

Our Mission

Santa Fé de Toloca

Alachua County Historic Site

Ellen Goldberg and Ana Robles

Our Mission

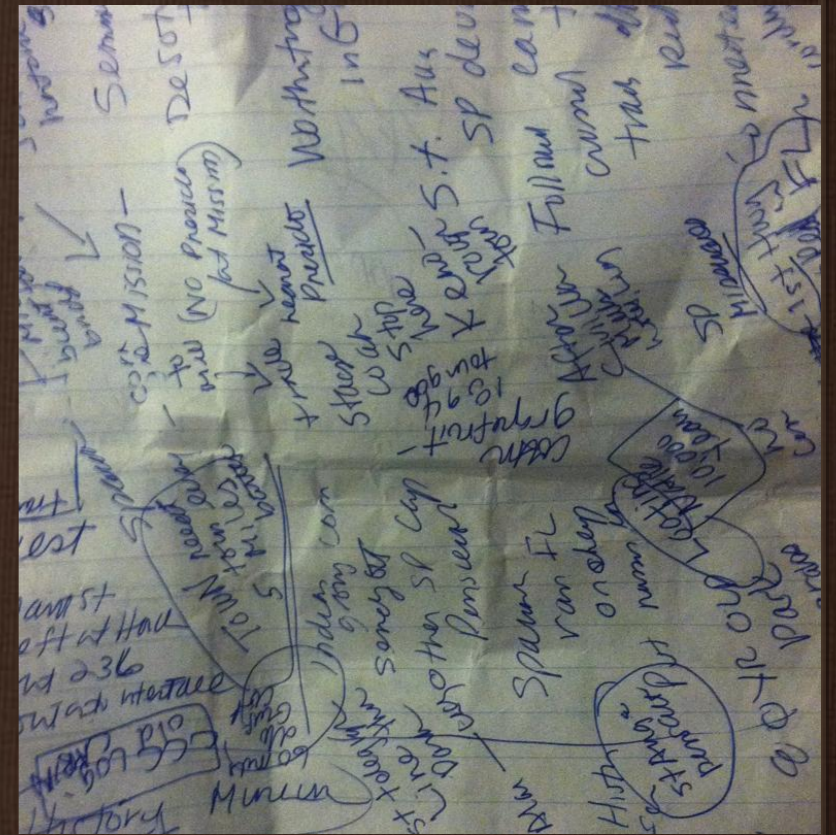
After a long day of gathering information and travel to the edge of the county of Alachua we have found that very few people know about the Mission Santa Fe de Toloca. In fact there is no actual visual site where the mission can be found. Was this "Mission Impossible?" Our "trail" led us to the most knowledgeable historian who works out of a small house/office in the middle of O'Leno State Park. There was no one at the park entry when we arrived (who were we supposed to pay?...we guessed the attendant was in the restroom); all buildings were closed or they closed earlier in the day. But we did not despair in our "mission" to find the Mission. Morgan Tyrone, the resident Park Manager was our gold at the end of the trail. He filled us in on Florida History for nearly 2 1/2 hours. Actually we learned about the Native American, Spanish, French and British history of Florida! We also learned about what people use this park for and what sites are contained within the park. We had a glimpse of the beautiful Santa Fe River which flows underground in a portion of the park.

Our other research has revealed that there is some archaeological history about this site in the Florida History Museum and there are only a couple of articles/books written on the subject. We found an article from a historical magazine that compared southwestern missions with the southeastern missions. Though these missions roughly served the same number of Native Americans the Florida missions did not survive due to weather conditions and building methods. The Spanish did help to destroy Native American culture but they also brought sheep, orange trees, horses and hogs with them. We also learned that De Soto's trail (Camino Real or Royal Way) went through this park, but the focus is not on the Spanish history as there is not much to see in terms of anything from this period.

Our mission after all of this information gathering is to reveal this history and make it visible to the community and elementary school children who study Florida history in their curriculum. We are going to find out about the reconstructed Mission San Luis programming for children that exists in Tallahassee, Florida. We are working on a web-site, brochure, graphics and activities related to Mission Santa Fe and the surrounding area. We also want the local tourist and historical organizations to be linked to our site.

Our journey ended with a debriefing at a charming old town Alachua restaurant.

- Ellen and Ana





What's Our Mission?

Problem

Lack of Information

Research

1. Basic Internet Research at UF
2. Gainesville Tourism Office
3. O'Leno State Park - Mr. Tyrone, Park Manager
4. Extended research through webpages.

Findings

Disconnection between the Alachua County community and its local history about Santa Fé Mission.

Goal

Teach children about the importance of Santa Fé Mission in their local history.
Promote interest in the Santa Fe site by helping students to visualize life in the 17th Century.

Focus Group

Students in grades 3-12.

Idea

Create a website where students can find information about the history and connect with the Florida Museum of History and the O'Leno State Park.

Social Engagement and/or Local Economy

Students learn by playing, creating and reenacting. Stimulate their interest in local history.





History

Interesting Facts

Map Site

Activities and Missions

Web Resources



Our Mission

Santa Fe de Toluca

Alachua County Historic Site

May 20, 1702: Franciscans have established the Mission of Santa Fe de Toluca at one of the largest Timucuan villages in northern Florida. Appalachian Indians fight a battle with the Spanish and Mission Indians. Both sides lose a considerable number of fighters before the Appalachicolos finally gain the upper hand.



Missions were established by Franciscan priests to spread doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church in what are now the states of Florida, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California. Many don't know that there were approximately 40 missions established in Florida by the Spanish from the 1500's onward. They were extensions of the main mission located in St. Augustine, Florida. Famous Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto blazed a trail through Florida that went through Alachua County. He came from a very brutal and uncivilized society in Spain and created dramatic consequences for the American Indians who were living in his path. The native population of Florida who had been in Florida for 10,000 years contained tribes such as the Calusa, Potano, Apalachee and Timucuan and their numbers were greatly reduced during the times of De Soto's conquest. The Spaniards destroyed culture of these native people and nearly 26,000 were indoctrinated by the Franciscan priests.

The Spanish brought orange trees, sheep, horses, hogs and cattle to Florida. Each mission produced a different crop or provided a different service. De Soto's trail passed through the O'Leno State Park in the northwest corner of Alachua County, located on the banks of the Santa Fe River which also runs underground through part of the county. A marker designating this spot is found in this park. Several miles from this spot but within view of the Santa Fe River was the Mission Santa Fe de Toluca. The site was known to be archaeologically excavated, but is not open for visitors.

Missions that were built in Florida differed from those built in New Mexico and the southwestern U.S. Little remains of these formerly wood and thatched roof buildings due to weather conditions and virtually nothing remains at the site of the Santa Fe de Toluca Mission. A replica of the Mission San Luis is housed in Tallahassee, Florida, and is characteristic of all of the missions that were built in Florida during the same time period.

Though many may glorify De Soto and the other Spanish Conquistadors for their exciting escapades, their presence in Florida destroyed a great culture that had been part of Florida for thousands of years. Mission Santa Fe de Toluca may no longer physically exist, but this website seeks to recreate and make real and visible this historical mission and part of history in Alachua County that was very much a part of Florida's Spanish and Native American history.

History of Missions



Interesting Facts



What is a mission?

In the second half of the 16th century, Spain established many missions throughout la Florida as Florida was called, with the purpose of converting the Native Indians to Christianity. This was a way of preventing colonization by the English and French and also helped maintain control of the native population.

How were Florida missions built?

They were built with posts set into the ground. The walls were palmetto thatch, wattle and daub or plank or left open.

Who were the Timucuan and where did they live?

The Timucua Province was initially established to serve the people known to the Spanish as the Timucua (called the Northern Utina by modern scholars), who spoke the "Timucua proper" dialect. Eventually, however, it absorbed several other Timucua-speaking provinces and became the largest of all the Florida mission districts. Similarly, the missions among the Potano, centered around what is now Gainesville, were considered part of the Potano Province, while missions to the Acuera, who lived around the Ocklawaha River, were part of the Acuera Province. Most of these areas were eventually considered part of the larger Timucua Province, in some cases because native populations had declined to the point that they could no longer support multiple missions. (The missions in Acuera Province were abandoned after the Timucua rebellion of 1656, although non-Christian Acueras continued to live there for another 40 years.) At this stage the Timucua Province included the area between the St. Johns and Suwanee rivers. Later, the Yustaga Province, which served the Yustaga who lived to the east of the Suwanee as far as the Aucilla River, was added, and the Timucua province covered the majority of north central Florida.[10]

What is a Franciscan friar?

A Franciscan friar is a member of a religious order founded by St. Francis of Assisi largely devoted to missionary and charitable work.

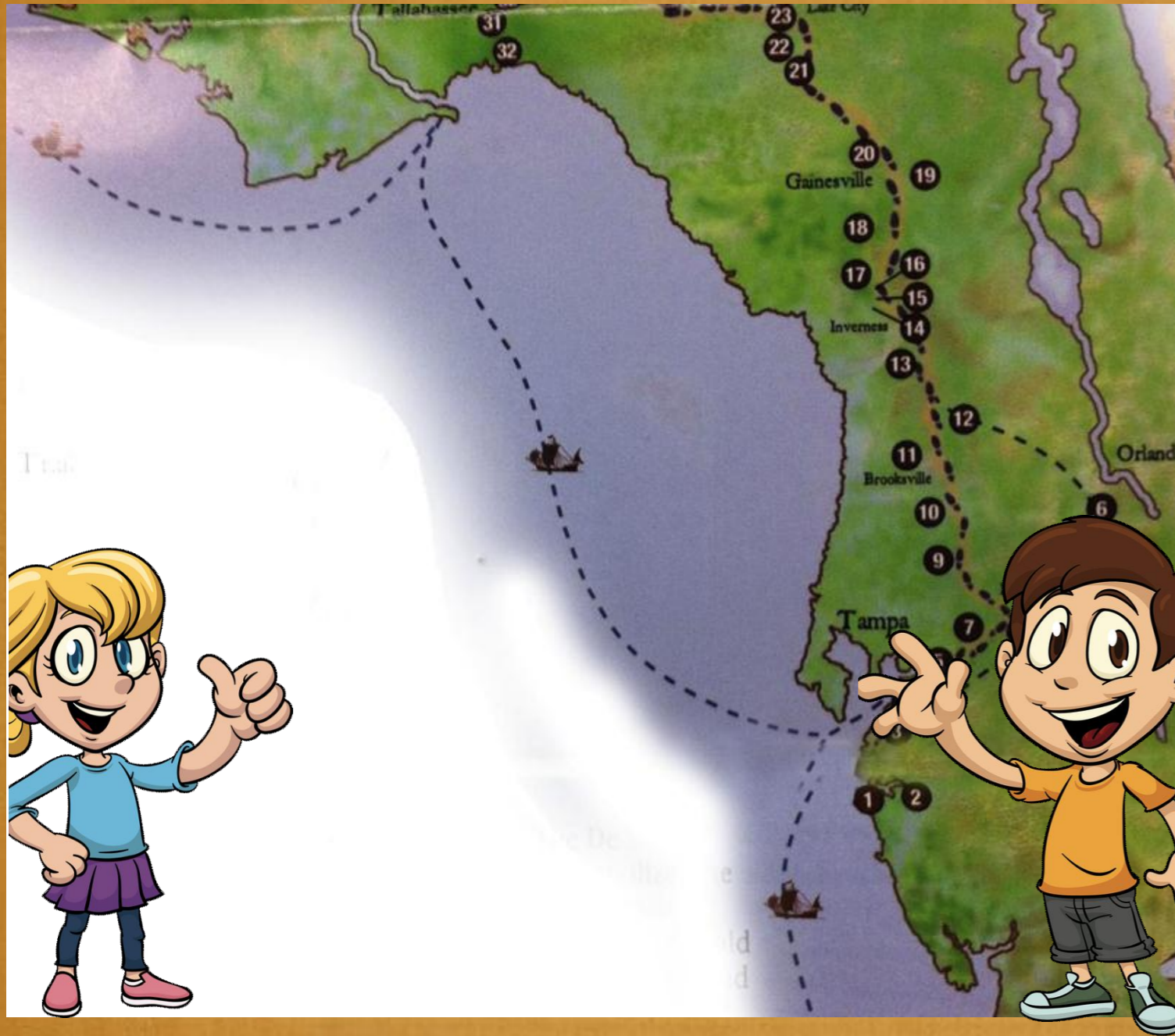
Where is Alachua County and what is its significance?

Alachua County, Florida, is 961 square miles and named by the Indians for its natural features. Some think the word alachua means sinkholes.

Who is Hernando de Soto?

He was a Spanish explorer who led the first European expedition across the southeastern United States. He was born in 1496 and died in 1542. He was famous for his conquests.





Map Site

O'leno State Park

Pensacola

Santa Fé Mission

Mission of San Luis



Activities and Missions for you



These questions and activities can be adapted to all age students. Refer to the Web Resource's Page for additional research and information.

1. Create a site plan and map of the area De Soto crossed in Alachua County, Florida and include the approximate location of Mission Santa Fe de Toluca.
2. Plot De Soto's trail through Florida using a map and connect the mission sites with (lines) trails. What are the current names of the cities and towns where the missions were located?
3. Make a model of a Spanish Florida mission using some of the natural materials listed on the Fact Page.
4. Compare the Spanish missions of the southwestern and southeastern (Florida) United States.
5. Make a drawing using the pictures of the items and animals the Spanish brought with them to Florida. (See Fact Page). What did Mission Santa Fe produce?
6. Make a drawing of a mission and label its parts. Include at least five stations and the tasks performed in each.
7. In a journal entry describe what you think a typical day for a Timacuan Indian in a mission would have been like.



Web Resources to have fun with

[Florida Museum of Natural History](#)

[O'leno State Park](#)

[Mission San Luis](#)

[Scholastic - Teacher Resource/ Missions](#)

[Jstor](#)

[Native American Encyclopedia](#)



Thank You