

Ormand Family Activity

February 2011: Rodeo Days 2011 Adventures

Every place has its own local culture, including its own holidays. Tucson is no exception. *Dillinger Days* (dlormand.us/family/fam_dillinger11.pdf) is of course very local. We have the *Festival of San Augustin* to celebrate the Catholic/Mexican aspect of Tucson (around St. Augustine Cathedral). We also have... **RODEO DAYS** (or, more precisely, La Fiesta De Los Vaqueros). There's a parade, and of course the rodeo, the last two days of which the public can buy tickets and watch the finals. Now, unless you're really into the ranching or cattle industry part of our local culture, you can go every few years to see the parade, and maybe half that often to see the Rodeo, and that's good enough. So for the most part, *it's a holiday!* Time off from school, take time off from work, and *this year*, it's an opportunity to see some other parts of our local culture.

Mini Time Machine

Like the Mini Time Machine. A small community of miniatures collectors and artisans collected around Patricia Arnell. In time, she donated her collection to a foundation that has developed an excellent little museum.



www.theminitimemachine.org

This place is a Tucson jewel, hidden on the north side of Camp Lowell Road right behind the shopping center at Swan Road. Not far from us, in fact. Good thing - I thought it would be a fairly quick visit, but we

went home for lunch after the guided tour and returned afterward (your admission is good for all day).



The front door hints of the playfulness inside.

There's a \$14 admission, but they will sell you a membership so you can come back in free any time. I thought hard about that, and harder by the time we left. There's a gift shop and some meeting rooms for children's crafts or birthday parties. But mostly, there are the three areas of the museum proper - the *historical*, the *international*, and the *fantastical*.

The *historical* part was the most extensive. Miniature houses were more than doll houses; they were status symbols, teaching tools, and historical records, in addition to children's playthings and opportunities for craftsmen to demonstrate their skill.

These cardboard dollhouses were sold from the Sears catalog... for twenty five cents!



Here's the geek thing: a Swiss tinkerer made this animated house, with workmen using their tools, soldiers quaffing beer, and couples dancing in circles, all operated by a complex clockwork arrangement of strings and springs and cams. The house isn't operated anymore, lest it wear out, but a video screen (and there are many all over the museum) captured the last running in beautiful detail.





This orangery, or live-in greenhouse for citrus trees, sports a Tiffany's style stained-glass window inside.

At the back of the *historical* area, there is an amazing "mansion" of several rooms filled with tiny things. Faith the shutterbug is preparing to take a picture. Don't use flash! She was followed all over the museum by a docent after a few accidental flashes went off...





The museum has a "mascot", a fairy named Caitlyn, who shows up in various places like this bathroom.

Previously, the MTM would have children's activities, including a search for all the Caitlyn instances. Part of this search was a paper and pencil to record the findings. The

museum halted these activities after discovering that the children were marking on the walls and display cases with the pencils.

Mrs. Arnell lived in England for a while, in a Georgian townhouse that she captured with this model. It includes a ghost in the attic right over the bedroom (upper right) where one of their children was staying, and she found it impossible to sleep there due to the strange noises and phenomena!



In the *international* area, there were exhibits like this Thai "Spirit House". Definitely not a plaything - the Thai set these up when demolishing an old house, so the spirits of previous inhabitants will have a place to move into.



The *fantasy* area has things like model shoes and animated music boxes, and lots of dragons and fairies and Kewpie Dolls. In one amazing room, there was an extended display of Christmas miniatures - "Department 56" - and inset into the floor with a glass cover allowing you to walk over it - or children to lay down on for a closer inspection - was a little snow-covered town.



One of the "Department 56" models. The display ran on a timer, and every so often the lights would blink and the animations would play. I'm sure the Tucson Hallmark Club would be intrigued.

The visit to the Mini Time Machine took all day Friday, much to our surprise, and we didn't really see everything. Really delightful. As we left, we discovered a "Tucson Passport", very much like Jerri's National Parks passport, or the "Route 66" passport we got in Flagstaff last year (that we intend to use this year). Did we get it? *What do you think???*

Tumacacori

Many years ago, before my family moved back to Tucson, we had visited the Tumacacori mission. I was surprised to learn that Jerri, who had lived here all her life, had never been here. It's about an hour's drive south of Tucson on I-19, just a few miles south of Tubac. Today (Saturday) is a bit cloudy and breezy - this fools me and I leave my hat in the car, and end the day with a sunburn on the top of my little thinning head!

Our obligatory shot at the park entrance. It's a National Monument, so our Park Pass works, and Jerri gets a stamp for her passport booklet!

www.nps.gov/tuma/index.htm

Inside, past the gift shop and the little theatre where we see an orientation video on the mission and its

importance in the northern parts of the Spanish colonies, is a recreation of the mission garden. Past that is a model of what the mission complex might have looked like in its day. And past that, through an arched colonnade, is our first view of the impressive building.





It isn't impressive for being large or beautifully made; church buildings I've seen almost everywhere else are larger and more beautiful. San Xavier del Bac in Tucson is far more beautiful, even St. Augustine Cathedral in Tucson is more so. Tumacacori is a monument to the Spanish Empire, or rather the Jesuit passion to reach the natives of Pimeria Alta with the Gospel and raise them out of savagery to civilization and a better standard of living and a purpose for being. The self-sacrifice of those Jesuit and later Franciscan monks who chose to live in a desert, facing Apache raids, standing between the Indians they loved and the nobles and landowners who wished to enslave them (and which was at least part of the reason why the Jesuits were expelled from the Spanish Empire). A large structure raised at considerable effort and cost in an alien place. It is the contrast between the Arizona wilderness and a European style church building that is so striking. The unfinished bell tower just emphasizes the effort and dedication of the Indians and the churchmen... later to be tragically abandoned. This tragic aspect is the real difference between dead, monumental Tumacacori and functioning San Xavier.





Inside the nave, looking back toward the door. When the Park Service took over, the ceiling was long gone, the large wooden beams scavenged for other local building projects. The ceiling was replaced in order to preserve the interior, but a bare minimum of restoration was enacted, in order to leave the effects of age and abandonment visible for visitors.

Once there was a balcony over the door, used as a choir loft. Catholic Pimans in the choir would sing in both Spanish and vernacular, and play native-made instruments. The access door to the left is reached by a stairway from the baptistery. Now, of course, fenced off.





Looking toward the altar, you can see the other interior structures and niches for statues of saints. In front of me is the pulpit built into the corner, reached by a stair from the vestry.

The inside of the dome built of adobe bricks and covered with lime plaster, still standing after 300 years. Also the cross of flowers. I guess the ACLU hasn't forced the U.S. Government to remove a Christian symbol from a National Monument yet. (Give 'em time.)



The interior exits through the vestry to the east. Outside is the entrance to the graveyard and the mortuary chapel; unfortunately, this area is undergoing repairs and we can't see more of it.



So the tour continues with the storehouse. The friars taught European style farming techniques to the Pimans, which greatly increased the productivity of their agriculture, allowing them to stockpile the surplus for the winter and for hard times. The video we watched had the monks distributing

grain from baskets sitting on a stone table like this one here. No ceiling anymore, but the holes for the beams are still quite visible.

Limestone was quarried from somewhere around here (probably quite some distance) and transported (probably by burro or cart) and reduced in this kiln. The resulting lime was used to plaster the masonry to protect the frangible adobe from rain.





The large church was raised by the Fransiscans; the original Tumacacori Mission building built by the Jesuits is gone, and only the footing or the outline of the walls remains. We are standing in the courtyard of the mission where the Indians worked at their crafts. To the right and behind me

were the orchards - all gone now, replaced by mesquites.

This representative Pima house is here to give a taste of what the native village around the mission might have been like. Except for the mesquite frames and the adobe mud plastering, it is just like the Cherokee houses at Tahlequah (dlormand.us/family/fam_nmtxokar10.pdf).



Tumacacori was the headquarters for the Catholic missions in the region, and the church for the Tubac Presidio just a few miles to the north. Juan De Anza departed from here on his famous expedition to establish a Spanish colony at San Fransisco from this courtyard. The church looked very much like it does now, including the unfinished bell tower.





And it was the indefatigable Jesuit missionary, Padre Kino, who established Tumacacori and the other nearby mission churches. In the good little museum, the Father gets some love from Faith.

Tubac

We have now seen Tumacacori and gotten our creds as good Southern Zonies and our memories of the frontier church and its blood, sweat, love, struggle, spiritual triumphs, and ultimate abandonment. Now we finish our Zonie fix for this weekend at the original capital of the Spanish Pimeria Alta: the Presidio of Tubac.

What Tubac is now, and which I don't have any pictures to show, is an artists' colony. The streets are packed with people going from shop to little shop looking at paintings or pottery or jewelry or clothing or native crafts or metal sculptures or antiques or just plain silly junk. It's hard to find a place to park! But park we do, and find our lunch place - the Old Tubac Inn (just a restaurant, really) which a friend recommended. When we are done, we leave into cloudy skies and a cold late winter wind. Soon, Faith is shivery and cranky, so I lend her my jacket. After stopping in a few shops (including a Christmas shop, which Mommy left without buying anything), we arrive at our

destination - the Tubac Presidio State Park (www.pr.state.az.us/parks/TUPR/index.html). We pay our little entrance fee and sit through an orientation video narrated by (*small world!*) Will Rogers Junior, who was a Tubac resident in his later life until his death. Afterwards, we go outside for the little self-guided tour.

The thing to remember about Tubac is, it was the site of many Arizona "firsts". Like the first public schoolhouse.



Which is totally unremarkable, as it has the same features of other one-room schoolhouses we have seen elsewhere, right down to the blackboards displaying the stringent school rules and teacher pay rates and such. Well, I guess this schoolhouse is unique in having a

raised stage, where doubtless the community gathered to observe recitations and perhaps dramatic and musical presentations.

Like the Tucson presidio, the walls of the Tubac presidio are long since gone, either scavenged for building materials for homes after the fort was abandoned and the "Soldados de Cuero" were moved to Tucson, or melted by the rain back into the soil. It was a tiny little fort, as shown by the outline of the foundations.



But there was an archaeological "dig" performed here, and the most interesting aspect (and a real credit to the otherwise skimpy Arizona State Park Service) is a subterranean gallery to view the excavation layers, and the different civilization periods from the Presidio

area, from the early native settlements to the American era. Faith the enthusiastic shutterbug takes another of her numerous closeup shots through the glass.

The little museum at the Tubac Park is really excellent. The patio outside is mostly the same as the Tucson Presidio site (dlormand.us/family/fam_presidio09.pdf), with the notable addition of this "arrastre", or low-cost do-it-yourself



Spanish-miner gold ore mill. Inside is an excellent exhibit of Indian, Spanish, and American artifacts

through the Territorial days. I thought this museum was much better than the dressier but sparse Tumacacori museum. Interestingly, the National Park museum at Tumacacori had all bilingual signs, where at the State Park here, everything was English-only.



From other great exhibits I learn another Tubac "first": The first Arizona newspaper, *The Arizonian*, was published right here in tiny Tubac. While everyone has heard of the *Tombstone Epitath* and most Zonies know about the historic (but now discontinued) *Tucson Citizen*, it was

actually the paper in Tubac that was The Original.

There were a few other things in the Presidio area to see, like the community hall (still used as such) with a display of paintings of the De Anza Expedition (in fact, like Kingman's Andy Devine Days and Willcox' Rex Allen Days, Tubac has its own festival, De Anza Days), and the restored "row house" of Mrs. Rosas, now deceased, but lived in Tubac all her life from before statehood. Really, a very nice state park! By the time we leave, the park is about to close, and nearly all the

artists' shops are closed and the shoppers are gone. So we get back in our lonely little car on the street in Tubac and drive an hour back up north to our home in Tucson, ending a very pleasant and adventure-filled Rodeo Days weekend.