

Tomato Mission (Tolomato)
Darlen, McIntosh County, Georgia.

HABS No. 14-719-271

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT No. 14

Historic American Buildings Survey
P. Thornton Marye, District Officer
62 Bartow St., N.W., Atlanta, Georgia

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TOLOMATO MISSION 1
Near Darien, McIntosh County
Georgia

Owner: Mr. Lewis Crum, of Savannah.

Date of Erection: Between 1573 and 1597.

Architect and Builders: Spaniards.

Present Condition: Ruins.

Number of Stories: Not known.

Materials of Construction: Tabby.

Other Existing Records: See text. See photographs on page 16 of
Cate, M.D., Our Todays and Yesterdays.

Additional Data: See following pages.

¹ According to Mr. Robert R. Otis and Wilbur G. Kurtz of Atlanta, Georgia, who measured part of this project in February, 1934, the mission was variously designated: Tolomato, Tupique, Espogache, The Thicket. The project was measured under "Public Works of Art Project, 1934, Fifth Region, J.J.Haverty, Director, Atlanta, Georgia".

H.E. Bolton in his Debatable Land distinguishes Tupique and Espogache from Tolomato, and he is probably correct. He places Tupique three leagues north of Tolamato. Otis and Kurtz evidently obtained their information from the Historical Sketches of the Golden Isles of Georgia, which confuse the three places, and which call the four small buildings "dungeons" and the refectory "barracks for soldiers".

Henry Chandler Forman
Henry Chandler Forman
Assistant Superintendent
Headquarters Office, HABS.
1936.

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TOLOMATO MISSION
Near Darien, McIntosh County
Georgia

HISTORICAL NOTES:

The Franciscan Mission is located on "The Ridge", about five miles from Darien,¹ and from the following references it was evidently built between 1573 and 1597.

"The first band of the Little Brothers came to Santa Elena in 1573..... Churches were built in the principal towns, at Tolomato,"²

"A new epoch opened in 1595, when, in the cool of October, Governor Avendaño conducted five more friars to Guale (Georgia). Gratifying success attended their labors. In seven towns along the Georgia coast old churches were restored and new ones built..... the veteran Corpa (labored) on the mainland at Tolomato, across from Zapala (Sapelo) Island.³

"In September, 1597, the blow fell. Father Corpa was slain and beheaded (by Indians). From Tolomato the angry mob rushed to the other missions.....!"³

Another authority⁴ makes it appear as if the Tolomato Mission was erected about 1593: "The revival came in

¹ The location of Tolomato Mission can be proven by comparing its present position on a county map with its position shown on a Spanish map illustrated in Bolton, H.E., The Debatable Land.

² Bolton, H.E. The Debatable Land, 13,14.

³ Same, 15.

⁴ Georgia Historical Quarterly, vol 7, 44-53, The Yamassee Revolt of 1597 and the Destruction of the Georgia Missions.

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Tolomato Mission, Georgia, continued.

1593. During that year the Council of the Indies granted permission to twelve Franciscans to enter Florida. The following year Pedro de Corpa [etc.] were sent to Guale. The priests established their missions on the islands of the Georgia Coast...The northernmost missions were those of Father Corpa at Tolomato [etc.]..."

by *Henry Chaudler Forman*
Haverford, Pennsylvania
1936

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TOLOMATO MISSION
Near Darien, McIntosh County
Georgia

ARCHITECTURAL NOTES:¹

The architectural remains consist in seven ruins, buildings believed to have been the fort, refectory, chapel and monks' cells. The cells are four small rectangular structures off in a field by themselves. The walls of the mission are made of tabby, a concrete used by the Spaniards.

The fort is octagonal, nineteen feet on a side. The refectory is in the shape of a "T" and lies between the fort and the chapel along the bank of Pease Creek. The chapel is a long rectangular building whose footings have been broken off at the edge of the river bank. The chapel entrance (?) doorway is on the west and has an elliptical brick head. Part of the stuccoed cornice of large dentils is remaining on this west side. On the interior is a fireplace or foundation of a fireplace, built of brick.

The most interesting feature of the whole mission is the construction of the monk cells. Great timbers still hold up the flat tabby concrete roofs, as may be seen in the photograph.

by Henry Chandler Forman
1936

¹ This description is based on notes taken by the writer at the site, and on the HABS photographs and on the measured drawings of R.R. Otis and W.G. Kurtz.