

7-19-73

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Form 10-300  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Florida	
COUNTY: Volusia	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 7 1973

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Tomoka State Park

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Nocoroco *Use this*

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Two miles North of Ormond Beach on Old Dixie Highway

CITY OR TOWN:  
Ormond Beach Vicinity

STATE Florida	CODE 12	COUNTY: Volusia	CODE 127
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**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Division of Recreation & Parks, Dept. of Natural Resources

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Larson Building

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee	STATE: Florida	CODE 12
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**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Elliott Building

CITY OR TOWN: Tallahassee	STATE: Florida	CODE 12
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**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Florida Archaeological Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1949     Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Florida State Museum

STREET AND NUMBER:  
\_\_\_\_\_

CITY OR TOWN: Gainesville	STATE: Florida	CODE 12
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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COUNTY: Volusia
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The site of the 17th century Indian village of Nocoroco is situated on a point of land, called Mount Oswald, which extends into Tomoka Basin. This point of land is bordered on the west by the Tomoka River, and on the east by the Halifax River. Fortunately, a first-hand description of this area was made by Alvaro Mexia during the year 1605.

A translation of Mexia's description is as follows:

"Continuing your way for a distance of five leagues (from a certain fresh-water lake) a footpath is taken through the gullies, traversing a wood of live-oaks, and you emerge at a bay which is called Nocoroco, where canoes are boarded. This bay has a gravelly bottom and there is a cove on the west side, and on the flats of the said cove are four villages. On the point of land extending on the south is the town of Nocoroco. A dense woods of live-oaks runs along the west side of the bay, and along the east shore stretches a thorny thicket." (Higgs, 1951:270).

Some changes have occurred in the area since Mexia's visit, but the vegetation is remarkably similar to that of the original description. In fact, Higgs reports that the live-oak stand mentioned by Mexia "... is still extant - a verdant oasis in the arid beach terrain (Ibid)."

Griffin and Smith (1949:342-343) have reported that significant erosion of the area has taken place since the 1605 visit. The gravel bottom of the bay is not apparent at this time, but the existing muck deposits in the bay could be representative of very recent deposition. This hypothesis is somewhat substantiated by the discovery of a brick platform located on the west shore of the bay. This platform, presumably built between 1766 and 1835, was covered by approximately 9 inches of muck (Ibid). "In view of the evidence for the accumulation of muck around Tomoka Basin, it appears likely that Mexia's description of the bay as gravelly bottomed may also be correct. Deposits of coquina rock are common in this region; the point on which Nocoroco was located is underlain by it" (Griffin and Smith, 1949:343). They also characterize the extant vegetation on the site as indicative of a young hammock. This is due to the clearing of the area for agricultural purposes during the 18th century (Ibid:342). At the present time, the area, excepting the beach erosion, closely approximates the physical environment reported in 1605. The area is under public ownership, and has been preserved from the urban encroachment that has affected much of Volusia County. Some drainage canals have been cut through the marsh areas as part of the local mosquito control program.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric         | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture         | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture        | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce            | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications      | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation        |   |  | _____                                    |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Nocoroco was apparently a Tamucuan Village that was in existence at least as early as 1605. In all probability, this site extends back in time to some degree, but its known temporal placement enhances its significance. Excavations were conducted on this site in the late 1940's by John W. Griffin and Hale G. Smith (1949), and the artifact assemblage recovered strongly indicated that this was the site of Nocoroco reported by Mexia in 1605. Ceramics represented the major portion of the artifacts, although a pair of scissors, a split bone awl, and a shell spoon were recovered (Griffin and Smith, 1949:355). The provenience of the scissors within the excavation units definitely ties the site to an historical phase, but the ceramics offer the major evidence for a tight chronological placement. A minor amount of San Marcos Complicated Stamped was excavated at Nocoroco, and is dated from the Early Spanish Colonial Period in St. Augustine (Smith, 1948). Approximately 50% of the potsherds belong to the St. Johns series, with plain wares predominating. This presents an interesting picture, primarily because St. Johns Check Stamped is the major aboriginal ceramic type of the St. Johns series in St. Augustine. Evidently Nocoroco represents a very early transitional site, moving toward the Mission period influences, and away from totally indigenous cultural traits. The particular location of this site would also allow for influences coming in from the late Glades tradition. Nocoroco evidently represents one of a small number of sites which manifests an artifact assemblage influenced by early European impact. This contrasts greatly with the later sites of the Mission period which are products of a great deal of European influence and are comparatively quite numerous.

The actual fate of the village of Nocoroco after Mexia's visit in 1605 is unknown, but a legend concerning "Tomokie" has gained wide popular acclaim and become part of the region's oral heritage. According to the legend, the Indians regarded a certain spring with awesome superstition. Its waters were believed to possess curative

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Attached Sheet)

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	29° 21' 22"	81° 05' 30"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	29° 21' 22"	81° 04' 58"				
SE	29° 20' 51"	81° 04' 58"				
SW	29° 20' 51"	81° 05' 30"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **100 acres**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Daniel T. Penton, Historic Site Specialist**

ORGANIZATION: **Division of Archives, History & Records Mgt.** DATE: **11/16/71**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Department of State - The Capitol**

CITY OR TOWN: **Tallahassee** STATE: **Florida** CODE: **12**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name *Robert William*

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

*Robert M. Utley*  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 5/7/73

ATTEST:  
*W.D. Smith*  
Keeper of The National Register

Date 4 26 73

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8. Significance

powers, and was called the "water of life". Tomokie, giant chief of his warriors, did not share in this belief. He greatly offended the members of other tribes by drinking out of the spring with a sacred cup, never before touched by human hands, and brought war on his land by the other tribes. Tomokie was unharmed until Oluta, a beautiful enemy maiden, fired an arrow that pierced his heart. She grabbed the cup from the dead Tomokie's hand, only to be struck by a poisoned arrow, causing her to fall dead. This so enraged her tribe that they did not stop until every member of Tomokie's band was dead. This popular legend holds the cup to be in the possession of Florida Indians at the present time.

This legend is memorialized by a group of statuary which was executed by Fred Dana Marsh and donated to the park.

A document, dated November 16, 1569 by Captain Antonio de Prado, states that a blockhouse was to be built in a place called Nocoroco "... which is situated between two rivers, one which goes to the port of Matanzas and the other to that of Mosquitos." (Connor, 1925:291). There are no further records available on this proposed blockhouse, and the plans for such a blockhouse probably never materialized.

In summary, the site of Nocoroco is significant for a number of reasons. It is a site known to have been occupied in 1605, and archaeological evidence indicates that European acculturation was just beginning to be expressed in the material culture of this group. In addition, this site seems to be the origin of the popular legend of Tomokie; an integral part of the local heritage. It is a site which has contributed greatly to the understanding of Florida's early history, and also holds the potential for yielding more data as new excavations are initiated.

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9. BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Connor, Jeanette Thurber. Colonial Records of Spanish Florida. (1570-1577), Vol. I. Deland, 1925.
2. Higgs, Charles D. "The Derrotero of Alvaro Mexia, 1605" in Irving Rouse's "A Survey of Indian River Archaeology, Florida", Yale University Publications in Anthropology. Vol. 44, New Haven, Conn., 1951.
3. Griffin, John W. "Toward Chronology on Coastal Volusia County", The Florida Anthropologist, Vol. L, No. 3-4, Gainesville, Florida, 1948B.
4. Griffin, John W., and Hale G. Smith. "Nocoroco, A Timucua Village of 1605 Now in Tomoka State Park". Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol. 24, No. 4, Gainesville, Florida, 1949.
5. Smith, Hale G. "Two Historical Archaeological Periods in Florida", American Antiquity, Vol. 13, No. 4, 1948.