

HISTORICAL NOTE ON MEETING PLACES

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In 1853 the Gadsden Treaty fixed the boundary between Sonora and Arizona at 31° 20' North Latitude and, from the 111th meridian in a straight but diagonal line to a point on the Colorado River twenty miles below its junction with the Gila. On that boundary lie the twin cities of Nogales, Sonora, and Nogales Arizona -- cities which act for all the world as though there were no boundary and, as Los Ambos Nogales, carry on their civic work as a single entity. Truly, the Gadsden boundary is artificial and the people of Nogales are historically right in disregarding it. For the international boundary neatly bisects what was once a completely homogenous ethnic area called Pimería Alta, or the land of the upper Pima Indians, who lived along the north-flowing San Pedro and Santa Cruz Rivers from a point considerably South of Magdalena de Kino in Sonora almost as far North as the Gila and whose lands extended East and West from the San Pedro to the Gulf.

On March 13, 1687, an Italian Jesuit, Eusebio Francisco Kino, first reached Pimería Alta, and he stayed until his death in Magdalena, now Magdalena de Kino, almost precisely 24 years later. In that short space of time, Father Kino brought to Pimería Alta not only Christianity but European civilization and economic self-sufficiency. He explored North to the Gila, West to the Colorado and the Gulf, proving, incidentally, that California is not an island; he introduced cattle raising and agriculture throughout the area; and he built great churches on both sides of the border, at towns unheard of in New England, New Spain, or Europe -- Caborca, Tubutama, Cósari, Buquivaba, Imuris, Cócóspera, to name a few South of the border, and at Guévavi, Tumacacori and Bac in what is now Arizona.

When Father Kino died on March 15, 1711, he was dedicating a chapel at the church of Santa Maria Magdalena de Buquivaba. He was buried in the very chapel which he had dedicated and in May, 1966, distinguished archaeologists from the City of Mexico discovered his remains which are now appropriately enshrined in the town whose name has been changed to Magdalena de Kino.

Pimería Alta's debt to Father Kino is very great, and on both sides of the imaginary border there have been efforts, unfortunately never quite sufficient, to recognize that debt. The State of Arizona has sent a statue of Kino to Statuary Hall in the Capitol in Washington; in 1967, the Governor of Sonora commissioned two equestrian statues and in August of that year, came to Phoenix to dedicate the one which now stands in front of the Capitol - the other was placed in Hermos Hermosillo, where it commands the entrance to the Capital city and looks forever toward the Pimería Alta for whose development he was so largely responsible.

After Kino's death the most important event in the history of Pimeria Alta' was the Pima Revolt in 1751, which cost the lives of about 100 Europeans, including two Jesuit priests. The revolt was begun by Luis of Sáric, who took his people North into what is now Arizona and ultimately surrendered to Spanish troops at Tubac early in 1752. But the surrender was not until after the Battle of Arivaca, which was the largest military engagement ever to occur in Arizona. On January 5, 1752, near the little settlement of Arivaca West of Nogales, 63 mounted Spanish troops attacked and dispersed 2,000 armed Pimas, killing 46 and losing not a single Spanish soldier. The Pima revolt resulted in the creation, on April 1, 1752, of a military command designated as the Pimeria Alta Company, with fifty Spanish soldiers and one officer. It took a couple of months to decide where the Company should be stationed, but on June 2, 1752, a Royal Presidio was established at Tubac and the Company was settled there. Tubac thus became the first permanent European settlement in what is now Arizona.

Tubac, like all of Pimería Alta, has had an important place in the history of the Southwest and West. The Presidio's most famous comandante was Juan Bautista de Anza, who later served as Governor of New Mexico, but who earned an enduring place in history by two expeditions to Northern California. Anza's first expedition left Tubac in January, 1774, and was part of a Spanish effort to take and ultimately to colonize upper California so as to prevent its falling into the hands of the Russians. The second and more famous trek left Tubac the end of October, 1775, and was for the purpose of taking colonists, many of them from Tubac, but others from all over Pimería Alta, to settle and to establish the City of San Francisco.

Thus Pimería Alta, the Santa Cruz valley, and in the last century, the crossing at Nogales have always served as a gateway between Sonora and Arizona -- a gateway for soldiers, for settlers, for cattle, for gold seekers, more recently for produce, and, more important, for the interchange of ideas and ambitions.

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