



The mission of San Xavier del Bac as it is today.

PAPAGUERIA, THE DOMAIN OF THE PAPAGOS

BY FATHER BONAVENTURE OBLASSER, O.F.M.

We have often been told of the nomadic Papagos. Even our good senator, the Hon. Henry F. Ashurst, has expressed his opinion that the Papagos are good natured, peaceable nomads. In fact he still adheres tenaciously to this opinion.

Carl Lumholtz visited the Papago country about 1910. He published the results of his brief study in *New Trails in Mexico*, 1912. He states:

The greater part of the tribe never could be induced to live in pueblos or villages, which was always the policy of the Spanish missionary. In spite of the efforts of the Jesuits and Franciscans the Papagos are still living in their rancherías as of old, half nomadic in habit, resorting in the winter to the Sierras, where water is more plentiful and where their cattle, horses, mules, and donkeys find good grazing ground. In the summer they move to the broad, flat valleys to devote themselves to agriculture, which is made possible by the aid of the showers that fall in July and August.¹

Carl Lumholtz represents the opinion of those who class the Papagos as "half nomadic," which would mean roaming within a small area to suit weather conditions, as is the case with the Navajos.

Both opinions fall short of the truth. Lumholtz spent but part of a year in the Papago domain; I met him at the Pima villages on his return from the desert. Since his statement that the Jesuits and Franciscans made efforts to gather the Papagos away from their rancherías is not a historical fact, we can see that he was not very careful about the statements in the rest of the paragraph.

The truth is that the Papagos have lived in permanent villages, since before the advent of the white man. Every one of these villages had attached to it what we might call emergency villages embracing field locations, waterholes, cactus groves, mesquite forests, acorn plots, localities for gathering basket materials, etc. The village proper was built of houses of a more permanent construction than those found

¹ p. 25.

in the emergency villages. The Papago villages consisted of permanent houses, which were built on a uniform plan. They were of such permanency that some of the larger council houses are still extant, as at Santa Rosa, Pisinemo, and Anegam. The custom of destroying houses at the death of the owner accounts for the lack of more examples. In Spanish literature, the villages of the Papagos are at times styled pueblos, but more frequently they are referred to as rancherías. The word ranchería implies a house construction notably less perfect than that of the Spaniards. It is, therefore, not correct to make an essential distinction between the words pueblo, village, and ranchería.

At the time of the Gadsden Purchase the Papago villages, excluding San Xavier del Bac near Tucson, were: Kwahate, Anegam, Santa Rosa, Kaka, Mesquite, Komali, Tecolote, Kupk, Gueva, and Perigua. Just over the Mexican boundary there were Sonoyta and Quitovac. To complete our list we must mention a group of nomadic Papagos who lived in the badlands of Arizona, the stretch of desert west of the Papago Reservation and south of the Gila River and extending to the Gulf. These are the "Sand Papagos," called *Arenenos* by the Spaniards.

Owing to changes of conditions since 1852, many emergency villages have become permanent. This accounts for the sixty-two inhabited villages aggregating 1,013 houses with a total population of 5,560 persons recorded by Mr. Clotts. But these new villages still form one unit with the parent village, holding their grazing and certain other lands in common.

The eleven American Papago villages mentioned above as forming the parent rancherías of the reservation still form with their offspring villages that many districts. The boundaries between their lands are well defined, as they have been for ages past. The statement then that grazing lands throughout the Papaguería seem to have been common to the entire tribe regardless of village affiliations is not correct.

Furthermore, every part of the Papago country is the part of some village community. The present arbitrary reservation does not include all the land continually occupied by the Papagos since the Gadsden Purchase.

With these remarks forming a preface to our treatise for its better understanding, let us trace the existence of a few of the Papago pueblos back through the pages of history.

SAN XAVIER DEL BAC—INHABITED MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES

Let us turn back to Civil War days. In 1864 Mr. Browne² in the company of Charles D. Poston, the first Indian Commissioner for the Territory of Arizona, visited the village. His impressions were printed in Harper's *New Monthly Magazine*, December, 1864. He tells us:

On the 19th of January we set forth on our journey with an escort of thirty men, belonging to Company G, California Volunteers, under command of Lieutenant Arnold. . . . Nine miles from Tucson we came to the fine old mission of San Xavier del Bac. . . . A village of Papago Indians, numbering some two or three hundred souls, partially surrounds the mission. . . . As far back as our knowledge of the Papagos extends they have been a peaceable, industrious and friendly race. They live here, as they lived two centuries ago, by cultivating the low grounds in the vicinity, which they make wonderfully productive by a system of irrigation. . . . The Papagos . . . are originally a branch of the Pimos, and speak the same language. . . . On one occasion, when the principal chiefs and braves were away gathering patayah in the desert, the old men and boys of the tribe kept at bay, and finally beat off, a band of over two hundred Apaches who made a descent upon the village.

In 1855 U. S. Commissioner, Major William H. Emory, called at San Xavier. Thus he could make the following statements in Chapter VI of his "Report on the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey" (describing the Gadsden Purchase):

. . . There are in this territory four settlements: one the Mesilla Valley settlement, containing about fifteen hundred inhabitants. . . . At Tucson there is a settlement consisting of about seventy families. . . . South of Tucson there is a small settlement at San Xavier of semi-civilized Indians, called Papagoes.

In the second part of the report on page 19, in describing the geology of the country, he states:

Approaching the town of San Xavier, noted for its superb church contrasting strangely with the mud hovels surrounding it, we came upon running water. . . .

² J. Ross Browne, *The Apache Country*, p. 139.

Coming to 1826, we find the following entry in an old register, now in the archives of the Bishop of Tucson: Under date of November 16, 1826, Fr. Rafael Díaz attests to the marriage of "*Tomás Barrios de la ranchería de Santa Ana agregado a este pueblo con María Candelaria Trinidad.*" The pueblo referred to is San Xavier, since the writer signs his name as that of its missionary.

An inventory, dated 1768, from the archives of Querétaro College bears the signature of the chief of the pueblo of San Xavier, thus showing that the old town was in existence at that time.

Under date of January 3, 1754, the church register of the old Guevavi Mission contains the following entry signed by Frco. Pauer: ". . . *visité el Pueblo de San Xavier y bautizé.*" Thereupon follows a long list of Indians baptized, including the child of Chief Havanimo, one of the leaders in the rebellion of November, 1751. Under date of July 17 mention is made of the Chief of San Xavier.

Bolton's translation of Padre Kino's *Favores Celestiales* brings us back to April 26, 1700.

Having arrived at this great rancheria of San Xavier del Bac . . . we killed six beeves of the three hundred which they were tending for me here. . . . They had also a good field of wheat which was beginning to head, and during the following days they planted for the church a large field of maize, which they had previously cleared.³

In the same work Dr. Bolton tells us of the first visit of a white man to this village on August 23, 1692. Padre Kino writes:

I went in to the Sobaipuris of the north. . . . I found the natives very affable and friendly, and particularly so in the principal rancheria of San Xavier del Bac, which contains more than eight hundred souls.⁴

The earlier records call the Pima Indians of the Santa Cruz and the San Pedro valleys "Sobaipuris."

We have thus traced the existence of San Xavier as a village to almost a century before the birth of our own republic.

³ Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Kino's Historical Memoir of Pimeria Alta*, Vol. I, p. 234.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

KOMALI VILLAGE

The pueblo of Cumaro claims the valley west of the Baboquivari Mountains. One of its watering places was located at the foot of the highest peak. Kino met the Indians here. So did Browne and Poston in 1864. But their pueblo was located at the mountains or hills called Komali by the Indians, but marked on the map as Sierra de Las Animas. The remains of an ancient adobe fortification can still be seen. So too the remains of a square stone enclosure used for their dances and ceremonies. The number of ancient graves covering the Komali Mountains testifies to the antiquity of the settlement. The first mention of Cumaro is by Pedro Fages in his diary:

1781, Wednesday, October 3

We broke camp in the morning . . . and, continuing our march over level, well grassed land, arrived at a place which the soldiers called Cumaro, where we halted after travelling eight leagues. There were several pools of water, sufficient for the people and the horses. Distance from Pitic, 94 leagues.

The village remained concentrated at this location during the following century. We meet with an occasional mention of it in the Sacaton agency archives. It would not join in with the revolt of the Cobota-Tecolote Pueblo against the Mexicans in the early fifties. The pueblo had fields scattered over the full length of the Baboquivari Valley, from Little Tucson Hill down to Corner Village, near the modern San Miguel. After the Apache menace had been overcome by the American government, these Indians commenced to live permanently at their fields, and so the villages of Little Tucson, Topawa, Cold Fields, and Corner came into existence as permanent ones. The Komali village of today consists of the fields closest to the ancient pueblo. This latter, located west of the hill, has been deserted for some thirty years.

TECOLOTE

This pueblo is not mentioned by the early Spanish explorers, but when this country was taken over by the United States, it was a large, flourishing community. Its members are still the wealthiest of the tribe, being the best cattlemen.

Their territory adjoins that of Komali. Together with these people they claimed water rights at the foot of Baboquivari as an emergency village site. Shortly before the arrival of Colonel Emory, they made their last stand against the Mexicans; they were defeated and dispersed.

When Emory made his survey he noted the village of Cobota. This was a fortified mountain village of Tecolote, some ten miles to the north. The old men still relate a stiff fight with Apache marauders at this place.

Emory gives an interesting description of Papago rancherías in this vicinity. He says:

They are generally situated some distance from water, as there seems to be a superstition about living near it; the women, who do all the labor, have to bring it in ollas, or earthen vessels, a long way, bearing it on their heads. They are compelled to keep very large ones filled, which are sunk in the ground, and capable of holding a great many gallons. This tribe is comparatively well off in worldly goods; they plant and grow corn and wheat, and possess cattle and many fine horses. . . . From the suwarrow (*Cereus Giganteum*) and pitaya they make an excellent preserve by simply boiling the fruit down without sugar, and also a candy of the same material. . . . The women are better dressed than most Indian women; they all wear skirts of manta or calico, covering the body from the hips down. They appear to be a good, quiet, and inoffensive tribe.⁵

The report contains another instructive passage:

The line, after crossing a desert of about seventeen miles, strikes a comparatively low and narrow sierra, composed chiefly of porphyry and amygdaloid rock. This sierra presents two vertical peaks, rising up like a pair of horns, which constitute natural monuments for the line as it falls between them. It is a northerly continuation of the Cordillera Cobota, so called by the Papago Indians who have several fixed settlements here. . . . The Sierra Arteza and Soni lie, respectively, southeast and northwest; the former in the United States, the latter in Mexico, both well known and famous among the natives as being remarkably auriferous. . . . The Papagos claim this region and from the time they first learned to appreciate the value of gold to the present day, have continued to prospect successfully.⁶

Another emergency village of Tecolote was Pozo Verde. Mr. Browne tells about his visit in 1864.

⁵ "Report on the United States and Mexican Boundary Survey," p. 123.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Pozo Verde, or Green Wells, was our next encampment after leaving Zazabi.⁷ . . . We arrived at the Pozo Verde about two P. M. . . . The Boundary Commission spent some weeks at this point recruiting their animals and making explorations in the vicinity. The water is contained in a sort of pit or natural tank. . . . A few hundred yards from the well is an adobe fort built by the Papago Indians as a protection to their frontier village and grazing range. . . . In former years it was frequented a good deal by Apache bands, but the Papagoes generally came off victorious in the battles that ensued. At this time they rarely appear except in squads of three or four, who descend from the mountains at night and make sudden raids upon the Papago cattle.

Nine years previous Emory reported about this village:

Crossing it brings you to the base of Sierra del Pozo Verde, on which is erected Monument XV. . . . A trail leads around its southern extremity to Agua del Pozo Verde (Green Well) lying at the foot of the western slope, a little east of south, and about two miles distant from the monument. Permanent water is found here; and, although a large number of animals soon exhaust it, still it fills up in a few hours. This is the site of an old rancheria of the Papago Indians. . . . The grave of one of their chiefs, who had been killed by the Apaches was found near camp.⁸

Most interesting, too, is the account of his visit to this ranchería, and of his visit to the near-by famous cave of Mange, the soldier companion of Padre Kino.

After the Apache menace had ceased the Tecolote people made their permanent homes in their fields. This gave rise to the villages of San Miguel, Vamuri, and San Rafael. The sites at Rocky Point and Pozo Verde became large cattle-raising centers. A few families still reside at Tecolote.

⁷ Sasabe.

⁸ J. Ross Browne, *op. cit.*, p. 278.

