

Playing Tourist in Southern Arizona

One of our tourist stops was at the Tumacacori National Historical Park home of one of the oldest Spanish missions in Arizona. Located in the Santa Cruz River valley, south of Green Valley it is where O'odham, Yaqui, and Apache people met and mingled with European Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries, settlers and soldiers, sometimes in conflict and sometimes in cooperation. The Anasazi People, also known as the Ancient Ones were in this area as early as 1200 BC and had a well-developed culture. In my reading of Southwestern history, I have found several references to the Ancient Ones and now I am in the area they lived. Pretty exciting.

When the Spanish expanded their holdings in New Spain, present day Mexico northward, Jesuits missionaries accompanied them and established missions to 'convert the uncivilized people to Catholicism' starting as early as 1691. A revolt by the O'odam in 1751 closed the missions in the area and they stayed closed until 1753. Actions in Spain had an impact on the Jesuits in New Spain when the Spanish King took action against the Jesuits who had become too powerful. That action reminds me of the Templars who saw a similar fate when they became too powerful. However, back in New Spain, the Jesuits were expelled in 1767. Spanish soldiers No Jesuit, no matter how old or ill was excluded from the king's decree. Several of them were born in New Spain but it didn't matter. Many were exiled to Italy. As I've mentioned in earlier articles, history repeats itself. Our current administration has embarked on a program of deporting people from the US, even though some were born here. Isn't it also interesting that religion is an important role in the expulsion in New Spain and the deportations today? Not only that, winners normally get the write the story.

Monday evening, Sweetie, Bev and I went to the Madera American Legion for burger night. There are two Legions in Green Valley and I equate them to a NCO club and the Officers club. We were in both and like the NCO club version better. The burgers were good and the people very friendly. As we were leaving the bar, a man sitting at the bar stopped me and asked my name was Les. When I said yes, he said that his name was Spud and he worked as a bartender at the Lamplight in Moorhead and remember me from there. For those who may not remember, the Lamplight was in the south end of the Holiday Mall. For those who don't remember it, it was in the parking area near the Courtyard and Village Inn. It was a very popular hangout for MSC students. Many of the bartenders were Vietnam Era Veterans. Spud and I spent several minutes catching up on people. It was very enjoyable and surprising to find someone I knew in Arizona.