

# TACACHALE

**Essays on the Indians of Florida and South-eastern Georgia during the Historic Period.**

**Edited by Jerald T. Milanich and Samuel Proctor**




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## Essays on the Indians of Florida and Southeastern Georgia during the Historic Period

Edited by

*Jerald T. Milanich and Samuel Proctor*

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## Preface

THE sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a time of great change for the native people in Florida and along the Georgia coast as Spain explored and then colonized a land the Europeans called La Florida. Early American Indian societies struggled to cope with the demographic catastrophe precipitated by the European presence and a colonial system that sought to make them part of Spain's empire in the Americas. Ultimately those societies were engulfed by the European presence. The people who witnessed the expeditions of Juan Ponce de León, Hernando de Soto, and Pedro Menéndez de Avilés were destroyed by the diseases and warfare brought to La Florida from across the Ocean Sea.

With the demise of the indigenous population by the mid-1700s, Creek Indians from Georgia and Alabama moved southward to establish settlements in northern Florida. Today the descendants of those native American Indians—the Seminole peoples—still live in Florida.

The publication of *Tacachale* in 1978 helped to focus scholarly attention on all of these native groups and their interactions with the Spaniards, the French, and the armies and settlers of the newly formed United States of America. In the last decade and a half anthropologists and historians have continued that inquiry, focusing on the events and cultures of the colonial era and the period of Florida's early statehood. Those recent contributions, all published by the University Press of Florida, include two volumes by John Hann, *Apalachee: The Land between the Rivers* (1988) and *Missions to the Calusa* (1991); *First Encounters: Spanish Explorations in the Caribbean and the United States, 1492-1570* (1989), edited by Jerald T. Milanich and Susan Milbrath; *Excavations on the*

*Franciscan Frontier: Archaeology of the Fig Springs Mission* (1992), by Brent Weisman; *Spanish Missions of La Florida* (1993), edited by Bonnie G. McEwan; and *Hernando de Soto and the Indians of Florida* (1993), by Jerald T. Milanich and Charles Hudson.

*Tacachale* was the first volume in the Florida Museum of Natural History's Ripley P. Bullen publication series. Since its publication thirteen additional volumes have appeared in print. The original publication of *Tacachale* was funded in part by the Wentworth Foundation, founded by A. Fillmore Wentworth. That foundation and its president, William M. Goza, remain staunch supporters of the Bullen series and the museum. We are grateful to Bill and to the foundation for helping to underwrite what has become a successful publishing venture.

JERALD T. MILANICH  
SAMUEL PROCTOR

## Introduction

TACACHALE translated from the early-seventeenth-century Timucuan Indian language of northern Florida means "to light a new fire." The ritual of kindling a flame to remove or prevent some impurity was an important part of the religion of the Southeastern Indians. Often this ritual was associated with a period of transition or what anthropologists call a "life crisis" such as birth or death. Lighting a new fire was an attempt to control changes or at least to prevent unforeseen happenings at a time when the status quo was being altered. We have entitled this volume *Tacachale* in order to symbolize the efforts of the aborigines in Florida and southeastern Georgia to deal with the European presence in the New World. Unfortunately, although many changes in the aboriginal cultures took place, they could not overcome the problems posed by the Europeans. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the aboriginal cultures and populations were destroyed under the brunt of Spanish, French, and English expansion into the southeastern United States. When the Spanish withdrew from Florida in 1763 only eighty-three Indians, thought to be almost all of the remaining descendants of the North Florida aborigines, accompanied them.

The Indian cultures in Florida and southeastern Georgia changed in various ways and at various rates during the two hundred years of European contact. These variations were the result of different settings for contact, including missions, military garrisons, ranches, trade networks, and the frontier town of St. Augustine. Consequently, the Florida situation affords anthropologists a comparative field situa-

tion for the study of culture change occurring as a result of contact between Western cultures (in this instance, European) and non-Western, non-white cultures (New World aborigines). The Seminole, who entered Florida over a long period of time beginning in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, also underwent rapid change due both to the adoption of Western culture traits and to cultural adjustments made in response to the successive occupation of different environmental zones over a period of several decades.

The papers in this volume were organized around this common theme—describing and interpreting the changes which occurred in the aboriginal cultures during the historic period. All of the papers, except that of William C. Sturtevant, were presented in abbreviated form at a symposium held as a part of the thirty-eighth annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology in San Francisco in May 1973. The symposium, entitled “Historic Indians of Florida and Southeastern Georgia: Ethnohistorical-Archeological Correlations,” contained a presentation on the Apalachee by L. Ross Morrell and B. Calvin Jones, who chose not to publish their paper. Sturtevant’s paper, prepared especially for this volume, provides welcomed perspectives on the South Florida Indians. The paper by Samuel Proctor describes the activities of the Center for the Study of Southeastern Indians at the University of Florida and its Indian Oral History Project.

Anthropologists have long recognized the importance of incorporating information derived from historical documents into their research. The present writers are no exception. Our ability to describe and understand correctly the aboriginal cultural dynamics of the historic period is greatly enhanced when archeological data can be combined with historical information and examined through the anthropological perspective. Increasingly, anthropologists are working hand-in-hand with historians to uncover our cultural heritage. Such cooperation is evident in a diverse range of projects presently underway in Georgia and Florida, including studies of Spanish shipwrecks, the culture of plantation slaves, the locations and architecture of Second Seminole War forts, and life in sixteenth-century St. Augustine.

Today, the descendants of many Southeastern Indians still reside in areas once inhabited by their ancestors—the Seminoles in Florida, Creeks in Georgia, Alabama, and West Florida, Cherokees in North Carolina, Catawbans in South Carolina, descendants of the Powhatan Indians in Virginia, Choctaws in Mississippi and Tennessee, and remnants of various tribes in Louisiana and along the coast of South

Carolina. During the last century the lives and cultures of these people have continued to change, much as the cultures of their ancestors changed several hundred years earlier. Many have become so completely assimilated into the non-Indian cultures that surround them that they do not retain any distinctive Indian physical features. Except for a few words, the Catawbias and the Virginia Indians have lost their traditional languages. Some of the Southeastern Indians—the Miccosukees of Florida, the Mississippi Choctaws, the Pamunkeys of Virginia—are conservative, and in an effort to resist acculturation they have sought to avoid as much as possible contact with the outside world. These Indians have tried to maintain their own churches, schools, and social institutions.

The Indians of the Southeast realize how quickly knowledge about their past is fading. They are cooperating with the University of Florida's Oral History Project. By taping meaningful conversations with a representative group of Indians, particularly elderly persons in their communities, much important historical data are being saved. These tapes are transcribed, and edited, and the material is made available for use by scholars.

JERALD MILANICH  
SAMUEL PROCTOR



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# Spanish-Indian Relationships: Synoptic History and Archeological Evidence, 1500–1763

*Hale G. Smith and Mark Gottlob*

THE exact date of the earliest European contact with the aboriginal peoples in Florida and southeastern Georgia is uncertain. John Cabot's 1497 voyage may have taken him into Florida waters, although the southernmost limits of his voyage are still being argued by scholars, as is the alleged expedition of Vespucci in 1497. The Council of the Indies claimed that beginning in 1510, fleets and ships had gone to Florida, and Florida is indicated on the Cantino map of 1502 (Lowery 1901:123). Thus, Florida was known to Europeans soon after, and perhaps even before, the first voyage of Columbus.<sup>1</sup> These early voyages of discovery, however, had little influence upon the native American groups. Not until the Spaniards came to Florida in larger numbers, establishing settlements and missions, is there any indication of culture change occurring in the aboriginal life-styles.

## EARLY EXPLORATIONS, 1500–1550

In 1513, Juan Ponce de León, who had accompanied Columbus on his second voyage and who later had been governor of Puerto Rico, obtained a royal grant authorizing him to explore and settle Bimini, a fabulous island believed to contain a great treasure and a fountain of youth. The narratives of Ponce's expedition do not make clear which

1. The Piri Re's map helps in supporting the hypothesis that the New World was known before 1492 (Hagood 1966). The map dates from 1513 and shows the Atlantic coasts from France to the Caribbean and south to Antarctica. Hagood also believes that the Piri Re's map was derived from earlier maps.

ethnic groups he contacted. Woodbury Lowery believes that he dealt mainly with the Calusa (Lowery 1901:142, 446). Juan Ponce, however, was not the first European to encounter the Calusa since at least one of the Indians he met understood Spanish (Davis 1935:18, 20). In addition, the hostile nature of the Calusa suggests that they had already encountered the Spanish (Swanton 1946:35). Some scholars believe that during Ponce's first voyage along the east coast of Florida he met the Ais Indians, who occupied the Indian River archeological area (Rouse 1951:49).

The period from 1513 to 1526 was a time of exploration, trading, and attempted settlement of the Florida area. In 1516, Diego Miruelo undertook a trading expedition for gold along the Gulf coast, and three years later, Alonzo Alvarez de Pineda sailed along the west coast at least as far as Mobile Bay and perhaps all the way to the mouth of the Mississippi. Francisco Hernández de Córdoba attempted a landing upon the southeast coast of Florida in 1517 but was repulsed (Díaz del Castillo 1938:35). In 1521, Ponce de León again tried to establish a settlement in Florida among the Calusa (Lowery 1901:158; Davis 1935:63-64; Swanton 1946:36), but after having touched the island of Tortugas, he was fatally wounded during an Indian attack upon his expedition as its members were getting settled in their new location.

By 1520, there were slave raids on the Florida Indians.<sup>2</sup> Lucas

2. In contrast with the Spanish colonization in other parts of the New World, the settlements in Florida never went beyond their primary status as outposts. It has been stated by W. R. Jackson (1945:77) that a primary reason for this was "the independence of character of the individual Indian, and the Spaniards could not cope with the Indian on an individual basis since they were very few compared to the number of natives they were trying to bring under subjection." It was unlikely that the hostility of the Indians was merely the result of their "independent nature." The European practice of taking slaves, which possibly occurred with the first European landing in Florida, probably led to much of the hostility.

Slaves were an important economic factor during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The first recorded taking of slaves in the New World was during the first Columbus voyage. On October 14, 1592, Columbus noted in his diary: "I do not think that it (a fort) will be necessary for this people is very simple in the use of arms, as your Highness will see from seven of them that I have taken in order to bring them to you" (Hells 1885:147).

By 1499 the *encomienda*, the legal institution that required the Indians to pay tribute and allowed the use of Indians for service, was implemented by Columbus on his second voyage after he found the Indians had become hostile. Enslavement of the Indians was allowed by Queen Isabella because they were reported to be cannibals and could not be converted to Christianity. Therefore, it became an established practice to demand tribute or service, or to enslave the Indians in the New World.

The first documentation of slave-taking in Florida occurred in 1520, and it appears that the Spanish were following their already established practices in the Antilles, and in Central, Middle, and South America. The taking of Indians for slaves probably

Vasquez de Ayllón made a voyage during that year and possibly discovered the St. Johns River. A settlement was established by de Ayllón, perhaps somewhere along the South Carolina coast where the natives were friendly and easy prey (Lowery 1901:153-57). The friendliness of the aborigines suggests that they had not previously encountered the Spaniards. The Florida Indians, being closer to the Greater Antilles, undoubtedly felt the slave raids first, and their unfriendliness was a reaction to the hostile Spanish advances.

Pánfilo de Narváez' expedition reached Florida in 1528 and, according to Swanton, landed near Johns Pass just north of Tampa Bay in Timucua territory (Swanton 1946:37). From there the force moved inland, proceeding to Apalachee country, where they were subject to Indian attacks. Later, the group sailed west to Pensacola where they also encountered hostile natives. The survivors of this expedition eventually reached Mexico after traveling overland on foot (Núñez Cabeza de Vaca 1904:9-54).

The Narváez expedition was the first to penetrate the interior of Florida. During their northward march, the Spanish apparently encountered only one or two Indian villages until they came to the Apalachee area (Swanton 1922:334). It is most likely they traveled through the sparsely occupied and swampy coastal flatlands after leaving the central Gulf coast. In the Tampa Bay area, they went to a village where they found "many boxes for merchandise from Castilla. In every one of them was a corpse covered with painted deer hides. . . . We also found pieces of linen and cloth, and feather head dresses that seemed to be from New Spain, and samples of gold" (Núñez Cabeza de Vaca 1904:12-13). According to the Indians, this material had come from the Apalachee area.

The next major expedition into Florida was by Hernando de Soto in 1539-40. Several narratives (Garcilaso de la Vega, Gentleman of Elvas, Ranjel, and Biedma) describe the activities of his expedition which landed either at Tampa Bay or at Charlotte Harbor (Brinton 1859:15-16; see Bullen, this volume). De Soto's group was composed of six hundred men and camp followers and their livestock and provisions. Many of their supplies were either given away or buried along their route.

They spent their first winter, 1539-40, at the town of Iniahica, near present-day Tallahassee, and in the spring moved into Georgia. In

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occurred with the first landings in Florida (Hanke 1949:19), and the hostility between the peoples of the New World and the Old World may have had its origins even before Columbus.

Florida, de Soto mainly encountered the Tocobaga, various Timucuan tribes, and the Apalachee. As de Soto marched through Florida and the Southeast, he met the same general hostile resistance as had Narváez. His enterprise ended in disaster, and from the time of its failure until the settlement of the French on the St. Johns River, little else was done by Spain to explore or colonize Florida.

During this period, 1500–1550, various Spanish shipwrecks occurred along the Florida coast, particularly along the southern part of the peninsula in the Straits of Florida. As a result of attempts to rescue the shipwrecked sailors, the Spanish undoubtedly contacted the Tequesta and other South Florida Indians.

The main purpose of all of these early Spanish explorations was economic—the search for gold, slaves, land, skins, and other commodities. Less important was the desire to convert the aborigines to Christianity. The Spanish attitude toward the natives is illustrated by Narváez' proclamation to those Indians who might prefer their own religion or the rule of their own chief to that of the king of Spain: "With the aid of God and my own sword, I shall march upon you; with all means and from all sides, I shall war against you; I shall compel you to obey the Holy Church and his Majesty; I shall seize you . . . your property shall I take and destroy and every possible harm shall I work you as refractory subjects" (Swanton 1939). Colonization was held at a minimum, and little was accomplished regarding conversion of the Indians. The explorers did not find gold in Florida, and Spanish interest in La Florida waned.

#### EARLY SETTLEMENTS, 1550–1600

The latter half of the sixteenth century saw Spain once again undertake activities in Florida. The Spanish colonies in the circum-Caribbean were partially supplied by fleets from the mother country, and the Plate Fleet took vast quantities of precious metal back to Spain. The Crown was forced to extend Spanish control to the coasts of Florida in order to protect the shipping lanes. Luis de Velasco, Spanish viceroy of Mexico, planned to occupy Florida and develop friendly relationships with the Indians. In September 1558, he dispatched Guido de Labazares to determine the best Florida site for a projected settlement, and he reported in favor of Pensacola Bay (Winsor 1886:356–57).

Receiving this information, Tristán de Luna y Arellano began his preparations for settlement. He sailed from Vera Cruz on June 11,

1559, with five hundred soldiers, a thousand servants and settlers, four Dominicans, and a large group of Mexican Indians (Swanton 1922:159; Lowery 1901:351-77; Priestly 1936; Winsor 1886:356-57). Their exact landing place is questionable; it could have been Pensacola Bay, Mobile Bay, Perdido Bay, or Choctawhatchee Bay. Most scholars believe that the group landed at Mobile Bay and later moved to Pensacola Bay.

Before de Luna could land his stores, a hurricane destroyed five ships, a galleon, and a bark, and blew one caravel and its cargo inland. When the storm subsided, scouting parties were sent out to explore the inland territory. In 1560, after leaving a detachment of fifty men and Negro slaves at the port, de Luna moved his main group to the Indian village of Nanipacna, where many of his people starved to death. The Spanish evidently made no attempt to cultivate the Indian fields or to raise anything for their own support (Winsor 1886:258).

At first de Luna ignored a petition to move back to Mobile, but he was forced to take this action in June 1560. Two ships arrived there to take the women, children, and sick to Havana and New Spain. A scouting party that had stopped in the Coosa area was getting along well, but the majority of de Luna's group refused to follow him there when he wished to set up a base.

Angel de Villafañe's fleet, on its way to Santa Elena, stopped at Pensacola Bay, and the remainder of de Luna's men left with him. When de Luna embarked for Havana, only fifty or sixty men were left at the settlement under the command of Biedma with orders to remain for five or six months. This expedition, as a whole, probably had little effect upon the material culture of the Indians. Its role in introducing diseases is unknown.

In 1561, after many disastrous expeditions to Florida, and only slight material gain, the area was closed to exploration by royal proclamation (Lowery 1901:376). This policy changed rapidly in 1562 after news of the French settlement in Florida reached Spain. Jean Ribault had arrived at the St. Johns River and claimed the area as French, before sailing on to South Carolina. In 1564, René de Laudonnière, with Ribault on his first expedition to Florida, returned to the St. Johns River and established Fort Caroline.

Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, seeing a threat to Spanish shipping, captured Fort Caroline, turned it into a mission, and established St. Augustine in 1565. Because Fort Caroline had been occupied for such a short period and the French had had relatively little rapport with the Indians of the area, the quantity of French materials which fell

into aboriginal hands was probably very small. There is little archaeological evidence of cultural materials that the French might have brought with them.

St. Augustine was basically a military outpost and frontier town, built on the earlier aboriginal village of the *Cacique* Selay. A fort was built adjacent to the inlet, and smaller posts were established north and south of the town. Later military fortifications were established in Ais, Tocobaga, Tequesta, and Calusa territory, but they remained active only a short time.

St. Augustine became the center for a number of outlying garrisons and missions positioned to solidify Spain's hold on Florida and its aboriginal population. In 1566, the Spanish established themselves in the Guale area when Menéndez negotiated a settlement of the conflict between the Gualeans and Cusabo. To assure his control he built Fort San Pedro on Cumberland Island, Georgia. A Guale mission was established by the Jesuits in 1570, but they were recalled two years later. Franciscans arrived in the area in 1584, but in 1597, the Indians killed all but one of the missionaries and destroyed several of their missions. Other missions were also established along the Atlantic coast from St. Augustine northward to Guale.

#### MISSIONIZATION, 1600–1700

Spanish expansion and exploration into the interior of Florida reached its peak during the seventeenth century. Mission work among the western Timucua was begun at Potano in 1606 (Geiger 1937). An Indian village (Richardson site) of the Potano period (part of the Alachua tradition 1600–1715) indicates, with other evidence from the Fox Pond and Zetrouer sites, that this group had single component Spanish-Indian villages which were established apart from areas occupied by peoples of the prehistoric Alachua tradition (Milanich 1972:35–36). Quite likely, a single, centrally located mission served several outlying villages. Such villages, some with missions, have been archeologically documented for the Timucua. Fox Pond has been tentatively dated between 1630 and 1660 and Zetrouer between 1660 and 1700 (Milanich 1972:57). The Nocoroco site in east Florida (Griffin and Smith 1949) described by Mexia (1605, 1940a, 1940b) was occupied in 1605, but the time range of occupation to either side of this date is unknown.

By 1633, all of the Timucua Indians had been brought under mission control, and the Spanish began to extend the mission chain into



Apalachee territory in northwest Florida. The Apalachee were a Muskogean group who occupied the area from the Aucilla River on the east to the Apalachicola River on the west. Their northern boundary probably extended into present-day Georgia, with the Gulf of Mexico the southern boundary. They were primarily agriculturalists, growing maize, squash, and beans, who supplemented their diet by hunting and collecting.

The missionization was not totally altruistic; the Spaniards quickly saw that the fertile soil of northwest Florida could supply a surplus of corn sorely needed for the inhabitants of St. Augustine. Foodstuffs from the province of Apalachee were shipped by sea via St. Marks to St. Augustine or were carried overland.

The Apalachee staged a rebellion in 1647, killing three missionaries and destroying seven churches. The Spaniards quelled this violence with help from friendly Apalachee. Some leaders of the revolt were executed; others were sentenced to forced labor.

The Apalachee were later involved in the Timucua rebellion of 1656, which lasted eight months (Swanton 1922:338). This outbreak was directed against the Spanish and their policy of forcing Indians to provide labor for the Spanish farms. The rebellion was quickly put down.

The Apalachee, on the whole, became ideal mission Indians, and after 1647, the conversion of the tribe was completed. In 1655, Díaz de la Calle listed nine missions in Apalachee (Serrano y Sanz 1912:135). The later Calderón letter, written during the bishop's visit to the Florida missions in 1674-75, lists thirteen in Apalachee (Wenhold 1936). Mark F. Boyd, Hale G. Smith, and John W. Griffin (1951), working with these two lists and documents in the Lowery collection in the Library of Congress, found reference to fourteen missions in Apalachee, and the Lowery collection includes a Spanish map showing fifteen missions present. It is impossible to know how accurate these listings are, but they indicate that the number of missions had been growing in the Apalachee area since their inception.

Although the Spanish in 1679 and 1681 attempted to convert the Apalachicolos who lived on the Chattahoochee River, these were for the most part unsuccessful ventures. A single mission was established near the confluence of the Flint and the Chattahoochee rivers (Boyd 1949:2). The Spanish hoped that converting this group would make them resist English advances and that they would serve as a buffer to the Apalachee area on the west.

The English moved into the Flint-Chattahoochee area in 1685, but