácori, one man is forever associated with the mission: Father Eusebio Francisco Kino. Born in 1645 to minor Italian nobility, Kino vowed to become a priest during a serious illness at age 18. After his education in Italy and Germany he joined the Jesuit order and was sent to Mexico in 1681.

In his assignment in 1687 to the Pima, he found his calling. Quickly establishing a mission at the Pima *ranchería* of Cosari, Kino expanded his reach throughout the Pimería Alta. Tough-minded yet sensitive, he seemed born to the work. His understanding of Pima ways and lack of dogmatism won the confidence of his charges. The relations he established with the

Pimas set the standard for his successors. He mixed practical help—introducing wheat, livestock, and fruit trees—with impressive church ritual and pageantry. When his travels took him to Tumacácori, Kino offered communion and baptized the Pima children.

Kino crisscrossed the Pimería Alta for 24 years, establishing missions, blazing new supply routes, and mapping the area for New Spain. Though he loved this kind of work, he also was an excellent administrator, returning often to the missions he had established and overseeing the work of the fathers under him. When Kino died in 1711, Spain lost one of its greatest missionaries.



Emblem of Franciscan Order

Early 1770s
Franciscans redecorate church, build adobe dwellings for Pimas, and wall in the mission.

circa 1800
Franciscans begin building larger church. Lack of funds soon brings construction to a halt.

1801
In June, an Apache attack nearly wipes out all of Tumacácori's livestock.

1572
Indians kill pioneering Jesuit missionaries in Florida and on the Chesapeake Bay. These failures and a rebellion by Indians at a mission in what would become Carolina cause Jesuits to shift efforts to New Spain.

1687
Father Eusebio Francisco Kino is first Jesuit missionary permanently assigned to Pimería Alta.

1691
Father Kino first visits Tumacácori and Guevavi at the request of Indians from those villages and from San Xavier del Bac. The Father Visitor with Kino, impressed by this tribe of the Pima nation and their land, decides to expand the missionary effort there.

1749
At Guevavi, in February and March, disease kills nearly two neophytes daily.

1751
Pima Revolt: Indians kill two priests and more than a hundred settlers and destroy buildings at several missions. Leader surrenders four months later.

1753
In response to the revolt, a presidio is built at Tubac, and Tumacácori is moved to west side of river. Name changed from San Cayetano de Tumacácori to San José de Tumacácori.

1757
New missionary builds a small church, which serves for 65 years.

1767-68
Jesuits are expelled from New Spain. Franciscans are assigned to former Jesuit missions.

1771
Mission headquarters is moved from Guevavi to Tumacácori; for the first time the mission has a resident priest.

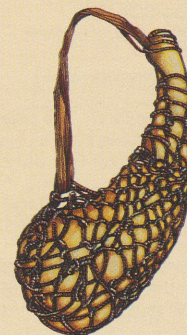
1821
Mexican Independence: Church construction resumes, but Spain withdraws aid to missions, and work ceases.

1823
Final phase of church construction begins.

1828
Mexico orders Spanish-born residents to leave the country. Only the native-born Mexican priests are left to care for missions, causing an extreme shortage of priest administrators. Tumacácori again becomes a *visita*.

1848
War with Mexico cuts supply lines. Apache attacks are stepped up; winter is extremely cold. In December soldiers abandon Tubac, and the last residents leave Tumacácori.

1853
Gadsden Purchase: Tumacácori site becomes part of the United States.



Water gourd in Pima rope bag



Emblem of Jesuit Order

Tumacacori

The River People

In San Cayetano [Tumacacori] they had prepared us three arbors, one in which to say mass, another in which to sleep, and the third for a kitchen.

So wrote Father Kino of his first encounter with the Pimas at Tumacacori. Kino found them "docile...affable...[and] industrious." Tumacacori and other *rancherías* in the eastern part of the Pimería Alta were permanent farming settlements. The Pima, or O'odham as they called themselves, raised corn, beans, and squash in irrigated fields, supplementing their diet with hunting. Dwellings were made of bent saplings covered with brush and earth, forming sturdy, dome-shaped structures. All were within hear-

ing distance of the communal "rain house," from which a crier broadcast information.

Each village had a leader, but government was by consensus, and he depended upon his powers of persuasion. During armed conflict, a war chief took absolute command of the village. The *rancherías* were politically self-contained, but during war neighboring settlements might form loose alliances against a common enemy. They would also jointly participate in games and religious observances, such as the rain ceremony. These rituals of celebratory songs, masked dancers, and tobacco smoking recreated the harmony of nature at the core of their spiritual life.

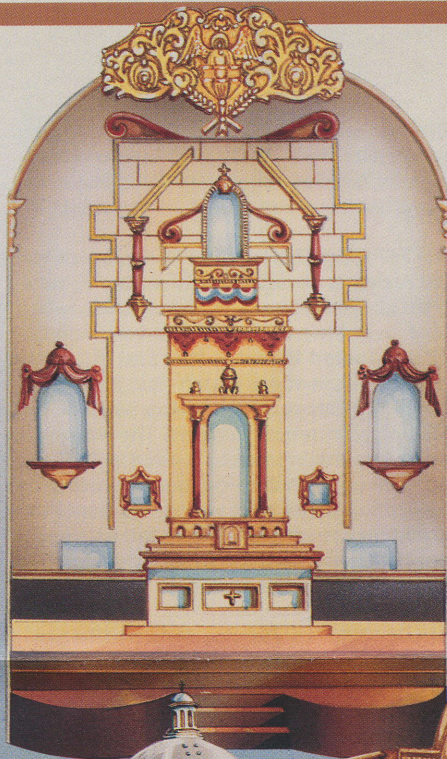


The O'odham have long been known for their basketry. Bundled bear grass fibers are bound together in a continuous spiral with strips of yucca leaves, yucca root, and a black bean pod called "devils claw." By the regular variation of the colors, the artisan can weave a number of geometric designs.

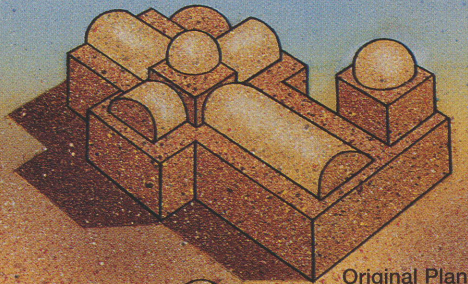
Frontier Church

By the time an 1803 report on the missions in Pimería Alta called Tumacacori's church substandard, the Franciscans were already at work on a new one. It was an ambitious undertaking—they wanted something to match the frontier baroque glory of the celebrated Mission San Xavier del Bac not far to the north.

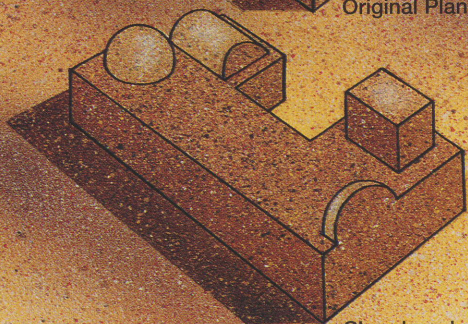
Work was begun about 1800 under the direction of a master mason and a crew of Indian and Spanish laborers. They laid five-foot thick cobblestone foundations that year, but construction ground to a halt as funds dried up. Over the next few years they were able to add a few courses of adobe bricks, bringing the walls up to seven feet, but it was not until 1821 that work truly resumed. An enterprising Franciscan sold 4,000 head of the mission's cattle to a local rancher, and with the first payment hired a new master and pushed the work ahead. The walls were raised to 14 feet, but the rancher stalled on his payments, and construction again ceased. Two years later, a persistent friar finally got the rancher to pay his



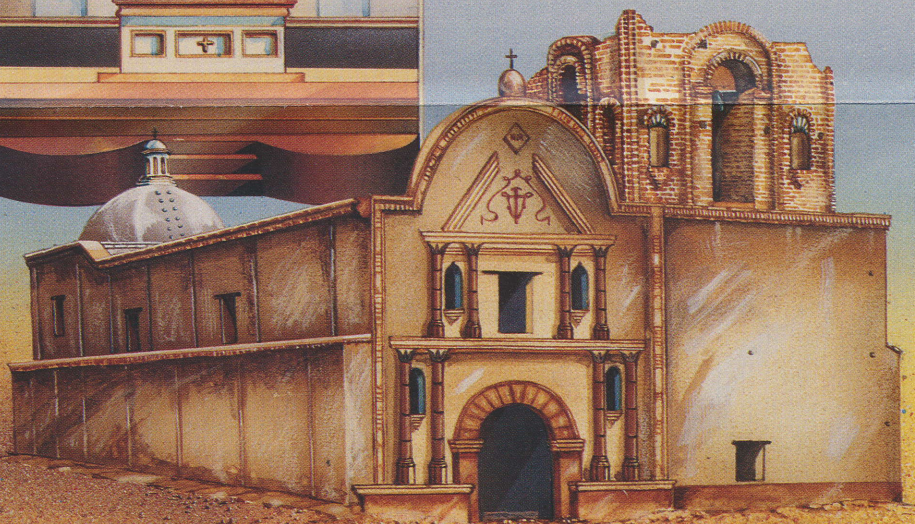
bill, and work resumed. Within a few years the church was almost completed, although the bell tower was never capped with its dome. The church must have been a striking landmark in the flat Santa Cruz Valley, with its embellished and painted facade, and plaster walls embedded with crushed red brick. The interior was even more colorful, especially the sanctuary and altar (left). As one entered the 75-foot nave, the choir loft was directly overhead. The baptistry was in a domed room beneath the bell tower. On the walls, the rich imagery of Catholicism—Mexican baroque statuary, paintings of the apostles, carvings depicting the Stations of the Cross, symbols of the Virgin Mary—was designed to capture the imagination of converts to the faith.



Original Plan



Church as built



The church altar and sanctuary wall (top) as they appeared before the mission was abandoned. The two flanking niches probably held statues of saints. The original cross-shaped plan (left, above)

called for barrel-vaulted nave and transepts. Domes would cover the crossing and bell tower. Lack of funds forced the Franciscans to scale back their vision twice, first eliminating the tran-

septs and later replacing the barrel vault over the nave with a flat roof and moving the dome over the sanctuary (left, below). The bell tower dome was never built.

Your Visit to Tumacacori

Tumacacori National Monument was established in 1908 by executive order of President Theodore Roosevelt. The National Park Service took over management of the site from the U.S. Forest Service in 1916. In 1990 the ruins of the missions of Calabazas and Guevavi were added and the name was changed to Tumacacori National Historical Park. There are no plans for restoration.

The main unit of the park is 45 miles south of Tucson and 19 miles north of Nogales at exit 29 off I-19. The park is open every day except Thanksgiving and

December 25, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. There are picnic tables available but no campgrounds.

For more information
Superintendent
Tumacacori National
Historical Park
P.O. Box 67
Tumacacori, AZ 85640
520-398-2341
www.nps.gov/tuma

The Mission Sites

Tumacacori The physical remains of the mission church San José de Tumacacori and the associated cemetery, mortuary chapel, and portions of the convento area are included in the self-guided walking tour. An adobe visi-

tor center, built in 1937, contains exhibits. The adjacent patio garden displays plants of the mission period.

Calabazas Some walls of the *visita* San Cayetano de Calabazas remain, together with the subsurface ruins of nearby associated buildings.

Guevavi The Church at Los Santos Angeles de Guevavi was built in 1751 and abandoned about 1771. Only a portion of the church still stands. Low mounds mark the location of other buildings and the convento area.

Related Sites

Tubac The mostly subsurface remains of the presidio of San Ignacio de Tubac (*see map on the other side*) are protected and interpreted by the state of Arizona. Tubac Presidio State Historic Park has a fine museum with exhibits relating to the history of the area, an underground archeological display, the 1885 Tubac schoolhouse, and a picnic area.

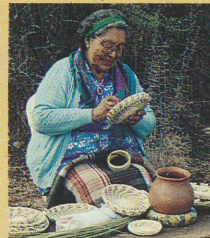
San Xavier del Bac
An active Franciscan mission to the Tohono O'odham Indians (near Tucson), it was established in August 1692, just one year after

Tumacacori. The church was completed in 1797 and is considered the finest example of Spanish colonial architecture in the United States.

For a Safe Visit

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

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William Miller/National Park Service

Anita Antone, of the Tohono O'odham Reservation, demonstrates her tribe's centuries-old basket-weaving technique at the Tumacacori Fiesta. Visitors to the fiesta, held each year on the first Saturday and Sunday in December, can see crafts and ceremonial dances, and sample foods of the O'odham, Yaqui, Apache, and Mexican cultures.