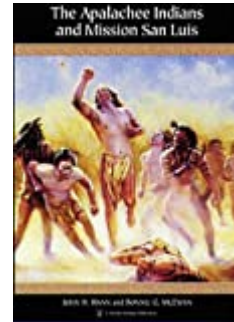


John H. Hann, Bonnie G. McEwan. *The Apalachee Indians and Mission San Luis.* Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1998. 193 pp. \$19.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-8130-1565-1; \$59.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8130-1564-4.



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The Dilemma of the Apalachee

The Dilemma of the Apalachee

Lacking the human and economic resources necessary for settlement expansion in Florida, the Spanish frequently built missions in Native American communities as an effective means of enlarging their territorial influence. These missions promised to save souls and help develop additional allies. While the Spaniards brought useful technologies, a new faith, and other advantages to the communities they entered, many natives discovered that these new relationships came with a steep price.

In *The Apalachee Indians and Mission San Luis*, John H. Hann and Bonnie McEwan offer a concise history of the Apalachee in Western Florida from pre-contact to their encounters with the Spanish and the Catholic Mission system in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Apalachee were the only true Mississippian culture from Florida and, due to their ultimate value to the Spanish, became one of the most documented societies of colonial Florida.

Aware of the Apalachee since Hernando de Soto encountered several communities in 1539, the Spanish did

not attempt to assert their authority when Florida was first settled. Catholics founded missions on Timucuan lands near the Apalachee provinces, but Franciscans did not enter the neighboring culture until 1633. Then, friars visited the area in hopes of easing tensions between the Timucua and Apalachee, not starting another mission. However, this initial contact marked the beginning of the missionization process. The Apalachee, open to attack from nearly every direction, saw the advantage of having the Spanish reside within their communities and welcomed the newcomers.

Mission building in Apalachee Province followed the model used throughout Florida in the seventeenth century. Franciscans lived and worked in a chosen area without military support and entered a community only when invited. In addition, the first missionaries to the Apalachee did not require the residents to provide any form of tribute. These idyllic conditions did not last, once Spanish soldiers began entering Apalachee towns in 1638. After the soldiers arrived, officials in St. Augustine initiated the *repartimiento*, a notorious labor draft. Spanish citizens also began moving into the area to es-

establish a ranching industry, adding another element of cultural conflict for the Apalachee. Faced with increasing challenges to their independence the Apalachee reacted violently to Spain's forced changes.

In a revolt that spread throughout the Apalachee territories in 1647, natives killed three friars and destroyed seven of eight mission compounds. St. Augustine responded to the violence with a force of Spanish and Timucuan soldiers. With the assistance of many Apalachee Christians, the Spanish subdued the region and executed several leaders. Following the revolt, unrest continued in the province, further complicating expansion of the mission system. The Apalachee were not angry at the church, however, but were upset at the demands of the Spanish government, its policies, and the arrival of Spaniards not affiliated with the religious order.

Following the Apalachee Revolt in 1647, Spanish officials consolidated their power and established a secular bureaucracy in the area. By 1656, San Luis, an Apalachee mission town, became Florida's western capital. Additional attention by the Spanish meant an end to Apalachee self-determination and the beginning of a new era of conflict and change. As the Spanish moved to solidify their power, British and French traders began operating across the region, providing yet another potential for danger. Whereas other Native groups found the arrival of additional European powers a possible advantage for purposes of trade and alliance, the Apalachee were already tied to the Spaniards and as such, their fate followed that of the Spaniards. Attacks by the English in 1702 and 1704 nearly ruined Apalachee society and virtually eliminated the culture. A number of those who survived the invasions accepted a British offer of freedom and protection if they moved from the area, while others relocated to St. Augustine or joined neighboring Native nations.

At first glance, *The Apalachee Indians and Mission San Luis* appears to be a densely illustrated text that may not interest the serious scholar. While this book will not answer all questions posed by the archaeologist, anthropologist,

or historian, it provides an excellent primer to the history of the Apalachee. McEwan, the director of archaeology at Mission San Luis, and Hann, a research historian at the San Luis Historic Site, bring together history and archaeology to provide the reader with an informative portrait of a Native American community before, during, and after European contact and colonization. Packed with maps, illustrations, translated documents, and charts, this book will serve as an excellent reference for information about the people and history of Apalachee Province. Where the historical record is lacking or the Apalachee voice silent, archaeological evidence is used to fill the gaps.

Although Hann and McEwan provide details of Apalachee society prior to European contact, the history of Native and European interaction is the most prominent feature of this volume. Still, certain issues that tempered the many cultural interactions are neglected. Considering the British role in the final dispersal of the Apalachee, it would be interesting to learn more about the activities of the French since they settled closer to the Spanish than the British and may have made more positive contact with San Luis's outlying communities. France enjoyed a closer relationship with Spain, but the French wanted to expand their influence in this region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Consideration of these matters would be helpful, but this volume does not set out to answer such questions. *The Apalachee Indians at Mission San Luis* is written to place this community and its experience in a more regional setting and this is clearly accomplished.

Beyond discussion on the cultural interactions, we are given a glimpse into the daily lives of the society before European contact and transformation. Using a variety of sources, the authors show how both cultures changed in response to the other. In the end, we are reminded that the Spanish did not always destroy Native cultures intentionally, that Europeans frequently relied on Native American alliances, and that the destruction of Native societies was not always a result of brutal conquest, but often came after years of cultural transformation.

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