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NATIVE AMERICAN SPEAKERS OF THE EASTERN WOODLANDS

Selected Speeches and Critical Analyses

Barbara Alice Mann

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Native American Speakers of the Eastern Woodlands

Selected Speeches and Critical Analyses

Edited by **Barbara Alice Mann**

Foreword by Ward Churchill

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Foreword

Reclaiming the Native Voice: Reflections on the Historiography of American Indian Oratory

Ward Churchill

One of the most insidious aspects of colonialism is its ability first to deny the native his voice, then to make it possible for the colonizer to steal it for his own purposes. For liberation to be achieved, it is imperative that the colonized first reclaim his voice, then learn to wield it as a weapon.

—Frantz Fanon
Wretched of the Earth

Since the publication of Virginia Irving Armstrong's *I Have Spoken* in 1971, there have been a number of books devoted to revealing the "Indian side of American history," or portions of it, by assembling selected bits of Native oratory as it was recorded over the years by European and Euro-American stenographers. Of the lot, probably the most noteworthy have been Roger Moody's two-volume collection, *The Indigenous Voice* (1988), Peter Nabokov's *Native American Testimony* (1992), and Steven Mintz's *Native American Voices* (1995).¹

While each can be said to make some useful contribution to the literature, at least in terms of making previously obscure statements by Native people more readily accessible, all are marred by holding several deficiencies in common. These devolve in the first instance upon a marked tendency to concentrate, in some cases exclusively so, upon the western regions of the United States. Hence, the great majority of North America's indigenous population and, with it, the historical preponderance of "Indian/white" interaction, was excluded from consideration by the books' very conceptions and designs.²

A related problem is that virtually all the source material upon which the various compilations have been based was originally transcribed in English. In other words, French, Spanish, Dutch, and Russian language sources—not to mention those

available in Native languages—have been ignored altogether and, along with them, every statement made by a Native American to anyone other than a literate English-speaker. Once again, the effect has from the outset been to preclude entire peoples, regions, and periods from representation.

The skews already attending such methodological deformities are, moreover, routinely compounded by defects in contextualization. In no case are readers offered more than a superficial sketch of the historical backdrop against which the editors' arbitrarily limited selection of statements were made. What little solid information is provided comes, all but invariably, packaged with a noticeably Eurocentric cant, sometimes even a tone of Western triumphalism. Thus do the motives and thinking underlying Native oratory remain unrevealed, or, worse, distorted beyond recognition.³

Most of this was both inevitable and predictable. None of the volume editors mentioned—neither Moody, Nabokov, Mintz, nor Armstrong—are Native Americans, nor do they display any particular competence in either Native history or the history of Native/Euro-American relations. Indeed, only one, Mintz, might be described as a professional historian by any reasonable definition at all. There is thus a distinct appearance that the interest of all editors save Moody,⁴ as well that of their respective publishers in undertaking projects of this sort, had little or nothing to do with a desire to perfect the historical record in releasing the resulting books. Rather, the object in each case seems to have been simply to cash in on what Sioux scholar Vine Deloria, Jr., has described as a “periodic cycle of enthusiasm for Indians occurring at approximately twenty-year intervals.”⁵

One such upsurge in public curiosity about things Native came during the early 1970s, and another, during the early 1990s, coincidental to the proposed national celebration of the Columbian Quincentenary.⁶ Under these conditions, almost anything exhibiting an “Indian theme” could be guaranteed brisk sales and consequent profits to its producers. This was certainly true of books, most especially those affording an aura of pseudoscholarly validation to popular preconceptions about “Indians” (we live “out West,” speak “broken English,” and so on).

In such an environment, the books discussed herein did quite well, advancing as they do no discernable challenge to prevailing stereotypes. As serious history, then, they should be assessed quite harshly, adding up at best to an aggregate travesty. They can be spared such criticism only to the extent that, as was suggested above, they were never really intended as anything more than a superficial form of “pop” commodity. Be that as it may, the serious historiographical work of excavating both the substance and the meaning of Native American oratory remained as much to be done in the aftermath of their collective debut as ever.

At long last, however, things may have begun to change in this regard, and very much for the better. Nowhere is this most strikingly evident than in the differences from its precursors marking editor Barbara Alice Mann's volume, *Speakers of the Eastern Woodlands*. Not only are the majority of the authors showcased Native,

themselves, but Mann and her contributors are also trained historians endowed with a recognized and highly cultivated expertise in the history of Native North America.⁷ The credentials of the book's two non-Native contributors, Bruce Johansen and Granville Ganter, compare quite favorably.

The mere mention of contributors should in itself signal a sharp departure from past practice. Unlike her predecessors, Mann does not presume to be all-knowing with respect to her subject matter. Instead, in presenting each oratory included in the book, she has solicited a scholar of appropriate competency to prepare an essay laying out both the factual circumstances the statement informs and the cultural sensibilities it embodies. The contextualizing material contained in *Speakers of the Eastern Woodlands* is thus both comprehensive and of uniformly high quality, painstakingly researched, thoroughly articulated, and consistently reflective of the perspectives manifested by its subjects.

This approach imposes obvious limits upon the number of statements which can be included, as does the editor's insistence that each statement be dealt with in its entirety rather than extracted or condensed, but the results are well worth such constraints. For the first time, professionals and lay readers alike share every prospect of coming away with a genuine appreciation of not only of what given Native leaders actually said on specific occasions, but of why they put things as they did.

As is indicated by its title, the book differs from its antecedents in other ways as well, focusing as it does entirely upon the experiences and consequent pronouncements of persons and peoples indigenous to regions east of the Mississippi River (where it all began, so to speak). Here a point of clarification is in order: Barbara Mann's analysis of the oratory of Muscogee (Creek) leader Chitto Harjo in Chapter 8 may seem at first glance to be geographically ill-suited to the collection, given that both Harjo and his people resided in Oklahoma at the time he spoke. The Muscogee, however, along with the Tsalagi (Cherokee), Choctaw, Chickasaw, and scores of other "Oklahoma Tribes," are all peoples indigenous to the East, coercively removed from their homeland by the United States, as late as the mid-1840s. Suffice to observe along with Harjo, himself, that rather more is required than an imperial edict backed up by force of arms to nullify such historical actualities, magically transforming eastern into western Natives.

In any event, the editor's geographic orientation allows contributors to avail themselves quite liberally of archival legacies accruing from the eras and areas of Spanish and French colonialism. A fine contribution by Barbara Mann and Donald Grinde, Jr., taps Spanish records to depict, through the words of the Natives, themselves, the experience of the Guales, a Muscogean people situated along the Georgia coast, in dealing with the Spanish at the very dawn of European conquest and colonization in North America in the sixteenth century. Similarly, a solo contribution by Mann is devoted to Kandiaronk, a pivotal Wyandot leader of the late

seventeenth century whose astute statesmanship and telling observations on the role of Christianity and its adherents in undermining the indigenous societies of the Great Lakes region were recorded in French

From there, in view of the fluency of contributors like Thomas McElwain in one or more indigenous languages, it is but a short and natural step to reliance upon knowledge maintained in these languages, as well. Together, McElwain's careful, line-by-line cross-translation of "Logan's Lament" from the English spoken by the stenographers offering up this caricature of Tahgahjute's oratory into the Iroquoian dialect actually spoken by Tahgahjute ("Logan"), along with the linguistic evaluation that follows, blaze an important trail for other Native scholars in assessing the level of interpolation by settler sources

Self-evidently, using Spanish, French, and Iroquoian language sources is a conscious avoidance of the "Anglophone Monopoly" still dominating "American ethnohistory." As a method, it serves to amplify, expand, and immeasurably enrich the resource base upon which any scholar, or set of scholars, might attempt to reconstruct the history of this country with anything resembling its full range of nuance and complexity

By the same token, historians Mann, Grinde, Virginia Carney, and David T McNab show the strengths of appealing to Native historians for exposition. In yet two more essays, Mann reveals the Native truth behind the Euro-American myths of "Indian history." First, the myth of the "Indian allies of the British" as grinning, malleable, and ultimately invisible Chief Wahoos mechanically pumping their tomahawk arms is exploded through the glowing words of the Lenâpé (Delaware) speaker, Hopocan, to the British in 1781, exposing the hypocrisy and the treachery of the British towards their Native "allies." Second, a careful look at the glorious "free-land" myth of the Oklahoma Land Rush, only recently used to underpin the climax of the Tom Cruise extravaganza, *Far and Away* (1992), shows it to be but the final betrayal of the Removed Muscogee, as Chitto Harjo made clear in his stinging indictment of the illegal admittance of Oklahoma as the forty-sixth state of the Union

Carney explores Native stateswomen, an area that has received all too little attention by Euro-American historians. Using the pronouncements of Beloved Women of the Cherokee like Nanye'hi ("Nancy Ward") and Kitteuha as a guide, Carney concerns herself with the roles and status of War Women, in the tradition of their own people. On this basis, Carney concludes that traditional Tsalagi society was, in many respects, a model worth emulation by contemporary feminists. Turning to the contemporary oratory of the leaders of the Three Fires Confederacy regarding the unextinguished nature of their aboriginal land title, McNab follows the logic of Native rather than Euro-American geography, focusing upon a society/territory beyond the present boundaries of the United States in defining Bkejwanong lands. Once more, the willful treachery of the invader is at issue, but, this time, Bkejwanong records put the true "ownership" of the land beyond dispute

The two non-Native scholars hold their own in this company Bruce E Johansen is a Euro-American scholar who has proven himself over the past quarter century to be imbued with an honesty, sensitivity, and integrity when assessing Native-Euro-American relations equal to that of any Native historian now working,⁸ while Granville Ganter, a fresh young face in the field, promises to achieve much the same Johansen's contribution takes as its topic a relatively famous, though inadequately quoted, speech made by the Onondaga leader, Canassatego, to close the 1744 Lancaster Treaty Conference in Pennsylvania The superlative essay by Ganter focuses upon an assessment of Anglo-American character as advanced by the Seneca leader Sagoyewatha ("Red Jacket") a generation later Together with Johansen, Ganter goes far towards demonstrating what many of us have contended all along that "white guys" actually *can* write history as well as anyone else, whenever they are willing to abandon the biases supporting Euro-supremacist privilege in favor of a more objective and humane position

Taken as a whole, *Speakers of the Eastern Woodlands* offers a stunning overview of the entire historical sweep of interaction between Natives and invaders on the Atlantic side of the continent There are gaps, of course, and many of them No single volume undertaken in this fashion could aspire to anything approximating completeness Nevertheless, this more than anything points to the crying need for more such books, many more, devoted not only to the much-slighted east, but the often, yet superficially, mined oratory of the West and the many regions of Canada, as well Thankfully, Mann has established a benchmark model by which to proceed

NOTES

1 Roger Moody, ed, *The Indigenous Voice Visions and Realities*, 2 vols (London: Zed Press, 1988); Peter Nabokov, ed, *Native American Testimony A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992* (New York: Penguin Books, 1992); Steven Mintz, ed, *Native American Voices A History and Anthology* (St James, NY: Brandywine Press, 1995)

2 Moody's collection in particular deviates from this description, but mainly because it adopts a global rather than a North American perspective On the historical demography of Native North America, see Henry F Dobyns, *Their Numbers Become Thinned Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983)

3 For a fuller exposition of the problems addressed in this paragraph, see Vine Deloria, Jr, "Revision and Reversion," in Calvin Martin, ed, *American Indians and the Problem of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 84-90

4 Moody again breaks the mold insofar as his objectives were explicitly political rather than historiographical

5 Vine Deloria has made this observation repeatedly over the years It is most memorably found in his *Custer Died for Your Sins* (New York: Macmillian, 1969) The formulation I have employed here accrues from a seminar conducted at the University of

Colorado at Boulder in April, 1992 (the notes on file)

6 For background, see John Yewell, Chris Dodge, and Jan DeSirey, ed., *Confronting Columbus: An Anthology* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1992)

7 Among Mann's previous books is *Iroquoian Women: The Gantowisas* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000) and as editor, along with Bruce E. Johansen, *The Encyclopedia of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois Confederacy)* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000). Contributor Donald A. Grinde's prior efforts include *The Iroquois and the Founding of the American Nation* (San Francisco: Indian Historian Press, 1977) and, with Bruce E. Johansen, *Exemplar of Liberty: Native American the Evolution of Democracy* (Los Angeles: UCLA American Indian Studies Program, 1991). Thomas McElwain's prior publications include *Mythological Tales and the Allegany Seneca: A Study of the Socio-Religious Context of Traditional Oral Phenomena in an Iroquois Community*, Stockholm studies in Comparative Religion, no. 17 (Stockholm: ACTA Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 1978). David McNab is a prolific author, whose most recent contribution is "Circles of Time: Aboriginal Land Rights and Resistance in Ontario," *Earth, Water, Air and Fire: Studies in Canadian Ethnohistory* (1999): 147–86. See also McNab's "'Black with Canoes': The Significance of the Canoe in Language and in Light," Language and Light: Twenty-fourth Annual Colloquium on Modern Literature and Film, Morgantown, West Virginia University, 17 September 1999, a version of which is forthcoming as, David T. McNab, Bruce Hodgins, and S. Dale Standen, "'Black with Canoes': Aboriginal Resistance and the Canoe: Diplomacy, Trade and Warfare in the Meeting Grounds of Northeastern North America, 1600–1820" in *Technology, Disease, and European Colonial Conquests, 1480–1820*, ed. George Raudzens (Amsterdam: Brill, 2000). Virginia Carney has authored a number of articles, including "Native American Loanwords in American English," *Wacazo Sa Review* 12.1 (Spring 1997): 189–203.

8 Among Johansen's previous efforts are *Forgotten Founders: Benjamin Franklin, the Iroquois and the Rationale for the American Revolution* (Opiswich, MA: Gambit Incorporated, Publishers, 1982) and, with Donald A. Grinde, Jr., *Ecocide of Native America* (Santa Fe: Clear Light, 1995). Grinde and Mann were also major contributors to his *Debating Democracy: Native American Legacy of Freedom* (Santa Fe: Clear Light, 1998).

Introduction

Since first contact, the western imagination has been captivated by Native American speakers. In the nineteenth century, a veritable “Indian” industry arose, immortalizing the anguished words of “war chiefs,” as settlers turned the misery of the people they were invading into drawing room novelties. Mostly, curiosity was satisfied by “quaint” imagery couched in “savage” logic, with a large dollop of “Great Spirit” mysticism thrown in for good measure. The authenticity of the resulting production was little scrutinized.

Too often, when Native speeches are reproduced in the present, it is with a continued eye to these dated—and racially conditioned—expectations of “Indian speeches.” Those invested in politics and history are neglected in favor of those speaking loftily of happy little birds and babbling brooks. Characterized as “simple” people “close to the earth,” Natives are supposed to address nature, not policy; spirituality, not humanity. As the announced losers in the invasion of Turtle Island (the Native term for North America), they are required to mourn their doom, not address their dreams, let alone challenge their “defeat.”

Worse, given the childlike nature of “Indian speeches,” it seems that just any old one can read them unprimed, so that the most threadbare background has been thought sufficient to set the speaker in his [*sic*] era. Vague, three-paragraph prologues that would never do for great European orators have been deemed adequate to the task of introducing Native speakers. In this lackadaisical way, the Native perceptions of the action at hand have been slighted, leaving the finer aspects of the nation, clan, and aims of the speakers demeaned or denied. Slimmed down to meet low expectations, the breadth, content, and vibrancy of true Native perorations have

been shut out of the texts, and the words of the Clan Mothers, excluded from consideration

Moreover, nearly all anthologies of speeches focus on west-of-the-Mississippi peoples caught up in the nineteenth-century chaos of Manifest Destiny's push to the Pacific. The great nations east of the Mississippi, who blocked the settlers' progress to the interior for three-and-a-half centuries, are forgotten, the ringing speeches engendered during those years seldom showcased with the élan accorded the words of a Sealth ("Seattle") or a Hin-mah-too-yah-laht-ket ("Chief Joseph"). Moreover, American history, even as taught in colleges, typically ignores the records of the French and the Spanish, who set up shop on Turtle Island well before the late-coming British. Even speeches recorded during the two centuries of British colonization of the east are left collecting dust in the archives. Consequently, the great speakers of the eastern woodlands who first met the Spanish, French, and British invaders—the War Women, the *Tadadahos*, the *henehas*, the *cacicas*, and the *miccos*—are today largely ignored in favor of the western Natives encountered during the slim century of the U.S. assault on "The West."

Therein, I believe, lies the rub: The Native speeches best known today tend to reflect, however subliminally, the attitudes of the "patriots," the "pioneers," and their "Anglo-Saxon" descendants. Intent upon cutting themselves off from European history in favor of crafting their own, glorious tale of all-conquering heroism, nineteenth- and twentieth-century American mythologers popularized only those speeches extolling their own exploits on Turtle Island. On the hurrah side, celebrated speeches often reflected settler self-images and were cried up—and, not infrequently, *made up*—so as to let the settler record show that even "the Indians" knew that they had a date with Manifest Destiny. Alternatively, on the pensive side, speeches echoed the settlers' own self-criticisms, pointing to various Puritan "sins": wastefulness, lack of brotherly love, deceitfulness, and an improper relationship with "the Great Spirit," that thinly disguised Christian God. As a result, any speeches hinging on truly Native analyses of events were drubbed as incomprehensible—and so they were, but only because the invaders would not take the trouble to comprehend them.

Twenty-first century scholarship is hopefully casting off the self-congratulatory cant of settler myth and allowing other voices forward. This volume is one vehicle of that new movement. Not content to rummage about solely in Anglophonic records, it scans both French and Spanish chronicles for material, providing new translations where appropriate. Neither does it reproduce speeches raw but evaluates and analyzes them in terms of their *Native* content. Mindful of the political issues they addressed and considerate of the social, economic, and partisan agendas of the various speakers, each chapter places its speeches in deep historical context. Unwilling to grant the chroniclers of the speeches, Europeans all, undisputed credence, the book quizzes them for their biases, agendas, and conceits, which are not allowed to interfere with the Native content of the messages they report. Finally,

Native oral traditions are respected and used to flesh out meaning

This volume resists an unalloyed adoration of all things Native. Speeches are grilled for their authenticity, while speakers are presented as human beings thrashing about in the turmoil of traumatic times and doing their best, or not, as their agendas and comfort required. Thus does Thomas McElwain, in “‘Then I Thought I Must Kill Too’ Logan’s Lament: A ‘Mingo’ Perspective,” critically review “Logan’s Lament,” one of the most famous—and, as it turns out, most infamously fabricated—speeches in Native American history. A close look at the Oneida identity of Tahgahjute (“Chief Logan”) belies many of the stories about him. By carefully testing the “translation” for its equivalent in Iroquoian dialects, speech conventions, and cultural references, McElwain moves past the fawning response the Lament once elicited to zero in on its obviously western construction, unmasking the received version as a weepy hoax.

By the same token, David T. McNab takes a long, embarrassing look at the devious doings of White Elk (Alexander McKee), son of a Shawnee mother and British father, who represented the British Crown at treaty councils in the late eighteenth century, defrauding the Bkejwanong (“Three Fires Confederacy”) of land the people never ceded. In “‘The Land Was To Remain Ours’: The St. Anne Island Treaty of 1796 and Aboriginal Title and Rights in the Twenty-first Century,” McNab does not shy away from exposing the devious devices of the settler usurpation that White Elk facilitated and that Bkejwanong speakers have never ceased to decry.

Deceit and treachery notwithstanding, the overwhelming impression that emerges from these pages is one of fraught, even desperate, resistance to invasion, outrage over cultural impositions, especially Christianity, disgust with dishonor, and frustration over the seemingly impervious engine of settler rapacity. The resistance began with the Spanish invasion of “La Florida” in 1513. As Donald A. Grinde, Jr., and I demonstrate in “‘Now the Friar Is Dead’ Sixteenth-Century Spanish Florida and the Guale Revolt,” it shows in the stirring speeches of the *cacique* (male chief) of Acuera and the *cacica* (woman chief) of Cofitachique, who both confronted the conquistadores, and culminates in the dramatic Guale Revolt of 1597–1601, headed by the fiery speaker Juanillo, the cheated *micco* of Guale.

If Juanillo outlined the reasons that the Guales foreswore Christianity, the seventeenth-century Wyandot speaker Kandiaronk clearly outlined the logic of the Iroquoian distaste for that strange belief system. Although widely libeled in French sources as a “treacherous savage,” an assessment blithely accepted in later English-language treatments of this Wyandot speaker’s life and work, according to Iroquoian law, Kandiaronk acted brilliantly and honorably throughout his dealings with both the French and the Haudenosaunee (“Iroquois League”). Moreover, a careful record of his discourses kept *even as he spoke* has long been dismissed by scholars for no other reason than Eurosupremacy, on the assumption that no “savage” could have spoken as logically, compellingly, or intelligently as the

chronicle insists I rehabilitate both Kandiaronk's reputation and his dialogues in, "Are You Delusional?" Kandiaronk on Christianity "

The reputation of Sagoyewatha, likewise tarnished in western history, is also revived by Granville Ganter in "'You Are a Cunning People without Sincerity' Sagoyewatha and the Trials of Community Representation " Ganter's long overdue scrutiny of the most primary, yet most overlooked, of sources on Sagoyewatha (whom the settlers named "Red Jacket") uncovers a very different story than that put about by his nineteenth-century opponents, which has, for too long, stood unchallenged as the final word on this great Seneca orator

If the words of Kandiaronk have been sneered away and those of Sagoyewatha, devalued, the speeches of Hopocan, the Lenâpé speaker, are largely lost in the present Still revered by the Native peoples of Ohio, Hopocan stood as a bulwark against invasion and the vicious inhumanity it bred His stunning rebuke to the British tribunal in Detroit, so penetrating in its grasp of Europolitics and so apt in its condemnation of the mindless cruelty of western warfare, deserves the honored scrutiny I give it, in "'I Hope You Will Not Destroy *What* I Have Saved': Hopocan before the British Tribunal in Detroit, 1781 "

Canassatego, the mid-eighteenth-century Onondaga speaker (*Tadadaho*) of the League of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois), was equally astute politically It was Canassatego who, on the accidentally coincidental date of July 4, 1744 (thirty-two years before the colonies' declaration of independence), provided colonial observers with a suggestion that they unite in a federal union resembling that of the Iroquois League Canassatego's suggestion is analyzed by Bruce E Johansen in the context of its delivery as the closing oration at the Lancaster Treaty Council of 1744 It is made generally available in its entirety here for the first time, in "'By Your Observing the Methods Our Wise Forefathers Have Taken, You Will Acquire Fresh Strength and Power' Closing Speech of Canassatego, July 4, 1744, Lancaster Treaty "

Too often, the fact that male speakers, such as Sagoyewatha, were speaking words sent forward by the women's councils has been overlooked in the record Even worse, the words physically presented by female speakers themselves have been shunted aside as superfluous, creating an extraordinary distortion of woodlander history through centuries' worth of scholarly oblivion of the female half of government in eastern cultures Virginia Carney restores some of the original balance of the genders, in "'Woman Is the Mother of All': Nanye'hi and Kitteuha: War Women of the Cherokees," a close look at the office of War Women among the Cherokees

The engineered invisibility of women in the western historical record is matched only by the odd habit of viewing the Removed Peoples of Oklahoma as western Natives, when, in fact, their cultures were born of and breast-fed by Mother Earth in the eastern woodlands This book therefore reclaims the magnificent Chitto Harjo as the eastern orator he was, even though, through the intervention of settler

cupidity, his people, the Muscogee, were forcibly relocated from their southeastern homelands across the Mississippi River into Oklahoma, “Indian Territory ” His valiant, career-long fight against the depredations of the Dawes era culminated in a gutsy appearance before a governmental committee that wished him dead, as I recount in, “ ‘A Man of Misery’: Chitto Harjo and the Senate Select Committee on Oklahoma Statehood ”

The speeches included in these pages may be going out to the general public, but it is important to remember that they belong rightfully to the nations on whose behalf they were originally uttered In granting his permission for us to quote from his speech of April 26, 2000, Chief Joseph B Gilbert of the Walpole Island Bkejwanong remarked upon his pleasure in seeing “Aboriginal scholars show respect to First Nation communities by taking the time not only to request permission to use our knowledge but also to use it in an accurate way in published form We have come a long way since non-Aboriginal researchers came into our community not too many years ago and took whatever they wanted away without even saying thank-you much less asking our permission prior to publication or sharing their knowledge with us ”

It is in the spirit of these comments that the authors of this text write

Barbara Alice Mann
Toledo, Ohio
December 2000

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“Now the Friar Is Dead”: Sixteenth-Century Spanish Florida and the Guale Revolt

Barbara Alice Mann and Donald A. Grinde, Jr.

A deep problem arises in speaking of the Native history of the American Southeast: Few Americans today realize that the South sustained a two-hundred fifty-year Spanish occupation, or that “La Florida,” the lands the Spanish once pompously claimed, extended up the peninsula of Florida, north through Georgia and South Carolina, west to the Mississippi—and even up into the Ohio Valley¹ Modern amnesia concerning the Spanish tenure is unfortunate, for the southeastern response to first contact was vigorous in the sixteenth century, with the Guale Revolt, its capstone and its emblem

The southeastern nations that bore the ferocious brunt of Spanish invasion were the Guales of coastal Georgia, the Apalachees of the Florida panhandle, and the Timucuans of northernmost Florida Of the three, the least known are the Guales, who were not only the first to have revolted, but also the only ones who managed to have held onto their hard-won freedom for an unheard-of four years The Spanish did not brook revolt lightly The Guales, therefore, incited the first dedicated “pacification” of the southeast, “pacification” being the Spanish euphemism for reigns of unspeakable terror loosed upon the people with the intention of quelling even the subliminal urge to resist² Nevertheless, the Guales maintained a record of almost unbroken opposition to Spanish invasion throughout the sixteenth century

A minor part of the larger mound-building cultures that dotted the Mississippiean southeast, the Guales were Muscogean (“Creek”) speakers They lived between St Andrews Sound and the Savannah River, located on the Atlantic coast of Georgia³ Communal people, like all woodlanders, the Guales set up their towns to reflect this fact The central feature of Guale towns, onto which homes faced, was the *buhio* (Spanish for “hut”), a large community center that hosted council meetings, ceremonies, and festivals *Buhios* were circular buildings with lashed-pine ribs, anywhere from twenty-five to sixty meters in diameter Similar, though

smaller, lineage dwellings stood nearby, with cultivated fields scattered about the towns' peripheries⁴

Pre-contact, there were many more than the two-to-four thousand Guales remaining in 1650,⁵ after wave upon wave of epidemic disease, coupled with repeated Spanish "pacifications," had wracked the population. The chronicles of the first-entry explorers speak of a densely populated landscape. A very early Spanish source spoke of twenty-two Guale villages in proximity, and a later source mentioned forty Guale towns standing within three or four leagues of one another.⁶ There were still several hundred inhabitants in each town in 1565, when the Spaniards settled in at their Floridian headquarters of St. Augustine.⁷

Prior to invasion, the Guales lived comfortably through a combination of maize-and-bean farming and hunting and fishing, occupations organized by the seasons.⁸ Like other woodlanders, including the Timucuan and Apalachees closest to them, the Guales moved around a regular circuit of habitation sites to take full advantage of their seasonal food sources. René Laudonnière, a sixteenth-century French adventurer who attempted to plant a French colony in La Florida, recorded that the Apalachees, close neighbors of the Guales who shared their subsistence patterns, planted corn "twice a year, to wit: in March and June," leaving crops "but three months on the ground; the other six months, they let the earth rest." In addition to corn, the people cultivated "fine pumpkins, and very good beans." The rest of the year, he said, the people lived on fish and game, mainly turkey and deer.⁹ This was a fairly common pattern throughout the woodlands.

Matrilineage is obvious in the way titles of office were inherited by the first-contact Natives of La Florida. If the primary sources are read carefully, it becomes apparent that, originally, leadership titles moved from uncles to matrilineal nephews and from aunts to matrilineal nieces—i.e., through the matrilineal grandmother.¹⁰ The *cacica* (female chief) of the Timucuan at the turn of the seventeenth century was, for instance, the daughter of the former chief's sister.¹¹ In other words, she was in the direct matrilineal line of the old *cacique*'s (male chiefs) mother. Dona Ana, the Guale *cacica* of San Pedro in 1603, was the niece of the former *micco* (chief), i.e., the child of his wife's sister.¹² On the other hand, during a 1576 attack on the Guales, the Spanish hanged the *micco*'s heir, his nephew.¹³ (The term *micco* is Muscogean; the Spanish used the terms *cacica* and *cacique* to indicate the same office as female or male, respectively.)

Recent scholarship suggests that the Guale title of *micco* was awarded on sheer promigéniture,¹⁴ but this conclusion should be regarded as speculative and contaminated by Spanish practices. Before the system was disordered by the Spanish, *miccos* seem to have been elected to office by what John Lanning called "the secondary micos [*sic*]," i.e., by the lineage leaders of the area.¹⁵ This would have been in keeping with the customs of other matrilineal woodlanders, where promigéniture played no role, since numerous members of a specific lineage were eligible to be nominated to an open title. However the Guale system originally operated, the

Spanish worked diligently to disrupt and degrade it, in the desire to enforce their own organizational patterns on the culture, the better to manipulate it to their ends¹⁶

As with all indigenous nations, the Natives of La Florida suffered staggering population drops as a direct result of contact. The massive depopulation that left the Guales *desaparecidos* in their own land did not, however, begin with the establishment of St. Augustine in 1565. It began generations earlier, in 1513, with the first Spanish *entradas*, or military intrusions, into La Florida. The charters behind these incursions always jabbered brightly about bringing Christianity to the pagans, yet Spanish pretenses of godly goals aside, *entradas* were not gentle. They were murderous looting sprees.

The primary mechanism by which the Spanish rationalized their larceny was something called *el requerimiento*, or The Requirement, surely the most idiotic instrument of foreign policy ever devised. Promulgated in 1513, with its fullsome statement, several pages long, of Christian rights and Native obligations, it "makes curious reading today," as Lewis Hanke observed in 1959.¹⁷ It did not make for less ridiculous reading in its own day. Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474–1566), the Dominican priest who fought so ardently for Native rights, once said that, upon first reading the *requerimiento*, he did not know whether to laugh or cry.¹⁸

Briefly, the *requerimiento* stipulated the conditions that had to be met "before the conquistadores could legally launch hostilities" against the Native population they addressed.¹⁹ Starting with the Catholic account of Church history and the papal justification for the seizure of the Americas, the *requerimiento* moved on to the obligation of X Native group to acknowledge Spanish rule and accept Christian missionizing. If X Natives refused either or both stipulations, the Spaniards were empowered to punish them with a military *entrada*, a "just war" that would scourge the Natives to the ends of the land and then oppress them under the yoke of hard rule. "We will take you and your wives and children and make them slaves," it thundered. A refusal also empowered the Spaniards to seize all of X Natives' property and "do to you all the harm and evil we can." No shame would accrue to the Spanish as a result, however, since "the deaths and harm which you will receive thereby will be your own blame."²⁰

The idea was that the *requerimiento* be read to each Native population at first contact, by way of fair warning. The catch-22 was, of course, that the *requerimiento* was read in Spanish with, at best, a half-hearted attempt at translation. Given the shaky or nonexistent translations, X Natives were left scratching their heads and squinting, still trying to comprehend what was being said, when the Spanish opened fire. In some instances, the Natives were shackled together *before* the *requerimiento* was read, to facilitate the immediate enslavement to follow.²¹ In effect, then, the *requerimiento* was a psychological dispensation that allowed the Spanish to set about hacking, slashing, killing, mutilating, burning, stealing, and enslaving, all wonderfully guilt-free. The magic incantation of the *requerimiento* explains why the Spanish felt empowered to harass the southeastern coastlines of

America, seizing slaves and attempting abortive colonies, almost from the moment in 1513 that Juan Ponce de León first sailed out of Puerto Rico for “Bimini ”

In search, some say, of the fantastic fountain of youth,²² León stumbled across something more around Easter, promptly naming the lands in honor of *Pascua Florida*, or the Feast of Flowers, a festival associated with Easter²³ At his second landing of the voyage, the local Native population repulsed his crew in a pair of skirmishes that left two Spaniards with fish-bone arrows in their flesh²⁴ The hostilities notwithstanding, based on León’s reports of a wonderous landscape, the Spanish king named him *adelantado* (governor) of Bimini and La Florida, granting him a charter to colonize La Florida in 1513 León’s fantasy that “colonization consisted of nothing more than to arrive and cultivate the land and pasture his livestock” soon took a nosedive, however, dashed by his ill-fated attempt to cultivate and pasture someone else’s land in 1514²⁵ Determined resistance to invasion by the Natives of modern Florida culminated in two pitched battles in which León was seriously wounded The attacks drove the Spaniards back to Havana, where León died of his injuries²⁶

León’s rather dramatic failure aside, the Spanish presence in La Florida was only temporarily confined to slave runs, such as those of Pedro de Salazar between 1514–1516 or those of Pedro de Quejo and Francisco Gordillo in 1521²⁷ The Spanish were still fully intent upon colonizing La Florida, expecting to find the same mineral wealth there that they had in México and Perú In 1525, Quejo was sent exploring rather than slaving, for the express purpose of descrying land on which to plant a permanent Spanish settlement His information, which included the coastline as far up as Chesapeake Bay,²⁸ set the stage for the 1526 colonizing attempt of Lucas Vásquez de Ayllón, a judge from Santo Domingo (Haiti)

Favored with six ships carrying six hundred people—including women, children, and African slaves, along with the usual retinue of friars, sailors, and soldiers—Ayllón sallied forth into one of the most spectacular failures in the annals of European colonization Running aground, losing his way, aimlessly sending out ships hither and yon to reconnoiter, and moving his settlement twice, Ayllón finally nestled his dwindling colony in somewhere around Sapelo Sound, where the colonists promptly began to die of disease and starvation There was no food to be had, as a result of the prior depredations and disease the Spanish had visited on the Native populations during their slave runs Some of the colonists tried moving into the towns of the local Guales, only to be killed Next, the African slaves revolted, and the Guales attacked the colony, until the desperate remainder of the Spanish expedition ran for “home,” in the Antilles Only one hundred fifty of the original six hundred survived Ayllón himself had died within a month of settling in Sapelo Sound²⁹

Next came the famed and furious *conquistador* Pánfilo de Narváez, who fared even worse Chosen for his proven viciousness toward the Natives of the Caribbean, Narváez, too, dragged out six hundred people, including women and Afri-

cans, but in only five ships Before he even left the Caribbean, one hundred forty men deserted, while two ships were demolished in a hurricane that claimed another sixty lives When Narváez finally left shore in 1528, he quickly ran aground Two storms battered and pushed him north, only so that he might run out of supplies, once he hit the west coast of Florida³⁰

Like *conquistadores* everywhere, Narváez attempted to “live off the land,” which meant seizing Native captives and forcing them to lead the invaders to towns and food, so that the Spanish might help themselves to whatever they wanted by plunder In this instance, however, the Apalachee and Timucuan “scouts” turned the tables, leading the Spaniards on a wild goose chase through the marshes and swamps of the Florida panhandle, steering carefully clear of the towns The debilitated Spaniards were then attacked at various times by the Apalachees Ultimately left in the lurch by their anti-guides, the Spanish became so desperate as to eat their own horses Rafting to the coast, the two-hundred fifty survivors of the trek were lost to the waters of the Gulf of México Some rafts wrecked, others— including that bearing Narváez—floated into the gulf waves, their complements presumably drowned The handful of survivors begged the Natives upon whom they had so recently preyed for succor and were taken in (Somehow, the survivors managed to present this act of Native generosity as a capture) Only four of Narváez’s crew made it back to Spanish lands, including Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, who left a hair-raising account of their grueling, two-year walk home³¹

Narváez might have been mourned by the Spaniards, but the Natives did not similarly grieve When Hernando de Soto took off on his bloody *entrada* into La Florida, the *cacique* of Acuera contemptuously replied to his reading of the *requerimiento*:

que ya por otros castellanos, que años antes habían ido a aquella tierra, tenía larga noticia de quién ellos eran y sabía muy bien su vida y costumbres, que era tener por oficio andar vagamundos de tierra en tierra viviendo de robar y saquear y matar a los que no les habían hecho ofensa alguna, que, con gente tal, en ninguna manera quería amistad ni pax, sino guerra mortal y perpetua, que, puesto caso que ellos fuesen tan valientes como se jataban, no les había temor alguno, porque sus vasallos y él no se tenían por menos valientes, para prueba de lo cual les prometía mantenerles guerra todo el tiempo que en su provincia quisiesen parar, no descubierta ni en batalla campal, aunque podía dársela, sino con asechanzas y emboscadas, tomándolos descuidados, por tanto, les apercebía y requería se guardasen y recatasen de él y de los suyos, a los cuales tenía mandado le llevasen cada semana dos cabezas de cristianos, y no más, que con ellas se contentaba, porque degollando cada ocho días dos de ellos, pensaba acabarlos todos en pocos años, pues, aunque polasen y hiciesen asiento, no podían perpetuarse porque no traían mujeres para tener hijos y pasar adelante con su generación Y a lo que decían de dar la obediencia al rey de España, respondía que él era rey en su tierra y que no tenía necesidad de hacerse vasallo de otro quien tantos tenía como él, que por muy viles y apocados tenía a los que se metían debajo de yugo ajeno pudiendo vivir libres, que él y todos los suyos protestaban morir cien muertes por sustentar su libertad y la de su tierra, que aquella respuesta daban entonces in para

sempre A lo del vasallaje y a lo que decían que eran criados del emperador y rey de Castilla y que andaban conquistando nuevas tierras para su imperio respondía que lo fuesen muy enhorabuena, que ahora los tenían en menos pues confesaban ser criados de otro y que trabajaban y ganaban reinos para que otros señoreasen y gozasen del fructo de sus trabajos, que ya que en semejante empresa pasaban hambre y cansancio y los demás afanes y aventuraban a perder sus vidas, les fuera mejor, más honroso y provechoso ganar y adquirir para sí y para sus descendientes, que no para los ajenos, y que, pues era tan viles que estando tan lejos no perdían el nombre de criados, no esperasen amistad en tiempo alguno, que no podía emplearla tan vilmente ni quería saber el orden de su rey, que él sabía lo que había de hacer en su tierra y de la manera que los había de tratar, por tanto, que se fuesen lo más presto que pudiesen si no querían morir todos a sus manos

[that he was already perfectly aware of who they were from other Castellians who had gone through that land years before, and he thoroughly understood their lifestyle and customs They regularly roamed about from place to place as vagabonds, living by robbing, sacking, and killing people who had offered them no injury There was no way he wanted friendship or peace with such people, only deadly and perpetual war Even should they turn out to be as brave as they boasted, he did not fear them in the slightest, since he and his subjects were no less valiant As proof of this, he promised them that he would sustain unrelenting war against them as long as they might wish to linger in his province, not out in the open or in a pitched battle— although he could do that—but by waylaying and ambushing (them), taking them unawares

[Therefore, he warned and required them to be on their guard and withdraw from him and his, for he had ordered his people to bring in exactly two Christian heads a week He would be content with just that many, since, by beheading two every eight days, he felt he could finish them all off in a few years Even should they colonize and set themselves up as settlers, they could not reproduce themselves, since they had not brought along womenfolk to bear children, thus to ensure that their lineages continued into the future

[He would furthermore have those who would wanted him to make his obeisance to the King of Spain understand that he was the King in his own land, and that he was not obliged to become the vassal of someone who was no more than his equal He reviled as quite contemptible any who put themselves under someone else's yoke, when they could live lives of freedom He and all his people vowed to sustain a hundred dead to keep their liberty and that of their country They were giving this answer, then and forever

[The Chief continued that he should, perhaps, congratulate those in bondage and those who, claiming to be subjects of the emperor and king of Castille, wandered around conquering new lands for his empire However, he now held them in even less esteem for having admitted to being servile to another, working and winning kingdoms so that other people could set themselves up as rulers and enjoy the fruits of their labor Indeed, in this self-same enterprise, they walked around hungry and weary and were otherwise pressed into adventuring at the risk of their lives It would be better for them, more honorable and advantageous, to win and amass riches for themselves and their descendants, rather than some third party They were even more detestable for being unable to shake off the role of underling, despite being so far away from home Consequently, they needed not look for friendship any time soon The chief would neither devalue his friendship thus nor stand for being ordered around by their king, for he understood what should be done in his own land

and how he ought to treat them Therefore, he bid them begone as fast as they could, if they did not all wish to die at his hands }³²

The chief’s well-laid reproof did not prevent Soto, another savage *conquistador*, from wreaking serious havoc on the Native populations of La Florida during his 1539–1542 spree Soto went avenging with nine ships and over seven hundred people, including hundreds of Native porters and concubines³³ Once more, his charter called for him to plant a colony, but, instead, he hacked, sacked, kidnapped, conned, and killed his way from Tampa Bay up the Florida peninsula, through the Southeast across the Mississippi and back again³⁴ If Soto was universally inimical to the Natives unlucky enough to have been in his path, they were initially polite to him One of the first recorded contacts with Native Americans in the American Southeast was with Soto in 1541 Twenty-five miles south of present-day Augusta, Georgia, at Cofitachique, or present-day Silver Bluff on the Savannah River, the Timucuan *cacica* of the region “sent her niece, borne in a litter, the Indians showing her much respect,” with gifts and this greeting:³⁵

Excellent Lord: Be thy coming to these shores most happy My ability can in no way equal my wishes, nor my services become the merits of so great a prince; nevertheless, good wishes are to be valued more than all the treasures of the earth without them With sincerest and purest good-will, I tender you my person, my lands, my people and make these small gifts³⁶

Having bestowed her aunt’s present of five or six strings of pearls on the Spaniards—according to Rodrigo Ranjel, one participant of Soto’s *entrada*, she also took a string of pearls from her own neck and draped it over Soto’s head as a gesture of goodwill—she disappeared into the forest³⁷ Soto and his raiders repaid the *cacica*’s friendliness ill, promptly plundering the local charnel house and stripping the corpses of two hundred pounds of pearls, Spanish trading beads, two Biscayan axes, and a glass gem, which the grave-robbers originally mistook for an emerald When she saw what the Spaniards had done, the *cacica* scornfully upbraided them for their sacrilegious pearl-lust “Do you hold that of much account? Go to Talimeco, my village, and you will find so many that your horses cannot carry them”³⁸

Soto obliged, seizing her and her entourage prisoner when she refused to provision him with supplies and men to tote them The pearls proved a heavy burden along the way, however, and one bearer of a six-pound bag rebelled against carrying the worthless trinkets any farther When a Spanish soldier also refused to lug them, the Timucuan boldly announced, “If you will not have them, I will not carry them any longer They will remain here” Then, opening the sack, the porter whipped it in circles aloft, all the pearls scattering to the winds Shortly afterwards, the *cacica* and her women escaped, later turning up at Cofitachique, safe and sound³⁹

Through such tactics as these, Soto managed to leave a putrid taste in the

mouths of every Native group he met. Indeed, Spanish records from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries abound with traumatic Native memories of him.⁴⁰ In 1606, when the Franciscan Father Martín Prieto attempted to contact the Timucuan near the short-lived Santa Ana *doctrina* (praying town), the medicine man of Potano spurned his advances. His *cacique* had been seized by Soto and made one of his slaves, thus instilling in him an undying hatred of the Christians.⁴¹ When Prieto approached the aged *cacique* in the council house, he “turned to the wall and told the others to throw [Prieto] out. Meanwhile he foamed at the mouth and with great anger scolded the chief men because they had consented to allow [Prieto] to approach where he was.”⁴² Although Prieto later left glowing accounts of his conversions in the area and even claimed the *cacique* to have been among them (exaggerating conversion statistics was a commonplace “white” lie), it is notable that none of the enumerated baptisms occurred at the Santa Ana *doctrina*.⁴³

Importantly, epidemics raged in the wake of each *entrada*. Malaria followed León; smallpox, measles, and typhoid fever ran behind Ayllón and Narváez, while the bubonic plague—the Black Death itself—scourged Florida after Soto.⁴⁴ It is impossible to know what the pre-contact population was, but, considering the effect of the bubonic plague on Europe when it first hit that virgin territory between 1347 and 1400—in some places, up to two-thirds of the population died—it is not unreasonable to triple the existing Native populations at the time. St. Augustine was established in 1565. Jerald T. Milanich put the coastal population at 350,000 in 1513, while Kathleen A. Deagan put the population of La Florida at contact at one million inhabitants.⁴⁵ Native populations went seriously downhill from there.

Despite the impressive failure of the four invasionary attempts by León, Ayllón, Narváez, and Soto, the Spanish crown still regarded La Florida as an essential cog in its colonial wheel, entertaining fantasies of unearthing an easy overland route from México to the Atlantic coast, thus circumventing the French and British pirates importuning the Gulf of México. Consequently, yet another *entrada* was mounted in 1559, this time under the command of Tristán de Luna y Arellano, who carried along 1,500 hundred settlers, servants, soldiers, and priests in thirteen ships.⁴⁶

Thanks to the murderous sweep of earlier *entradas*, known towns were all ruined or moved, and the population severely reduced by the time Luna arrived. By then, the surviving Natives knew full well the measure of these metal men and the bad medicine that dogged their steps. Consequently, they refused to give an inch or deplete themselves by offering the Spaniards succor. Luna’s expedition consequently fell to famine and feuding, with a little mutiny thrown in for good measure. Finally admitting defeat, Luna headed back to Havana to drop off the most fractious of his contingent, while a smaller expedition skimmed the Atlantic coastline, seeking a usable port opening onto good land.⁴⁷

French-Spanish squabbling over the “ownership” of La Florida followed, with the French staking out miserable outposts that the Spanish soon destroyed.

Ultimately, Pedro Menéndez de Avilés arrived on the Florida coast in 1565, erecting St Augustine at an unpromising landing, having been driven out of better sites by the French ⁴⁸ Avilés quickly turned the tables, however, routing the French and putting a few more teeth into the Spanish mastiff patrolling La Florida ⁴⁹ Gratitude did not move the king of Spain to support Avilés's outpost, however Once planted, St Augustine continued as the unloved stepchild of Spanish conquest for the remainder of its North American colonial period. Inadequately supplied and always understaffed, St Augustine was, nevertheless, established enough to visit sustained chaos on the local Native populations and cultures ⁵⁰

The poor provisioning at St Augustine reflected the Spanish expectation that the local Native populations, whom they arrogantly conceived of as their lackeys, would supply them with all the food and personal services they needed This proved to be a vain hope The seasonal relocation pattern of the Guales, as well as their reluctance to supply their enemies, was to become the despair of the missionaries, who struggled to force sedentary peasantry upon the recalcitrant people The abject failure of the Jesuit missions among the Guales in 1571 was not smally attributable to this firm Guale resistance to being confined in permanent farming villages for the benefit of the Spanish ⁵¹

Undeterred, the Spanish civil authorities slapped demands for "tribute" on the coastal peoples with whom they had allied themselves These demands were not understood by the Guales or other nations as a "corn tax," however, but as gifts, after the Native pattern of the large-scale gift exchanges that accompanied alliances Wittingly or not, the Spanish played into Native assumptions by making regular gifts to allied chiefs When, for instance, the new governor, Gonzalo Méndez de Canzo, arrived in La Florida in 1596, the twenty-two Spanish-allied chiefs appeared to greet him, and he replied with gifts of "flour, maize, clothing, and trinkets " Over the next month, more dignitaries arrived, all leaving with significant gifts ⁵² A close reading of Spanish records thus shows that what the Spanish styled as tribute was really the Native end of reciprocal gift-giving ⁵³ Indeed, Diego de Velasco, lieutenant governor of La Florida, openly acknowledged that the gifting was mutual, although he hypocritically used this understanding as an excuse to steal a stash of pearls from the *micco* of Guale ⁵⁴ (In another sensational incident, the *micco* of Guale actually swallowed a quantity of pearls rather than allow another commander, Alonso de Solís, to steal them ⁵⁵)

Over time, the Spanish authorities at St Augustine became progressively more stingy with gifts, on the one hand, yet shrill in their upped demands for more food and labor from the Natives on the other The *micco* of Guale remarked bitterly in 1576 that the Spanish had apparently "made him a Christian" just to turn him into a servant and "to steal his property " ⁵⁶ The Guales, Apalachees, and Timucuans looked at the swaggering foreigners who took without reciprocating and began refusing to give in the first place This reluctance to enter into one-sided gifting circles most likely caused the failure of Captain Juan Pardo to erect a line of inland

forts to create the coveted overland route to México⁵⁷

The Spanish consistently justified their invasion of America with the godly necessity of bringing the Natives to Christianity, but missionary efforts in La Florida were less than glorious. When the castaway Andrés de Segura entered the Guale lands of Asao-Talaxe in 1595, he detected no missionary, or even Spanish, presence. In the *doctrina* of San Pedro, where “many Christian Indian men and women” reputedly lived, there were no Christian services of any kind, since “in all Florida there was only one cleric, very old”⁵⁸ (Segura probably referred to the steady Baltasar López, who had arrived in 1583⁵⁹). In fact, there were more clerics than one, but they came and went in such a dizzying round of musical friars that Segura’s observations hit the emotional truth: Not only did the *doctrina* converts lack clerical services, but the better percentage of Spanish colonists born in St Augustine had never “received the sacrament” in their lives.⁶⁰ Between 1594 and 1597, only twenty-four baptisms took place, and these were primarily of Spanish children born in the New World.⁶¹ These baptismal records conflict with the glowing reports of the friars, who consistently claimed that they were reaping bountiful harvests in the fields of their lord.

Once Guale conversions did begin, they were often the result of mass baptisms. The usual tactic was to “convert” a chief (i.e., enter into a gifting circle with him or her). The chief would then agree to have his or her entire town baptized.⁶² In order to bring this about, the missionaries spotted (and often appointed) *miccos*, sometimes without regard for the actual lineage dispositions of the titles. The most successful efforts were through the auspices of Guales taken as small children to be Europeanized and raised as Christians by the missionaries.

Thus did Father Baltasar López, for instance, pin his hopes in 1595 on a missionary-annointed “*cacique*,” Don Juan, whom López had personally “raised from childhood.” López had great plans for Don Juan as the point man of his conversion efforts, and planned to use him to secure the alliances of “the rest of the Indians” through judicious presents of food in time of need.⁶³ Ultimately, Don Juan came through exactly as his mentor had hoped, using coercive tactics as *micco* to arrange mass baptisms at his town.⁶⁴ Since such conversions were mandatory, not voluntary, it is hardly surprising that the French later found the people chanting away in Latin, without the slightest grasp of what they were saying.⁶⁵ As Amy Bushnell notes, “new Christians underwent indoctrinals after baptism, not before it.”⁶⁶ Of course, in the midst of the constant plagues and epidemics, deathbed baptisms became the norm.⁶⁷ Such sham “conversions,” often forced on those too ill to protest, are not to be mistaken for acts of conscience on the parts of the dying people.

At the same time, the missionaries became ever more haughty in their efforts to demolish Guale culture. High on the Franciscan hit list was the practice they deemed “polygamy,” but which was actually a ritual marriage of an entire female lineage to one *micco*. Writing of the custom in the year 1562, René de Laudonnière

stated that "it is lawful for the king to have two or three [wives], yet none but the first is honored and acknowledged for queen, and none but the children of the first wife inherit the goods and authority of the father"⁶⁸ The diction here incorporates all the Eurocentric assumptions typically interpolated into European accounts Patrilineage was simply—although quite erroneously—assumed, while "king" is a complete misrepresentation of the the office of *micco*, by which ceremonial twin chiefs shared responsibility rather than authority Misconceptions aside, the friars played up their valiant struggles to uproot this particular custom, perhaps because it was a titillating "evil" that played well among the funding sources back home in Spain

The so-called bigamy perturbed the friars because it was connected in the lascivious Spanish imagination with the perquisites of patriarchy, yet incidental information in the sources show that much more—or, rather, much less—was involved in the marriage custom than one man's pleasuring himself with a harem First, only *miccos* had more than one spouse, and those "extra" wives were, in fact, the matrilineal sisters of his original wife⁶⁹ Since, under Gaules rules, titles of office passed through the female line, a fringe benefit of *micco*-hood was the chief's ability to see to it that his offspring had the inside track on all the titles in his wife's lineage by connecting himself to all the title-keepers in it, his wife and her sisters

Sources also make it obvious that economic interdependence was involved The *micco* was as dependent upon his wife's family for food as her family was upon him for game and kindling When, in 1606, the missionaries pressed one lapsed Christian to put away the additional woman who had taken him to husband after the Guale Revolt, the distraught *micco* pleaded, "If I leave her, I will not have anyone to give me to eat and if I do not enter the house where my children are to bring them food and wood, they will starve"⁷⁰ The man thus needed his wives if he was not to starve, just as they needed his hunting, fishing, and timbering to maintain their households' protein intake Far from the salacious *ménage à trois/quatre/cinq* pruriently imagined by the celibate friars, therefore, multiple marriage among the Guales was closely tied to systems of economics and inheritance Given all this, it becomes apparent that the diehard resistance to the missionary attempt to squelch bigamy—the first thing the Guales did upon revolting in 1597 was to restore their marriage customs—rested upon Guale objections to the disturbance of traditional inheritance patterns being engineered by the friars

Marriage customs were not the only targets of friarly wrath The clothing of the Guales—or, rather, the lack thereof, since the Guales preferred to walk about naked in the summer heat, to the consternation of the missionaries⁷¹—along with their ceremonies, spirituality, body paint, and dances were branded intercourse with the devil Elders who practiced Guale medicine were condemned as witches Dances, as aspects of precontact religions, were forbidden, as was body paint Women were pushed into subservient roles

Not only did the friars reorder customs, but they took it upon themselves to mete

out corporal punishment, as well. Whips were a regular part of church equipment, and the friars did not hesitate to ply them against the backs of any whom they felt were backsliding. Cutting Mass resulted in stripes, as did dancing or engaging in forbidden ceremonies. Physical punishment being unheard-of in Native cultures, many Guaules fled the *doctrinas* to escape the beatings. The friars promptly labeled them rebels and hunted them down like dogs.⁷²

Father Domingo Santos of the *doctrina* at Asao was such a menace with his whip that Captain Francisco Fuentes began filing critical reports on him. When Santos was confronted with his sadism and asked why he flogged “the poor people like that,” he smugly justified himself by retorting that “they were dancing forbidden dances.”⁷³ This charge was patently false, but Santos was not interested in truth. He merely wanted to draw a line in the sand that Fuentes could not cross: The friar knew full well that dancing fell under the purview of religious activities, making it a matter for the clergy, alone, to settle. Since the military was prohibited from usurping authority in ecclesiastical matters, Fuentes was, therefore, unable to forestall Santos’s bloody whip.⁷⁴

Perhaps the Guaules most resented the friarly presumption that missionaries might inflict punishments as they saw fit, humiliating even lineage *micos*. In 1606, for instance, still mopping up after the Guale Revolt of 1597, Bishop Juan de las Cabezas de Altamirano learned that the revolt had been caused by “the imprudence of a friar in administering punishment to the Indians.” Bishop Altamirano put the readiness with the whip down to the Church’s appointment of unsuitable young men to the field. Instead of “hot-tempered” youths with an aversion to work, he recommended that the Church confine its selection to mild-mannered bookworms over the age of forty. He frankly told the king that good conscience forbade the posting of friars of questionable ethics, indicating otherwise unrecorded volumes of friarly misconduct in La Florida. He also recommended against reassigning the jaded missionaries of México to La Florida, as they would simply spread their cynicism and disaffection to their new post.⁷⁵ Thus, the Church itself recognized that the friars in charge of the *doctrinas* were high-handed, short-sighted mischief-makers.

Pretenses that a pure desire to spread Christianity underpinned Spain’s conquests aside, missions did not spring up immediately with the founding of St Augustine. This was not because friars did not accompany the original colony. It was because the Guaules staunchly resisted Christian impositions from the start. The Guaules quickly noticed that disease accompanied the friars from house to house and, as in other nations, began to identify missionaries as the source of disease. Importantly, as with all later revolts, the first recorded Guale revolt, in 1570–1571, was preceded by a ferocious epidemic that ran from 1569 to 1570.⁷⁶ Despite the heavy depopulation caused by disease, leaving next to no one able to tend the fields, there was no concomitant reduction in the “corn tax,” another factor typically inciting rebellion. This epidemic-*cum*-revolt pattern was to be replayed throughout