

SPANISH AND MEXICAN FRONTIER (1680 - 1854)

Summary of Theme

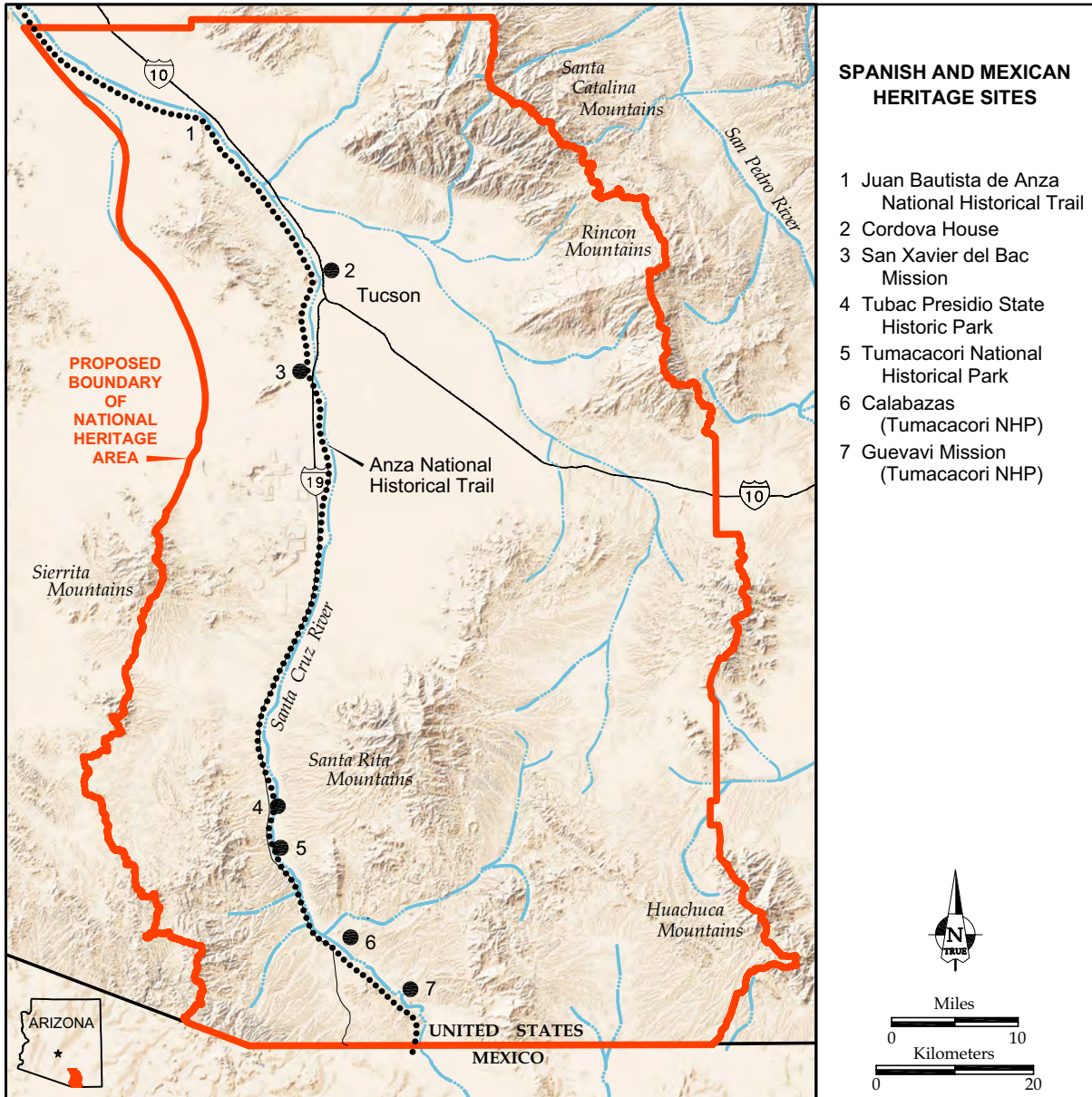
The proposed Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area will be the first National Heritage Area on the border with Mexico. The Santa Cruz Valley was once the northern frontier of New Spain – an isolated and often inhospitable region where Spanish colonists, soldiers, and missionaries interacted with local Native American populations beginning in the 1680s. The region became part of Mexico when Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, and then became part of the United States when the Gadsden Purchase was signed in 1854. Despite the changing political jurisdictions, many of the early Spanish and Mexican settlers have living descendants in the area today. A number of the presidio fortresses, missions, and ranches occupied between the 1680s and 1854 are still preserved in the Santa Cruz Valley, and many are open to visits by the public. Most of these heritage sites from the Spanish and Mexican periods are under the management of various governments; however, there is currently no interpretive link between them. Designation of a Santa Cruz Valley National Heritage Area will increase awareness of the rich and unique Spanish and Mexican heritage of the region, allowing local residents and tourists the opportunity to visit and learn about the deep history that connects this region with Mexico.

Description of Theme

The arrival of Christopher Columbus' fleet in the New World in 1492 led to the conquering of modern-day Mexico and the gradual expansion of Spanish authority northward into what is today the United States. Beginning in the 1530s, Spanish missionaries and military personnel in search of souls and resources traveled through what are now the states of New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

In Arizona, the efforts of Europeans were focused on the Hopi and Zuni pueblos in the north, and along the Colorado, San Pedro, and Santa Cruz rivers in the south. The Spanish and subsequent Mexican northern frontier extended from the Colorado River on the west, to the Rio Grande on the east. Between them, the Santa Cruz River and its valley was the focus of the heaviest occupation. The ready availability of water, fodder for grazing animals, irrigable fields, mineral resources, and relatively friendly Native American populations made the Santa Cruz Valley the hotspot of activity along the northern frontier of the Pimería Alta (Land of the Upper Piman Indians) from about 1680 onward. Native American uprisings and attacks increased through time, and eventually only the Santa Cruz Valley settlements remained. Small, isolated communities endured, with the residents watching warily as the area became part of the United States in the 1850s.

The interplay between local Native Americans, Spaniards, and Mexicans created a distinctive community along the border. The relative isolation of the area, quite distant from large commercial and manufacturing areas, fostered greater self-sufficiency and a reliance on cooperation and interaction among these groups. The result was the development of distinctive cultural traditions, architecture, and foodways in this border region. Many of these traditions, including the Sonoran rowhouse architecture and the use of Sonoran Desert plants as food resources, have continued into the modern period. Other traditions, such as the Día de San Juan festival, have been revived in recent times and are becoming increasingly important to



Spanish and Mexican heritage sites in the proposed National Heritage Area..

both local residents and visitors from across the nation and the world. The Spanish and Mexican heritage of the region is one of the reasons that have compelled an increasing number of tourists to explore the Santa Cruz Valley.

The Native Americans who lived along the course of the Santa Cruz River – the Pimans and Papagos (today known as the Tohono O’odham, or People of the Desert) – had probably heard stories of the newcomers heading north before these strangers actually traveled through the region. The 1530s and 1540s saw a handful of Spanish expeditions journey through the southeastern part of what is today Arizona. The first permanent Spanish presence in the Santa Cruz Valley was the cattle ranch established by Jose Romo de Vivar in 1680, at San Lázaro on the upper reach of the river, in what is now Sonora. However, more significant interactions

did not develop until Father Eusebio Francisco Kino was dispatched to New Spain's northern frontier in the 1690s.

Father Kino was a man of many talents. A Jesuit priest born in Italy in 1645, he was sent to the Pimería Alta to serve as a missionary to the Native Americans of the region. He traveled out to small communities, learning the Piman language so he could preach to them about his Catholic beliefs. Kino was an inquisitive man interested in understanding the history and geography of the area. He was shown blue seashells by some of his Native American friends, and afterwards, attempted to find an overland route to California, where he knew the shells originated from.

Kino and accompanying priests and soldiers were the first Europeans to travel north along the Santa Cruz River into what is now Arizona. Their journeys during the 1690s and early 1700s brought local Native Americans into contact with new ideas, technologies, and sources of food. Kino introduced cattle, sheep, horses, wheat, peaches, lentils, figs, onions, and other crops to communities along the river.

Unfortunately, the newcomers also brought diseases that local inhabitants were not immune from. Many people died from epidemics of measles, smallpox, and other contagions. The Spaniards had difficulties in understanding the time-honored yearly rounds of the Native Americans, who lived at their farming villages for part of the year and traveled out to gather wild resources for months at a time. The Spaniards preferred complete sedentism, so they could preach Christianity to the Indians and ensure that they were following European moral codes. Further, year-round occupation at villages allowed for a steady labor source. The introduction of European crops made this more possible, but attempts to change Native American lifestyles proved difficult.

Jesuit missions, where Native Americans could receive religious instruction and would supply labor, were established at Guevavi in 1691 and San Xavier del Bac in 1700. Visiting missions, known as *visitas*, were established at Tumacácori in 1691, San Agustín in 1700, and Calabazas in the 1750s. Priests initially traveled to these places several times a year. It was not until the 1730s that a permanent European presence was established.

Local Native Americans soon began to chafe under Spanish authority. By November 1751, interactions between the two groups soured as Native Americans grew tired of their land being taken, and angered at punishments and insults meted out by some of the missionaries. The Pimans revolted, forcing Spanish priests and settlers to flee south into Sonora. The following year, the Spaniards returned and constructed a presidio fortress, at Tubac, which was a small Piman rancheria 4 miles north of the mission at Tumacácori. A garrison of about 50 soldiers was stationed at the presidio, ensuring peace among the local Pimans and protecting the area from Apaches, who had begun to conduct raids into the area from the north, attacking settlements and capturing livestock.

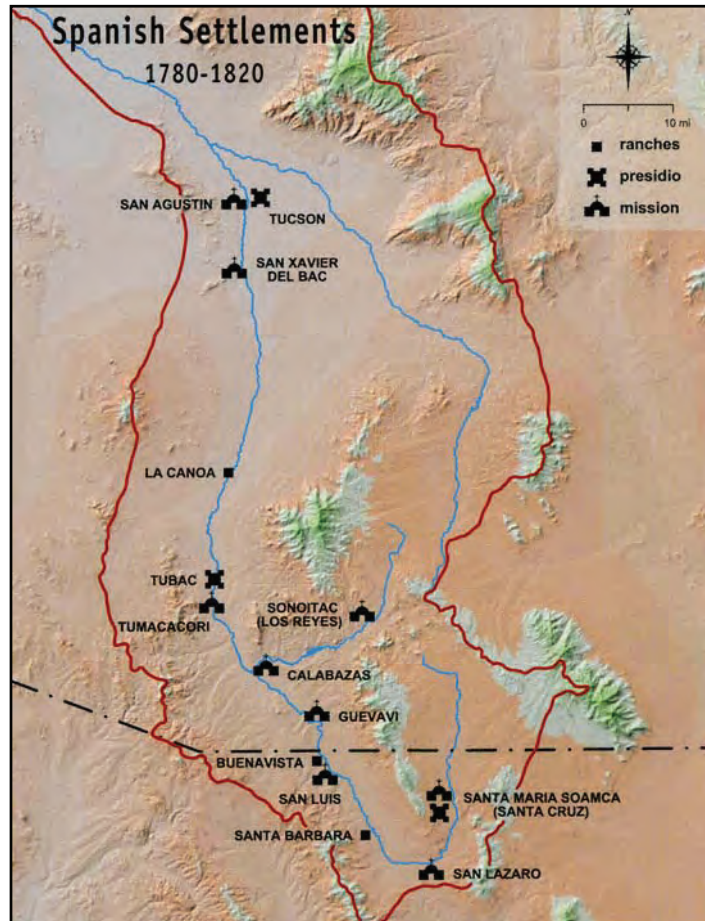
Other Spaniards trickled into the area, operating ranches and prospecting for mines. Raids by the Apaches against both Spanish and local Native Americans grew. In the 1760s, the Sobaipuri Pimans, who lived along the San Pedro River to the east, moved to Tucson to live at the Mission of San Agustín. In 1775, Juan Bautista de Anza led two expeditions from the Tubac Presidio to establish a colony at San Francisco, California.

Concerns about the overall security of the northern frontier led the Spanish military to have Irishman Hugo O'Connor make an inspection tour in 1775. He decided a new presidio was needed along the San Pedro River, and the Terrenate Presidio was constructed in 1776. That same year, he ordered the garrison at Tubac be moved north to Tucson. This was accomplished the following year, although the soldiers failed to construct the new fortress according to new regulations.

Meanwhile, the Terrenate Presidio proved to be a failure, with constant attacks killing 80 soldiers, including two of the fort's commanders, over a four-year period. It was abandoned in 1780. The soldiers at Tucson failed to heed this warning, and in May 1782, a group of about 500 Apache warriors attacked the presidio and mission. A desperate battle ensued, but the small garrison of Spanish soldiers was able to repulse the Apaches through the providential firing of a brass cannon. The Apaches had never heard such a loud sound, and fled the area. The soldiers spent the next year hurriedly enclosing their fortress within a tall adobe enclosure, about 670 ft to a side, guarded by 20-ft-tall towers on opposite corners.

The priests at San Xavier began construction of a new, grand church in 1783. Architects and artisans from Mexico and local Papagos fired adobe bricks and spent the next 14 years raising a dramatic cross-shaped chapel, its interior decorated with religious statues and paintings. The old church from the 1750s was dismantled and the materials converted into a convento, where resident priests lived. Afterwards, the trained workers probably moved to the Mission of San Agustín in Tucson, where they constructed a two-story convento, a chapel, a granary, and enclosing walls for the mission and nearby gardens. In 1800, work began on a new church at Tumacácori, a structure that would not be completed until the 1820s.

Political turmoil was developing in Mexico, as many people sought independence from Spain. Soldiers from Tucson were sent to Mexico in the 1810s, to fight against the rebels. Mexico gained its independence in 1821. The Mexican government was unable to maintain the same level of spending, and support for the military at Tucson and Tubac declined, as did work at the nearby missions. The expulsion of foreign-born priests removed religious leaders from the region. The feeling of isolation was compounded by increasing Apache raids.



Ranches and mines were abandoned, followed by the missions. For a time in the 1840s, Tucson was the only occupied settlement. The passage of the Mormon Battalion, United States Army troops marching to San Diego in 1846, was seen as an ominous sign. The discovery of gold in California resulted in increased travel through southern Arizona in 1849 and 1850. Many of the forty-niners brought trade goods to exchange for food, and Tucson residents were eager to barter. Arizona south of the Gila River became part of the United States with the completion of the Gadsden Purchase in 1854; however, it was not until 1856 that American forces formally took control. Many Mexican residents of Tucson and Tubac remained behind and became American citizens. Thousands of modern-day Arizonans are descendants of people who lived in the region when it was the frontier of New Spain, and then Mexico.

Distinctiveness of Theme

No other existing or planned National Heritage Area is located on the United States-Mexico border or has a Spanish colonial theme. Although the area along the Santa Cruz River from Nogales northward has been a part of the United States for 150 years, the influences of Spain and Mexico remain strong. Communities are increasingly looking back and celebrating their Hispanic cultural heritage. Annual events, such as the traditional Christmas Mass at Tumacácori National Historical Park, recall celebrations that occurred 100 and even 200 years ago. Sonoran-style cuisine, which combines Spanish, Mexican, and local Native American influences, is available in many restaurants throughout the region. Local Spanish and Mexican heritage sites are receiving increased visitation as people seek a greater understanding of the unique history along the Santa Cruz River. No other National Heritage Area currently celebrates the contribution that Spain and Mexico made in what is now the United States.

Related Resources

The missions of Tumacácori and Guevavi were established by Father Kino in 1691, and the visita of Calabazas was constructed in the 1750s. All three are part of Tumacácori National Historical Park. Guevavi was the location of a Piman village where Kino baptized local residents. In 1732, Father Grazhoffer became the first resident priest for the first church, which consisted of a brush roof on posts. An adobe church was being constructed at Guevavi when the 1751 Pima revolt began, and the site was abandoned by the Spaniards. A Spanish priest returned in December 1753. The Native American population of Guevavi gradually declined, and in 1771, Guevavi became a visita of Tumacácori. The complex was abandoned in 1775.

Calabazas was a visita of the mission of Guevavi in the 1750s. In 1760, a house was built and construction of a church begun. The church was still roofless in 1768, but was completed by 1773, when the Franciscans established a cemetery at the site. It was part of a rectangular compound with a central plaza. The church and other houses present at the visita were burned by Apaches in 1773, and the Pima abandoned the site in 1786. The church was later repaired in 1807, and served as a cattle ranch for the Tumacacori Mission until 1830, when it was again raided and burned by the Apaches. The land was acquired by Governor Gandara of Sonora in 1844, and was occupied by various people into the 1860s.

Tumacácori began as a visita of Guevavi and was moved to its present location in 1751. A large number of buildings were eventually constructed; however, the standing church was



Among the many heritage attractions in the Santa Cruz Valley are Spanish missions, presidios, and ranches dating between the 1690s and the 1820s.



begun in 1800 and completed in the 1820s. The mission was abandoned soon afterward and was only periodically reoccupied due to attacks by Apaches. The mission was made a National Monument in 1908, and was later designated a National Historic Landmark. It is open year-round to visitors. Guevavi and Calabazas were later added as separate units and can be visited during monthly tours.

The Presidio of Tubac was established in 1752, following the Pima Revolt the preceding year. About 50 soldiers were sent to build a fort at the location of a Piman rancheria. The presidio consisted of a cluster of structures centered around a Captain's House. An inspection in 1775 led to the presidio being moved north to Tucson. The village continued to be occupied, and military personnel were occasionally stationed in the community. The 1840s saw renewed attacks by Apaches, and for a few years, Tubac was abandoned. The arrival of Americans in the 1850s led to the revival of the village, which has developed into a tourist attraction today, with many shops selling artwork. The Tubac Presidio State Historic Park commemorates the presidio and includes an innovative underground archaeology display amid the ruins of the Captain's House.

San Xavier del Bac was the location of a Native American village; construction of the third church began in the 1780s, and was apparently completed in 1797. The Franciscan priest at San Xavier was deported in 1828, when the Mexican government ordered all foreign-born people sent back to Spain, and the mission remained without a resident priest for the next 30 years. The local Papago Indians removed the church furnishings and kept them safe until the return of Catholic officials in 1858. The Catholic church remains in use today. Recent efforts to restore the church have focused on cleaning the interior, exposing many paintings hidden beneath several centuries of smoke and dirt. Work on the exterior of the church includes replacement of concrete stucco with a re-creation of the original lime and cactus juice stucco, which will prevent water from becoming trapped in the walls of the structure. This church, widely considered to be the finest example of Spanish Colonial architecture in the United States, is open to public visitation.

The northernmost Spanish settlement along the Santa Cruz River was at Tucson. The Mission of San Agustín was on the western side of the river, while the Presidio of Tucson was across the river. Both survive as archaeological sites and have been heavily impacted during the historic and modern periods. Portions of the mission were destroyed by clay mining and use of the area as a landfill in the 1950s. Recent archaeological excavations have revealed that approximately 20 percent of the mission survives, along with the all of the nearby Mission Gardens. While nothing from the Tucson Presidio are visible, archaeological excavations have revealed that structure foundations and other archaeological features survive beneath streets, parking lots, sidewalks, lawns, and even buildings. The City of Tucson's planned Tucson Origins Heritage Park calls for the re-creation of selected structures at both locations. The prominent two-story convento and smaller chapel will be recreated at the mission, using historic photographs, drawings, and floor plans drafted by archaeologists in the 1950s. The northeastern corner tower and adjoining perimeter walls will be re-built at the presidio, slightly offset from the original wall foundations. Visitors will be able to view a portion of the 1780s tower wall and an underlying 1,000-year-old Hohokam pithouse in a unique glass display case. The mission and presidio re-creations will include museum exhibits and living history, with costumed docents teaching residents and visitors about daily life in eighteenth and nineteenth century Tucson.

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historical Trail follows the western bank of the Santa Cruz River northward from the United States-Mexico border until it reaches the Gila River and turns westward toward California. The National Park Service is working with Pima County, Santa Cruz County, and the Anza Trail Coalition of Arizona on developing and linking segments of the trail, and marking them with signs. Segments extending for several miles have already been developed in the Rio Rico property and between Tumacácori National Historical Park and Tubac Presidio State Park.

Throughout the year, a variety of events celebrate Spanish and Mexican culture within the proposed Santa Cruz River National Heritage Area. The Fiesta de Los Vaqueros Rodeo and Parade takes place every February in Tucson, culminating in the largest non-motorized parade in the United States. Summer holidays include the Día de San Juan and the Fiesta de San Agustín, two Saint's Day festivals with roots extending back to the Spanish-era Tucson Presidio. Local residents gather for these two events and watch singers, folklorico dancers, processions, and enjoy Mexican food. Tucson's Birthday Celebration, the anniversary of the founding of the Tucson Presidio is celebrated at an annual flag-raising, attended by local residents dressed in historic costumes. Historical attire is required for attendance at annual traditional Latin

masses held at churches in Tubac and Tumacácori during the Anza Days Cultural Celebration and at Christmas, respectively. Toward the end of the year, the Nacimiento, a large miniature Christmas scene, is presented at the Cordova House within the Tucson Museum of Art Complex. Other events held during the year include Mariachi and Norteño music festivals and Cinco de Mayo celebrations. Attendance at these events has increased in recent years, as people seek out Mexican cultural experiences.

Spanish Barb Horses

In the late 1680s, Father Kino established a herd of Spanish horses and other livestock at Mission Dolores in Sonora, Mexico, to supply the missions and ranches he was establishing throughout the Pimería Alta. In the 1690s, Kino brought horses from this herd to the Santa Cruz Valley, introducing them to the region. In the late 1870s, Dr. Rueben Wilbur purchased a breeding group of 25 mares and a stallion from the herd at Dolores, and allowed them to run wild on his ranch near Arivaca, in southern Arizona. This isolated herd was preserved by Dr. Wilbur's descendents.

In 1989, when the Wilbur ranch was sold to The Nature Conservancy to become part of the Buenos Aires Nature Preserve (and later, the Buenos Aires National Wildlife Area), the American Livestock Breeds Conservancy funded the distribution of the Wilbur-Cruce Mission



A centerpiece of this National Heritage Area will be the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.

In 1775, Tubac was the final staging area for de Anza's expedition to colonize San Francisco.



strain among conservation breeders. The strain is now recognized in the registry of the Spanish Barb Breeders' Association.

Today, several strains of Colonial Spanish Horses, including these descendents of Father Kino's herds, have been preserved in the Santa Cruz Valley and other parts of the United States. Mostly or wholly extinct in Spain, and one of only a very few genetically unique horse breeds worldwide, they have both local and global importance for genetic conservation. The combination of exceptional disposition, great beauty, athletic ability, and historic importance makes this breed a very significant part of our Santa Cruz Valley heritage.

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