

SINALOA A MAGICAL WORLD

TRACKS AND SIGNALS OF SINALOA

Due to their indomitable temperament, the tribes that settled the territory in Sinaloa, were constantly at war fighting for the fertile lands surrounding the rivers and streams that came down from the Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range. War caused social upheavals which disturbed the land and turned it into a scenery where the supremacy of one tribe was then taken away by another more powerful and skilful in the art of war. Such situation slowed social cohesion and kept these tribes without identity and cultural background, avoiding civilization. There are no remains of great temples or a cult for a god in the territory of Sinaloa.

The most aggressive tribes owned the most humid lands and became efficient in agriculture. Those were the deep-rooted tribes. The other tribes were forced to be nomadic, that is, they could not find an appropriate place to settle, devoting their living to hunting and fishing.

The cahitas tribe settled the north of Sinaloa (Sinaloa, Guasave and Ahome) and was the fiercest that controlled the other weaker ones. It seems that the cahitas were a mixture of remote tribal migrations. There is also the possibility that the cahitas came from the nahoa. It is believed that Hueman, the priest with the strong hands, pushed the nahoa to the south to search for the eagle and the snake in the lake of Tenochtitlan. It is also said that when the mexicas passed through the region created the domain of Huey – Colhuacan, and created the cult of the bloodthirsty god Huitzilopochtli that had a hummingbird as a symbolic bird.

The cahitas shared their power through war and politics with two minor tribes: the tahues and the totorames. Other tribes were the acaxees, xiximes, pacaxees and achures. The cahitas – from whom the mayos and yaquis descend - kept their domain and imposed their political and religious norms.

However, this warlike indigenous world found itself, suddenly, with a more powerful enemy than any other enemy tribe. It was the white man emblematically embodied in Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán, the fierce

conqueror who never used the dissuasive capacity of Hernán Cortés, and conquered Sinaloa through blood and fire.

Nuño de Guzmán sustained his first combat with the totorames in the limits of Sinaloa and Nayarit. During this first battle he noticed the weakness of the enemy who only used bow and arrow and lacked any military instinct.

After being in Chiametla, south of the state, he proceeded to Culiacán, defeating the tribes he was encountering. On the right bank of the Cihuatlán river (now San Lorenzo) he established what would be the capital of the new kingdom: San Miguel del Río San Lorenzo. Due to a flood in 1530, Nuño de Guzmán agreed, along with his captains, to change headquarters of his recently acquired territory over to the confluence of the rivers Humaya and Tamazula, calling it San Miguel de Culiacán, founded on September 29, 1531.

When the insurrection movement was called, led by the priest of Dolores, Guanajuato, Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, very few neighbours from San Miguel de Culiacan were aware of this fact. The insurrection was a brief lightning in Sinaloa. Don Miguel Hidalgo signed an agreement ordering to return the land to the Indians. On September 5, 1810, Hidalgo named José María Gonzalez Hermosillo lieutenant colonel and ordered him to lead an uprising in Sinaloa and Sonora.

When the National Independence was consummated in 1821, Sinaloa was part of Sonora, and during the Iturbide Empire, both received the name of Provincia de Sonora. The Constitutive Act of the Federation of January 1824 again reunited Sonora and Sinaloa in the Estado Libre de Occidente, using El Fuerte as the capital. In 1826 it was proposed that the state would be divided in two, and in 1827 the local legislature presented the General Congress its position. On October 13, 1830, Anastasio Bustamante, vice president of Estados Unidos Mexicanos issued a decree by which the Estado de Occidente would be divided, forming two different states: Sonora and Sinaloa.

The French Intervention in Sinaloa made the miracle of getting together the ones who used to be enemies. In November of 1864, the French seized the port of Mazatlán and the corvette Lucifer sailed to Altata. The French army entered the state through Durango crossing the Sierra Madre Occidental mountain range. General Ramón Corona defeated the invaders at Veranos. The French commander Armand Castagny entered Mazatlán on January 13, 1864 where he stayed until November 15, 1866, date in which

General Aquiles Bazaine abandoned the country with his army of 26 thousand men via Veracruz from February 13 to March 12, 1867

Colonel Antonio Rosales, then, defeated once again Castagny's army on December 22, 1864 at San Pedro, Navolato. General Gazielle surrendered, thus ending the short war against Napoleon's soldiers in Sinaloa.

The restoration of the Republic did not bring along the desired political stability for the state due to internal frictions and factions that continued with concerning frequency.

When Porfirio Díaz launched El Plan de la Noria, which did not recognized Benito Juárez as the president, Francisco Cañedo joined him. After the triumph of the commander from Oaxaca, Cañedo became the strong man in Sinaloa as governor of the state from 1884 to 1909.

In January 1910, Francisco I. Madero was in Sinaloa and then rebelled against the Porfirista Regime. On November 20, 1910, Madero followers came out from Culiacán to fight against the Federal Troops. Culiacán was under the control of the revolutionary leaders, Ramón F. Iturbe and Juan m. Banderas in May 1911. Mazatlán fell one month later. The Huerta usurpation reignited the armed movement and constitutional forces attacked in several places of the state. Venustiano Carranza arrived to El Fuerte in September 1913. The fighting between Villistas and Carrancistas motivated the rupture of the revolutionaries in Sinaloa. Finally, the Constitutionals won. General Ramón F. Iturbe, one of the main Carrancistas, became state governor.

In modern times, the Sanalona dam was inaugurated in 1948 on the Tamazula river, project that got the people of the state to embrace agriculture assuring water on the foot of cultivable land. It also unchained the creation of similar infrastructure on the rivers El Fuerte, Sinaloa, Mocerito, Humaya, San Lorenzo and Elota.

This is how the present came to be for the laborious and hardworking people in Sinaloa whose best pages are being written nowadays.

Herberto Sinawawa

ANCESTRAL SINALOA

In the territory of what today is Sinaloa there were different indigenous groups. The characteristics of these groups came from the adaptation to the region that served them as settlement. Thus, we had hunting groups and others that cultivated the land and others devoted to fishing in the rivers and sea.

Ancestral Sinaloa was, however, dominated by groups that had reached certain improvement in their interchange with their immediate environment. There were the cahitas, the tahues and the totoremes. The three had become sedentary tribes and depended on agriculture to cope with the difficulties of living back then.

The north part of this ancient Sinaloa was the settlement of the cahitas. Remains of their culture in El Fuerte and Choix were found in later years. The central region of the state of Sinaloa served as the settlement for the tahues tribes that had found in the Culiacán area enough means for survival. The south section of the state was inhabited by the totorames who lived from the Piaxtla river to Las Cañas river.

Ancestral Sinaloa attracted other groups, such as the acaxees and xiximes that lived in the Sierra Madre mountain range, sharing features and similarities in the way they managed to get food through hunting and collecting wild fruits.

All of these groups practiced war in a permanent way. Their beliefs were very varied and depended on the level of development they had reached. That explains the wide variety of cult objects, rites and ceremonies they had. However, the three most important groups worshiped the sun and the moon, while others venerated totems.

Their cultural life had diverse expressions. The tahues used cotton to elaborate their clothing and manufactured ornamental pottery which has called attention in the north due to its rich drawings. Their main entertainment was the ball game that is still being practiced nowadays, and has been called since then, ulama.

The totorames were artisans and manufactured pottery very similar to the tahues. Unlike the previous tribes, the cahitas had very poor quality pottery that had no practical uses. The cahitas wandered half naked, wore deer skin and were very skilful playing the ball game ulama.

All of these groups were governed by Indian chiefs that assumed particularities according to their level of knowledge. This form of government was clearer in Culiacán, where there was a certain kind of noble class: the cahitas organized their politics around the shaman but the totorames had a less defined structure in this matter.

The archaeological vestiges of Ancestral Sinaloa tell us about their cultural development. There have been findings of very colourful pottery in Chiametla featuring vessels, crushers, clay seats, ear flaps, drums, whistles, pipes and several figures. In Guasave big pots with skeletons inside have been found and vessels with multiform pottery such as masks, rings, human and animal figures. In the area of Culiacán findings include vessels decorated with beautiful colours and clay objects such as rattles, whistles and pipes.

When carving the stone, the ancient dwellers of the earth claimed good harvests to their gods, a life guarantee. Due to the constant invocation of the snake as fertility symbol, it can be concluded that their message was, generally, a message of anguish for the lack of rain, or else, to signal a route.

These stone carvings are found near rivers and mountains from El Fuerte to Escuinapa. Very detectable are these expressions of long permanence on the rocks of La Mascara mountain near El Fuerte. These carved stones can also be found on the banks of the Humaya and Tamazula rivers. These messages are repeated in Tacuichamona and Ajoya, with the evident purpose of making them get farther.

At the Labradas in san Ignacio, there are carved stones that the tide, in spite of centuries, has not been able to wash away. There is no different message. There is no doubt; it's the same message. But that message has not been clarified for the benefit of Sinaloa's ancient history

It's like lowering the voice until it becomes inaudible.....

The ulama game has prevailed up to nowadays in spite of the popularity of other sports such as football, baseball and basketball.

It's a game that the Indians played before the conquest. It is played with the forearm using a 500 grams hard rubber ball. The court is called taxte, and it is 100 meters long and only 1.40 meters wide. There is no net, only the "analco", which functions as a dividing line

It's the favourite sport of the mayos in Guasave, Angostura, Mocerito, Sinaloa de Leyva, Salvador Alvarado, El Fuerte, Ahome and Choix. In Concordia, Mazatlán and Rosario, the ulama is played with the hips in spite of the danger that entails for the kidneys.

The ulama comes from the nahuatl "ullamaliztli" that the Mexican tribes practiced and functioned as a resource for human cohesion

The religious festivities of the mayos in the northern part of the state during Holly Week present extraordinary colors in the ceremonial centers of Tehueco, Mochicahui, San Miguel, Higueras de Zaragoza, Capomos, Ahome, San Blas and Charay.

The deer and pascola dancers fill with fantasy the austere Mayo people.

RACIAL MIX SINALOA

The conquest process in Sinaloa fired a commotion in the ancestral cultures. The irruption of the conqueror altered the traditional way of life of the natives, modifying their beliefs and rites. The practice of magical and mystical exercises, by which they searched for answers concerning the most common facts of life, especially those dealing with the cycle of planting crops and reproduction, was hidden to the eyes of the invader and some others were changed and substituted with the ones imposed by the colonists.

The supplanting process of an ancient culture produced true historic trauma and, in some cases, the natives opted to let themselves die or rebel against the cruel invasion of their world. However, the Spanish enemy rehearsed different controlling ways until succeeding, finally, to get over the natives resistance.

By force, institutions alien to their customs, were imposed to the autochthonous groups. This is how the colonists managed to infringe a pattern for the towns, keeping armed forces for defence and establishing adequate education systems for the Spanish needs. The presence of the missionaries was of great help, and with the cross symbol and translation of the prayers to the cahita language, the controlling of the tribal groups was easier.

The building of temples and missions all along the territory witnesses the presence and importance of the catholic religion. At the same time, buildings in ruins used for congregations of the faithful, tell us stories of how the native dwellers entered in pacific ease with their oppressors with the purpose of survival.

The spiritual world gave way to more mundane activities, giving answer to the material demands of the dominator. Many trades appeared like potters, carpenters and blacksmiths that came to change the simple life of the natives to more complex expressions enclosed in the way of life of the Spaniards.

Among tribal groups and Spaniards, there was an interchange in all senses. The culture of the prehispanic groups was not completely erased, neither was the Spanish culture imposed in a crushing fashion. In fact, it was all about symbolic mixtures whose live expressions are the fiestas, dances, music and ceremonial rites that are periodically represented during festivities as evidence of the two ways of life: the tribal and the Spanish.

These presences have defined our essence and identity as “Sinaloenses” Many of these features are unknown or ignored because they belong to a past that is offered to us as something recent, but in reality, they are part of a world to which we owe everything we are and should appreciate the value to consolidate a proper identity.

In Sinaloa de Leyva – ancient village of San Felipe y Santiago – stand the remains of the temple Colegio de la Compañía, founded by Jesuits Gonzalo de Tapia and martin Pérez in 1591.

Other evidence of civilization by the Jesuit missionary is found in Pueblo Viejo and Nio, Guasave

In 1795 the church of San Felipe y Santiago was built on the highest point, far from the Petatlán river whose recurrent floods destroyed the old Jesuit constructions.

It’s no longer yori (the white man), neither yoreme (the Indian): It’s a mixture of two races, the Indian and the spanish.

The temple of “Nuestra Señora del Rosario” in Imala, Culiacán was built in 1831.

Bishop Lázaro de la Garza y Ballesteros started building the cathedral “Nuestra Señora del Rosario” in Culiacán (following pages) in 1842, and was finished by bishop José de Jesús María Uriarte y Pérez in 1885. The similarities between the two constructions are notorious.

Through the corridors of big mansions in Mazatlán, the whisper of waves can be heard as they splash against the reefs.

RURAL SINALOA

The colonization of the territory of Sinaloa contributed to the development of towns that facilitated the relations between the native groups and the foreigners. It was the need for survival and the existence of conditions to make life possible and the building of houses grew in importance as time went by. The geographic map of our state is marked by signals that indicate the presence of man through time and they are part of our peculiar way of being and understanding.

Mining defined the birth of towns such as El Fuerte, Álamos, Bacubirito, Badiraguato and Sinaloa in the north, and Cosalá, Chiametla, Pánuco, Concordia, Copala and El Rosario in the south. In the center, Culiacán got the status of a venerable town, due in part to its favourable location for agriculture and as headquarters for the Spanish forces.

The building of missions attracted a population flow that was searching for physical and spiritual residence, finding wise guidance in the missionaries to be preserved in community. This is how some native towns remained such as San Miguel Zapotitlán, Yacorato, Bacubirito and San Ignacio. In these places one can find the deep Sinaloa, which contrasts in spiritual and cultural richness with the “mestizo” (mix race) towns.

Agriculture and livestock farming have been a cohesive force for the people in the towns and still is. There are invisible ties that have sustained their particular way of life.

Picturesque places that emit charm offer attractions and are the pride of the people, towns like San Ignacio that witnessed the adventures of Heraclio Bernal and was a battle front during the war of Independence.

Cosalá amazed the Spaniards with its extraordinary mining and natural richness. Rosario's beautiful women made European nobles fell at their charm, keeping the prestige of Sinaloa as being the fountain of mining richness.

Mazatlán, seat of filibusters, witnessed glorious episodes of confrontation against the American invaders; Mocorito with its exquisite products has been the birthplace of personalities of noticeable worth such as Rafael and Eustaquio Buelna; El Fuerte whose colonial architecture attracts amazed foreign visitors. Finally, places like Concordia with its furniture of national and international fame; Culiacán has the honor of being one of the oldest cities in America.

In each one of these places, features of a glorious past are preserved. Corners that whisper legends and rich historic episodes. Places that stay in silence, treasuring secrets for those who know how to appreciate them. It's the Sinaloa that accumulates experiences and testimonies of a past as beautiful as it is vigorously recent.

NATURAL SINALOA

Besides its diverse and cultural richness, Sinaloa credits itself with the conservation of ecological and colourful islets, symbolizing the respect of man for his environment. They are niches that must be preserved for the enjoyment and appreciation of present and future generations.

In the valleys and coasts of our wonderful state there are ecological reservoirs, some of which are provided by nature and others by man's prodigy. Natural views such as Meseta de Cacaxtla are now protected for endangered species that include wild boars and armadillos, in San Ignacio; sea turtle breeding farm in Bahía de Ceuta, Elota; exuberant vegetation parks in Cosalá; mountains in El Fuerte, Choix. Concordia and San Ignacio are favourable for the protection of a rich variety of flora and fauna. The construction of dams has favored micro climates with beautiful sceneries. that offer marvellous corners brushed with falls, streams and hidden places inside the mountains, highly favourable for alternative and sustainable tourist development.

Any tour through the coasts or mountains allows us to appreciate unknown or unnoticed sceneries due to the fact that is something that has always been there. These unique spots must be known by children, young people and visitors so they can value the natural richness of their land. Each one of our eighteen municipalities has corners with matchless attractions. To show these natural wonders is to promote their knowledge and also to appreciate what we treasure in our state.

Sinaloa has many bays; different species of sea birds; sea wolves sanctuaries; thermal – medicinal spring waters; marshes and lagoons that attract migrating birds; observatories for white doves and quails; forests with a wide diversity of pine trees and oaks; ever changing sand dunes; spots to enjoy wonderful sunsets; enigmatic mystical places; carved stones and cave paintings: cliffs and wide beaches; spas and natural breeding places for molluscs; reservoirs for wild animals such as deer, wild cat and wild boar and also environments created by hydraulic constructions where human activity and nature's expression meet in delicate balance.

DAILY LIFE SINALOA

For centuries Sinaloa was a mining state and predominantly rural. Post revolutionary times produced considerable changes that stamped great dynamism to the region: agriculture developed, population settled the valleys, small cities such as Guasave and Guamúchil emerged and Mazatán, Los Mochis, and Culiacán got consolidated. Communication nets connected the state with the rest of the country. A complex of productive and cultural infrastructure was also created

Urban life left behind old cooking utensils, the “huarache” (sandal), the donkey and horse as transportation media; the cow as nourishing source (milk and dairy products); firewood as fuel; “coricos, melcochas and ponteduros” as treats; the weekly dance as only entertainment; the travelling circus; the quarrels and street fights backed by the honor of “clean hands”; the “sombbrero” (hat) for sun protection; the water bottle during work at the farms and the sacked coffee that perfumed the waking hours of the lethargic: the credit purchase at the corner store; the litany of the “tesguino and tepache” seller and the monastic respect for the family nucleus around the mother and father figure.

The urban – nowadays, means: always on the go, the bustle of the city, hectic activity, struggle for boarding transportation, getting a good job, substituting traditional devices such as the “cachimba” (petrol lamp) for the aggressive electrical light bulb; it’s the victory of the car, manufactured products, designers clothing, the glamour of “haute cuisine” combined with regional cooking, access to public services, hospitals, water and drainage; paved streets, enjoyment of parks and gardens, great exhibitions, movies and cultural complexes.

Contemporary Sinaloa abandoned the calmness of the cart pulled by horses (araña) for the power of the automobile. But Sinaloa is also a brave song that adapts to the rhythms demanded by modern life. It is also the Sinaloa that evidences the transition of the modest subjugated woman for another that multiplies into several “leading role”, active woman.

Today’s Sinaloa is also a cultural place with poets that sing to the city, dancers that go beyond frontiers, musicians that present their talent to big companies, writers that are the pride of their plot and chroniclers and historians that attentively read the evolution of their much loved home town.