

Padre Kino and the Trail to the Pacific

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Illustrated by Anthony D'Adamo

Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, mapmaker, geographer, and explorer, went to Mexico in 1680 with the hope that he would be sent on to China as a missionary. Instead, he was assigned to the Indians of Lower California, a region then thought to be an island. After winning over the natives, he was forced to leave the post because of the difficulty in transporting supplies across the stormy Sea of California.

Afterward, as a missionary on horseback to the Indians of the American Southwest, Kino worked ceaselessly to build up the settlements where his charges could live in peace and plenty. He fought tirelessly against men of power and position who wished to enslave the Indians in the mines, and as long as he lived, they were protected.

Busy as he was, Padre Kino never forgot the Indians of Lower California. He built up great herds of stock against the day when he could supply new missions there. Toward this end, and disbelieving that the area was an island, he embarked on many explorations until he finally discovered a land passage from the mainland. The humble padre realized his fondest dream when the missions in Lower California were re-established.