

Mount Carmel

IN GARAPAN (SAIPAN)
DURING THE GERMAN PERIOD

By
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INTRODUCTION

Today, as much as during the nineteenth century, the Catholic faith plays a major role in community life in the Mariana Islands. The focal point of the faith has always been the church, a locale for the congregation to come together for mass, and a venue for organized worship. A church building is also a visual statement of the wealth and strength of a community, and an expression of financial commitment. The building serves to impress on the members of the community, especially the younger members, the importance of the church as an institution. But the building also demonstrates to others the aspirations and wealth of the community that built it.

In many communities the size and appearance of a church became the focus of interdenominational competition and jealousy. In the Marianas, which were almost exclusively Catholic, this competition was not a factor. However, as the community changes, so too does the church building. Modernization and alteration, usually in the form of expansion, are commonplace. The impetus for this is derived either from a change in governance, or because the edifice has been damaged during a natural disaster.

This brief study considers the church at Garapan, originally consecrated as San Isidoro (1854), then as Nuestra Senora del Carmen (1893), and finally as Christo Rei (after World War II). While the study focuses on the German colonial period (1899–1914), some context of the Spanish period has to be provided. The aim of this booklet is to collate *all* available information, textual and pictorial, on the church Mount Carmel in Garapan during the German colonial period. The quality of the images reproduced here fluctuates from very good to quite poor. Images that in the absence of original prints had to be copied from early 20th century publications suffer from quality problems. In view of the aim of being as exhaustive as possible, this variation in reproduction quality could not be avoided.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

The evangelization of the Marianas started even before the establishment of a permanent Spanish settlement on Guam, with the first priest, Fray Antonio de los Angeles, literally jumping ship, a galleon, in 1596. Formal missionization started in June 1668 with establishment of a garrison and a mission on Guam. Soon after, in October 1668 the first mission was started on Saipan. By early 1670 the first missionaries were being killed on Saipan.¹ Retribution followed, which led to prolonged intermittent conflict. By the mid 1690s there were two churches on Saipan: the main church at Ana-guam, dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, and a smaller church, St. Joseph's at Fatiguan. In 1705 a typhoon destroyed both. A new church, constructed from *ifil* (*Intsia bijuga*) was built at the main settlement of Saipan between 1715 and 1720. By 1730 the majority of Saipanese had been relocated to Guam and by 1749 the island was officially uninhabited. After the period of the *reduccion*, the Chamorro population remained concentrated on Guam.

Repopulation of Saipan was first initiated through the settlement of some 400 Carolinians in 1815 and later also permitted to Chamorro by Spanish authorities. In 1858 a main settlement called San Isidro de Gárapan was established.² The settlement grew gradually from about 420 in 1861 to 1216 in 1897. In addition, from the resettlement of the population from Tinian in 1887, the population of Saipan grew even further. Accurate statistics only exist for the German period,³ but not all residents of Saipan were Catholics as there was a sizeable Carolinian community which still adhered to their own traditional spiritual beliefs (Table 1). Overall the congregation remained small.

Table 1. Size of the congregation on Saipan 1861-1914.⁴

Year	Garapan	Tanapag	Combined	Total Saipan
1861	420?		420	420
1864	433?		433	433
1866	466?		466	466
1871	655?		655	655
1877	705?		705	705
1882	749?		749	749
1887	886?	242	1128	1128
1891	1216?	232	1448	1448
1894	1061?	227	1288	1288
1897	1216?	250	1466	1466
1899				1921
1900	714	76	790	1407
1901	891	76	967	1631
1902	1012	61	1073	1798
1903	1075	69	1144	1952
1907				2133
1908			2303*	3303 +
1909			2395 *	3455 +
1910			2172 *	2672 +
1911				2651
1912	2103	125	2228	2603
1913	2339	159	2488	2760

* Includes Tinian

THE ARRIVAL OF THE GERMANS

Following her defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898, Spain lost the Philippines and Guam to the United States of America. Spain retained the remainder of Micronesia, which was no longer strategically, or economically viable. The Caroline, Palau and Mariana Islands were sold to Germany for the sum of 25 million Pesetas (US\$ 4.2 million) on 12 February 1899. After

a transition period, Germany took control of the Marianas on 17 November 1899.⁵ Germany established a district administration on Saipan, governing all islands that today make up the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

GERMAN ADMINISTRATION AND SPANISH PRIESTS

After the hand-over, the only Spanish influence to remain in Saipan rested with the four Catholic priests, three of whom remained, while the fourth, Tomás Cueva, returned to Manila: P. Mariano Allegre (Rota); P. Cornelio Barcia (Tanapag); and F. Francisco Resano (Garapan). Resano, the Vicar and Pastor of Agaña, Guam, was sent to take charge of the Saipan Parish from mid-July 1899 but remained Vicar for all the Marianas.

After the US occupation of Guam and the Spanish sale of the Marianas to Germany, the Marianas remained (administratively) part of the Diocese of Cebu (Philippines). While US Governor Leary threw all Spanish priests out of Guam in September 1899, the German district administrator in charge of the Northern Marianas, Georg Fritz, had no such intentions and welcomed Resano to Saipan. Fritz saw the church as a stabilizing force with high prestige and thus tolerated the Spanish priests—at least until they could be replaced by Germans. In his view there was nothing to be gained by confrontation. He understood only too well the pivotal role the church played in Chamorro life and was acutely aware that the respect of the local people for the German administration would be lost were he to wage a war against the church. Exactly this had happened in Guam, resulting in the exodus of Chamorro to Saipan.

The Spanish Augustine Recollect monks encountered serious financial problems and had difficulties funding their mission after Spain, as a colonial power, withdrew from Micronesia, and consequently withdrew their financial support. The German colonial office agreed to help. Using this as precedent, Fritz argued that the Spanish Recollects ought to be replaced by German monks.⁶ Yet, at the same time, Fritz was dependent on Father Resano as one of the few reliable expatriate citizens and a stabilizing influence. Fritz described Resano as the sole intellectual contact he had on Saipan.⁷ Fritz appointed him one of the deputy assessors of the district court of Sai-

pan 1904–1906.⁸ In that role he would aid the presiding magistrate, Fritz, in decisions of civil and minor criminal cases.



Figure 1. The German priests take over from the Spanish. From left: Pater Callistus, Pater Odilo, Pater Cornelio (Spanish Augustine), possibly photographed on the steps of the priest's residence in Garapan.⁹

GERMAN PRIESTS

From 1908 onwards, five and later six German Capuchin monks worked the missionary field of the Marianas, officially serving both the German Marianas and Guam. Pater Paulus was appointed Apostolic Prefect of the Mariana Islands, while Pater Callistus served as priest in Garapan, and Pater Corbinian on Rota. Two lay brothers (Mennas Bohner and Joachim Petry) complemented the padres. A fourth padre, Odilo, left soon after arrival following disagreements. Pater Callistus desired to improve the existing

church, Mount Carmel de Garapan, so that it was up to his perceived 'standard' of head church of an Apostolic Prefecture. He ordered iron pillars to replace wooden ones and wished to heighten and re-roof the building. The building costs swallowed up much of the mission funds. In addition, his abrasive style with other padres strained relations.

Pater Callistus ran a confrontational course with the German district administration in Yap as well as with the US Administration on Guam. Eventually, he was recalled from Saipan and posted to Yap, then Palau and finally New Guinea. His replacement on Saipan, Pater Gallus Lehmann, stayed until the deportation of all Germans following the Japanese occupation in 1914.

However, before Pater Callistus was moved on to Yap, Pater Paulus, as Apostolic Prefect of the Marianas also in charge of Guam, had tried to place Callistus as priest in Merizio, Guam, in view of the much more sizeable flock on Guam. When Pater Paulus arrived in Guam to discuss matters, his inability to speak English, Chamorro or Spanish confounded both the American administration and the congregations. As he wished to move his headquarters to Guam and to place more German priests there, the American administration feared an increase of German influence in Guam. This was compounded by Paulus' refusal to have American Capuchins posted to Guam.

Because Pater Callistus' confrontational style had become known in Guam, not the least because the German administration in Saipan advised its American counterparts to be on the alert and generally counseled against giving Pater Callistus residency, he was rejected.

When Pater Paulus and Pater Callistus arrived on Guam in June 1910, they were refused entry and sent back to Saipan. Because Guam and the northern Marianas were under the administrations of two different colonial powers, the Apostolic Prefecture of the Mariana Islands was set to fail. As long as Spanish priests served both sides, there was no fear of undue influence, but once the German Capuchins took over, the balance was tipped.

The very public tussle between the German Capuchins and the worldly powers subsequent to the refusal to have Pater Callistus land on Guam, resulted in a reorganization of the Catholic Church in Micronesia: Guam was

excised from the Apostolic Prefecture and made its own Apostolic Vicariate (which has a higher rank) effective March 1911. The German Marianas were combined with the Carolines to become a new Apostolic Vicariate of the Marianas and Carolines with its seat in Pohnpei.

Table 2. Priests serving at Mount Carmel 1858–1914.¹⁰

Period	Priest	Nationality	Order	Note
1858–1859	Modesto Sesma	Spanish	Augustinian	11
–1861–	Isidoro Liberal	Spanish	Augustinian	
–1866–	Toribio Bonel	Spanish	Augustinian	
1865–1867	José Palomo	Spanish	Sec Mission	12
–1871–	Gregorio Martinez	Spanish	Augustinian	
1876	Francisco Resano	Spanish		13
1877–1878	José Lambán	Spanish	Augustinian	14
1878–1883	Miguel Lasa	Spanish	Secular	15
1883–1887	José Palomo	Spanish	Secular	
1887–1888	Hilario Medrano	Spanish	Secular	16
1888–89	José Palomo	Spanish	Secular	
1889–90	???	Spanish		
1890–91	José Palomo	Spanish	Secular	
1891–1892	Clemente Danso	Spanish	Augustinian	17
1892	Calixto Moral	Spanish	Augustinian	18
1892–1899	Tomás Cueva	Spanish	Augustinian	19
1899–1907	Francisco Resano	Spanish	Augustinian	
1907–1909	Callistus Lopinot	German	Capuchin	20
1907–1913	Paulus Fischer	German	Capuchin	21
1908–1910	Odilo Grabow	German	Capuchin	22
1908–1912	Joachim Petry	German	lay-brother	23
1908–1913	Mennas Bohner	German	lay-brother	24
1908–1914	Gallus Lehmann	German	Capuchin	25
1913–1914	Odorich Schell	German	lay-brother	26
1914–1916	Corbinian Madre	German	Capuchin	27

THE BUILDING

The first Catholic church erected on the location of present-day Christo Rei church, was a small chapel constructed from swamp bamboo (*saguali*) with a roof made from coconut fronds.²⁸ The chapel was built some time in 1858 or 1859 and continually served the community, presumably with various modifications and continual repairs. The initial chapel/church was named San Isidro after the patron saint of the village of Garapan.²⁹ The original building, or its repaired and modified successor, existed until 1892. In 1890 Father Clemente Danso began to collect building materials from the reef for a future, more substantial church.³⁰

THE SPANISH BUILDING

Building seems to have started sometime in 1891, for in 1892 the new Church was built as Nuestra Senora del Carmen (Mother of God of Mount Carmel).³¹ At the time of the take over by the German administration, this was the church at Garapan. It had been inaugurated on 14 May 1893 by Father Fray Tomás Cueva and dedicated to its earlier titular, the Virgen del Carmen.³²

Spanish records describe a *mampostería* church as being of 'average size' and roofed with galvanized iron.³³ The *mampostería* was made of coral limestone boulders and coral heads. The latter, collected from the lagoon, had been allowed to weather for a while to reduce their salt deposits. When ready for use they were stacked and cemented with lime mortar, made from locally burnt coral lime.³⁴

The earliest photos of Mt Carmel we have in hand are photos taken in the late 1890s, with additional material taken in 1900 and 1901. Among the latter images, the construction of the German administration building, which commenced in 1900, was well under way (Figure 2, Figure 6).



Figure 2. The church and its congregation in 1900 or 1901.³⁵

The building was a five-bay church, seemingly without a chancel (Figure 6, Figure 12). The building was long and low. If we assume that the 1903 repairs were cosmetic only and did not alter the basic structure (p. 21), then the building would have been 36 m (120 feet) long, 9 m (30 feet) wide and, based on the proportions of the front façade, approximately 4.5 m (15 feet) high. The height of the roof ridge would have been approximately 1 m (3 feet) lower.

Decorative elements aside, the front façade was dominated by a very wide round arched door. A smaller quadrangular window existed just above the door. Rather than being placed on the base line of the triangle making up the gable, the window is placed half-way between the baseline and the top of the round-arched door. A window in this position is a pattern among Spanish churches in the Marianas and can be observed in the old church at Tanapag (Figure 23) as well as on Rota (Figure 25). Common to those two churches is also a thickened lower section of the front façade. That is not evident in the photos of the Garapan church. Judging by the parapet, however, the entire front faced is very thick and sturdy (Figure 3).

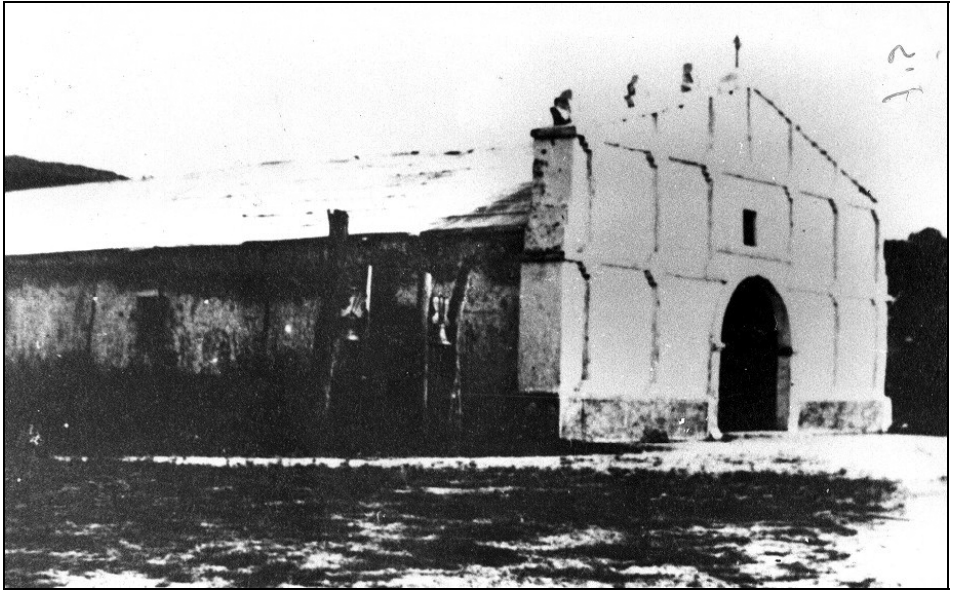


Figure 3. The church as seen from the north. Photo taken in the late 1890s. Note the bell 'tower' erected from four unfinished logs and the thickness of the front facade.³⁶

While the sides of the church were merely roughly rendered and white washed (Figure 2), the front façade was smoothly rendered and furnished with a render-based grid-like appliqué decoration. The intersection of the lines is marked by a stepped circle, while each of the vertical lines ends in a star-burst-shaped finial that was set upon the parapet. Judging from the available photos, the building seems to have been whitewashed, with the decorative lines painted in a different color, presumably light green or light blue. Given the state of the church at the time of the German occupation, and given that the repairs to the church following the earthquake (p. 21) were limited to the façade and roof covering, we can assume that the roof was then as later supported by sixteen locally obtained *ifil* timbers of irregular shape and that the floor was compacted earth (p. 24). The front façade protruded above the roof.



Figure 4. The church as seen from the north. Photo taken in 1900.³⁷

Compared to major churches in the Philippines and elsewhere, the church was considered unassuming in its appearance and did not rate a mention in the first impressions of Saipan as reported by incoming German Governor Rudolf von Bennigsen.³⁸

The German district administrator, Georg Fritz, in his seminal work *Die Chamorro* provides a description of Chamorro churches. There he comments that

“the style of the churches is the same in all villages; low, very long side walls with small quadrangular windows, and gable walls that are undecorated, or extremely tastelessly split into quadrangular fields.”

The remainder of the description makes it clear that he refers to the church in Garapan.

“The round-arched door is in the east [should be west, *ed.*] and the high altar opposite is decorated with the usual naïve decorations from artificial flowers, mirrors and colored paper. Two rows of *ifil* trunks support the tin roof and separate the centre from the aisles. Walls and wooden columns are white washed and decorated with a red and blue band.”³⁹

The building lacks any major decorative elements, such as a bell *côte*, or a formal bell tower or a campanile of stone or wood construction. A chancel also seems to be absent. A photo taken in the 1890s shows at the northwestern corner of the church a simple structure of four wooden up-

rights supporting at least two bells (Figure 3). The image is not clear enough to judge whether this structure is a quadrangular 'tower' base, or merely two pairs of tree trunks supporting one bell each. The uprights seem to have been unmilled tree trunks of varied height, most likely *ifil* which gave the whole a crooked appearance.

This bell 'tower' is no longer visible on a photo showing the church at the same angle in 1900 (Figure 4). The arrangement of the bells after 1900 is unclear. During the Japanese period a campanile, a free-standing bell tower, was erected at the northeastern corner of the building (Figure 20). It is tempting to assume that this location was chosen in 1922 because of the presence of bells at the same spot in the years before. Unfortunately we have no photographs of the church from that angle to confirm this.



Figure 5. Father Resano with part of the congregation prior to the earthquake of 22 September 1902.⁴⁰



Figure 6. The relationship between the positions of the church and the German administration building in 1900.⁴¹

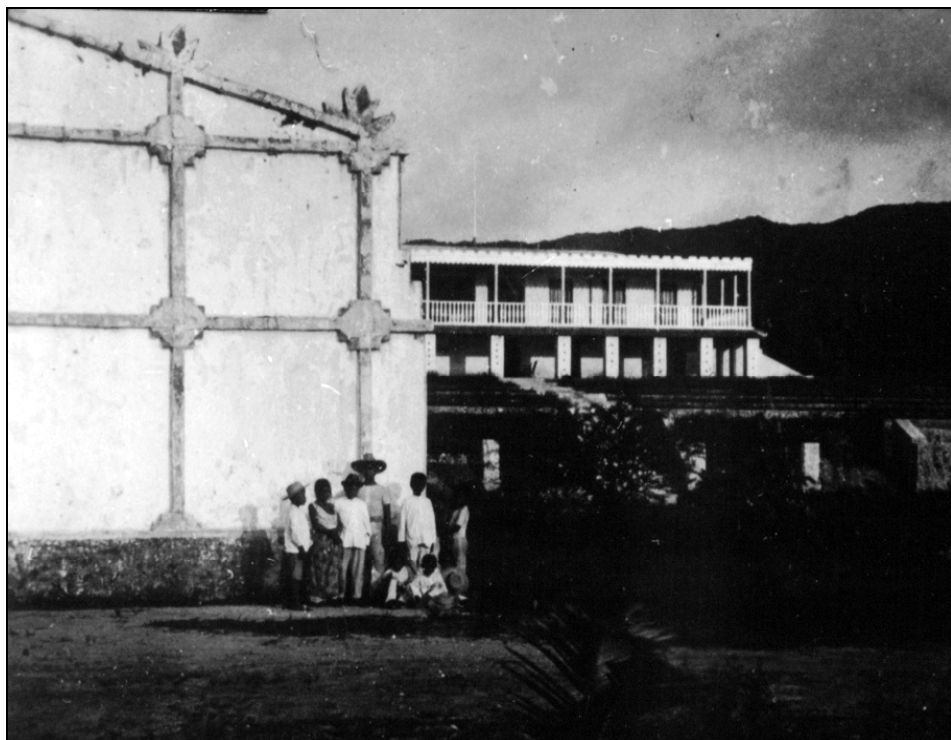


Figure 7. The southwestern corner of the church in late 1901 or early 1902.⁴²



Figure 8. The relationship between positions of the church and the German administration building between 1902 and 1905. Note the roads lined by coral limestone blocks.⁴³

MOUNT CARMEL AND GERMAN URBAN PLANNING

The Imperial German administration developed the area near the church as the centre of its administration. The position was chosen with care both for its logistic and for its symbolic location. To understand this, we have to visualize a German village square, with the City Hall at one end and the main church at the side. The Plaza of many Spanish colonial cities were of similar layout.

In the case of Garapan, the presence of the church, as well as the presence of a small landing area, predetermined the choices Georg Fritz could make. He fully realized the focal role the Catholic church played in the lives of the Chamorro he had been appointed to rule. The symbolic center of Garapan was, like it or not, Mount Carmel, where all people would congregate at least on Sundays. Rather than relocating the symbolic centre of the settlement, he capitalized on this and sited the German administration building on the Pleistocene shoreline terrace behind Mount Carmel church (Figure 8). Fritz played on the vista this plaza would provide. The German administration building was elevated above the surrounding buildings, dominating the future plaza.

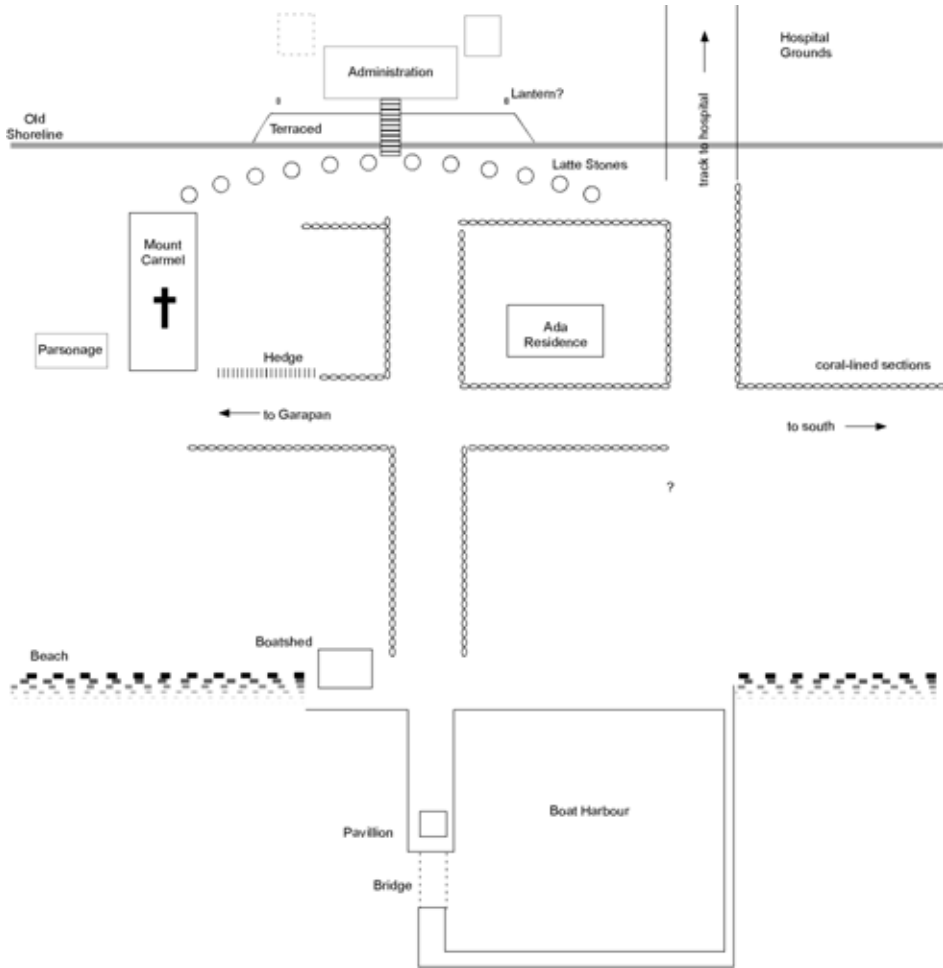


Figure 9. The 'Plaza' at Garapan. Schematic interpretation of the available photographic evidence.

A row of concrete latte stones were arranged in a slight arc at the base of the terrace. This is the first use of artificial latte stones as a symbol. When looking down the plaza, the visual impression was that the German administration building stood on the latte columns, symbolizing that German administration was supported by and stood on the foundations of a proud Chamorro culture. The Spanish period was, in effect removed.



Figure 10. The rebuilt church photographed in 1903 or 1904. Note the cement rendering ruled-off to appear like regular stone-work.⁴⁴

Mount Carmel stood below and to the right of the German Administration building (as seen from the administration). The symbolism this represented was well understood by onlookers. Symbolically, while subordinate, this location was the most powerful place after the centre position. Any future structure to be erected below and to the left of the administration building would be of lesser status and rank.

To consolidate the positioning, Fritz had a boat harbor and landing dock built at the other end of the plaza. Thus every visitor coming from off island would have arrived there and looked up the plaza.

At the risk of over-interpreting the symbolism of the German government structure, it should be noted that the row of concrete latte is not straight, but has been arranged in the fashion of an arc (Figure 18). The northern end of the latte arc reaches almost to the church. It could be interpreted as that the structure embraces the church as well as the rest of the plaza.



Figure 11. The church and parsonage seen from the north in 1905.⁴⁵

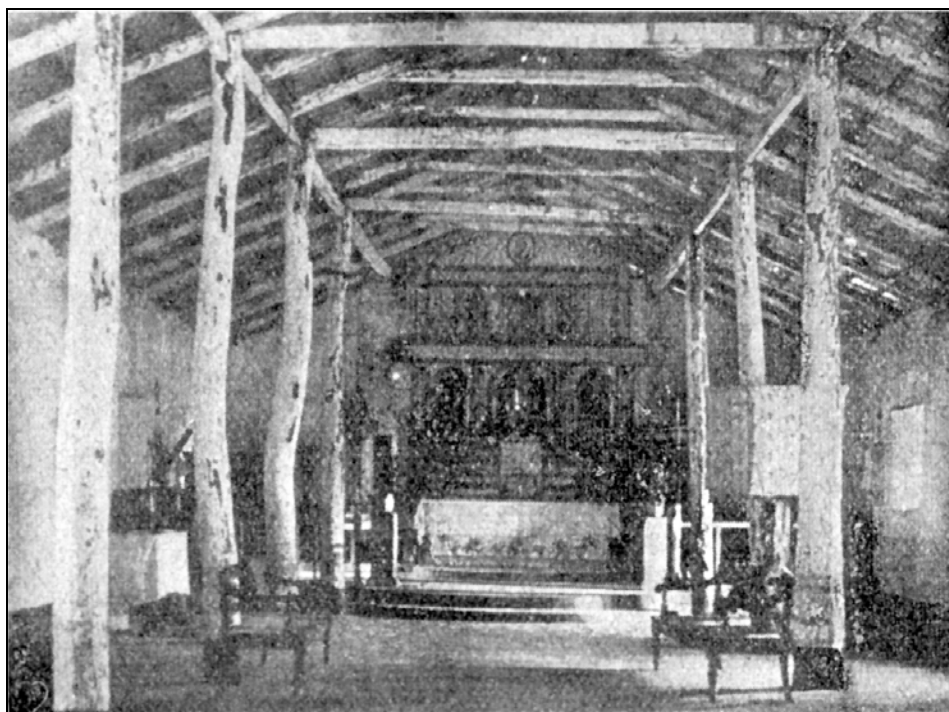


Figure 12. Interior of the church prior to the heightening of the roof in 1907. The irregular shaped posts made from ifil are evident.⁴⁶

AFTER THE 1902 EARTHQUAKE

While wooden buildings appeared visually inferior and *mampostería* structures were a sign of wealth and status, it was these buildings that were most vulnerable during earthquakes. And of these natural events there were many.



Figure 13. The front door of the church (detail of Figure 16).⁴⁷

On 22 September 1902 a powerful earthquake ($M_s=7.4$) shook the southern Marianas.⁴⁸ The main quake at 11:29 was followed by a series of aftershocks lasting for a few days.⁴⁹ It was reportedly felt as far afield as Pohnpei and Mokil.⁵⁰ Damage on Guam was wide-spread, with most stone and *mampostería* buildings, public and private, sustaining severe damage or collapsing altogether. Churches and bridges also collapsed.⁵¹ On Saipan damage was limited to some private buildings and the church.⁵²

The newly erected administration building and other structures withstood the event, except for some hairline cracks on the recently completed concrete latte.⁵³ The Garapan church, however, sustained damage. The extent of the damage remains unclear, but seems to have been limited to cosmetic problems with the front façade.⁵⁴

That façade was modified in 1903 or early 1904 (Figure 10). While structurally the same, it was heightened with the addition of a high central parapet. This gave the church, when seen from the front as by a visitor coming from the dock, the appearance of a central tower. The new render pattern of the front façade added an element of optical illusion that gave it additional height. Whereas the grid pattern evident on the Spanish façade emphasized its horizontal nature and gave it a squat appearance, the new design of four smoothly rendered bands, two running either side of the front door and the two at either margin, emphasized a vertical alignment.



Figure 14. Caribou races down the main street as part of the Emperor's Birthday celebrations in 27 January 1905.⁵⁵ Note the seeming loss of cement rendering at this early stage.

The square windows along the sides were retained. By judicious application of render on the window surrounds, however, the windows were made to look much larger than they actually were (Figure 10). In addition, the new front façade incorporated two windows, which would have improved the lighting in the church.

By comparison with the Spanish period front façade, the German period façade was stark and almost bland, without any ornamentation. Clean lines dominated the design. While the German administration had little to do with the restoration of the church, the administration certainly approved of the new design.

The administrator Fritz could not refrain from commenting that the church was

“now beautified in its appearance by heightening the monotonous gable wall, which was lifted by flanking it with two small towers and the addition of two round arched windows; also, the peasant-style side windows have been rebuilt as arched windows.”⁵⁶

All facades had been rendered with cement or lime mortar and ruled off to imitate stone work. The roof was covered with corrugated iron sheeting laid in three rows (Figure 10).



Figure 15. The church with Pater Callistus in front, photographed in 1907.⁵⁷ The parsonage can be seen at the left.

In 1907, when the German Capuchins arrived, the church is described by Pater Calistus as 36m long and 9m wide. The window openings had no of glass panels, something that somewhat disappointed the early German missionaries in 1907. There were solid wooden shutters, but these func-

tioned mainly as devices against storms and typhoons. The floor of the church consisted of compacted earth. The roof was supported by sixteen wooden posts derived from locally sourced *ifil* tree trunks, with roof beams and rafters of similar material. In view of the irregular shape of some of them it would appear that no milling of the timbers had taken place. Some letters written soon after arrival as well as the annual report of the German Capuchin missionaries for 1908 complains about the bent shape of the posts.⁵⁸ This is very evident in Figure 12. The roof was supported by Queen trusses.



Figure 16. The porch of the church during the hand-over to the German missionaries. Father Resano, flanked by Pater Corbinian (left) and Pater Callistus (right).⁵⁹

Judging from the sole shot of the interior (Figure 12) it would appear that the altar wall comprised of a painted, multi-tiered edifice painted on the eastern wall of the church. It had a couple of curved steps leading up to it. A small wooden and plain-looking pulpit was erected on the southern side. The interior seems to have been whitewashed.



Figure 17. The front facade of the church after the heightening of the roof.⁶⁰

By the time the German priests arrived in 1907, the cement render had fallen off in large sections from the front façade (Figure 16)—and presumably also off the sides. It survived only in small patches. The church entrance was closed by two wooden doors with Norman-style window paneling (Figure 13). The rendering does not seem to have lasted long at all, for a photograph taken in January 1905 shows the higher, and more exposed parts of the church, already without render (Figure 14).

The church survived the typhoons of 27 August and 8 November 1905,⁶¹ although the roof seems to have been holed in many places by flying debris, causing rain to penetrate.⁶² The windows, it seems had typhoon shutters that kept the elements out.

MODERNIZATION IN 1907

When the German Capuchin missionaries took over the missions in 1907, they were forced to repair the church. Despite the financial hardship that this represented, the building required a new roof. But Pater Callistus had more elaborate plans for Mount Carmel, with the aim of enhancing it to be commensurate with the seat of an Apostolic Prefecture.⁶³ He took the opportunity presented of having to renew the roof, to heighten the walls of the building and also to replace the irregular wooden posts—which his orderly German mind found visually so offensive—with cast iron ones.⁶⁴ The necessary building materials, with the exception of the stone for the heightening of the walls, were ordered from Japan, the nearest source of building materials.

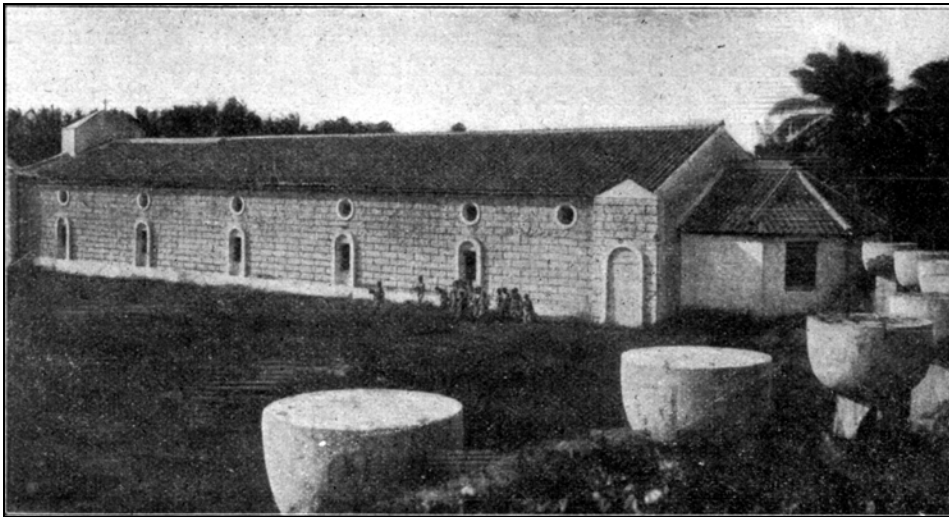


Figure 18. The southern facade of the church after the heightening of the roof.⁶⁵

As part of the heightening, each of the square windows on the long sides was given a second circular window above (Figure 18). From the available evidence it is not clear whether the window openings were in fact circular or whether the circular appearance was a visual illusion brought about by judicious application of rendered window surrounds.

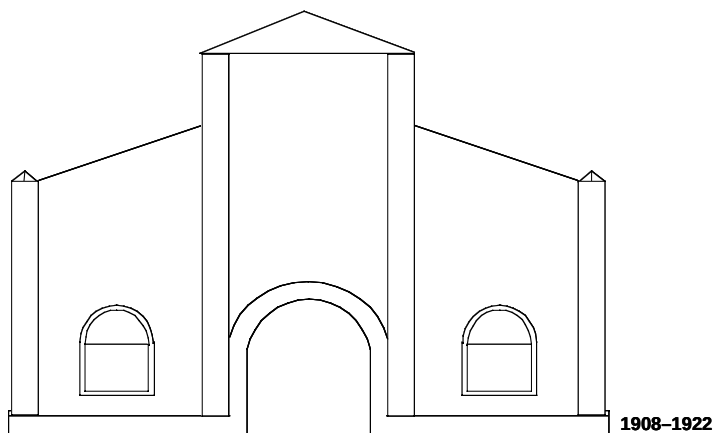
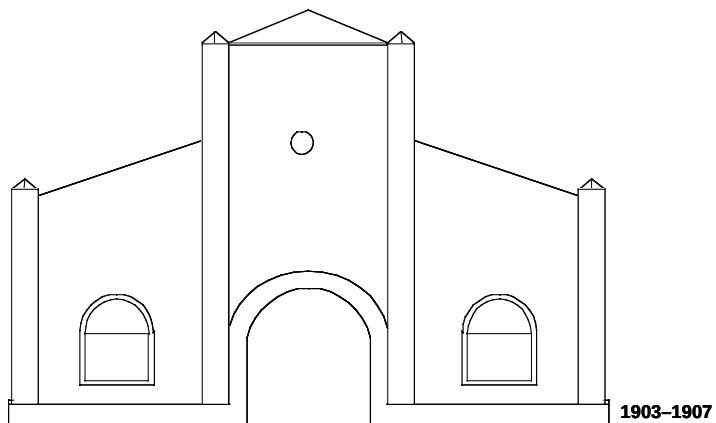
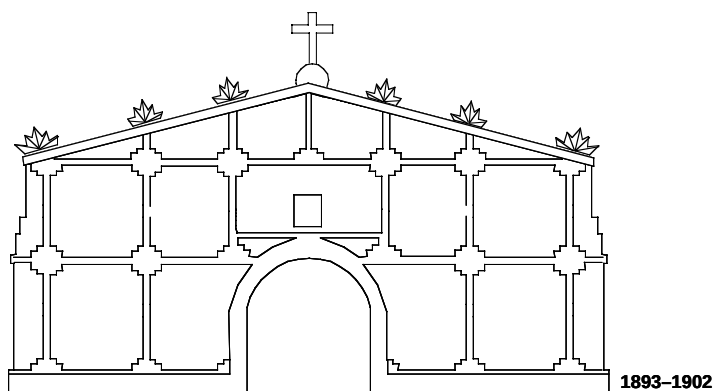


Figure 19. Development of the front façade 1893–1922. Later crosses omitted.

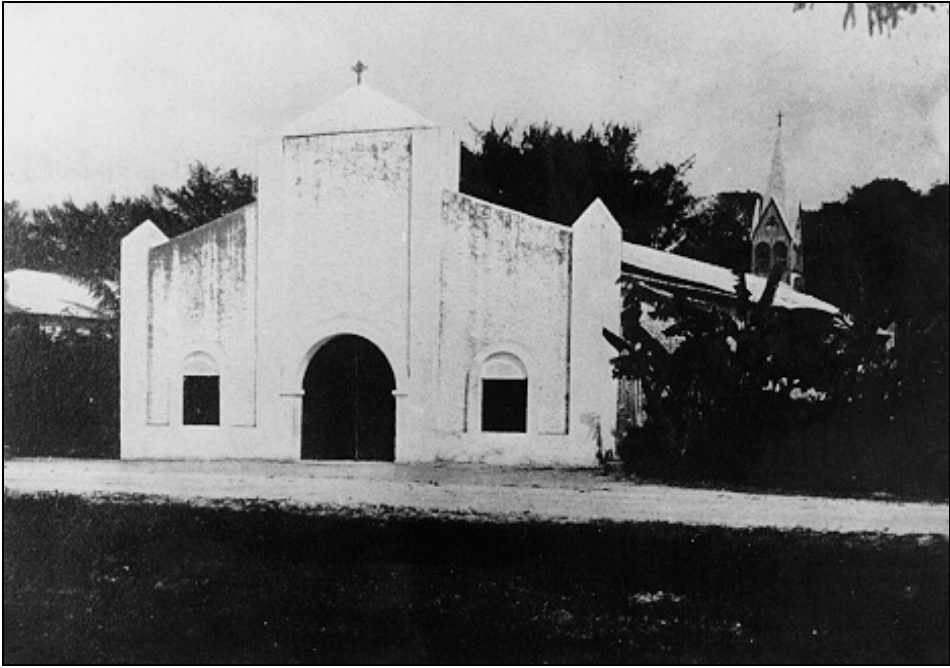


Figure 20. Mount Carmel during the early Japanese period.⁶⁶

The eastern end of the nave was visually closed off by the addition of a ‘transept.’ Rather than a real transept, the wall was added to with a slight buttress-like protrusion, which was ornamented with a large false window, solely comprised of render, and a small gabled roof (Figure 18).

The church was also given a small chancel with a hexagonal end. The chancel had at least two, possibly three windows, again square. While the roof covering of the chancel certainly appears to be ceramic tiles, the roof covering of the nave cannot be determined for certain from the available photography (Figure 18), but also appears to be tiles. That would have considerably added to the costs.

The front façade of the church was modified slightly by heightening the sides of the parapet. The central ‘tower’ portion remained at the same height, which resulted in a slight change in proportions. The small quadrangular window above the porch, which had been just below the roofline of the old church, was closed off once the roofline was heightened.

The visual appeal of the church had been altered as much as possible, in order to make it look both more imposing and more 'modern.' This trend had started in 1903 and was continued by the German Capuchin monks. As a result of the extensive modernization, a German cigarette card collectibles manufacturer putting together an album of cards on the German colonies, chose the more traditional-looking church in Tanapag as the example for Saipan.⁶⁷

DEVELOPMENTS AFTER 1914

Following the outbreak of World War I on 30 August 1914, Japan responded to a request for help by the British government. Japanese forces occupied the German colonies in Micronesia, landing on Saipan on 14 October 1914. By end of November all German administrators had been removed, as were the missionaries on Saipan. Only Father Corbinian on Rota had been allowed to stay (until 1919) and it was he who nominally became responsible for the congregation on Saipan—although he could almost never come and visit due to travel restrictions. The lay preacher Gregorio Sablan was delegated by Apostolic decree to fulfill the necessary functions. Since the need for the presence of Catholic priests continued, the Japanese government approached the Vatican for non-German priests. On March 2, 1921 the Spanish Jesuits returned to Saipan.

With the exception of a bell tower, at first little changed (Figure 20, Figure 21). Later, the front façade was modified by increased decorative elements of concrete render, and the side windows were enlarged and completed with concrete tracery. Later, the amount of decorative elements increased, culminating in a highly decorated portico addition, replete with gothic-style tracery carried out in concrete (Figure 22). The church was severely damaged during World War II and demolished soon after the war.



Figure 21. Mount Carmel during the early Japanese period.⁶⁸

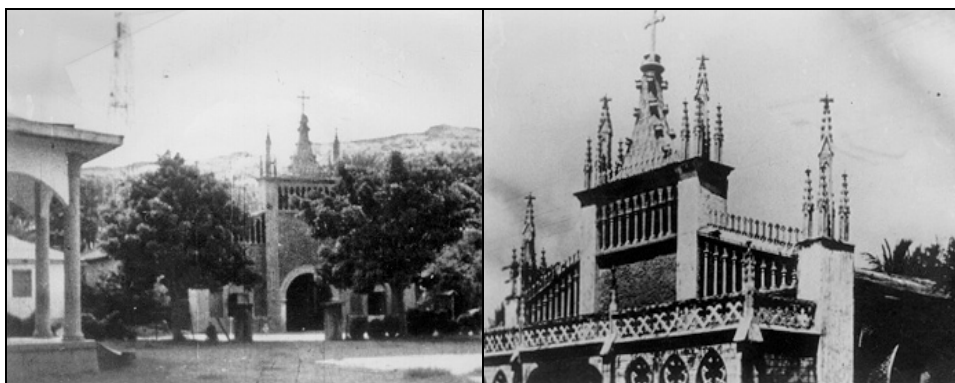


Figure 22. Appearance of Mount Carmel during the later Japanese period.⁶⁹

OTHER CHURCHES

While Nuestra Senora del Carmen was the main church of the northern Marianas, it was by no means the sole one. There was a church on Rota and a church on Tinian. When the Tinian community was relocated to Tanapag on Saipan in 1889, a new church was built there. Both the church on Rota and the one in Tanapag were made from the same construction technique as the original Garapan church.



Figure 23. The church in Tanapag.⁷⁰

TANAPAG

The Tanapag community, founded in 1889, had a church from 1894, dedicated as Nuestra Señora la Virgen de los Remedios.⁷¹ The building was made of *mampostería* and roofed with corrugated iron sheeting. It was one of two buildings to withstand the effects of the typhoon of 1905. When the Germans missionaries took over in 1907, their residence was a small weatherboard structure with a single window in the long sides and thatch roofing (Figure 24).⁷² It was a temporary replacement for the accommodation structure which had been destroyed, like much of the village of Tanapag, in the typhoon of 1905.⁷³ The annual report for FY 1908/09 notes that the church was in need of repairs,⁷⁴ which was carried out by the priests in FY 1909/10.⁷⁵



*Figure 24. The Missionaries' residence in Tanapag.*⁷⁶

ROTA

Unlike Saipan, Rota was never depopulated. The population of the congregation of that island fluctuated between about 400 in 1770 and 478 in 1897, with an epidemic-induced low of 332 in 1857.⁷⁷ A stone church existed until 1891 when it was demolished and replaced by a *mampostería* church covered with a thatch roof (Figure 25).⁷⁸ Before or shortly after the arrival of the German administration the thatch roof was replaced by a corrugated iron roof.



Figure 25. The church at Songsong, Rota with Pater Mariano Allegre.

POHNPEI

Although not located in the Marianas, it is worth looking at one other church building in Micronesia: Christ the King in Kolonia, Pohnpei.⁷⁹ This church, built by German missionaries from the design phase on, provides a contrast to the pre-existing and modified churches such as Nuestra Senora del Carmen.

At first Saipan was the seat of the Apostolic Prefecture and thus the seat of power of the church. When the Apostolic Vicariate was established in Pohnpei in 1911, that center of power shifted and the Marianas became a backwater. The Catholic Church built only one major church building in Micronesia, the Catholic Cathedral of Kolonia (Figure 26). Consecrated on 11 November 1913, with the tower completed just before Christmas of the same year,⁸⁰ it was the largest German church in the Pacific colonies.

That building had been under construction in 1911 when the Apostolic Vicariate was declared, and thus became the Bishop's Cathedral. Architecturally, the stone-built church on Pohnpei was much larger and higher than any other German church in Micronesia. At the same time, its design echoes some of the renovated features of Nuestra Senora del Carmen. The round-arched windows in the sides, each with a circular window above (in this case a blind window); and the main porch flanked by two windows.



Figure 26. The Catholic Cathedral on Pohnpei.⁸¹

LEGACY

What is the legacy of a building that is no longer there? At first sight the answer is 'little.' The legacy of a church building no longer in existence rests in whether a new church has been erected on the same hallowed ground. In the case of Nuestra Senora del Carmen this is the case. While the ruins of the church were demolished, and the name transferred to a new church built in 1949 in Chalan Canoa, the locality still supports a church, Christo Rei.

Nuestra Senora del Carmen existed from 1892 until shortly after World War II when the front section was destroyed, and the overall building too much damaged to warrant rebuilding in its original form. During that life span the basic church remained the same, with the exception of the addition of a chancel in the 1907 rebuild. All other modifications, including the construction of the bell tower, were purely cosmetic. The main modification occurred at the front façade. The originally squat and heavy grid pattern and the star-burst ornaments of the parapet gave way to the stark façade with slightly elevated central 'tower-like' section of the German period. The return of the Spanish monks during the Japanese period ushered in a renewed emphasis on the ornamentation, first with the addition of finials on the parapets, and later with the addition of a complete and heavily ornamented portico replete with gothic windows of elaborate tracery (Figure 22).

Today, some of the design of the later incarnations of Nuestra Senora del Carmen at Garapan can be found in the facades of the post-World War II church Nuestra Senora del Carmen in Chalan Canoa.

Nuestra Senora del Carmen lives on, not only in name, but also in the echoes of its designs.

ENDNOTES

- This publication was made possible through the kind assistance and provision of photographs by Genevieve S. Cabrera (Historic Preservation Office Saipan); Maggie Sablan (CNMI National Museum, Saipan); and the Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam. Jane Downing (Albury) commented on an earlier draft. Gudrun Möller (Frankfurt, Germany) made available some letters written by Georg Fritz. Their contribution is gratefully acknowledged.
- ¹ Fr. Luis de Medina and his Visayan assistant Hipolito de la Cruz were speared to death (de Viana 2004).
 - ² Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 17.
 - ³ Spennemann 1999.
 - ⁴ Compiled from Fidel de Blas 1910; Müller 1908; 1909; 1910; 1911; 1912; 1913; 1914; Spennemann 1999 (and sources therein); Fritz, Georg (1901) *Jahresbericht Marianen 1900/01*. MS on file Records German Governor New Guinea file 126b. Australian Archives Record Series CRS 1 Roll 5.
 - ⁵ Cf. Spennemann 1999; 2003.
 - ⁶ As it took the necessary funds from the budget for the dissemination of the German language (it could not financially support a religious institution *per se*), the colonial office argued that German priests be employed. Capuchins from the Rhenania-Westphalian province (Rheinisch-Westfälische Ordensprovinz) were sent to the Carolines in 1903 and to the Marianas in 1908. The German colonial office spent RMK 7,000 in 1902 and RMK 9,000 in 1903.
 - ⁷ Letter Georg Fritz to his parents dated Saipan 13 June 1902. Copy courtesy Möller, Frankfurt.
 - ⁸ Fritz, Georg (1905) *Anlage zum Jahresbericht Marianen 1904*. MS on file Records German Governor New Guinea file 126b. Australian Archives Record Series CRS 1 Roll 5.
 - ⁹ Müller 1909, p. 16.
 - ¹⁰ Compiled from Driver 2000; Müller 1908–1914.
 - ¹¹ Modesto Sesma de San Francisco Javier (1816–1880), from Miranda de Egra, Navarra, Spain.—1852– 1855 Inarajan & Rota; 1855–1858 Rota; 1858– 1859 Rota and Saipan; 1850 to Manila.
 - ¹² José Bernardo Palomo y Torres (1836–1919), 1860–65 Agaña; 1865–1867 missionary in Saipan; 1883–1887 Saipan; 1887–1889 Tinian; 1889 Agat; 1890–91 Saipan; 1891–93 Agaña; 1893 Rota; 1894–1919 Agaña.
 - ¹³ Francisco Resano del Sagrado Corazon de Jesus (1851–1914), from Andosilla, Navarra, Spain 1876 Saipan; 1877 Rota; 1877–85 Agaña; 1885–93 Agat, Guam; 1893–1899 Agaña; September 1899 Guam; 1899–1907 Saipan. 1907–09 Manila; 1909–14 Spain.
 - ¹⁴ José Lambán (1849–>1906) from Zaragoza, Spain. 176 Rota; 1877–78 Saipan; 1879–80 Manila; 1880–85

- Agat, Guam; 1886 Calapan, Philippines; 1887 Manila; 1888-89 Carmona, Philippines; 1890 Merizo, Guam; 1891-98 Inarajan, Guam; 1899 Span; 1899 Brazil; 1906 Spain.
- 15 Miguel de Lasa, on record 1872–1892. Arrived in Guam in 1872, 1878–1883 Saipan; 1884–1892 Agaña.
- 16 Hilario Medrano, 1887-1888 Saipan.
- 17 Clemente Danso de la Virgen del Yugo (1867–1896) from Tudela, Navarra, Spain. 1891–1892 Saipan; 1892-96 Cebu.
- 18 Calixto Moral del Pilar (1868–) from Tosantos, Burgos, Spain. 1892 Garapan; 1892 Tanapag; 1895 back to Manila.
- 19 Tomás Cueva de la Virgen de Araceli (1867–1905), from Corella, Navarra, Spain. 1892 Agaña, Guam; April 1892–November 1899 Garapan; 1899–1905 Manila.
- 20 Pater Calistus Lopinot.—* 25 June 1876 (Geispolsheim) † >Feb 1964.—Alsacian citizen [until 1918 German National; then French national].—Common law name Paul Lopinot; a.k.a. Pater Calisto de Gosipolsheim.—D Strassbourg; 1892 OMCap; 1899 priest; 1904 to Carolines; Yap, 18 December 1904–1907 to teach at the school; Garapan (Saipan) May 1907–June 1909; recommended for priest position in Merizio, Guam, but was rejected by the US administration; in Palau, 21 June 1909–1 December 1909, in Manila 1910, priest of Laspinas (Philippines) 1912–1913; in Palau, 29 March 1913–May 1914; Gabaya, New Guinea 3 May 1914–19 June 1921 (deported by the Australians); 1921 back to France; 1932 Prefect of Mayotte; 1936 resigns.—Superior of the Capuchin mission in Palau; Assessor district court Yap and Palau 1907, 1914.
- 21 Pater Paulus Fischer * 24 October 1863 (Kirchhausen; † 30 January 1940 (Aschaffenburg).—Württemberg citizen.—Common law name Theodor Fischer.—D Rottenburg; 1885 OMCap; 1888 priest; 1907 to Oceania; 18 June 1907; Apostolic prefect for the Marianas 1908–1 March 1911; priest Saipan until 1913; Visits Guam in 1908–1911; Deputy assessor district court Yap and Palau 1911–1913.
- 22 Pater Odilo Grabow.—German Capuchin monk.—departed for Oceania 25 November 1906; Priest in Garapan (Saipan) 1908–1910.
- 23 Brother Joachim Petry.—* Kistelbach, Rhineland.—German Capuchin lay brother.—Yap, 1905–1906; Garapan, Saipan 1908–late 1912; Rota late 1912–1913; 1913–11 March 1916 (deported by the Japanese).
- 24 Brother Mennas Bohner.—* Bohlingen.—Citizen of the Grandduchy of Baden.—German Capuchin lay brother.—On Rota 1906–1908; Garapan, Saipan 1908–1913; Rota 1913–21 November 1914 (deported by the Japanese).
- 25 Pater Gallus Lehmann.—* 24 May 1870 (Sursee, Switzerland); † 25 December 1945 (Deggingen).—German National.—D Basel; 1892 OMCap; 1898 priest; 1908 to Oceania; German Capuchin monk.—Priest in Garapan (Saipan) 1909–November 1914 (deported by the Japanese).—

- Superior of the Capuchin mission in Saipan 1908–1916; Deputy assessor district court Yap and Palau 1914.
26. Brother Odorich ('Odoricus') Schell.—* Leutkirch.—Württemberg citizen.—German Capuchin missionary, Saipan, 1913–1914, deported by the Japanese 11 March 1916.
27. Pater Corbinian Madre.—* Rechtenbach, Lower Franconia.—Bavarian citizen.—German Capuchin priest.—Priest in Rota 30 March 1908–6 April 1919 (deported by the Japanese); 1914 to 1919 Superior of Apostolic Vicariat the Northern Marianas and nominally in charge of Garapan.
28. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 18.
29. San Isidro Labrador: Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 19.
30. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 18.
31. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 19.
32. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 19.
33. Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 19.
34. Mampostería is a construction technique that had been popular in rural Mexico and from there had been brought by the Spanish to the Philippines and the Marianas. A number of surviving buildings of the Spanish period on Guam have used that construction technique (eg Garden House and the Chocolate House of the Governor's residence in Agaña; the Malesso Convento; Fort Soledad). It is also described for many other buildings no longer extant, such as the Casa Real in Umatac. Today the terms is often used for cast concrete blocks.
35. Photo nº M100. Fritz photo collection, Micronesian Area Research Center.
36. Russell 1984, p. 20 figure 8; originally taken from Real Academia de la Historia.
37. Fritz photo collection, CNMI Historic Preservation Office.
38. Von Bennigsen 2003.
39. Fritz 1904, p. 47.
40. Photo courtesy CNMI Historic Preservation Office.
41. Photo nº M20. Fritz photo collection, Micronesian Area Research Center.
42. Photo nº M31. Fritz photo collection, Micronesian Area Research Center.
43. Photo nº M29. Fritz photo collection, Micronesian Area Research Center.
44. Costenoble 1905, p. 80.
45. Photo nº M30. Fritz photo collection, Micronesian Area Research Center.
46. Müller 1907.
47. Photo courtesy CNMI Historic Preservation Office.
48. Only two other earthquakes of similar magnitude occurred during the 20th century: 8 August 1993 (Mw = 7.5–7.7) and 5 April 1990 (Mw = 7.5).
49. Anon. 1902; 1903a–b. Letter Georg Fritz to his parents, dated Guam 2 October 1902.
50. Anon. 1907.
51. Letter Georg Fritz to his parents, dated Guam 26 September 1902.—Fritz expressed some satisfaction that the damage caused by the earthquake was limited to stone houses and thus to the buildings of the wealthy. Letter Georg Fritz to his parents, dated Guam 2 October 1902. Courtesy Möller, Frankfurt.

- ⁵² On Saipan the shockwaves were visible and ran from east to west. Fritz observed them as he was in the street when it happened. The earthquake was accompanied by a loud rumble, as well as creaking of the wooden houses. Letter Georg Fritz to his parents, dated Guam 2 October 1902.
- ⁵³ Letter Georg Fritz to his parents, dated Guam 26 September 1902. Courtesy Möller, Frankfurt.
- ⁵⁴ Fritz 1904, p. 47.
- ⁵⁵ Photo n° M158. Fritz photo collection, Micronesian Area Research Center.
- ⁵⁶ Fritz 1904, p. 47.
- ⁵⁷ Dwucet 1909, p. 166
- ⁵⁸ Müller 1908, p. 21.
- ⁵⁹ Photo courtesy CNMI Historic Preservation Office.
- ⁶⁰ Schmidlin 1913, p.204.
- ⁶¹ Spennemann 1999; 2004.
- ⁶² In the absence of a detailed damage report, we use Fritz' (1905) comments on damage to government infrastructure, which included widespread deroofing of buildings. We have to assume that the roof sustained damage.
- ⁶³ Herdach 1990, p. 185.
- ⁶⁴ Müller 1908, p. 27.
- ⁶⁵ Müller 1913, p. 49.
- ⁶⁶ Courtesy Sam McPhetres.
- ⁶⁷ Cigaretten-Bilderdienst 1936.
- ⁶⁸ Courtesy Sam McPhetres.
- ⁶⁹ Courtesy Sam McPhetres.
- ⁷⁰ Müller 1909, p. 31.
- ⁷¹ Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 21.
- ⁷² The German Capuchins continued the earlier Spanish practice of making the church in Tanapag subordinate to that in Garapan. Services were provided by Pater Victorin from 1909 onwards. That church was mainly patronized by the Carolinian and Samoan community; the few Chamorro residing in Tanapag preferred to worship at Garapan. This ethnic segregation, generated by the desire of the communities, not the church, continued throughout the German period. To improve the church's outreach among the increased numbers of Carolinians, Brother Odorich Schnell was sent from Germany to serve them in Garapan, Tanapag and Oleai-Village. Living in Garapan, he made his visits by bicycle, and when that proved too stressful, later by ox-cart.
- ⁷³ Müller 1908. p. 27.
- ⁷⁴ Müller 1909, p. 31.
- ⁷⁵ Müller 1910, p. 18.
- ⁷⁶ Müller 1908, p. 28
- ⁷⁷ Fidel de Blas 1910.
- ⁷⁸ Ruiz de Santa Eulalia 1925, p. 16.
- ⁷⁹ Name after Hezel 1991.
- ⁸⁰ Müller 1914, p. 12.
- ⁸¹ Sources: Left: Müller 1913, p. 13; Right: Müller 1914, p. 12.

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