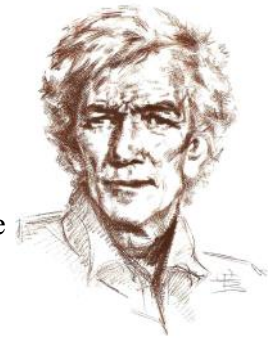


# Padre Kino - Our Padre on Horseback



Padre Kino

Jesuit missionary and explorer Padre Eusebio Francisco Kino is described by the eminent U.S. historian Lawrence Clark Powell as "the noblest Southwesterner of all." He is also known as "The Padre on Horseback." Kino's skill and endurance on horseback made possible his far-reaching Christian missionary work in the Sonoran Desert and Sky Island Mountain regions of the present day borderlands of the United States and México.

Kino was born in 1645 in the Italian Alps. For his last 24 years he ministered both to the spiritual and earthly needs of the O'odham people and other indigenous peoples living in what is now southern Arizona and northern Sonora. His previous assignment was on the drought stricken coasts of Baja California where he worked for 3 years, sailing on the unpredictable waters of the Gulf of California.

As a mission builder, Kino created Christian utopian communities. His missions provided self sufficient places of transition where indigenous people acquired skills to survive in an European colonial world. Kino taught European technologies and agricultural practices with his introduction of new farm animals, crops and foods. The O'odham people, especially from the community of San Xavier del Bac, traveled great distances throughout the year to Kino's Mission Dolores headquarters to help him plant and harvest crops and herd cattle and sheep.

As a frontier statesman, Kino promoted peace among the 16 distinct indigenous peoples he encountered. He defended them from powerful interests who coveted their lands and labor and relentlessly attempted to undermine his work. On one ride for peace and justice, Kino traveled 1,500 miles of trails in 53 days to speak truth to

power in the México City capital. Before the highest civil and religious officials, he defended the rights of the O'odham people and secured the peace that he restored after the 1695 Tubutama Uprising. He also presented his "Biography of Father Saeta" which was revolutionary in its urging of a tolerant and modern missiology.

During the first half of his life, Kino was a gifted student and professor of science in Europe's greatest universities. In the New World, when he was not building missions, Kino was an explorer making 50 expeditions beyond the Spanish frontier, providing pastoral care and discovering a land passage to California. Kino proved that California was not an island as geographers then believed. Kino's accurate maps were published in Europe during his lifetime and were the best maps of the region for 150 years.

After ordered to abandon Baja, Kino led a 12 year advocacy campaign that resulted in Salvatierra's revival of the mission effort and Spanish settlement there. Kino's prosperous ranches provided necessary support. Kino co-founded the Pious Fund of the Californias that also financed the mission effort & settlement in U.S. California.

On March 15, 1711, Kino died in Magdalena, Sonora after celebrating Mass at a chapel dedication for his patron saint, Francis Xavier. As a recognized "Hero of México," his grave site is a national monument. Today pilgrims continue the tradition of the O'odham who traveled to visit Kino during his lifetime. Pilgrims throughout Mexico and the U.S. journey to the Magdalena Fiesta in the Fall to celebrate Kino and his saints, Francis Xavier and Francis Assisi.

In 1965 Kino was honored by the State of Arizona as its representative in the U.S. Capitol's "Hall of Heroes" National Statuary Hall. He is also honored by the Cowboy Hall of Fame.

Many geographic features, schools and other public institutions are named for Kino. Historians acknowledge his lasting contributions. Artists memorialize him in film, music and fine arts including monumental statuary.

The greatest tribute to Kino's memory is the work of the Kino Border Initiative. It carries on Kino's legacy of social justice by providing humanitarian assistance to migrant people living on the borderlands of the United States and México. It also advocates for humane governmental policies and treatment of migrants. For more about the life and legacy of Padre Kino, view the website of the Kino Heritage Society at [www.padreokino.com](http://www.padreokino.com).



Padre Kino's 1701 Map