

1982

## Timucuan Rebellion of 1656: The Rebolledo Investigation and the Civil-Religious Controversy

Fred Lamar Pearson, Jr.



Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact [STARS@ucf.edu](mailto:STARS@ucf.edu).

---

### Recommended Citation

Pearson, Jr., Fred Lamar (1982) "Timucuan Rebellion of 1656: The Rebolledo Investigation and the Civil-Religious Controversy," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 61 : No. 3 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol61/iss3/4>

## TIMUCUAN REBELLION OF 1656: THE REBOLLEDO INVESTIGATION AND THE CIVIL-RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

by FRED LAMAR PEARSON, JR.

**T**HE Timucuan Indians rebelled in 1656 because they had been mistreated by the Spaniards. In particular, the Indians reacted against the forced labor policy which Governor Diego de Rebolledo had sought to impose on them. Forced labor had not originated in Florida during the Rebolledo Administration, but the manner in which the governor sought to carry out his policy proved galling to the Indians. Often when St. Augustine experienced frequent food shortages because of the uncertainty of the *situado*, governors turned to the provinces to procure corn to see the settlers through the difficulty. Apparently such a shortage existed in 1656, for Governor Rebolledo ordered the Indians in Timucua and Apalachee to bring grain to St. Augustine.<sup>1</sup> The Indians, who had no beasts of burden, had little choice; if they obeyed the order, they would have to transport the cargo themselves. Further, providing food for the St. Augustine settlement cut seriously into the Indian's reserve. Poor soil, especially in Timucua, and the marginal agricultural practices the Indians utilized frequently meant that the Indian reserves were precariously low. Any demands tended to upset the balance. The Indians resented Rebolledo's actions, and they complained to the Franciscans. Not only did the Indians protest having to share precious food resources, they protested the potential distance involved in transporting them to St. Augustine. For the Apalachee

---

Fred Lamar Pearson is professor of history, Valdosta State College, Valdosta, Georgia. He wishes to express his appreciation to the Division of Graduate Studies, Valdosta State College, for a research grant and to the Department of History of his college.

1. John R. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors*, Bulletin 73 (Washington, 1922), 338; Fray Juan Gómez de Engraba to Fray Francisco Martínez, March 13, 1657, Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI) 545-10/73, John B. Stetson Collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida (hereafter SC).

Indians it was a distance of 100 leagues each way. The Timucuan *caciques* particularly resented the Rebolledo directive, because it did not distinguish between rulers and subjects. The governor had insisted that the Indian *principales* had to help transport the grain. Whereas the church fathers had recognized social distinctions in Indian society, Governor Rebolledo did not. The *caciques* pointed out that they had no intention of subjecting their *principales* to such indignities; there were servants to perform such tasks. Rebolledo however was not willing to modify his demand.<sup>2</sup>

The *cacique* of Tarihica refused to send his *principales* along with the other servile Indians, all of whom were to carry three *arrobas* (seventy-five pounds) of corn.<sup>3</sup> His fellow *caciques* agreed that Rebolledo's demands amounted to an insult to the *principales*.<sup>4</sup> This arrogance was simply too much. Accordingly, the *cacique* of Santa Cruz de Tarihica decided to do something about the matter. He informed the Timucuan *caciques* of his intention to disregard Rebolledo's order and to resist its execution with war if necessary. The *caciques* were of one accord; they would not obey the governor. When the *cacique* of San Martín took up arms against him, he was joined by the rebellious *caciques* of Sante Fe, San Francisco de Potano, San Pedro, Potohiriba, Machaba, San Francisco de Chuaquin, Tarihica, San Matheo, and several others, a number of whom lived in Apalachee province.<sup>5</sup> Rebolledo had no success at first in subduing the Indians. He then dispatched Sergeant-Major Adrian de Cañizares y Osorio and sixty infantrymen to put down the uprising. Cañizares quelled the rebellion with undue severity, executing eleven

---

2. Gómez to Martínez, March 13, 1657, AGI 54-5-10/73, SC.

3. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1657, AGI 54-5-10/74, SC.

4. Rebolledo would argue later that he did not order the Indians to do this, that he had asked for 500 Timucua warriors to bolster St. Augustine against an impending English invasion. The governor would also deny that he had ordered the Indians to bring corn to St. Augustine for the Spaniards, but that he had requested them to bring food for their own consumption. Rebolledo would hold that the Indians had refused to help at all, but rather that they had elected to profit from the situation which had tied his hands and that they had rebelled against Spanish authority. See Rebolledo to the crown, May 25, 1658, AGI 54-5-10/79, SC.

5. Charles W. Spellman, "The 'Golden Age' of the Florida Missions, 1632-1674," *Catholic Historical Review*, LI (October 1965), 362-63; Gómez to Martínez, April 4, 1657, AGI 54-5-10/74, SC.

caciques.<sup>6</sup> He did not punish the Apalachees because they had not played a major role in the rebellion. Rebolledo, to insure against future disorders, stationed a garrison of twelve soldiers and a lieutenant in Apalachee.<sup>7</sup>

The Timucuan resented bitterly the soldiers' harshness. The execution of the caciques crushed morale, and this excessive action appalled the Franciscans who saw years of religious work in Timucua undone by this display of coercion. Many Indians abandoned their villages, and a mood of pessimism affected the friars. Six brothers quit the Apalachee province and took ship for Havana. They died at sea in a storm.<sup>8</sup>

Governor Rebolledo departed for the scene of the rebellion in November 1656. His ostensible purpose was to conduct a *visita* or inspection of Timucua and Apalachee. The conclusion that emerges however is that he rigged the investigation in an effort to cover up the inadequacies of his administration. Strangely the governor chose to begin his inquiry in Apalachee rather than Timucua, the seat of the rebellion. It is difficult to understand why he spent almost a month in Apalachee and less than a week in Timucua. Equally hard to comprehend is that the governor made little or no effort, while in Timucua, to ascertain the causes of the rebellion. The testimony of the Timucuan Indians, strangely silent on the revolt, dealt with domestic matters. These Indians, no doubt fearful of further punishment, volunteered little information to shed light on the matter. Rebolledo collected evidence only from Indians and did not question any Franciscans. However, upon his return to St. Augustine, the governor charged the Franciscans with responsibility for the rebellion. Rebolledo's reluctance to collect Franciscan depositions suggests strongly that

---

6. Gómez to Martínez April 4, 1657, AGI 54-5-10/74, SC. Swanton, *Early History of the Creek Indians*, 338.

7. Testimonio de la visita clue se hizo en la provincia de apalachee y Timucua fha por el Señor Don Diego de Rebolledo Caballero del horden de Santiago, governador y capitan general de las provincias de la Florida por su Magestad, Auto para hacer [la] Visita General en la provincia de Apalachee, January 16, 1657, SC. AGI. Escribanía de Camara [hereafter EC] leg. 155. Rebolledo to the king, October 18, 1657, in A. M. Brooks, *The Unwritten History of Old St. Augustine*. Copied from the Spanish Archives in Seville, Spain, by Miss A. M. Brooks and translated by Mrs. Annie Averette (St. Augustine, 1909), 102-05.

8. [Governor Rebolledo's] Notificacion y Repuesta [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg. 155.

he did not want to risk any evidence which might be contrary to his objective, namely to place responsibility for the disorder on someone else.<sup>9</sup>

Rebolledo commenced his investigation at the Apalachee village of San Damián de Cupahica (Escambi) where he issued a decree January 16, 1657, outlining the objective of the visita. This decree, subsequently read in all of the towns visited, instructed the Indians to assemble if they so desired.<sup>10</sup> The governor began to hear witnesses on January 17, 1656. Altogether he collected evidence in eleven of the Apalachee towns. Indians in six villages declared the Franciscans had compelled them to serve as cargo bearers. Unfortunately some of the Indians who had been forced to labor had died without the benefit of last rites. The testimony consistently singled out the Franciscans as guilty, but none of it indicted the soldiers for their harshness. Rebolledo, in response to these allegations, issued a decree prohibiting the use of Indians as cargo bearers without authorization from the lieutenant and guaranteeing payment for their services.<sup>11</sup>

Franciscan interference with tribal dancing was an especial concern in three of the Apalachee villages. The Indians informed the governor that the Franciscans had not, until the present, proscribed dancing. The current friars, however, according to the testimony, had beaten and kicked caciques and principal men when their subjects attempted to dance. This unusual treatment of tribal leaders had alarmed the dancers who had fled to avoid similar treatment. The Indians resented this treatment, and they asked the governor to permit them to resume the performance of their ancient dances. Rebolledo granted their request but stipulated that the dances must not be obscene or lewd.<sup>12</sup>

- 
9. Fred Lamar Pearson, Jr., "Spanish-Indian Relations in Florida 1602-1675: Some Aspects of Selected Visitas," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LII (January 1974), 267-71.
  10. Auto para hacer [la] Visita General en la provincia de Apalachee, January 16, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.
  11. Visita de San Damián de Cupahica, January 17, 1657. Visita del lugar de San Pedro de Patali, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Luis [de Talimali], January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Martín de Tomoli, January 23, 1657; Visita de San Joseph de Ocuya, February 5, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Francisco de Oconi, February 6, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.
  12. Visita de San Damián de Cupahica, January 17, 1657; Visita del lugar de

Franciscan prohibitions against playing the Indian ball game resulted in complaints in two villages. The game was rough, and serious injuries occurred frequently. Since the Indians covered their bodies with paint to resemble animals identifying their clan totem, the priests felt that the ritualistic practices were diabolical. Rebolledo, however, granted the Indians permission to resume the game as long as the participants did not injure themselves.<sup>13</sup>

The Indians of eight Apalachee towns protested that the Franciscans had attempted to prevent them from providing food or lodging for soldiers passing through the area. Purportedly they were offended by the friars' actions because the soldiers had treated them kindly. The Indians of San Luis de Talimali claimed that the priests had whipped one of their principal men and had threatened to punish the cacique because the Indians had given food to soldiers. The governor ruled that Indians could, if they wished, supply food and lodging for the military.<sup>14</sup>

In three villages the Indians claimed that the Franciscans had bought food from them at low prices, sold the commodities, and then had used the profit to purchase ornaments for the church. The Indians protested also that the friars had appropriated food on occasion and had not paid for it. The people of San Martín de Tomoli, in particular, had resented the actions of Father Juan de Paredes. According to their statement, food had been planted to sustain Father Paredes, but any excess was to go to Indians who needed it. There had been a good harvest, but Father Paredes had shipped most of it out of the province. This meant that

---

San Juan de Azpalaga, January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Martín de Tomoli, January 23, 1657; Aranzas que se dió a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AGI.EC.leg.155.

13. Visita de San Damián de Cupahica, January 17, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Martín de Tomoli, January 23, 1657; Aranzas que se dió a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AGI.EC.leg. 155. For an excellent discussion of the ball game see Amy Bushnell, "That Demonic Game: The Campaign to Stop Indian Pelota," *The Americas*, XXXV (July 1978), 1-19.
14. Visita de San Damián de Cupahica, January 17, 1657; Visita del lugar [San Antonio] de Bacuqua, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Pedro de Patali, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Luis [de Talimali], January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Juan de Azpalaga, January 22, 1657; Visita de San Joseph de Ocuya, February 5, 1657; Visita del lugar San Lorenzo de Ibitachuco, February 7, 1657; Aranzas que se dió a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AGI.EC.leg.155.

many Indians had gone hungry, and the inhabitants lacked sufficient seed to plant the friar's field the following spring. The Indians made no such accusations against the military, avowing in each village that the soldiers had treated them well. Rebolledo issued instructions to correct the grievances.<sup>15</sup>

The San Damián de Cupahica inhabitants informed Rebolledo that the Franciscans had interfered with the trading privileges they had formerly enjoyed at San Marcos de Apalachee. The Indians customarily had worked on the docks as stevedores, for which they had received compensation. Also, they had traded with the sailors. The priests, however, had stopped this practice. They had bought the Indian trade items at low prices and sold them to the soldiers. Additionally, the fathers had required the Indians to carry the products to the wharf and without compensation. Rebolledo did not question the Franciscans in this instance; rather, he ordered no one to interfere with the Indian trade at San Marcos, and he reiterated that Indians must be compensated for services rendered.<sup>16</sup>

The Indians of eleven Apalachee towns asserted that the soldiers with whom they had had contact had treated them very well, and they had responded by furnishing them with food. Accordingly, the Indians requested Rebolledo to retain the garrison on a permanent basis to provide protection.<sup>17</sup> Indians in seven Apalachee pueblos expressed their appreciation for the governor's decision to increase the size of the provincial garrison. The stronger military contingent would prevent such enemies as

- 
15. Visita de San Damián de Cupahica, January 17, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Martín de Tomoli, January 23, 1657; Visita de San Joseph de Ocuja, February 5, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AG.I.EC.leg.155.
  16. Visita de San Damián de Cupahica, January 17, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AG.I.EC.leg.155.
  17. Visita de San Damián de Cupahica, January 17, 1657; Visita del lugar [San Antonio] de Bacuqua, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Pedro de Patali, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Luis [de Talimali], January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Juan de Azpalaga, January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Martín de Tomoli, January 23, 1657; Visita de San Joseph de Ocuja, February 5, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Francisco de Oconi, February 6, 1657; Visita del lugar de [La Concepción] de Ayubali, February 6, 1657; Visita del lugar San Lorenzo de Ibitachuco, February 7, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Miguel de Asile, February 8, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AG.I.EC.leg.155.

the English and French from establishing a salient at San Marcos. More directly the soldiers would provide protection for the Christian Apalachee against attacks of heathen Indians.<sup>18</sup>

In six Apalachee villages the inhabitants complained about corporal punishment which purportedly they had received from the Franciscans. In several instances, the Indians charged, the friars had stopped ceremonies, destroyed food containers, and lashed them for no apparent reason. The Indians protested that the Franciscans had punished caciques, principal men, and subjects without regard to rank. This humiliation of Indians led to disciplinary problems. Rebolledo heard the complaints and ordered that no one could punish a cacique or principal man without permission of the governor.<sup>19</sup>

The problem of soil sterility manifested itself in only one village, San Antonio de Bacuqua. Here the Indians reported that they had experienced a food shortage, that their village site was an old one, and that the fields had, accordingly, lost much of their fertility. Also, the wooded area around the town had been reduced to the point that firewood was difficult to obtain. Consequently, when the Indians requested permission to relocate their village, Rebolledo granted the request.<sup>20</sup>

The inhabitants of two villages complained that Franciscans had destroyed personal property without reason. Purportedly Friar Francisco Pascual had broken food dishes on one occasion when the Indians of San Antonio de Bacuqua had attempted to honor a neighboring cacique. The Indians had fled to avoid possible physical punishment. And in San Luis de Talimali the

- 
18. Visita de San Damían de Cupahica, January 17, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Luis [de Talimali], January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Juan de Azpalaga, January 22, 1657; Visita de San Joseph de Ocuya, February 5, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Francisco de Oconi, February 6, 1657; Visita del lugar de [La Concepción] de Ayubali, February 5, 1657; Visita del lugar San Lorenzo de Ibitachuco, February 7, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.
  19. Visita del lugar [San Antonio] de Bacuqua, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Pedro de Patali, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Luis [de Talimali], January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Juan de Azpalaga, January 22, 1657; Visita de San Joseph de Ocuya, February 5, 1657; Visita del lugar San Lorenzo de Ibitachuco, February 7, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657 SC.AGLEC.leg.155.
  20. Visita del lugar [San Antonio] de Bacuqua, January 19, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.

Indians charged that the friars had destroyed cooking vessels supposedly because they cooked too slowly.<sup>21</sup> Rebolledo assured the Indians of his intention to prevent future recurrences.

Three villages did not currently have a priest, and they protested that fact. Three caciques lamented that their subjects had been insubordinate. The cacique of the San Juan de Azpalaga pueblo declared that his principal men had been disobedient. Rebolledo promised to do all that he could to procure priests for villages lacking them, and he ordered the principal men to obey their caciques.<sup>22</sup>

Prior to his departure Governor Rebolledo issued an edict for Apalachee. It required the return of all male and female Timucuan Indians in Apalachee to Timucua within fifteen days; the punishment for noncompliance was the lash and forced labor for males, the lash only for females. The governor placed responsibility for execution of the decree upon the caciques and principal men.<sup>23</sup> Rebolledo's apparent motivation for this ordinance was to minimize contacts between the Timucuan and the Apalachee, supposedly to contain future rebellious tendencies.

Rebolledo thus concluded his inspection of Apalachee province. He had spent almost one month conducting an investigation in an area peripheral to the focus of the rebellion. Due to the great distance between the towns of Timucua, Rebolledo dispatched Captain Luis de Florencia to the various villages requesting the caciques, principal men, and others to assemble in San Pedro de Potohiriba for the purpose of investigation.<sup>24</sup> On February 13, 1657, the Timucuan arrived in compliance with the governor's request. Diego de Salvador, who served as interpreter, explained to the Indians that Rebolledo

---

21. Visita del lugar [San Antonio] de Bacuqua, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Luis [de Talimali], January 22, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.

22. Visita del lugar [San Antonio] de Bacuqua, January 19, 1657; Visita de San Joseph de Ocuya, February 6, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Pedro de Patali, January 19, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Luis [de Talimali], January 22, 1657; Visita del lugar de San Juan de Azpalaga, January 22, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657; SC.AGLEC.leg.155.

23. Bando que publico por la provincia de Apalachee, February 10, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.

24. Auto, February 13, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.

had come to Timucua to determine the cause of the rebellion and to hear their complaints. Few problems emerged from the testimony. Governor Rebolledo granted the *cacicazgo* (chieftanship) of San Francisco to the Indian, Francisco, and he ordered an insubordinate Indian to obey his cacique. Not a single Timucuan registered a complaint to the governor about the soldiers which was consistent with the testimony Rebolledo had obtained in Apalachee. Accordingly, Rebolledo gave the Timucuan the same directives he had issued in Apalachee, thus speedily concluding his inspection of the province.<sup>25</sup> Consistent with his practice in Apalachee, Rebolledo did not question the Franciscans.

Rebolledo returned to St. Augustine shortly afterwards, apparently convinced that he had collected sufficient evidence to prove that the Timucuan had rebelled because of Franciscans mistreatment. The testimony he had gathered supported that belief. The reports Rebolledo had received from his officers in Apalachee seemed to bolster his case still further. On May 8, 1657, Sergeant-Major Adrian de Cañizares y Osorio, who had suppressed the Timucuan rebellion, reported to the governor that the Florida Franciscan Father Provincial, Francisco de San Antonio, had appeared in Apalachee province shortly after the governor's departure and had behaved mysteriously. Cañizares aware of the evidence that Rebolledo had collected, suspected that the father provincial had come to Apalachee for some purpose, and that he would ascertain what purpose it was. The soldiers reported that the provincial had received letters from a friar and an Indian in Timucua which apparently had prompted his trip from St. Augustine to visit the Timucuan and Apalachee missions. The soldiers, however, did not know the contents of the letters.<sup>26</sup>

The soldiers' report had alarmed Cañizares who suspected that the provincial might be conducting an investigation. Ac-

---

25. Visita del lugar de San Pedro [de Potohiriba] y demas caciques de Ustaca [Timucua], February 13, 1657; Otra Visita [San Pedro de Potohiriba], February 13, 1657; Aranzas que se dio a todos los lugares de Apalachee, January 17, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

26. Cañizares to Rebolledo, May 8, May 21, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

cordingly, he asked Father San Antonio about conditions in Timucua. At this point, however, the provincial became evasive, and while admitting that he had received letters from Timucua, he refused to comment concerning them. This reticence disturbed Cañizares for he suspected that the letters and Father San Antonio's arrival had a relation to the Timucuan rebellion and Rebolledo's investigation. Also, the provincial's reluctance to discuss Timucua and his subsequent insistence on raising probing questions about Apalachee bothered Cañizares. Father Provincial San Antonio asserted in essence that a false peace now prevailed in Apalachee and that serious Indian unrest existed behind a facade forcibly imposed by the presence of a strengthened garrison. Cañizares assured Governor Rebolledo that he had not permitted the provincial's assertion to go unanswered, and that he had charged the Franciscans with intriguing with the Indians in an effort to get the soldiers withdrawn. The friars had, he believed, especially concentrated attention on Cacique Martín of San Antonio de Bacuqua, hoping indirectly to influence Don Luis of San Luis de Talimali, the cacique of Apalachee's most important village. Cañizares reported with pride that the Franciscan effort had failed.<sup>27</sup>

Cañizares indicated that, at first, he had suspected Franciscan efforts with Cacique Martín, who had informed him of a supposed food shortage in Apalachee. At the same time, the cacique had urged a reduction of the garrison from twelve to six soldiers to prevent undue hardship on the Indians. Cañizares, disturbed by this request, waited until the Father Provincial San Antonio had departed for St. Augustine before trying to ascertain if other Apalachee caciques shared Cacique Martín's sentiments. He then reported that there was nothing to fear; the caciques had reiterated their gratitude for the manner in which the soldiers had treated them. Cañizares believed that the provincial had no other purpose in mind than to cause the governor difficulty, for apparently the Franciscans had been envious of the esteem the Indians held for the military. Cañizares reasoned that it must have been galling for the Franciscans not to have been able to

---

27. *Ibid.*

influence Cacique Luis and through him the other Apalachee chiefs.<sup>28</sup>

Adjutant Pedro de la Puerta's report to Governor Rebolledo, July 12, 1657, confirmed Cañizares' conclusions concerning the conduct of the Franciscans. Puerta had no doubt that the Franciscans opposed the presence of the military in Apalachee and that the father provincial had obviously attempted to conduct a surreptitious investigation of the military rather than to survey the needs of the missions. Puerta had investigated Father San Antonio's claim that the soldiers had mistreated the Indians, but found that it was the friars who had really been responsible for the abuse.<sup>29</sup> Puerta informed the governor that two friars had been especially active in the attempt to turn the Indians against the soldiers. He cited Father Alonso del Moral, an Apalachee priest, and Father Bamba, who served in Timucua. Puerta singled Fray Joseph Bamba Galindo out as a person of such disruptive influence that he excited Apalachee Indians from afar. Such priests, Puerta thought, should be recalled.<sup>30</sup> Cañizares, on July 18, 1657, in essence, reiterated Puerta's charges.<sup>31</sup> Neither officer made an effort to question the priests concerning the allegation of their impropriety.

On August 4, 1657, Father Provincial Francisco de San Antonio and four friars—Juan de Medina, Sebastián Martínez, Jacinto Domínguez Alonso del Moral, and Juan Caldera—presented a petition to Rebolledo. This document, they claimed, had resulted from a request by the Indians to act in their behalf. Specifically, the Indians did not want the governor to increase the size of the Apalachee garrison, an action already taken, because the soldiers had mistreated them. The Apalachees reasoned that more soldiers meant more abuse. The Indians' statement to the Franciscans differed sharply from the testimony which they had given to Governor Rebolledo when he had visited the provinces. The Apalachees, it now appeared, had, apparently out of fear, told the governor what he wanted to hear, namely

---

28. *Ibid.*

29. Puerta to Rebolledo, July 12, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

30. *Ibid.*

31. Cañizares to Rebolledo. July 18, 1657, SCAGIEC.leg.155.

that the soldiers had treated them well and that friars had abused them. Once Rebolledo left the province, the Indians had expressed quite different sentiments to the Franciscans.<sup>32</sup> The probability that the governor had attempted to use the visita to cover up inadequacies in his administration becomes increasingly difficult to dismiss.

The Franciscans agreed that the Timucuan rebellion of 1656, and the discontent which spread to Apalachee and still existed there, had hurt the interests of the church and the crown in the provinces. The Timucuan, the friars asserted, had revolted not against the church but against the crown because of the intense hostility which they felt toward the soldiers stationed there. This feeling had resulted because of the work which the soldiers forced the Indians to do against their will. The soldiers, not the Franciscans, had required the Indians to serve as cargo bearers and to perform all kinds of menial tasks. In effect, the soldiers had reduced the Indians to an approximation of slavery. The friars vigorously denied that they entered into the rebellion picture at all and argued that the only reason the poor Indians had testified against them was the fear of further reprisals from the military. The Indians felt that Sergeant-Major Cañizares had used a very heavy hand when he put down the rebellion; execution of eleven caciques seemed to the Timucuan an extremely harsh retribution. The petition noted that Father Provincial San Antonio had written to the crown in an effort to make known the terrible state of affairs which existed in the provinces prior to the Timucuan rebellion. These conditions, the father provincial asserted, had existed before the appointment of Rebolledo as governor, but the situation had reached its nadir during his administration. Unfortunately, San Antonio observed, the crown had done nothing to correct the situation, and, consequently, the Timucuan had revolted. The friars told Rebolledo that they had also dispatched a letter to the crown protesting his decision to increase the size of the Apalachee garrison. The presence of

---

32. [Franciscan] *Peticion* [to Rebolledo], August 4, 1657; See also *Visita del lugar* [San Antonio] de Bacuqua, January 19, 1657; *Visita del lugar de San Pedro de Patali*, January 19, 1657; *Visita del lugar de San Juan de Azpalaga*, January 22, 1657, SC.AG.I.E.C.leg.155.

more soldiers would mean more mistreatment of the Indians, and their discontent would not abate as long as the garrison remained large.<sup>33</sup> The friars questioned whether Apalachee needed twelve soldiers. They agreed that the presence of two soldiers and a commander for observation purposes did not pose serious problems, but twelve soldiers would produce nothing but hostility. The soldiers, they felt, would require the Apalachees to serve as virtual slaves, and this situation might produce another rebellion.<sup>34</sup>

The following day, August 5, 1657, the public scribe, Juan Moreno, read the contents of the Franciscan petition to Governor Rebolledo. The friars had laid blame for the 1656 rebellion on his shoulders, and he did not hesitate to defend his position. Rebolledo replied that the Franciscan mission program had begun in Apalachee during the administration of Governor Luis de Horruytiner (1633-1638) and that his successor, *Damían de Vega Castro y Pardo* (1638-1645), had sent the first contingent of soldiers to Apalachee where they had remained until *Pedro Benedit Horruytiner* assumed the governorship in 1648.<sup>35</sup> The latter, who governed for only a year, Rebolledo pointed out, had recalled the garrison in response to a Franciscan request, an action which had left the province without adequate protection. There had been no one to administer justice to the Indians, or to keep an eye on the ships that entered and departed from the harbor at San Marcos. As a result an excellent opportunity had presented itself for the English, or some other foreign power, to establish a base of operations in the province.<sup>36</sup>

Rebolledo noted that when he assumed the governorship (1651) officials in Havana and St. Augustine had urged him to return a detachment of soldiers to Apalachee. Only the military, they believed, had the means to prevent the Indians from supplying alien vessels with food in exchange for trade items, a type of activity in which the Apalachee had engaged after the troops

---

33. [Franciscan] *Peticion* [to Rebolledo], August 4, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155.

34. *Ibid.*

35. [Rebolledo's] *Notificacion y Repuesta* [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657, SC.AGLEC.leg.155; See also Rebolledo to the king, October 18, 1657, in *Brooks, Old St. Augustine*, 102-05.

36. *Ibid.*

withdrew in 1648. More important the presence of a garrison would insure against any enemy attempt to occupy places such as San Marcos, the principal port of Apalachee.<sup>37</sup>

In view of those reasons, Rebolledo had decided to send Captain Antonio de Sertucha and two infantrymen to Apalachee in 1651. He felt this would enable him to deal more effectively with the problems of St. Augustine and Guale. Captain Sertucha had wasted no time once he had reached Apalachee. He sent word to the governor that a pirate ship had sailed into the harbor at San Marcos and that he needed reinforcements. Rebolledo had responded quickly and dispatched Captain Gregorio Bravo and thirty soldiers to render assistance. In the meantime, Sertucha had summoned the Apalachees to defend the province against the pirates, who, facing resistance, had departed before Bravo arrived with reinforcements. Because there was no longer an emergency, Bravo obtained a supply of food and returned to St. Augustine.<sup>38</sup>

The Apalachee garrison numbered only three until the Timucuan rebellion of 1656. At that time Governor Rebolledo decided to place more than an observation team in Apalachee. Rebolledo indicated that factors in addition to the rebellion had influenced the need for additional protection and that the Franciscans had asked for soldiers also. All of these had influenced the governor's decision. He had exercised considerable care in the selection of the Apalachee commandant, he claimed, and had selected Cañizares because of the Franciscans' high regard for him.<sup>39</sup>

Rebolledo felt that any intrusion in Apalachee had to be checked because of its potential as a food producing area. He realized that if the English gained a foothold they might undermine the mission program. The Franciscans, he believed, did not realize that St. Augustine was so far away that troops could not be dispatched in time to ward off an attack. He also pointed out to the friars that San Marcos was only thirty leagues distance from the area where the galleons rendezvoused to go to Havana

---

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

and thence to Spain. Obviously an English base at San Marcos would represent a serious threat to Spanish shipping in the Gulf of Mexico.<sup>40</sup>

Rebolledo admitted that there would be difficulties if Father Provincial San Antonio decided to send friars to the Apalaches and Choctaws. Apalachee, in particular, required a strong garrison of soldiers, and a fort would need to be constructed at San Marcos before the mission effort could be extended.<sup>41</sup> He denied the Franciscan assertion that the Apalachees did not want soldiers in their province. He bolstered his argument with the claim that no Indians had complained about the soldiers during the course of his visita. Additionally, letters from Cañizares and Puerta had not mentioned any ill will that the Indians harbored toward the soldiers. In fact, the officers had reported that good relations prevailed. The priests, he asserted, had stirred up the Indians because they resented the friendship between the Indians and the soldiers. The churchmen, he believed, wanted the province without a defensive system.<sup>42</sup>

Rebolledo pointed out to the Franciscans that a large delegation of Apalachee Indians had visited him shortly after the conclusion of the visita. He insinuated that the loyalty of these Indians had played a major role in the Apalachees not joining Timucuan rebellion. Not only did Indians come to St. Augustine, but they had communicated important information about provincial affairs. Don Luis, for example, the important cacique from San Lorenzo de Ibitachuco, had sent word that Father Alonso del Moral and Fray Miguel Garcon de los Cobos had traveled about Apalachee in an effort to persuade him and other caciques to protest and perhaps secure the withdrawal of the soldiers. Rebolledo recalled that he had specifically asked the father provincial not to send these particular priests to Apalachee for he had foreseen the possibility of their causing difficulty.<sup>43</sup>

---

40. *Ibid.*

41. [Rebolledo's] Notificación y Repuesta [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

42. [Rebolledo's] Notificación y Repuesta [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657; Cañizares to Rebolledo, May 8, May 21, July 18, 1657; Puerta to Rebolledo, July 12, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

43. [Rebolledo's] Notificación y Repuesta [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

The governor did not intend for anyone, friar or soldier, to mistreat Indians, and he had instructed his officers to supervise the conduct of their men and to investigate Indian complaints against Spaniards. Rebolledo asserted that he had made every effort to guarantee that the Indians did not have to serve as cargo bearers, but admitted the difficulty of preventing this practice. For example, the soldiers, on one occasion, had asked the Indians to help them complete a defensive system at San Luis, but had no money to pay them when they had finished their task. Rebolledo conceded that this doubtless had caused discontent, but that the Indians had received compensation when the subsidy arrived from New Spain.<sup>44</sup>

The governor acknowledged that the Spaniards could not maintain an Apalachee garrison nor construct a fortress at San Marcos without Indian cooperation. Rebolledo doubted that the survival of a mission program was possible without protection. He pointed to the rebellion of 1646 when Indians had killed friars and soldiers indiscriminately and had burned churches. The uprising had occurred, he believed, because of an insufficient force to deter rebellious tendencies. The best interest of the crown required the presence of both the church and the military.<sup>45</sup>

The governor suggested that the Franciscan attitude toward the military varied so much that it was difficult to determine its true feelings. The friars had favored erecting a fort and strengthening the garrison when the Timucuan revolted in 1646. Eleven years later, they had changed their minds, although the defensive needs of the province were no less urgent. Rebolledo maintained that he did not want to dispute with the father provincial or the friars; he only wanted peace in the provinces, and for that it was essential to maintain a strong garrison. Also, it was imperative that the San Marcos port be continuously observed and that a presidio be constructed quickly.<sup>46</sup>

---

44. Instrucion [Rebolledo for Apalachee], August 8, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

45. [Rebolledo's] Notificacion y Repuesta [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155; Lucy L. Wenhold, "The First Fort of St. Marcos de Apalachee," *Florida Historical Quarterly* XXXIV, (April 1954); 301-13.

46. [Rebolledo's] Notificacion y Repuesta [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

Governor Rebolledo selected an incident which had occurred in Guale to emphasize the need for soldiers in Apalachee. When Father Sebastián Martínez had returned from Guale with reports of English activity there, the father provincial had inquired anxiously whether Rebolledo would protect the mission. The governor declared that he had every intention of ensuring the safety of the missionaries, but he did not let pass the opportunity to chide the Franciscans with the allegation that they evidently had wanted soldiers in the mission area only when an invasion threatened.<sup>47</sup>

Rebolledo defended stubbornly his position. He reminded the Franciscans that they had a responsibility to encourage the Indians to like the soldiers. But he attempted to soften his stance and suggested that an increase in the garrison size was not likely. Also, the governor postponed, for the time, construction of the fort at San Marcos, not because he wished to please the Franciscans, but because he had insufficient funds with which to build it, and suggested a possible reduction of the Apalachee garrison from twelve to eight soldiers. Rebolledo did point out that, contrary to reports, there had been a good harvest in Apalachee and that the Indians had received payment for food sufficient to feed a twelve-man garrison. There is no evidence that Rebolledo actually reduced the garrison force; by 1662, its size had increased to forty.<sup>48</sup>

Governor Rebolledo hoped that the Franciscans would cooperate with the soldiers rather than work at cross-purposes, for the conduct of some of the friars had been deplorable. He acknowledged his desire to work with all of the priests, but made his intent clear not to stand by and watch the Franciscans undermine his efforts to secure Apalachee militarily. He assured the father provincial that any individual who mistreated the Indians would be punished. This concluded Governor Rebolledo's lengthy response to the Franciscan petition of August 4, 1657, which the scribe, Juan Moreno y Segovia, read to the Fran-

---

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.* See Governor Aranjuez y Cotes to crown, August 8, 1662, SC.AGI. 58-2-2, Document 8.

ciscans.<sup>49</sup> Rebolledo had not provided the Franciscans with a written answer to their petition.

After Rebolledo had answered the Franciscan petition he prepared a set of instructions for Lieutenant Sertucha, directing him to ensure the good treatment of the Indians. Especially was the lieutenant to see to it that the Indians received compensation for employment and payment for food which they provided to Spaniards. When situations arose which the Franciscans felt required punishment for the Indians, the friars had first to inform the province lieutenant concerning the nature of the offense. Then, the officer would determine if the situation warranted correction. Only older neophytes who had become lax in fulfilling their religious obligations would be excepted from this rule. Rebolledo ordered Sertucha to assure that the Indians obeyed the religious instructions which the friars gave them. Province lieutenants, henceforth, were not to permit anyone to punish a cacique or principal man regardless of the act which the Indian had committed. Rather, the lieutenant was to transfer that individual to St. Augustine where the governor was to decide the case.<sup>50</sup>

Sertucha received specific instructions with respect to the port at San Marcos. When a vessel arrived he was to ascertain the purpose for which the ship came to Apalachee and forward the information to St. Augustine as speedily as possible. While awaiting the governor's direction, the lieutenant was to furnish the crew with food if necessary but was not to allow the ship to depart. Rebolledo indicated his intention to send ships annually to Apalachee to procure provisions for St. Augustine. No doubt this was to bolster the annual subsidy sent to Florida without which survival would have been difficult. Also, these vessels were to bring whatever supplies the officials in Havana wished to send the Franciscans. If a ship came to San Marcos, after the needs of St. Augustine had been satisfied, the lieutenant was to allow the Indians to sell food and other trade items. The lieutenant re-

---

49. [Rebolledo's] *Notificacion y Repuesta* [to the Franciscans], August 5, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

50. *Instrucion* [from Rebolledo for Apalachee], August 8, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155

ceived explicit orders to inform the governor should the friars attempt to impede the execution of the instructions.<sup>51</sup>

On August 11, 1657, Rebolledo sent a strongly-worded statement to Father Provincial San Antonio, charging him with responsibility for disorder in the province. Rebolledo reiterated that he advised against the decision to send Friar Alonso del Moral and Friar Miguel Garcon to Apalachee, for the province had no shortage of priests. Additionally the friars were not qualified for the assignment because they had not acquired fluency in the tribal language and had little experience in mission work. Rebolledo affirmed that he had urged the father provincial to send priests to Timucua where a need existed. This advice Father San Antonio had chosen to ignore. Moral and Garcon had not been long in Apalachee province before they had caused difficulty. Rebolledo emphasized that he had received reports from Sergeant-Major Cañizares and Adjutant Puerta which confirmed that Father Moral and Father Garcon had influenced other Franciscans to stir up the Indians and thereby get the soldiers withdrawn. The friars, the governor insisted, had distorted the picture and misrepresented the facts. Their efforts had not succeeded; the Indians had refused to be influenced. Rebolledo avowed that the priests deserved to be recalled.<sup>52</sup>

Segovia, the scribe, read Governor Rebolledo's second message to the father provincial. Father San Antonio heard the verbal communique and requested a copy of it, but the scribe refused. The father provincial made reference to the August 4 petition which the Franciscans had sent to Rebolledo and expressed his displeasure with the governor's reluctance to provide him with a written answer.<sup>53</sup> Segovia expressed the father provincial's sentiments to the governor, and Rebolledo, obviously irritated by Father San Antonio's attitude, declared in essence that he had discussed the matter as much as he intended and that the Franciscans could appeal to others if they desired.<sup>54</sup>

---

51. *Ibid.*

52. Exortacion y Requerimiento, August 11, 1657; Cañizares to Rebolledo, May 8, May 21, July 18, 1657; Puerta to Rebolledo July 12, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

53. Petición [of the Father Provincial and the Franciscans to Governor Rebolledo], August 11, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

54. Repuesta [of Governor Rebolledo to the Franciscan Petition], August 17, 1657. SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

On August 18, 1657, the scribe delivered orally the governor's reply to the provincial. The father provincial handed the scribe a petition to deliver to the governor. Father San Antonio acknowledged that he had received Rebolledo's demand to reassign Fathers Moral and Garcon, but regretted that the governor had provided no firm evidence other than the reports of the military in the province. Father San Antonio stated that he intended to keep the friars in Apalachee until the charges against them were proved.<sup>55</sup>

Rebolledo, upon receipt of Father San Antonio's reply, asserted that there were sufficient reasons for the recall of Fathers Moral and Garcon. The whole controversy, in the governor's opinion, had resulted in nothing more than confusion and an unpleasant state of affairs. The governor charged that the father provincial had skirted the issue consistently and had not acted in the best interest of the church or the crown by assigning and retaining priests such as Moral and Garcon in Apalachee. Rebolledo admitted the controversy which had developed could not be resolved in Florida. Accordingly, he forwarded the documents and related papers to the Council of the Indies.<sup>56</sup>

The Franciscans took their case to the council also. They accepted no responsibility at all for the Timucuan rebellion. In their view it had resulted from Governor Rebolledo's heavy-handed policies. The soldiers, for example, had forced the Indians to carry heavy cargoes from Apalachee to St. Augustine. Because of the hardships thus imposed on the Indians many of them had died. Such administrative policies, the friars felt, did nothing more than undermine years of arduous labor in the mission fields. Rebolledo, the friars admitted, had not inaugurated the custom of using the Indians as porters. Fray Gómez de Engraba claimed that during the administration of his predecessor, Governor ad interim Pedro Benedit Horruytiner, 200 Indians had been required to carry burdens to St. Augustine, and only ten of them had ever returned to their homes. The Franciscan charged that the Indians had not been given enough to eat and had starved to death. Rebolledo refuted the friar's claim by pointing out that

---

55. *Peticion* [of the Father Provincial San Antonio]. n.d., SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

56. *Repuesta* [of Governor Rebolledo to the Franciscans], August 19, 1657, SC.AGIEC.leg.155.

there had been a smallpox epidemic in Florida and that disease, not mistreatment, had killed the Indians. The Franciscans maintained that soldiers had treated the Indians like slaves, which the Indians had deeply resented. This quasi-enslavement had caused the Indians to rebel and undo the religious work which had been progressing so well in Timucua before the rebellion. Father Gómez felt that Cañizares had put down the rebellion with unwarranted severity. There was no justifiable reason, in his opinion, to execute eleven caciques.<sup>57</sup>

The visita papers and the Franciscan reports reached the Council of the Indies, and that body took the matter under consideration. There was also an unsigned letter which protested the way Governor Rebolledo had treated the soldiers in the presidio at St. Augustine. The council studied the evidence against Rebolledo, as well as the documents which he submitted to defend himself. In July 1657, the council recommended to the crown the replacement of Governor Rebolledo and an investigation of his administration. The governor, however, died before crown officials had the opportunity to take punitive action against him.<sup>58</sup>

---

57. Letter from Friar Juan Gómez de Engraba, March 30, 1657, AGL 54-5-10, Document 73, SC, Rebolledo to the king, October 14, A.G.I. 58-2-2; Same to same, October 24, 1655, in Ruth Kuykendall, tr., North Carolina Historical Commission, North Carolina Historical Records Survey, Reel 24. Gómez to Father Francisco Martínez, Comisario de la Provincia de Florida, April 4, 1657, AGI. 54-5-10, Document 74, SC.

58. Council of the Indies to the crown, June 15, 1657, AGI. 53-1-6, Document 68; Council of the Indies to the crown, July 1, 1657, AGI.54-5-10, Document 75; Council of the Indies to the crown, July 7, 1657, AGI. 53-1-6, Document 70, SC.