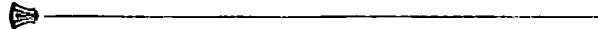


Florida's Frontiers



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THE INLAND FRONTIER, 1609-1650

The baptism of the paramount chief of the Utina at St. Augustine on Easter Sunday 1609 marked the effective creation of the inland frontier. During the next forty years, that frontier successively encompassed the Potano and the Utina, the Yustaga (after 1623), the Acuera (1620s?), and the Apalachee (after 1633). The Mayaca and Ais, on the southern march of the tidewater frontier, continued to have an uncertain relationship with the Spaniards, sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile but always influenced by gifts, trade, and epidemics that seem to have swept outward from the Spanish center, especially in 1613-1617. The same was true of peoples further removed from the areas under Spanish influence, including the Pojoy of the Tampa Bay region, the peoples of the areas later incorporated into the inland frontier, and the peoples behind the coast of Guale and to the north of its mission stations. As before, Native American elites were the usually willing collaborators in the spread of Spanish influence because of the benefits they received. Yet the Indians increasingly may have been drawn to the Spaniards because the epidemics called into question native religious beliefs and at least partially killed off the shamans and other elders who had perpetuated those beliefs. Seeking meaning for their lives, some

Indians turned to the Spaniards and their seemingly more powerful god.

Obedient to their belief that baptism was essential if a soul were to reach heaven, by 1609 the more enthusiastic friars wanted to expand their mission work to the tens of thousands of Indians known to them because of Fr. Martín Prieto's travels in Potano and Utina, in 1606-1607, and to Apalachee in 1608. That it took a generation to carry the inland frontier into Apalachee was the result of caution born of the Guale revolt, the small number of friars prior to 1612, the royal order of 1608 denying military escorts to the friars, and the unwillingness of caciques other than the paramounts of Potano and Utina to support the missionaries. Gifts and trade goods were not problems until the 1630s, except that the annual costs kept increasing as more and more elite Native Americans claimed the right to receive gifts.

The development of the inland frontier was checked numerically by the epidemics of 1613-1617 and endemic diseases afterwards, by the changing of Spanish access to trade goods during the 1630s, by the Apalachee revolt of 1647, and by the shifting of Spanish attitudes toward the Indians. Yet compared to the prolonged difficulties the Spaniards had in establishing the tidewater frontier, these difficulties hardly caused the expansion to miss a beat.

Creation of the Inland Frontier, 1609-1650

The creation of the inland frontier began well enough. Utina's chief followed up his baptism by allowing Fr. Martín Prieto to burn a dozen idols on the plaza of his town and six more in the other four major towns of his domain, which also included fifteen smaller villages dispersed around these main centers in crescent-like arrangements. Evidently this was the paramount chief's way of asserting his religious as well as his political authority. The sources are silent about the reactions of his subjects, but the friars apparently expected hostility. Prieto and his confreres followed up on this victory over Satan, as they would have expressed it, by working a circuit among the towns from a base at Utina's town (the Fig Springs site?), where the mission San

Martín de Timucua (later San Martín de Ayacuto) was founded. When more Franciscans became available, residences for the friars (*conventos*) were set up in three of these towns and the towns then became *doctrinas*: Santa Fe de Toloco or Teleco (archaeological site 8AL190?), San Juan de Guacara (Baptizing Springs?), and Santa Cruz de Tarihica (or Tarica, founded in 1612 at Indian Pond?). A fifth convent was at Cofa, near the mouth of the Suwannee River.¹ The latter was in existence in 1611; Fr. Luis Gerónimo de Oré visited all but Cofa in 1616.

Critical as the support of the Utina paramount was to this success, it also rested on gift giving and the possibility of armed Spanish support for the missionaries. Governor Juan Fernández de Olivera informed the king in 1611 that "the main foundation [for the growth of the province] is the gift [*sic*] given to the natives and that the friars who teach them receive [military] support."² His gift giving that year at St. Augustine included over 300 *varas* (yards) of various kinds of cloth, 64 blankets, 14 hatchets, 148 boxed knives (mostly double-edged), 34 strings of blue and purple glass beads, and 26 "hands" of tobacco, not to mention various other items of clothing and quantities of food. To get around the royal order of 1608 forbidding soldiers to accompany the friars and yet supporting the need to provide them with some protection, governors used soldiers, and some paid Indians, to carry supplies to the missionaries. Since each friar required some 1,800 pounds of rations, wine, and wax per year (including containers), the comings and goings would have been frequent.³ The gifts and the use of soldiers as bearers were not confined to the Potano and Utina missions, but included the Guale and Mocama missions and, in the case of gifts, pagans who visited St. Augustine.

Not neglecting another method of maintaining Spanish hegemony, in February 1612 Governor Fernández de Olivera visited the provinces of San Pedro (Mocama) and Guale. Among the gifts he took were 41 shirts, 43 pair of scissors, various kinds of cloth, and 960 strings (*sartas*) of beads.⁴ We know that Guale and Mocama already were important sources for maize traded to the Spaniards, a fact that may account for renewal of the earlier custom of the governor visiting the caciques in their towns, thus

probably enhancing the cacique's status among their peoples as well as displaying Spanish power and superior status.⁵ We do not know if the sarsaparilla trade continued or what sort of trade to the interior ran from the coastal towns; a new governor might take a personal interest in both.

Expansion of the frontier to the lower Suwannee River brought the Spaniards into conflict with the Pojoy and Tocobaga, a conflict that gave them a new opportunity to expand their influence by trying to make peace with those peoples and the Calusa. The Pojoy and Tocobaga apparently ranged in their canoes along the west coast of the peninsula from Tampa Bay to at least St. Marks Bay to trade, fish, and on occasion raid the people they encountered. On some unspecified day in 1611, a party of them attacked and killed seventeen baptized Indians carrying supplies to the missionaries at Cofa. A Spanish retaliatory expedition captured the killers and beheaded them and the cacique of Pojoy.⁶ Later, probably after 1633, some Tocobaga became Spanish auxiliaries, freighting cargoes by canoe from St. Marks to the Suwannee and other points on the west coast. Villages that included Tocobaga eventually appeared on several rivers in Apalachee.⁷ But we anticipate.

Governor Fernández de Olivera's combination of liberality and brutality paid dividends, as similar policies had for his predecessors. Or at least that is how he and the friars understood Indian behavior during 1612. Early in the year, the chief of the Calusa made peace overtures to which the Spaniards responded by sending Ensign Juan Rodríguez de Cartaya from Cofa to "Carlos" (the Calusa) by way of stops at Pojoy and "Tampa" (Charlotte Harbor). At each stop, Rodríguez de Cartaya gave gifts and established peace and friendship. Carlos reciprocated by returning a Black man whose canoe had been blown in a storm from Cuba to Florida, giving two gold objects, and promising to return any Christians who might be wrecked on his coast.⁸ In the fall, the paramount of the Apalachee visited St. Augustine seeking missionaries and Spanish military support against unrest among his subjects. Apparently the friars had maintained at least occasional contact with him since 1608. After consultation, the Franciscans and the governor agreed that they would pass up the

opportunity because missionaries would only be secure if a small garrison were placed in Apalachee and supplied by sea. The twenty-one new Franciscans who had recently arrived were needed for other missions closer to St. Augustine, even though men working in Utina were eager to learn Apalachee in anticipation of royal authorization (and troops and support!) for mission work there. Other (unnamed) caciques also visited that fall from as far away as one hundred leagues and a distance that took as long as two and a half months of travel time. Like the paramount of Apalachee, all were fed, entertained, given gifts, and encouraged to live in peace with their neighbors and to tell them of the Spaniards' desire that those neighbors become friends and subjects of Philip III.⁹ It appeared that the *pax hispanica* extended throughout the peninsula and that Spanish influence was reaching well into the areas beyond Utina, Mocama, and Guale.

The Franciscans rejoiced that the "Day of the Lord" had arrived and that the Indians no longer tried to remove every trace of the Spaniards, and even their cattle, as they had done in 1597. As one wrote, "Although this land in no way attends to the temporal increase of Your Majesty's kingdoms, Your Majesty's great service to God in attending to these poor and forsaken souls, who are encouraged and preserved so much in Your Majesty's shadow, will provide very great increases in the crown of glory that Your Majesty is to enjoy in the heavens."¹⁰ To further their work, the friars called for more soldiers, a total of fifty-five missionaries, and even Spanish settlers. Missionaries, they noted, were cheaper and more effective in subjugating the natives than a war in which the Indians would "do more damage to us than we to them; besides, they are like deer. . . ." The Indians, the Franciscans claimed, were even asking for Spanish colonists to teach them to farm because the Indians lived on only maize, acorns, roots, fish, and occasional game. Wheat, evidently sown in Utina province, had done well. The woods of evergreen oaks (*encinas*), deciduous oaks (*robles*), and hickories were so open that horses could be raced in them. There were great pine forests, white mulberries for silk cultivation, good soils for wheat, and rivers for mills. Spanish settlers, the friars suggested, would give alms to the fri-

ars and thus free the king of the need to pay for the missions.¹¹ The Crown, however, did not recruit settlers.

Other causes for Franciscan pleasure existed in the fall of 1612. In Mexico City, Fr. Francisco Pareja's various books in Timucuan, including his grammar, began to come off the press. Although based on the Mocama dialect, these publications provided the friars with a basic grounding in the language and gave their Timucuan-speaking charges literacy, a gift many took up eagerly.¹² In Rome, the general chapter of the order created a Province of Santa Elena to embrace Cuba and Florida, freeing the Franciscans there from the supervision of the Mexican province.¹³ And the missionaries had thirteen new bells, each with a name of a saint.¹⁴ Only a few of the names inscribed on the bells were already in use, suggesting that more missions were to be built.

Reality rather quickly set in. The first problem was that there were not enough vestments or vessels for saying Mass, although that situation was overcome in time.¹⁵ Far more demoralizing were the epidemic diseases that killed half of the mission Indians between 1613 and 1617. The number of converts fell from about 16,000 to approximately 8,000, essentially wiping out the equivalent of the numerical population gains made with the extension of the frontier into Potano and Utina (with additional baptisms in Guale?).¹⁶ The friars consoled themselves that at least the baptized would go to heaven. The more zealous probably redoubled their efforts to baptize even more Indians before disease could sweep them away.

The natures of these diseases are not clearly stated. Bubonic plague (*peste*), possibly even in pneumonic form, was noted by the friars. Typhus or some other adult (rather than childhood) viruses have been suggested as well.¹⁷ Whatever the diseases were, they and their mortality spread slowly and did not discourage caciques from continuing to visit St. Augustine, the governor from visiting Mocama and Guale, and the friars from continuing to expand their missions, especially in Guale where new missions were created at San Diego de Chatoache (Satuache) on the Ogeechee River north of St. Catherine's Island and Santa Isabel de Utinahica on the Ocmulgee River (the dates and locations are uncertain).¹⁸

These epidemics, unlike previous ones, had documentable reverberations far beyond the human grief that accompanied the deaths. The population decline in parts of the tidewater frontier was so serious that the friars used it as a reason to ask permission to consolidate villages consisting of ten or fewer households. Evidently permission was granted, because by 1630 “congregated” villages were noted as among those served by the missionaries.¹⁹ This fact suggests that native sociopolitical structures in the Spanish sphere were affected but where and to what degree we do not know. This fact also alerts us that mission lists hide continuing population decline because of endemic diseases or migration. The listmakers did not include towns subject to the cacique’s town that housed the *doctrina* because they were only interested in maintaining or expanding the number of friars, not in how many or few persons they served.

The effects of these pandemics on non-mission peoples are suggested by archaeological evidence. In the Georgia, North Carolina, and eastern Tennessee piedmonts these years mark a period (1600–1630) of apparent demographic decline and population movements away from old chiefly centers such as Coosa. The gradual disappearance of status-indicating grave goods suggests that the decline of the chiefdoms was in full swing, although there were probably multiple causes for this, not just the epidemics of 1613–1617. Additional evidence of this change comes from the upper Oconee (i.e., Tama?). There, as elsewhere in the piedmont, people dispersed from the old nucleated towns to rural farmsteads clustered around springheads. This phenomenon has been interpreted as a sign of the *pax hispanica*, but it may also have had adaptive value in the face of diseases that spread easily through nucleated populations.²⁰ Whatever the truth of these hypotheses, such dispersal of the population signaled the weakening or even collapse of the chiefly authority formerly associated with the nucleated, often palisaded towns De Soto had seen. This change is obscured in the few records we have because the Spaniards continued to call village headmen, as well as tribal chiefs, “caciques” and continued to support “chiefly” lineages in the Christian villages.²¹

Far less clear is whether these epidemics facilitated the expan-

sion of the mission frontiers by undermining native faith in their own religious traditions. Scholars generally believe that the deaths of older persons, common in the epidemics that devastated Native American populations after 1492, meant the loss of religious leaders and related knowledge, especially in chiefdoms where such leadership and knowledge were more likely to be confined to one lineage than in the “segmented tribe” where the more egalitarian social structure spread religious and other critical cultural knowledge more widely. In addition, widespread death that traditional religious leaders and healers could not contain is thought to have undercut Indian faith in their previous worldview, opening up the possibility that they might embrace another, such as that offered by Christian missionaries.²² The 50 percent death rate in the period from 1613 to 1617 likely did have this effect among pagan Guale, Timucuan, and other southeastern peoples, although perhaps to a lesser degree among the latter because the effects of the epidemics may have been lessened by distance and by decreased frequency of contact with the Spaniards. If these supposed religious-psychological effects did occur in La Florida after 1613, then they help to explain the rapid expansion of the inland frontier in Yustaga, Acuera, and the Alapaha River basin after 1617, and the Apalachee and other groups’ insistent demand for friars prior to 1633.

Although the governor and friars decided in 1612 to confine the initial expansion of the inland frontier to Potano and Utina provinces—that is, east of the Suwannee River—by 1616 the friars at Santa Cruz de Tarihica were visiting the pagan town of Tarraco, which was on the path that ran from Tarihica across the Alapaha River (a tributary of the Suwannee River) and then across the Tifton uplands to the Ocmulgee River and Santa Isabel de Utinahica. When Fr. Luis Gerónimo de Oré passed that way in late 1616, he noted those visits and the presence of three or four other Timucuan towns nearby. A *doctrina* (mission), Santa María de los Angeles de Arapaja, was eventually created in the area.²³ Oré does not indicate how many converts had been won by 1616. Nor do we know when Santa María was founded, but a date in the early 1620s is likely.

The expansion of the inland frontier entered a second phase

in 1623 when Frs. Alonso de Pesquera and Gregorio de Mobilla entered Yustaga province west of the Suwannee River. Rather like Elijah, these prophets were fed at first by a pious woman because the chief refused to do so, in addition to forbidding them to baptize anyone. But shortly the chief received baptism and a rapid missionization began. San Pedro y San Pablo de Potohiriba became the center and a total of four *doctrinas* eventually flourished, although we have no details of when or how. Besides San Pedro, they were Santa Elena de Machaba, San Miguel de Asile, and San Matheo de Tolapatafi. In 1635, a friar claimed that more than 13,000 Yustaga had been converted.²⁴

Expansion to the south also occurred in these years. At an unknown date, friars set up missions in Acuera on the Oklawaha River, south of the Aguadulce towns on the St. Johns River. Mission Santa Lucía de Acuera may have existed by 1627. By 1655, San Luis de Acuera also existed.²⁵

The expansion into Yustaga seems to account for many of the 12,000 newly baptized Indians claimed around the year 1630 (making a total of 20,000; another 50,000 were instructed but not baptized), and for four of the twelve new *doctrinas* created between Oré's visit of 1616–1617 and 1630. Because Santa María de los Angeles de Arapaja and, apparently, the two Acuera *doctrinas* were extant by 1630, the remaining five additional *doctrinas* were in the other provinces, especially in Utina, where four new names appear on the list of 1655.²⁶ This rapid expansion was the work of the thirty-five friars in the province in 1617, although that number seems to have declined to twenty-seven by 1630, prior to the arrival of ten additional brothers.²⁷

Still other prospects beckoned during the 1620s but could not be taken up immediately because of a lack of manpower. Oré reported around 1617 that Indians from Apalachee (where a few churches had already been built), La Tama, Machagua [Machaba?], and Santa Elena had requested clergy. In January 1617 the friars asked for twenty additional men to meet this and existing needs.²⁸ But only a dozen were authorized in 1627, of whom ten reached La Florida in 1630. Petitions for an additional twenty-four in 1630 (adding Cayagua—Charleston—to the list of areas requesting clergy) and 1631 were met with authorization

for an additional eleven in 1633. However, these eleven were barely sufficient to replace men who had died, left La Florida, or were worn out and had to be replaced.²⁹ According to one friar, Indians who wanted to live in the missions were migrating into them from areas not served. This may explain the appearance of Leon-Jefferson ceramics in mission sites of this and later dates, well before the forced resettlements of the 1660s.³⁰

Even in the face of insufficient manpower, a third major expansion of the inland frontier began in October 1633. At the conclusion that fall of Fr. Lorenzo Martínez's general visitation of the missions, he and Governor Luis de Horruytiner agreed to send two friars who knew the language, and who had volunteered, to begin the long-delayed conversion of the Apalachee. In explaining this to the Crown, the governor highlighted his economic before spiritual motives. He noted that in the province's dozen leagues (measured in an east-west distance) there were as many as 16,000 "indios"—probably men are meant rather than the entire population—and that the land was "of much abundance and fertility," a fact of importance in a year when the spring rainfall may have been so low that the maize crops failed around St. Augustine.³¹ This manpower represented potential for the future economic development of Spanish enterprises.

From this beginning, the Apalachee mission grew steadily, although how rapidly is unclear. In 1630, Governor Damián de Vega Castro y Pardo wrote to the king that two friars were working in the province and had made 1,000 converts. However, in 1635 the Franciscan *custodio* of Florida claimed that more than 5,000 of 34,000 Apalachee had been baptized *in anticipation of more friars* (emphasis added) while in 1676 a Franciscan claimed to have seen a listing (*matrícula*) of 1638 showing more than 16,000 Christians in Apalachee!³² The figures from 1635 and the governor's figure from 1639 can be reconciled if it is assumed that the governor was only counting men, with an implied ratio to the total population of one to five. More likely, however, the Franciscan numbers, especially for 1638, are inflated because they are part of arguments for sending them many more friars. How inflated this number may be is suggested by the report that on the eve of the revolt of 1647, only eight of forty Apalachee caciques

had been baptized.⁴⁴ Assuming that the population was still about 34,000, and that on average each cacique had the same number of subjects (i.e., dividing total population by the number of caciques, then multiplying by eight), the Christian population may be estimated to have been 6,800 in 1647. On the other hand, in 1643 the governor wrote that the evangelization of Apalachee was progressing rapidly, although that fact is not inconsistent with the number just proposed.⁴⁴

The total number of baptized Indians in the various mission provinces in 1647 is not known but may have approached 35,000. This estimate is based on a claim from the year 1635 and the net addition of 5,000 others (including at least 1,800 Apalachee) over the next twelve years in the face of continued but not dramatic demographic decline. In 1635, more than 30,000 converts were said to exist in forty-four *doctrinas* being administered by thirty-nine friars, most of whom worked alone and sometimes had to travel barefoot up to fifty miles (round trip) to administer last rites.⁴⁵ Assuming that *doctrinas* embracing perhaps 5,000 baptized Indians had been established by 1635 in all eight of the Apalachee villages listed as Christian in 1647, this statement of 1635 indicates that an additional four *doctrinas* had been established elsewhere in the Spanish realm since 1630, when there were thirty-two, and an additional 5,000 converts made. At least some of those converts were persons who had moved into the missions when it became clear that an expansion of the missions to their (unidentified) towns would be slow in coming, or so a Franciscan claimed in about 1630.⁴⁶ The ongoing consolidation of satellite villages probably also brought new persons into the mission towns. Thirty-five thousand baptized Indians and forty-four missions are possible numbers, but what we know about persistent disease mortality suggests caution in accepting the first sum uncritically. As Governor Andrés Rodríguez Villegas wrote to the king in 1647, "no other Indians in the empire were 'less worked or better treated' but 'with all of that, they die and are ended, just as in the other parts of the Indies.'⁴⁷ He seems to have been commenting on events of the previous century, the previous history of the colony. So far as is known, there were no major epidemics from 1617 to 1650.

Events on the Peripheries

On the peripheries of the Spanish frontiers of La Florida, the years 1617 to 1647 saw the last Spanish explorations of the northern Georgia piedmont, a continuation of the previous pattern of alternating mutual hostility and alliance with Indians south of the mission areas, a few instances of raids by hostile Indians along the northern marches, and episodic concern about European raids. We will consider each in turn.

The final four Spanish expeditions into the northern Georgia piedmont were motivated by an Indian report that white men on horseback were in the interior and, we may surmise, by new governors' interest in the reported wealth to be found there. That the Spaniards should receive such a report suggests some degree of trade, perhaps reinforced by occasional visits to St. Augustine by caciques or ordinary Indians from "La Tama." That they acted on it indicates a degree of concern that the English might have penetrated the back country from Virginia. The first expedition, in 1624, got an estimated 150 leagues (at least 375 miles) before a lack of supplies caused it to turn back without obtaining certain news of the strangers. The second attempt did not get even that far. The third and fourth expeditions, in 1628, were in obedience to an order to run the report to ground by going further into the interior. Eleven soldiers and sixty Indians reached Cofitachequi, some 200 leagues from St. Augustine, on the second attempt. The report these men gave of Cofitachequi included a tale of fishing pearls from some lakes near it and the opinion that the rumor of white men on horseback was an Indian tall tale that arose from their "talking every day with the Devil and seeing many witches and sorcerers."⁴⁸ The discoverer of the alleged pearl fishery was eventually given permission to exploit it with as many as four soldiers and a few paid Indian helpers. Apparently this license was never used.⁴⁹ If nothing else, the report from the second expedition, in 1628, indicates that knowledge of Pardo's discoveries in the interior had not disappeared among soldiers in St. Augustine.

The Spanish relationship with the Indians of the lower west and east coasts of the peninsula continued to follow the general

pattern established in earlier periods. On the lower west coast (the domains of the Calusa, Pojoy, and Tocobaga), the Spaniards had little contact and no new conflicts. Indeed, during the initial salvage work on the wrecks of the *Margarita* and *Atocha* in 1621, the Calusa and Matacumbe seem to have been friendly enough that the Franciscans could believe that they wished to receive missionaries.⁴⁰ But again, nothing was done.

On the lower east coast, the old pattern of episodic hostility and alliance through gift giving and trade continued into the 1620s but may have diminished afterwards since little seems to be said about it in the documentation. Apparently driving the hostilities were disagreements arising from Spanish failures to respect Indians and their property, the ongoing trade in ambergris and salvaged precious metals, and, after 1620, Indian trade with the Dutch, English, and other non-Spaniards who occasionally landed seeking water, wood, and food. Thus in 1620 or 1621, Governor Salinas tried the leaders of the Ais for killing the sergeant major and three soldiers who had landed among them for water while sailing to Havana. He acquitted all but the *capitanejo*, who was hanged and quartered in front of the others to make the point that the Spaniards were not to be molested when they landed on that part of the coast. Salinas's successor, Luis de Rojas y Borja, used gift giving and trade to draw the Ais and other lower east coast peoples into alliance and a promise that they would not allow non-Hispanic Europeans to land in their territories.⁴¹ This arrangement probably lasted as long as the Spaniards were able to provide trade goods, that is, into the late 1630s. And as in earlier periods, the Spaniards showed no interest in setting up missions or otherwise developing a more permanent presence among these peoples. Considering their strategic location on the Bahama Channel, this lack of interest is surprising. Around 1630, a Franciscan complained that the indifference was due to the fact that the governors were interested only in the ambergris that came from the area, not in the eight thousand souls of the Indians who lived there. His proposal to congregate them, and the archaeological indications that they lived by gathering arrowroot and other plant foods and by hunting and fishing, suggest more fundamental obstacles.⁴²

In contrast to this sometime hostility along the southern side of the tidewater frontier, the northern and western rims of the inland and tidewater frontiers remained quiet between 1617 and 1647, although there were two notable exceptions. Evidently the threat of Spanish power and the inducement of gifts and trade normally served to keep the pagan neighbors of the mission provinces on peaceful terms. In Apalachee, this peace was organized by the Spaniards in 1639, coincident with the initiation of regular contact by sea with Havana and St. Augustine (the route was pioneered in 1636).⁴³ In 1639, the Chacatos, Apalachocolos (Lower Creek), and Amacenos were induced to take up trade in place of their former hostilities with the Apalachee. The Chactos (Choctaw) would not make peace, having "never been at peace with anyone," according to the governor. Archaeological evidence suggests that the tribes of the middle Chattahoochee River Valley were soon enmeshed in a trade involving deerskins and possibly other goods.⁴⁴ Indeed, the Amacenos/Amacanos and possibly the others (except the Choctaw) may have been drawn toward Apalachee province by the possibility of trade, a trade apparently established by Timucuan before 1633, on the basis of old networks.⁴⁵ Archaeology also shows that remnant populations from throughout the Georgia piedmont were moving into the Chattahoochee and Coosa-Tallapoosa River Valleys in these decades, beginning the formation of the parts of the later Creek confederacy.⁴⁶

The exceptions to this general rule of peace along the northern marches both come from the early 1620s. In 1620, some of the Christian Guale and pagan Indians from around Port Royal Sound renewed the mutual raiding that the Spaniards first had stopped in 1566. Outnumbered, the Christians appealed for Spanish help, which was sent in the form of Captain Alonso Díaz and thirty soldiers. Díaz apparently negotiated a settlement. Impressed, the Guale (or perhaps the friars acting through them) asked for a permanent garrison. However, the soldiers were needed at St. Augustine.⁴⁷ A few years later, the first Ysicas or "Chisca" appeared, evidently in the northern areas of Utina where they robbed missionized Indians before apparently re-treating in the face of a Spanish patrol. Another group of

"Chisca" returned to the inland frontier in the 1630s. In 1639, the governor reported that he had given them land ten leagues from St. Augustine to farm and hunt; he expected to use them to round up baptized Indians who had fled the *doctrinas*. This people's identity is unclear aside from the fact that they came from the west. Nor is it likely that they gave up their nomadic ways to settle at the site the governor had selected.⁴⁸

The near absence of conflict with Indians before 1647 was not matched by an absence of military threats from the Dutch, English, and French fleets that sailed the Gulf Stream past Florida. Thus in 1620 and again in 1626 the presidio lost a *fragata* when crews ran it aground to escape enemy fleets. In the first case, the enemy had three large ships, in the second ten large and three small. In the 1626 case as well, a Dutch fleet landed 200 men at Ais to get wood and water, causing the Spaniards to muster 150 soldiers and 300 Indians to march against them, although they did not do so, because the Dutch left. In both years, crewmen from enemy ships were captured ashore.⁴⁹ Research failed to disclose if this danger continued into the early 1640s, but it probably did because shipping from all nations used the Bahama Channel to exit the Caribbean.

The English colony in Virginia was a recurring concern for governors into the 1620s. Note has been made of Spanish unease in 1624 that the mounted white men reported to be in the piedmont might be Englishmen. But the concern about Virginia dated from the founding of Jamestown in 1607. From their diplomatic sources in Europe, via Madrid, and from Indians, the Spaniards at St. Augustine kept a close watch. At least initially, they considered expelling the English. In 1609 and again in 1611, they sent scouting parties to Chesapeake Bay but did not attack even though the Council of War at Madrid concluded that the English were a danger to the Spanish empire because of their Protestantism, which the Spaniards thought was similar to the pagan views of the Indians.⁵⁰ Father Oré added his own propaganda in favor of an attack on Virginia and Bermuda by reporting on the earlier Jesuit mission to Jacán that had taken place between 1570 and 1571. He showed a prior Spanish claim to Virginia and demonstrated what Philip III's father would have

done by reporting the supposed expeditionary force that was to have driven the English from Roanoke in 1590 but did not. He also detailed the force needed to destroy Jamestown and Bermuda: 3 galleons, 2 galleys, three auxiliary craft, and 1,000 well-armed men. His call for strong actions was backed by the governor of Florida.⁵¹ But Anglo-Spanish peace and friendship in Europe were more important as the twelve-years truce (1609-1621) with the Dutch drew toward its close and the possibility of war was again under discussion. Too, the English presence in Virginia had not had any palpable effect on La Florida and any details that the Spaniards could learn about the settlement must have suggested that it was not likely to survive. Incompetent management, summer dysentery, and the Powhatan attacks of 1622 nearly did destroy English settlement although it revived in the late 1620s and continued to grow thereafter.⁵² Perhaps confident that Virginia could be destroyed if necessary, the imperial government left it alone.

In sum, while willing enough temporarily to adopt an aggressive posture against enemy landing parties and to expand the mission frontier, the Spaniards normally stood on the defensive in La Florida. They had little choice. Governors typically claimed to find no more than 150 fit men in the nominal garrison of 300. That was a number judged barely adequate for the defense of St. Augustine. As Governor Salinas put it in 1620: "We are so few that we cannot make a clamor."⁵³ In addition, the wooden fort that had been built after 1586 required approximately bi-annual replacement of major parts of its palisade and artillery platforms. This was done with the labor of soldiers and Indians, the latter mostly recruited from Mocama and paid a real a day for their labor, and by Black slaves.⁵⁴ Although the Crown had authorized stone construction in 1595 using the *coquina* aggregate discovered on Anastasia Island in the 1580s, and although it had sent skilled slaves from the fortification work at Havana and 10,000 pesos from Mexico for that purpose, only a little rock was quarried and some of the foundations opened by 1600. Work stopped because no engineer was sent to direct it. The remaining money was used to rebuild St. Augustine after the hurricane of 22 September 1599. The slaves were put to other tasks.⁵⁵ Conse-

quently, governors continued to request the rebuilding of the fort in stone, but it was to no avail until the 1670s. St. Augustine's major defense continued to consist of a partially rotten sand and wood fort.

Events within the Spanish Frontier

As the expansion of the frontiers continued from 1609–1647, the Spaniards made little progress on the other facets of creating a self-reproducing, economically attractive colony. Population grew, but slowly. A few Black slaves were brought from Havana to relieve the soldiers and Indians of the brutal work of hauling timbers for the fort's reconstruction. Replacement soldiers and friars arrived from time to time. Fragmentary church records for St. Augustine show a population pattern typical of a "dependent community," that is, one that maintained its numbers by immigration more than through natural reproduction. On average, there were 6.85 marriages per year (1628–1647), producing 3.6–3.7 children with a slight trend in favor of females. Deaths, which ran two-to-one male because of the garrison, were four for every five births, with a trend that fell slightly over the course of the seventeenth century.⁵⁶ We do not know how many Indians, brought to the town for work in the fields or on the fort, remained or died. A guess would put St. Augustine's population at over 1,000 with a growing percentage of locally born persons. Indian women may have been becoming less common as wives.

The search for commercially viable products continued. Proposals were made during the 1620s that Indians from Campeche and Honduras be brought in to teach the Timucua how to cultivate indigo and even cochineal (an insect that grows on a particular type of cactus). Another proposal requested Spaniards to help develop a hemp industry on the Altamaha and lower Suwannee River flood plains. Yet other proposals called for cotton, pitch, and the old perennial silks on the list of products that could be produced if the Timucua and Guale were instructed.⁵⁷ As before, nothing came of these ideas even though the Crown did follow up on the idea of cultivating indigo; it requested knowledgeable Indians be sent from Central America. On the

other hand, trade with the Indians north and west of Apalachee for deerskins, with the lower east coast groups for ambergris, and with the Guale for sarsaparilla developed or continued, but went largely unrecorded in official records. As monopolies of the governors and treasury officials and their merchant associates, such trades could not attract civilian immigrants. Without such immigrants, the Spaniards remained in a limbo between being an occupying army and being a growing colony of settlement.

The final of the four problems of settlement—a stable food supply—showed some progress during these years as the Spaniards largely solved the problem of supplying themselves with meat. Governor Salinas imported enough cattle so that he was able to establish viable herds after 1618.⁵⁸ Although the anticipated hide exports probably did not develop, by 1627 the herds were large enough and making enough meat available to St. Augustine that Salinas's successor, Luis de Rojas y Borja, could impose a tax of one real per head on cows delivered to the St. Augustine slaughterhouse. At an uncertain date during these years, the royal treasurer, Francisco Menéndez Marqués, began his own ranch, La Chua, using old Indian fields and the natural savannah of Paynes Prairie in Potano province.⁵⁹ A few other ranches probably existed between St. Augustine and the St. Johns River, where cattle grazed on the grasses of savannahs created by burning and selectively lumbering the long-leaf pine forests.

Difficulties

This generally positive set of developments after 1609 began to be undermined in the late 1630s. First the *situado* and then the spring rainfall became unstable. Without regular, annual shipments of gift and trade goods to maintain the status system of the Indian caciques, the Spaniards found their hold on the Guale, Timucua, and Apalachee slipping. With unstable spring rainfall patterns, the Spaniards found that the maize crops grown in the fields around St. Augustine with Indian labor were not adequate for their needs. In search of maize or alternatives such as wheat, the governors put more and more economic pressure on the western Timucuan and on the Apalachee. That pres-

sure, too, translated into unintended attacks on native status systems. And since the friars in Apalachee were beginning to move against yet other aspects of the native status system there, as they had earlier in Mocama, Guale, and western Timucua, the stage was being set for the Apalachee rebellion that burst forth in February 1647. We will briefly explore each of these matters in turn.

At the most general level, there were three major difficulties with the *situado*. The Crown tried to end abuses that defrauded it and the soldiers. The wars in Europe caused a diversion of funds. And governors and the proprietary treasury officials continued to try to reap private profits from collecting and dispensing the funds, goods, and credits that were involved. Suffice it to say, none of the "reforms" changed the system. Governors still controlled the retail trade of St. Augustine either directly (Salinas had a store in his house) or indirectly (Rojas y Borja brought in a Portuguese merchant, Martín Freyle de Andrade, made him a captain, and used him to collect the *situado*), and the soldiers still experienced deprivation.⁶⁰ So lucrative was this system that Ruiz de Salazar openly bought his governorship in exchange for the finished hull of a 500-ton galleon delivered at Campeche, and some years later reported to a patron at court that he had reduced his debts from 460,000 to less than 40,000 pesos. His bondsmen, creditors, and *situado* agents were Basque merchants from Veracruz.⁶¹ The treasury officials were no better. When they nominally controlled collection from 1629 to 1646, fraud and collection problems were so great that in some years no funds or *situado* goods reached St. Augustine even though they had been procured in Mexico.

The Crown's need for money in the late 1630s affected the *situado* in two ways. The major effect was non-payment in 1637 and less than full payment in the years 1639–1643.⁶² A secondary effect was an attempt to bring expenses of the Indian gift fund back within the 2,068 pesos (1500 ducats) authorized in 1615. In 1625, expenses were 3,400 pesos, rising in fits and starts toward an eventual peak of 9,271 pesos in 1650.⁶³ Most of this increase apparently was not due to price inflation but to the increasing number of caciques who claimed annual gifts. As the treasury officials noted in 1627 with evident disgust, the Christian ca-

ciques of Guale came for clothing "as for tribute, and they call it that."⁶⁴ By then it was an article of faith among La Florida's officials that, as Governor Vega Castro bluntly wrote to the king in 1636, the gifts were "the foundation and head of the conversion. . . ."⁶⁵ Since it was also true that "this presidio cannot be preserved except with the service of these natives," no one in La Florida dared to enforce the parts of the decree of 1615 that indicated gifts were to be given only to pagans (to induce them to accept baptism and friars) or to Indians who actually performed some service for the Spaniards.⁶⁶ In Mexico City, however, the treasury officials were prepared to cut back. In 1635, 1637, 1638, 1642, 1643 and 1645 no monies were released for Indian gifts and in 1636, 1639, 1641, and 1644 less than the 2,068 pesos were provided, and some of those payments were for prior years.⁶⁷ Indian caciques found themselves without the European clothing they wore to display their rank and without the exotic goods such as axes whose control was a means of building unequal reciprocal relationships with their subjects and maintaining their political-religious authority. Discontent with the Spaniards began to brew. Meanwhile, Spaniards of rank found that they did not have wheat flour bread nor the other imported foods that helped to mark their status within St. Augustine's society.

Benito Ruiz de Salazar Ballecilla, governor from 10 April 1645, chose a unique response to the general problems of the *situado* in the late 1630s and early 1640s. It too played into the rising discontent of Indians in western Timucua and in Apalachee. Keenly interested in making money, he approached the irregular deliveries from Mexico as an opportunity. During an inspection tour, he negotiated the use of land near the village of Asile for a wheat-growing farm and for a cattle and horse ranch. Successful production of those products would, he claimed, free Florida from some of its dependence on Mexico. The cacique of Asile agreed to the lease and helped organize labor to clear the ground on a promise of annual payments of axes, hoes, and clothing and the governor's help in forcing some of his people to return from Apalachee. He apparently did not receive the payments he expected. In addition, after the death of Ruiz de Salazar in 1651 and the successive sale of the hacienda to the Crown and then the sale

of the animals and implements to private parties, the friars—who had opposed the hacienda from the beginning—claimed that the governor's agents at the hacienda had coerced unpaid labor from the Indians, angering them.⁶⁸ Ruiz de Salazar also installed a lieutenant governor in Apalachee, over Franciscan objections, to monitor (as he said) and to run (as they said) the province's developing trade with Havana (and his hacienda).⁶⁹

Ruiz de Salazar's hacienda was an unprecedented Spanish intrusion into the Indians' world,⁷⁰ but it was not the only sign of an intensifying Spanish presence at a time when Spanish gifts were scarce. The other signs arose because of the highly variable spring rainfalls that began in 1638 and lasted until 1646; these caused the Spaniards to demand more maize and porters from the Indians of the inland frontier. Reconstructed ten- and thirty-year running average rainfall patterns from March to June for Georgia suggest that the years 1610 to 1660 were generally drier than normal. A finer-grained reconstruction that assumes crop losses at March–June rainfall levels 15 percent below or above the mean shows very unsettled weather (very dry and very wet) from 1638 to 1646, and the possibility of a number of crop failures.⁷¹ And indeed, the years 1642 and 1643 were noted for a “sterility of maize” at St. Augustine that got so bad that Spaniards and Indians had to go to the woods to seek out edible roots. This drought continued into 1644.⁷² In Guale, many baptized Indians left their coastal and island villages and went to live with their inland pagan relatives. In Mocama and Timucua, some baptized Indians dispersed to gather and hunt in the forests as early as 1639. At least in Guale, the refugees began to return only in 1646, when spring rains returned to normal.⁷³

Exactly how the Spaniards counteracted this sudden shortage of maize is unclear, but apparently they tried to get more maize from the western Timucuan and especially from Apalachee, which was less affected, if at all.⁷⁴ In doing so, the Spaniards, probably unthinkingly, violated implicit parts of their accommodation with the Indians.

Evidence taken after the Apalachee revolt of 1647 claimed that heavy use of Indian porters developed in the late 1630s and early 1640s as the governors had maize brought to St. Augustine. Trade

goods (for a private trade up the Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers) and the friars' supplies were then shipped west with the returning porters. Not only was this labor exacted during a time when the Indians may have been malnourished and thus more likely to die from exposure during the winter months (when much of the maize was transported), but apparently porter service was also demanded of *all* adult men (except caciques) rather than, as was Indian custom, of women, hermaphrodites, and men not admitted to warrior status. Evidently population decline had so decreased the numbers of men in the western Timucuan (non-Mocama) villages that caciques were forced to assign porter duty to men whose status or rank in society had exempted them during the early phases of the expansion of the inland frontier. For the western Timucuan, this service was in addition to their role of providing gangs to cultivate St. Augustine's fields.

Adding injury to insult, at some point in the 1620s (?) the friars, and increasingly other Spaniards, stopped paying the porters who carried their supplies or paid them trivial amounts, such as an axe worth a peso for carrying up to seventy-five pounds more than one hundred miles.⁷⁵ In short, the increased demand for porters regardless of social rank and without adequate compensation in trade goods, like the decreased giving of gifts during the same period, was a blow to the male status systems of Indian societies. Some men (temporarily?) absented themselves from their villages rather than endure the underpaid humiliation of being porters. The mission of Santiago de Ocone (east of the Okfenokee Swamp?) seems to have become a center for such refugees.⁷⁶

During roughly the same period, 1620–1645, the Spaniards began to detain for longer and longer periods the Indians sent to cultivate the fields at St. Augustine. They sometimes arbitrarily increased the number of workers, using the “extras” for private purposes. As will be recalled, this supplying of agricultural laborers had started in 1601 as a part of the Spanish–Guale accommodation that ended the Juanillo revolt. The custom was extended into Potano, Utina, and Ustaga after each was brought into the mission system. By the 1640s, the friars, and presumably their caciques, were complaining about the abuses just noted.



The friars also complained about the continuing custom of the unpaid quartering of soldiers who passed through the villages.⁷⁷ Both complaints not only looked to the economic well-being of the villagers but also to keeping bad moral examples out of the villages, because soldiers, and Indians who returned from St. Augustine after long residence, were likely to be less pious and respectful of the friars.

To sum up, a combination of events that neither the Spaniards nor the Indians of La Florida could control had created shortages in gifts, trade goods, and maize by the mid-1640s. The results of the Spaniards' efforts to solve the latter problem to their own benefit and of long-standing abuses in the agricultural labor system and the quartering of itinerant soldiers were increasing strains on the mutual accommodations that the Spaniards and the caciques had worked out at the turn of the century. The caciques and Indians would have been right had they concluded that the Spaniards were unilaterally changing the terms of the relationship in ways unfavorable to the Native Americans. Among the Mocama, Guale, and most western Timucuan, the Indians' unrest likely was tempered by their already long histories of living with the Spaniards and the rise of a generation of elite leaders who had been schooled to obedience by the friars.⁷⁸ But in Apalachee, the majority of the Indians and caciques were still not even baptized.

The Apalachee Revolt, 1647

On 19 February 1647, pagan Apalachee killed three of the friars gathered at the new mission of San Antonio de Bacuqua. The mission was celebrating that patron saint's day. All nine members of the lieutenant governor's household were killed as well. Baptized Indians helped the provinces' other five friars escape. Five or six other Spaniards resident on Governor Ruiz de Salazar's hacienda also escaped. The Apalachee burned seven of the eight mission churches.⁷⁹

The Spanish response was predictable. Captain Martín de Cuevas and thirty soldiers were quickly dispatched from St. Augustine to apprehend the leaders of the "riot." Ruiz de Salazar,

who happened to be in western Timucua at the time, joined the force with the ten men of his household and helped Cuevas recruit five hundred Timucuan warriors. As this new force moved into Apalachee territory, it was attacked by a large party of warriors (Salazar claimed it numbered more than eight thousand). The fight went on all day and consumed all of the Spaniards' ammunition. The Apalachee left them in command of the field, but the Spaniards retired to St. Augustine to refit and prepare for what they thought might have to be a long campaign.⁸⁰

In fact, the coming of spring planting and low rebel morale because of leadership casualties suffered in the first battle provided the opportunity for Francisco Menéndez Marqués, the royal treasurer, to end the rebellion. He took twenty-one soldiers and sixty Timucuan warriors—the only men who could be spared from the western Timucuan villages during planting season—and captured and executed the dozen principal leaders. An additional twenty-six men were taken to St. Augustine for hard labor. The rest of the Apalachee pledged obedience, rebuilt the churches, and welcomed the friars back. Baptized Apalachee had aided Menéndez Marqués. These actions took a month.⁸¹

Investigation of why the rebellion had occurred produced much heat but only limited light. The Indians and friars blamed the Spaniards' demand for porters and other economic abuses of the Indians. Ruiz de Salazar (who was suspended from office at the time) blamed the Indians' "natural evil," in effect dismissing economic abuse as a cause. Indian testimony prompted by the next governor suggested that the friars had caused the economic abuse.⁸² In short, friars and governors once again blamed each other in the hope of scoring political points in their ongoing struggle over power and ignored the more general causes: the Spanish presence and assaults on the status system of native society.⁸³

The Apalachee rebellion shook Spanish confidence only slightly and business as usual only briefly. The Asile hacienda was reoccupied. Wheat was sown and harvested from 1648 to 1651 to build up a store of seed grain. A miller and millstones were sent for but arrived after Ruiz de Salazar's death and the breakup of the hacienda. A new lieutenant governor, Captain Juan Fernández

de Florencia, and a small garrison took up residence once more in Apalachee, as did Franciscans. So far as can be determined, commerce carried on Indian backs continued across north Florida. Apalachee's trade in deerskins continued to develop. In Guale and western Timucua, and now also in Apalachee as a price for failure in the rebellion, chiefs had to supply quotas of laborers for the fields of St. Augustine.³⁴ Ruiz de Salazar resumed office as governor and pressed ahead in his exploitation of La Florida's economy. The only sign to reveal that the Spaniards had learned anything from the rebellion was in their return to gift giving. In four years, 1648–1651, the treasury spent 21,424 pesos for gifts, with 9,271 of them in 1650 (see below), suggesting that there were gifts valued at over 4,000 pesos in each of the other three years.³⁵ Whether this largesse mollified the caciques' egos that had been bruised by the years of comparative neglect is not known.

New Chisca raids on some of the Timucuan missions in 1650 or early 1651 also failed to interrupt business as usual. Governor Ruiz de Salazar sent seven soldiers to the Timucuan villages on a successful search-and-destroy mission. A second Spanish force was sent to Guale in case any Chisca were there, but apparently it saw no action and returned to St. Augustine.³⁶

Although the Apalachee Revolt of 1647 passed into history with little immediate impact on business as usual, we can see that it signaled the beginning of a dozen years of rebellion and disease that hollowed out the Spanish frontiers and transformed the Spanish–Indian relationship. The almost undocumented demographic decline, consolidation of villages, and changing Spanish attitudes toward their Indian subjects (as they increasingly became) during the late 1630s and 1640s had prepared the way for much of what followed after 1647. These developments are explored in the next chapter.

6.

DEATH, REBELLION, A NEW ACCOMMODATION, AND NEW DEFENSES: LA FLORIDA'S FRONTIERS, 1650–1680

The return of domestic peace to Apalachee in the summer of 1647 and the resumption of many of the same Spanish practices that had brought that people to rebellion and their neighbors to a high degree of restiveness turned out to mark a lull in a dozen-year-long general crisis that began with the rebellion of 1647. That rebellion was followed by three waves of epidemic disease that carried off a major part of the remaining baptized Indian population; by drought; a military threat; and an unsuccessful rebellion by the western Timucuan. The results were changes in the Spanish–Indian accommodation that subordinated the Indians within the frontiers as never before. The Spaniards had hardly begun to enjoy the fruits of this victory when Westo raids on the Guale missions and then buccaneer attacks challenged the security of La Florida. Aided in the 1670s by a slightly revived Spanish imperial government, the friars tried to expand the missions and the soldiers built new defenses and improved the food supply of St. Augustine. But Madrid did not give permission for the destruction of Charleston, founded in 1670, thereby sowing a seed whose fruit proved to be the annihilation of La Florida's missions.