

An aerial, black and white photograph of a river valley. The river flows through the center, surrounded by dense vegetation and trees. In the background, a town or city is visible on a hillside. The foreground shows a steep, rocky bank on the left and a more gradual slope on the right. A dark, semi-transparent rectangular box is overlaid on the lower half of the image, containing white text.

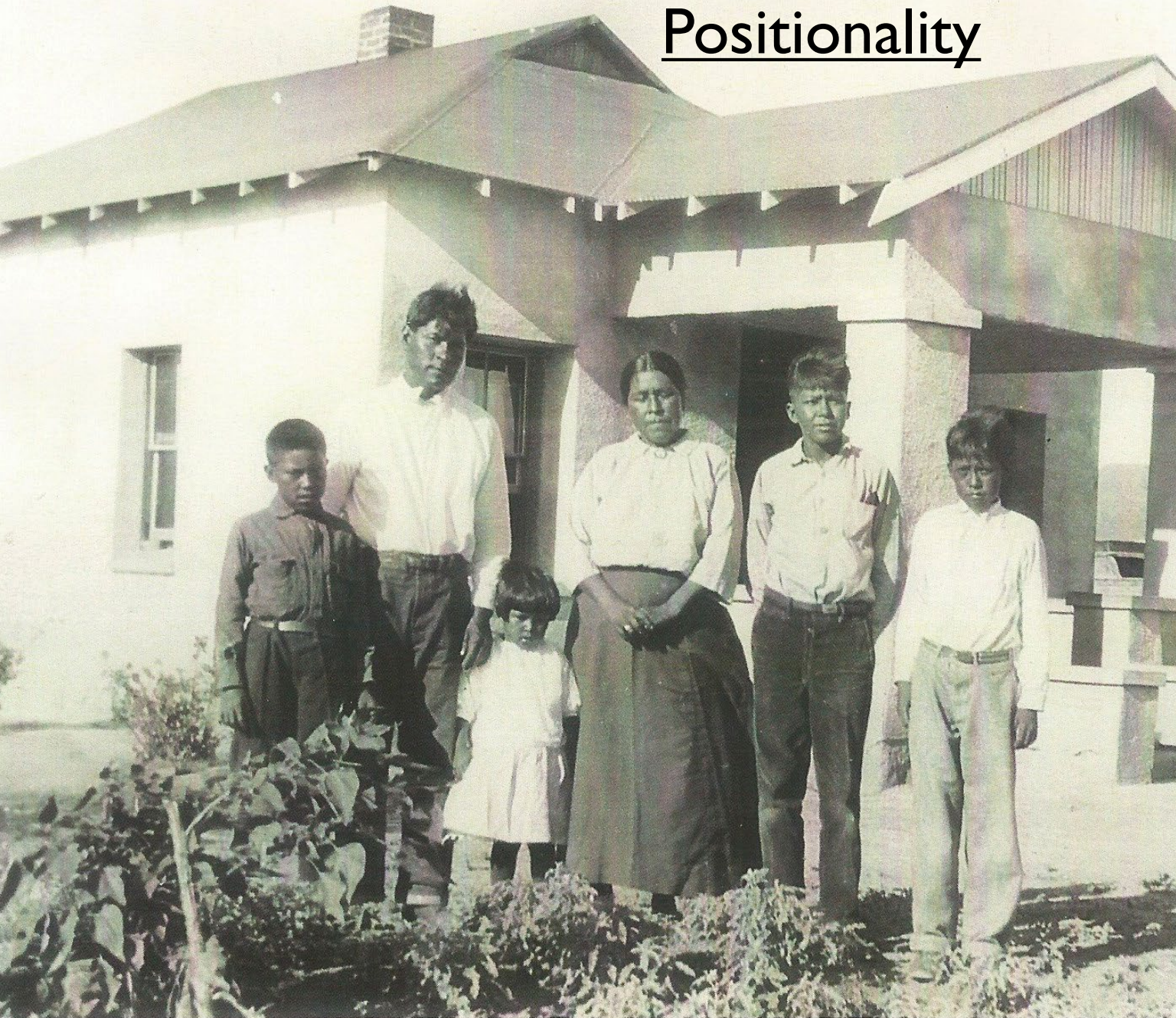
**DISSERTATION RESEARCH:
THE HISTORY OF LAND &
WATER IN SAN XAVIER**

BY DR. JACELLE RAMON-SAUBERAN

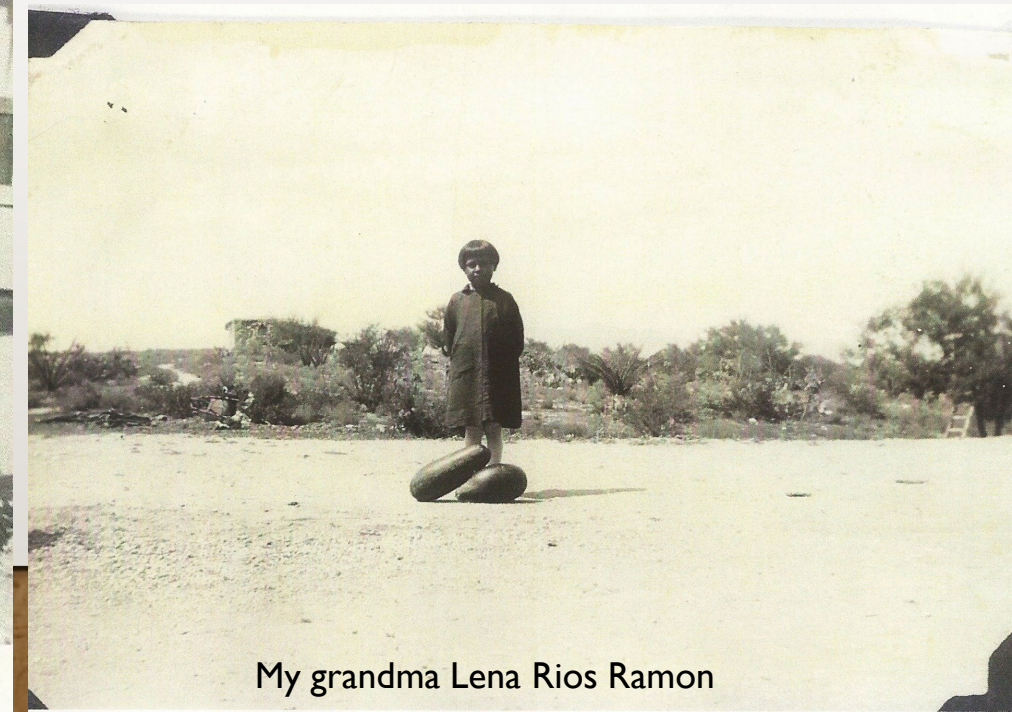
INTRODUCTION

- ❖ My Dissertation Research Topic: The History of Land and Water in San Xavier
- ❖ My dissertation research topic was first brought up when I took Indigenous Economics during my MA and wrote a research paper on the San Xavier Co-op Farm.
- ❖ When I started my PhD, I did a 3-part multimedia project for the San Xavier Allottees Association for their 25th Anniversary capturing the History of Land and Water in San Xavier. After the project and conversations with my Auntie Julie Ramon-Pierson and others in my community I knew this needed to be the topic of my dissertation research.
- ❖ Land and Water are intertwined, and my dissertation explores the following:
 1. The History of San Xavier and Allotment
 2. San Xavier Cooperative Farm
 3. Defenders of O'odham Land Rights
 4. Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act (SAWRSA)
 5. San Xavier Allottees Association Inc.

Positionality



My great grandparents Frank & Anselma Rios with my grandma and her siblings



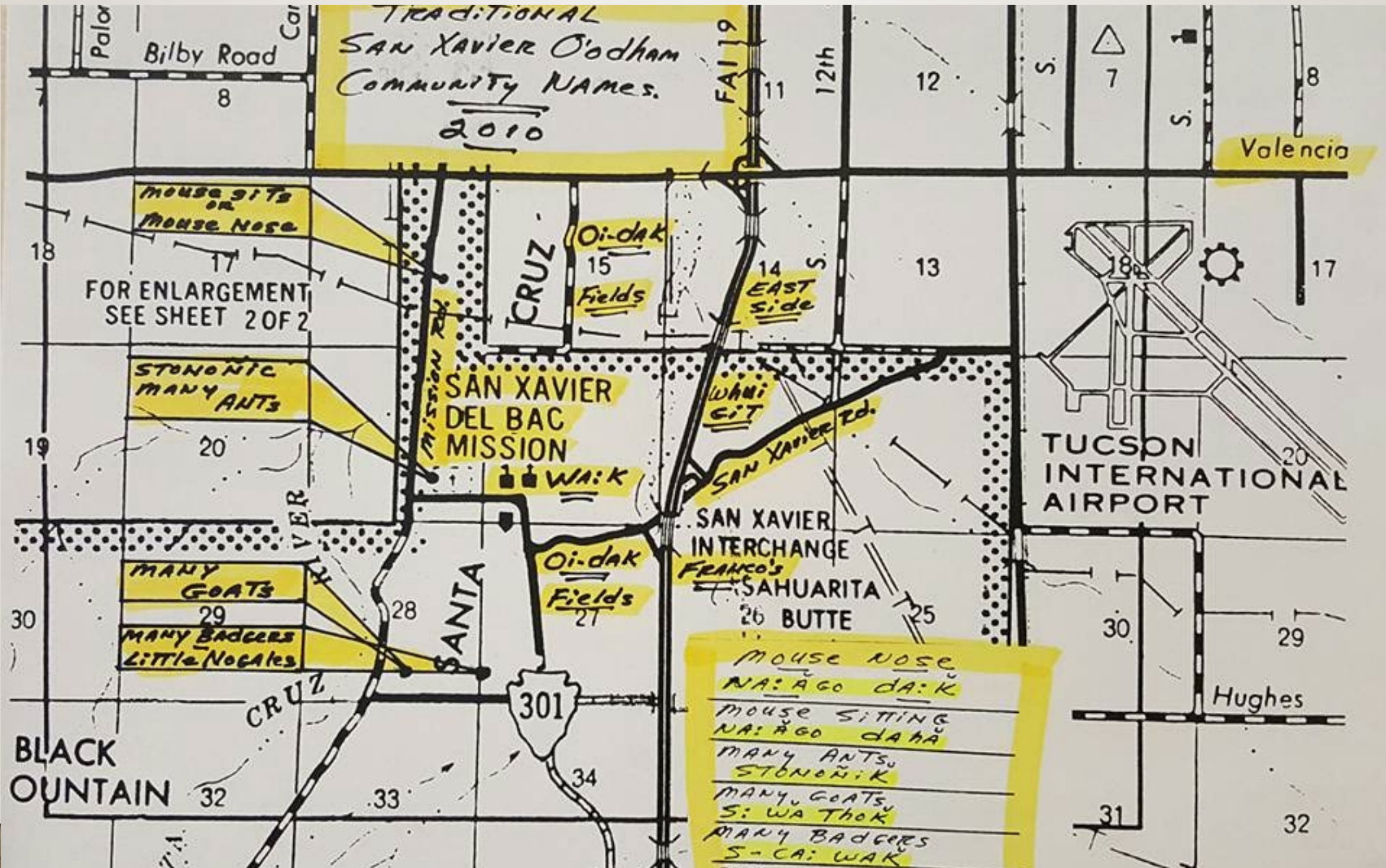
My grandma Lena Rios Ramon

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- ❖ The knowledge shared with me during my dissertation research is vital to current and future generations as it entwines the very essence of being Wa:k O'odham, and the information needs to be recorded before it became lost forever.
- ❖ During my research two individuals I interviewed have passed away and there were others who showed interest or were recommended to be interviewed but they passed away before I had the opportunity.
- ❖ With help from San Xavier Community, San Xavier District, San Xavier Co-op Farm/Board and San Xavier Allottees Association/Board, we were able to create a living document to help educate O'odham and non-O'odham, this is known as Community-based Research.
- ❖ **Community-based research:** In the past, academic research on indigenous communities have used little to no input from members of the community being studied and their research is published in the perspective of the researcher (outsider). Community-based research brings communities together and the participants work with the researcher to answer research questions. Participants will also help design the research, share knowledge with other community members, and contribute their knowledge to produce results that are beneficial to the community.

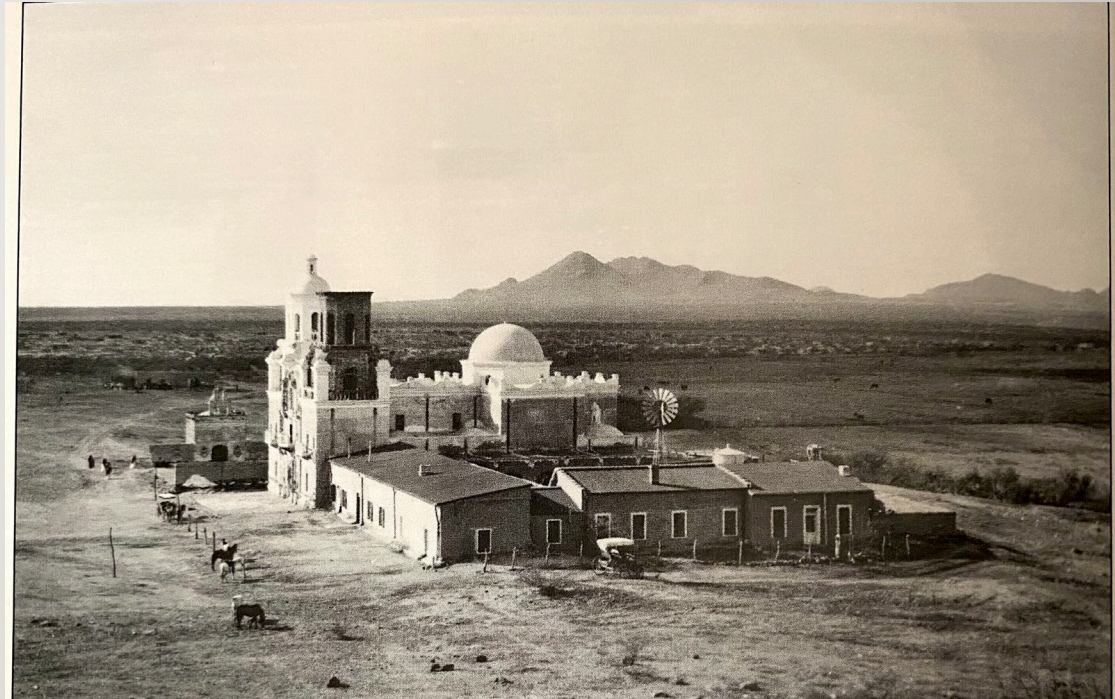
Interviewee	Title	Interview Date	Interview Method
Michael Enis, Sr. +	Current Allottee *At time of interview	July 15, 2016	In-person at his residence in Tucson, AZ
Ruby Gonzales	Future Allottee	February 20, 2020	In-person at San Xavier District Conference Room
Julie Ramon-Pierson	Current Allottee Former SXCF & SXAA Board Member Former SXD Council Member	February 21, 2020 March 13, 2020 September 22, 2020	In-person at San Xavier District and at her residence in Tucson, AZ
Tony Burrell	Current Allottee SXD Council Member Former SXCF & SXAA Board Member	March 12, 2020	In-person San Xavier District Conference Room
Austin Nunez	Current Allottee San Xavier District Chairman	March 13, 2020	In-person at San Xavier District Administration
Eric Throssell	Current Allottee	September 18, 2020	In-person at San Xavier Allottees Association Office
Jessica Estrada	Current Allottee	September 18, 2020	Virtual via Zoom

Interviewee	Title	Interview Date	Interview Method
Clifford Pablo	Current Allottee Former SXCF Farm Manager	September 25, 2020	In-person at his residence in Tucson, AZ
Philbert Bailey	Current Allottee SXD District Council Member & SXAA Board Treasurer	November 12, 2020 November 20, 2020	In-person at San Xavier District Conference Room
Eleanor Hunter	Current Allottee	November 19, 2020	In-person at her residence in San Xavier
Sally Pablo	Current Allottee SXD Natural Resources Department Director	November 23, 2020	In-person San Xavier District-Natural Resources Department
Cie'na Schlaefli	SXD Natural Resources Specialist	November 23, 2020	Virtual via Zoom
Rowena Carlyle	Future Allottee SXD Education Center Administrative Assistant	December 10, 2020	Virtual via Zoom
Michael David Enis	Future Allottee O'odham Culture Teacher	January 16, 2021	Virtual via Zoom
Adam Andrews +	Current Allottee SXCF & SXAA Board Member O'odham Language Teacher *At time of interview	February 15, 2021	Virtual via Zoom






ALLOTMENT ERA 1887-1934

- ❖ In 1887, the General Allotment Act also known as the Dawes Act was created. The purpose of the act was to give each Native American person a piece of land of 40, 60, 80 or 160 acres, so they could farm, ranch or harvest timber on the lands.
- ❖ The U.S. Government believed that if Native Americans were given individual plots of land to harvest on, they would do well and become assimilated into American culture as middle-class farmers. O'odham in San Xavier were farmers already. This Act was the direct responsible for the loss of 90 million acres of Native American lands.
- ❖ In 1890, the San Xavier Indian Reservation lands were allotted.
- ❖ There were 292 allotments, which total 41,000 acres at that time.
- ❖ When Federal Government assigned allotments, you did not have to be from San Xavier. Allotments were given to any O'odham in San Xavier at that time.
- ❖ Currently, there are 1,800 allottees/landowners that have interest in these allotments.
- ❖ Allotments are passed from one generation to the next. Thus, land interests becomes fractionated, meaning that their ownership can be very small percentage.
- ❖ Following Allotment there was the Reorganization Era 1934-1953, ending allotment and when tribal governments were first established. Peter Blaine Sr. was the man at the forefront of this and helped create the first constitution for O'odham.

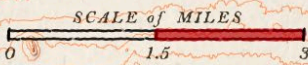
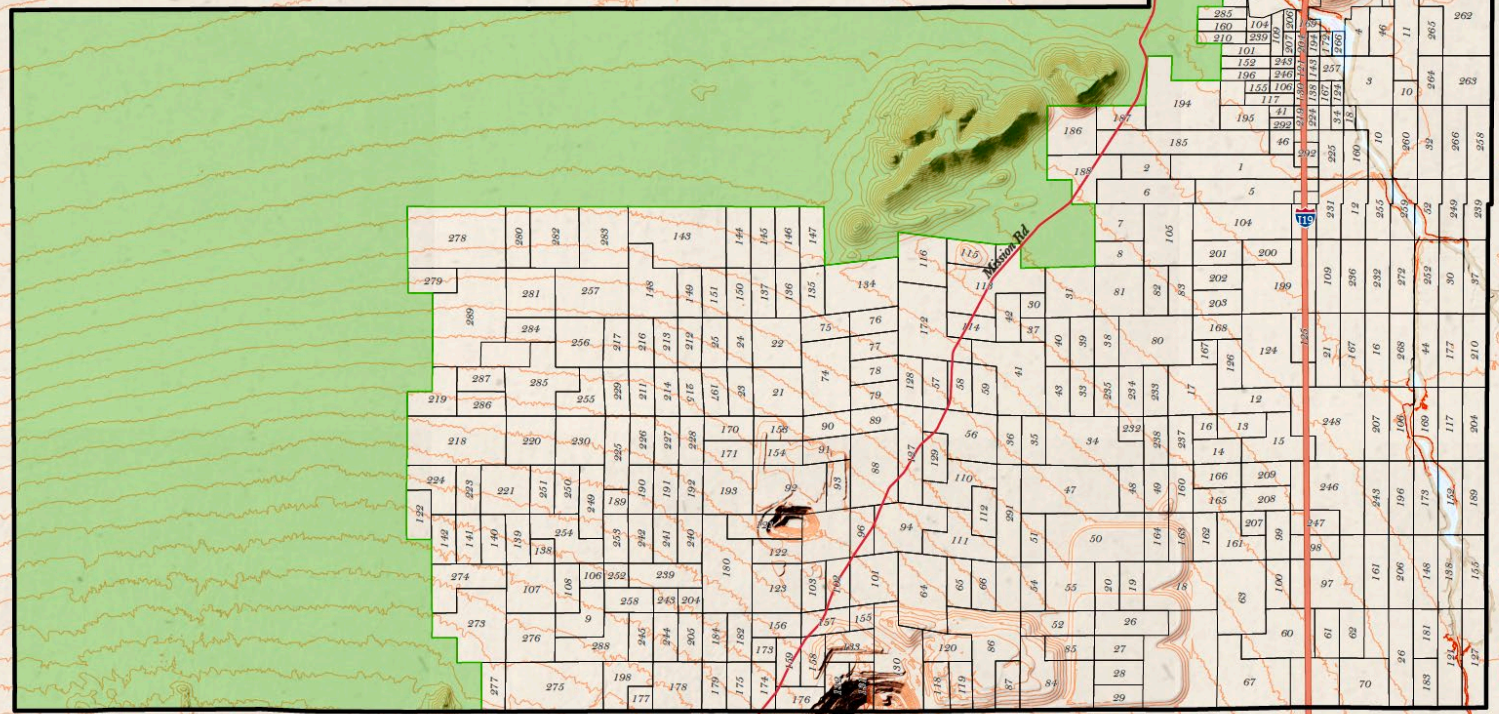


*San Xavier del Bac Mission around 1900.
(Photo credit: Arizona Historical Society)*

 *San Xavier District Boundary*
 *Allotments*
 *Tribal Land*



Ajo Hwy



WATER ISSUES

- ❖ As noted, throughout time families in San Xavier farmed the land and they used an intricate canal system to irrigate fields designed by their ancestors the Huhugam (Erickson, 1994; Blaine, 1980; Ramon-Pierson, 2015).
- ❖ Also, the Santa Cruz River, was right at their backdoor and was the only place on the Tohono O’odham Nation where irrigation agriculture was possible (San Xavier Co-op Farm website).
- ❖ Unfortunately, the water in the Santa Cruz River was taken and depleted by settler colonial authorities such as the City of Tucson. This caused O’odham farming to become a thing of the past.
- ❖ O’odham did not want the traditional ecological knowledge of their people to die out. Plus, the allotment era had introduced individualism to San Xavier, but O’odham had always been relational.
- ❖ In 1971, a group of Allottee members got together in San Xavier and “formed a cooperative of landowners in order to piece some of the lands back together and find a way to farm it as a whole,” (San Xavier Co-op Farm website).



This picture taken on the San Xavier Reservation in April 1973 features a Tohono O’odham man irrigating fields for the local Tribal Farm Co-op.



Effluent-dependent flowing stretches

Direction of flow of water

Water treatment plant

Santa Cruz River Watershed



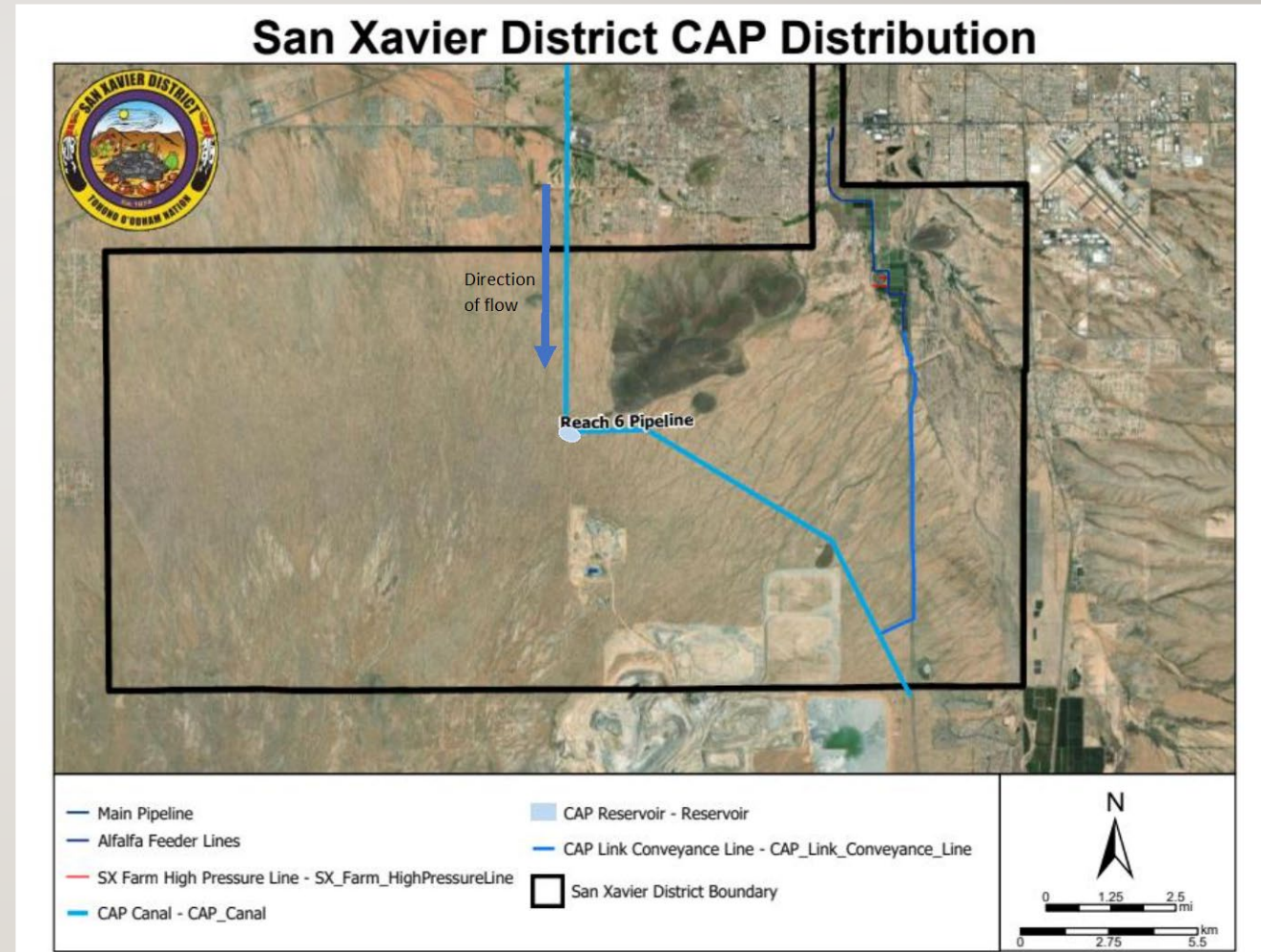


ALLIANCE NO.	NAME	DATE OF BIRTH	AREA FURNISHED
1	Ascension Rios	June 17, 1890	36.0 ✓
4	Jose Juan Rios	1893	13.0 ✓
5	Francisco Rios	February, 1893	39.6 ✓
9	Jose Juan Rios	November 4, 1930	19.5 ✓
12		May, 1927	19.6 ✓
16		about 1893	18.5 ✓
26		1910	17.0 ✓
30	Jose Juan Rios	September 11, 1955	19.0 ✓
37		1906	18.0 ✓
44	Jose Juan Rios	March, 1922	24.0 ✓
56	Walter Navarro	September 11, 1921	44/38.0 ✓
60	Juan Navarro	1930	30.0 ✓
67	Celestino Moreno	September, 1914	20.0 ✓
80	Jose Antonio	February 2, 1913	27.0 ✓
84	Pablo de la O	1913	20.0 ✓
86	Gabino Romo	about 1899	19.5 ✓
88	Jose Ruiz	March, 1930	18.0 ✓
94	Cristobal Corona	July, 1907	37.0 ✓
97	Sah-ko-kah-tum Graulin	Oct., 1912	20.0 ✓
101	Pancho Goh-O-geh-ld	1897	29.0 ✓
104	Matias Encinas	February 1930	20.0 ✓
109	Nunca Siembra	1916	32.0 ✓
113	Andres Castillo	Summer 1929	18.0 ✓
117	Lorenzo Gomez	1903	32.0 ✓
138	Miguel Orozco	February 13, 1939	20.0 ✓
152	Calixto Mayor	1908	28.0 ✓
169	Antonio Merced	1893	8.5 ✓
173	Doroteo Garcia	1900	6.4 ✓
177	Gregorio Paralta	10/18/19	20.0 ✓
180	Antonio Burruel	1920	20.0 ✓
185	Francisco Ortega	1896	20.0 ✓
189	Jose Manuel	1920	20.0 ✓
193	Jose Ignacio	March, 1925	19.6 ✓
199	Pablo Solvis	March 5, 1924	18.0 ✓
206	Jose Juan Cristobal	About 1895	15.0 ✓
207	Rafael Cristobal	about 1899	13.0 ✓
219	Jose Juan Ortiz	1924	17.5 ✓
224	Jose Antonio Ortiz	1912	10.0 ✓
236	Orvino Rios	1929	20.0 ✓
239	Roberto Sacaballa	1909	19.8 ✓
243	Antonio Mpedan	about 1899	18.0 ✓
246	Jose Lobo	1899	16.8 ✓
249	Francisco Munoz	1897	10.0 ✓
252	Jose Rios	February 5, 1920	14.0 ✓
255	Juan Pablo	1903	10.7 ✓
285	Francisco Alvarez	September 23, 1945	18.0 ✓

46 Allotments

WATER ISSUES

- ❖ In 1975, the Tohono O'odham pressured the federal government to file suit against agribusiness owners, copper mines, and the city of Tucson, who were draining water from the aquifer beneath the San Xavier District (Ramon-Pierson, 2015). In the end Congress passed the H.R. 5118 - 97th Congress: **Southern Arizona Water Rights Settlement Act (SAWRSA)** in 1982, granting 50,000 acre-feet of water a year to San Xavier through the Central Arizona Project (CAP).
- ❖ This allowed for the farm to be productive for the community again. In 1991, the San Xavier Allottees Association, Inc.(SXAA) was formed to help educate and assist landowners of allotments or allottees on the San Xavier Indian Reservation.
- ❖ The SXAA assists allottees as a group and individually to manage land related concerns including water rights, economic development and environmental protection.
- ❖ In 2004, there were amendments made to SAWRSA.

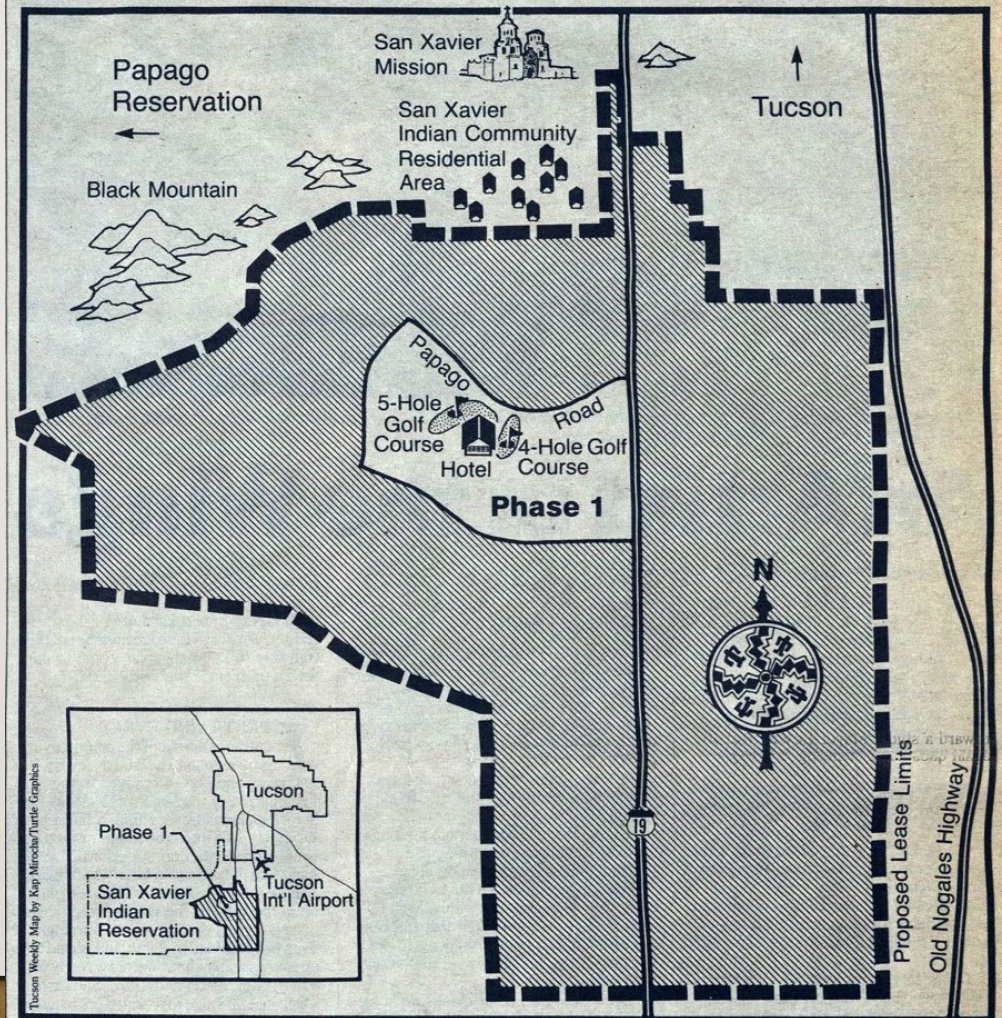


Santa Cruz Properties Proposed Land Development

- ❖ In the late 1970s, a proposed land development was brought to San Xavier by a non-Native developer, James “Jim” Rothschild Jr., who was in charge of the operation, Santa Cruz Properties Inc.
- ❖ Rothschild gained approval from BIA, tribal attorneys, San Xavier District Chairman John Narcho, and the Papago Tribal Council Chairman Josiah Moore in 1983. At this time, the San Xavier Community nor Allottees had been consulted.
- ❖ The six-phase development proposed would have been a 90-year lease on 18,000 acres of uninhabited land –16,000 acres belonging to allottees, and 2,000 acres tribally held by San Xavier District. It would have included “a resort hotel, two country clubs with golf courses, commercial and industrial zones, a government center and housing for 100,000 people,” (Zanger, 1985).

Living in San Xavier

Questions About Authority, Bureaucracy and the 48-page Lease



The shaded area of the map represents the more than 18,000 acres of uninhabited land on the San Xavier District of the Papago Reservation. Santa Cruz Properties Inc. (a California development firm) wants to build the planned city of San Xavier, population 100,000 on the site. The inset map to the left shows the size of the development relative to Tucson.

Santa Cruz Properties Proposed Land Development

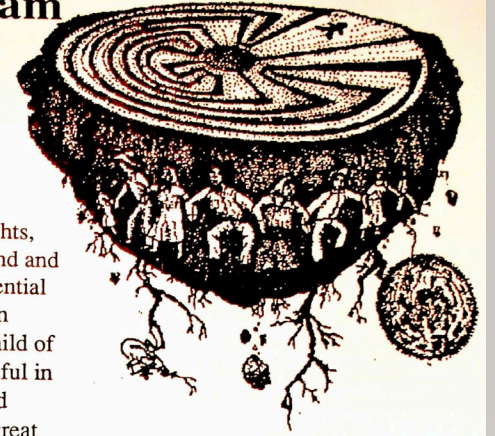
- ❖ By word of mouth the San Xavier Community found out about the proposed land development.
- ❖ Some were for the development while others were not.
- ❖ Tribal members against the development formed a group called Defenders of O'Odham Land Rights and took on Santa Cruz Properties.
- ❖ There were hearing and meeting held throughout the mid-1980s and it made newspaper headlines. The Tucson Weekly did a series of articles.
- ❖ The Defenders were able to stop the development from happening.
- ❖ This then led to the San Xavier District creating a General Land Use Plan, Vision Plan and Community Plan.

Defenders of O'Odham Land Rights, Inc.

March, 1990

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

We are the Defenders of O'Odham Land Rights, who have fought for four long years, to defend and save our land from a major non-Indian residential development which was proposed here at San Xavier by non-Indian developer Jim Rothschild of Santa Cruz Properties, Inc. We were successful in defeating this proposal. We have all the good people to thank, who joined us and gave us great support in our fight. Some of the highlights of this fight were:



August 25, 1986 - The Pima County Board of Supervisors held the public hearing on the Santa Cruz Properties development. The Defenders presented their case on all aspects of the development lease terms. The Supervisors supported our cause and wrote letters to the tribe and B.I.A., requesting to disapprove the land lease and to stop the whole proposal.

August 27, 1986 - A Tohono O'Odham Legislative Standing Committee recommended to the Tribal Council, that the proposed development "was not in the best interest of the Tohono O'Odham Nation". The tribal council, by resolution, rejected the Santa Cruz Properties development.

September 11, 1986 - the Tribal Chairman signed the resolution on the rejection.

September 16, 1986 - the San Xavier District Council rescinded the former approval of the Santa Cruz Properties development which was done in 1983.

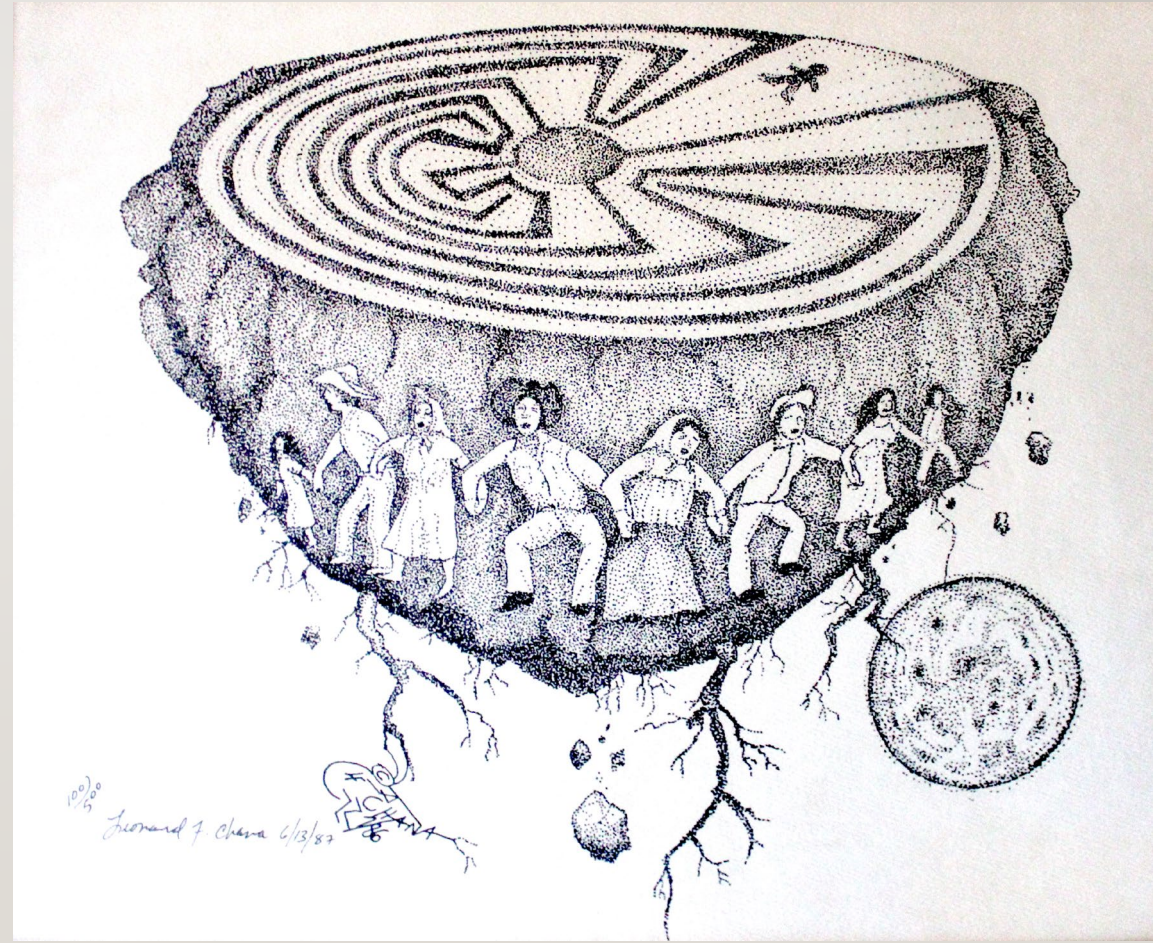
October 22, 1986 - A news release by the B.I.A. Area Director, Phoenix, AZ, stated that the land project and the Draft Environmental Impact Study of the development was dead. There was pressure to revive the proposal to the BIA and tribal council from a newly formed group called O'Odham Supporters for Progress and Prosperity — all working for Santa Cruz Properties.

November 6, 1986 - O'Odham Supporters met with the tribal council and introduced a resolution to revive the project. The "revival" never happened.

November 6, 1987 - The Chairman of the Tohono O'Odham Nation, Enos Francisco, Jr., delivered the death blow by officially notifying the Bureau of Indian Affairs that the Nation had rejected the proposed development.



Questions?



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