Horses in Arizona

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Horses are a common sight in Tucson but have you thought about how strange it is to find these noble and mysterious creatures in the desert? We normally think of horses living in grassy fields, how did they arrive in Arizona and when? What is it about horses that lets them thrive in the desert?

Many people don’t know but horses evolved in North America. According to the White Mountain Independent website, the earliest horse fossil was found in Idaho. Horses were widespread across the continent until 12,000 years ago. Nobody knows why horses died out in North America but they became extinct here several thousand years ago. Horses only survived as a species because they crossed to Asia where it was joined to the North American continent. (www.wmcentral.com)

Horses were brought back to Arizona by Spanish missionaries like Father Kino. According to saltwater-Monument group(website) during the 1680s Father Kino reportedly took hundreds of horses and cattle to missions he founded in Arizona. Horses were common in Arizona by the 1700s.

The horses thrived in Arizona because they were able to drink from springs, streams, and small pools of water. Horses can survive without a lot of water. According to Animals.mom.com(website) mild horses can survive in harsh conditions like the Arizona desert. They constantly move a round to find water, vegetation and shelter.
While I was researching this essay I learned a lot. Horses are originally from North America, not Spain. The Spanish explorers just brought them back to their natural habitat. Horses are well suited in Arizona because they came from here.