THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF WEST FLORIDA: ORIGINS, PURPOSE, AND USE

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There are many kinds of bibliographies. At its simplest level, a bibliography is a listing of the sources that an author or researcher consulted in writing their work. It contains a minimum of data elements about each item or work consulted. This is the kind of bibliography that most students learn about. A second kind of bibliography, most frequently used in library instruction, is the compilation of key works in a subject field. Most often these works are only those which are available in the individual library's collection. Here the bibliography becomes more of a catalog of available materials or checklist of possible research sources but limited to those readily at hand. A third kind of bibliography--and one most often associated with historical research--are descriptive bibliographies. Descriptive bibliographies are lists of works usually linked by a common subject but which may be found in any library or in a wide variety of places. Taking the idea of a list of books a step further, is the annotated bibliography. Here the compiler introduces explanatory notes of the nature and scope of the work, and additional information beyond the listing of a title and bibliographical elements.¹

For the historian, bibliographies are crucial. They serve as a means of identifying key primary sources that might not be
discernible in traditional ways. Historical bibliographies can range from the grand to the specific: for example, the Bibliotheca Americana, a dictionary of books relating to America from its Discovery to its Present Time by Joseph Sabin, down to bibliographical projects that can cover just a small regional area or specific topic. One of these is the Bibliography of West Florida, a project that has been sponsored by the University of West Florida for nearly thirty years.

The beginning of this bibliographical project had its roots in 1963 when the State of Florida authorized the creation of a new upper-level university to be situated in the most westernmost Florida city of Pensacola. This senior university was named the University of West Florida and commissioned to offer courses of instruction at the junior, senior, and master's level. The location of the new University was a result of intense citizen lobbying to have the state create a University in the panhandle section of Florida, a region that extends 200 miles west from Tallahassee. This region of the state is known as West Florida, primarily because of geographical location but also because Spanish and English governments had conveniently titled it as such.
When the University of West Florida was created, it had the distinction of being the only University on the Gulf Coast between Tallahassee and New Orleans, a 400-mile stretch of the Deep South. In addition to the historic symbolism of its name, the University of West Florida was also located in what some call the oldest city in Florida, Pensacola. Pensacola was first settled in 1559, six years before St. Augustine, giving rise to Pensacola's continued claim of being the oldest European city in America, usurping the claim of St. Augustine. Because the first settlement at Pensacola only lasted two years, Pensacolians are fond of celebrating their city as the oldest European city in America, pointing out that St. Augustine is the oldest continuous European settlement in North America. This issue is mentioned here, not to incite tourism or historical debate, but to show that research materials about the West Florida region date to as early as 1559.

In 1965, the University of West Florida hired its first Director of Libraries, James Albert Servies, a librarian from the College of William and Mary. His goal, and challenge, was to build a major University library from scratch, capable of supporting upper-level and graduate studies, research, and faculty support. One demanding
area of the curriculum was the History Department which would emphasize regional and local history as well as primary research by students and faculty. As the University Library began to take shape, a large donation of private funds were received from Miss Lois Maxon. Mr. Servies chose to direct these funds into purchase of primary research materials--notably books--about the West Florida region. The key problem was simply this--how to identify materials which had been published about the West Florida region.\textsuperscript{ii}

To solve this problem, Mr. Servies established a library-wide development program in 1967 to identify and record imprints pertaining to West Florida and the West Florida region.\textsuperscript{iii} Three parameters were established for inclusion: geographic, time, and scope of material.

In terms of time, materials would be included in the bibliography that represented any time from the earliest settlement of the region up to the present day. Or to put it another way, works would be cited regardless of a publication date so long as their content related somehow to Pensacola or the West Florida area.

Geographical limits were, however, trickier. Pensacola’s settlement dated from 1559 but after two years, the region was
abandoned until the 1680s when the Spanish began a frantic search of the Gulf Coast to locate a French settlement by Robert Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle. After a number of expeditions to Pensacola Bay, King Charles II ordered the occupation of Pensacola Bay in 1694. Little was done until 1698. In the meantime, West Florida became part of Carolana, the huge land grant given to Dr. Daniel Coxe, physician to His Royal Majesty. Fearful that either the English or the French would seize the initiative, the Spanish returned to Pensacola in 1698, reestablishing a permanent settlement. In 1719, the French captured Pensacola and it was quickly recaptured by Spain in the same year. Spanish possession of Pensacola and West Florida continued until 1763. At the end of the Seven Years War, Great Britain held Havana, Cuba. To get that city back, Spain traded Florida and in 1763, Pensacola became capital of the new British colony of West Florida. In 1764, the boundaries were enlarged to just north of the 31st parallel to take in lands around Natchez. Thus, West Florida, in geographical size, became the largest of the 15 British colonies in what is now the United States. Pensacola and West Florida were recaptured by the Spanish in 1781 during the American Revolution and West Florida again reverted to Spanish
Until 1821, the region of West Florida went through a succession of geographic reductions as lands were ceded to the United States, and the states of Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia were carved from the area.

So what geographically was West Florida? The best description of the region was proclaimed by King George III in his proclamation of October 7, 1763.

The government of West Florida [is] bounded to the Southward by the Gulph of Mexico, including all islands within six leagues of the coast from the river Apalachicola to lake Pontchartrain; to the Westward by the said lake, the Lake Maurepas, and the river Mississippi; to the Northward, by a line drawn due East from that part of the river Mississippi which lies in 31 degrees North latitude, to the River Apalachicola, or Catahouchee; and to the Eastward by the said river...iv

Beginning in 1821, the Territory of Florida was created. Thus for the bibliographical project, the scope was printed materials which contained information on any aspect of the region of West Florida as defined in 1763— from settlement up to 1821. After 1821, the scope was narrowed to the ten-county area between the Apalachicola and Perdido Rivers. This has been the scope of coverage up to the present time.

Finally the type of coverage was defined as every printed work
relating to West Florida, Pensacola, or any aspect of the ten county region of the Florida Panhandle. Originally the term "printed work" was meant to convey traditional publications such as books, government documents, dissertations, and the like. Eventually the scope was slightly altered to include "promulgated" works. Within the framework of traditional printing, printed works were clearly published items. Promulgated works are those materials that fall outside traditional printing but which cause dissemination of information; these can include works that are mimeographed, spirit duplicated, photocopied, or otherwise distributed. For example, today electronic works, e.g., works created and which exist on disk, could be cited in the bibliography since they are promulgated materials.

The geographic scope of the bibliographical project is of special note. First, initial surveys of literature began to show that this area of the United States had been virtually ignored by other libraries and historians, even within the State of Florida in terms of collecting or identifying published sources. Secondly, the regional cutoff of 1821 was deliberate, for there was no need to duplicate efforts within the present-day states of Mississippi, Alabama, and
Georgia to create bibliographies for their regions that had been part of West Florida. Third, even with these geographic limitations, it was envisioned that citations in the bibliography would occasionally step outside of these boundary lines. For example, family histories, travel accounts, and similar materials are often not limited to specific boundaries.

Lastly, it was clear that due to the geographic size of West Florida and its occupation by a succession of European governments, the scope of the bibliography could be staggering. The research literature of the history and people of West Florida could be expected to include all of the following and more: accounts of explorations by Spanish, French, and British explorers, in their respective languages with some translations; government documents concerning aspects of the region published by Spanish, French, English, and American governments and their subunits; travel accounts of visitors to America in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century; natural history, maritime, and ethnological accounts by scientists, botanists, and other observers; geographical studies including maps and prints; biographies and memoirs of individuals who had lived or resided in
West Florida; archaeological studies; and similar materials. Thus as long as a work dealt with some aspect of West Florida, its inhabitants, institutions, or history, it was a candidate for inclusion.

To this historical canon were also added contemporary materials: journal articles and doctoral theses; publications of local, municipal, regional and state agencies; literary works of West Florida citizens; publications of private organizations and agencies; environmental assessments; pollution monitoring reports; and similar materials.

Gathering of bibliography entries began in the summer of 1968 and was a collaboration of a number of University librarians, with final compilation by Mr. Servies. As citations were located, they were typed or written on five x seven cards. There were several ways that bibliographical citations were gathered. First, as the Library found items within its collections (e.g., journal articles, books, government documents, maps, newly published books, etc.), a bibliographical citation was made to the item. Secondly, these items were also studied for clues to other citations listed in footnotes and endnotes. The library staff also perused other bibliographical sources such as Sabin, Evans, and others. The American State
Papers and the monthly catalog of United States documents published by the Government Printing Office were scanned for pertinent government documents. Auction catalogs of major Americana were studied such as the Streeter Collection and the Eberstadt catalogs. Guides to holdings of other libraries were purchased; these included published book catalogs to the Library, the American Antiquarian Society, and the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, just to name a few.

The citations listed on cards gave as much bibliographical information about the item as possible. In addition, the compiler of each card was encouraged to write a short annotation about the item or contents. These cards were reviewed by Mr. Servies, and the annotation edited or rewritten as necessary. To maintain some method of locating citations, the cards were filed by date of publication and then roughly by author of the work. This permitted the citations to be retrievable for checking and verification.

From the beginning, this was to be an annotated descriptive bibliography, but the process yielded a new problem—how to examine the many citations that were not owned by the University.

These were often rare and obscure items that were
unobtainable by interlibrary loan. These items would have to be located in another library and someone would have to review them. Also because other libraries often had in-house indexes and holdings of unlisted publications in archives, it would be necessary to visit major American libraries to identify additional bibliographical citations.

To this end, Mr. Servies secured travel grants from the University Research Committee in 1970 and 1971 to facilitate travel to New York, Washington, Chicago, and other sites to review materials in other research libraries. By 1970, sufficient bibliographical citations had been accumulated to enable the University of West Florida Library to publish a book "Pensacola & West Florida, a Chronological Checklist of Printed Works, 1542-1969." This short form bibliography was compiled by James A. Servies, Director of Libraries, and published to enable his staff to be able to consult a quick guide to what had already been identified and what had not. As noted in the foreword, this checklist was also to be used as a checklist of materials to consult in other libraries and also to encourage readers to submit additional bibliographical entries to be included.
In 1972, the bibliographical cards were typed into book form and bound for internal library use. Now known formally as the "Bibliography of West Florida," this draft publication was bound in five volumes, the first four volumes arranged chronologically and the fifth volume being a name and subject index. For the first time, entries were tagged with identifying numbers; these codes consist of the four digits of the year of publication, then a hyphen, then a numerical sequence as they appear in the book. Even though the volumes were indexed with name and subject entries, the entries were also arranged alphabetically within each year.

Unfortunately this arrangement and the "publication" presented problems of continual revision, insertion of newly-found items, corrections of annotations of older items, and the need to add new details such as reprints. The alphabetical arrangement within the year made it impossible to easily change printed volumes. This meant that the compiler, Mr. Servies, was continually revising the bibliography.

Another major question was how to handle the virtual flood of federal, state, and local government publications dealing with the region. Produced by cities and counties, these publications included
budgets, planning documents, environmental studies, transportation studies, and similar items. Documents Librarian Frances Eubank, utilizing bibliographic citations, produced a new bibliographic publication in 1973 titled Metropolitan Pensacola: A Checklist of Selected Documents, 1963-1973. The entries in this publication were later added to the formal Bibliography of West Florida.

In late 1973, Mr. Servies produced a new revision, a 2nd internal draft. The original 1972 five-volumes were compacted into two volumes of citations and an index volume. Revisions continued and in 1974, a formal "Revised Edition" was produced. The revised edition covered all entries published through 1971 and included an index volume.

Additional entries of government publications enabled Frances Eubank to expand her previous checklist of government publications. In 1975, the Library published her new cumulation, Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties: A Checklist of Selected Research, 1963-1973. Most of these entries were also absorbed into the ongoing Bibliography of West Florida. After publication of the Revised Edition in 1974, all new entries and citations were compiled into a new volume with its own index. This was published in 1978 as
the "First Supplement." This first supplement included all newly-found entries and updated the set by including early imprints as well as recent entries covering from 1972 through 1978.

Although I use the term publication, all of the various editions of the Bibliography of West Florida had been internal editions, multiple photocopy sets bound by a standard library binder and available in extremely limited sets, and generally only available at the University. In 1979, however, the four-volume set was placed on microfiche and sets were distributed to libraries throughout the region, state, and country.

Bibliographical work still continued though. The Library staff continued to identify new sources of information. Mr. Servies maintained an active level of correspondence with scholars, bibliographers, and librarians throughout the United States to locate, verify, and obtain bibliographic data. Additional materials were found through the efforts of Dr. William S. Coker and his Papers of the Panton, Leslie and Company Project. In locating information on this British trading post which had operated in much of West Florida from 1783 through 1847, Coker frequently found citations and monographs relating to British West Florida and its inhabitants. At
the same time, other new bibliographical tools and sources were studied.

Mr. Servies began checking the entire nineteenth century run of Florida Reports. These reports of the Florida Supreme Court included decisions and case summations, and citations to the cases were placed in the Bibliography if they concerned people or businesses operating in West Florida.

By 1982, a new revised edition of the Bibliography of West Florida was ready for printing. The Gannett Foundation generously granted $5,000 to be used for the production of 100 sets of four volumes. These four volumes were printed by the University and bound; many of these were presented to libraries, with many sets sold to book dealers and individuals, the income placed in the Library=s account with the University of West Florida Foundation.

From 1982 until his retirement in 1985, James A. Servies continued to monitor additions to the Bibliography of West Florida. However, his interest turned elsewhere. He began work on a project titled the Bibliography of Florida. In a number of conversations with this author, he discussed the scope, content, work that would be involved, rationale for such a project and other activities. Using the
basics of the Bibliography of West Florida as a guideline, he began actively exploring compilation of a Florida bibliography, a project that he continued into retirement.

On April 2, 1986, the Bibliography of West Florida ongoing bibliographical project was formally assigned by the University Library administration to the Special Collections Department and Dean DeBolt, Special Collections Librarian. In the ten years since that assignment, the Bibliography of West Florida has grown to eight volumes from the original four published in 1982.

These include a Volume 5 covering early and newly-found entries from the 1760s through 1944; Volume 6, covering 1945 through 1981; Volume 7, covering 1981 through 1991; and an ongoing Volume 8, covering new entries and up through the present time.

Some of this division was necessary to help staff and researchers locate items. These divisions helped researchers find dates, enabled staff to create indexes, and also given the limitations of computer disk storage in 1989, to break the BWF files into manageable units.

For most researchers, the Bibliography of West Florida is a
nice surprise, an index that crosses the boundaries of traditional research, bringing together monographs and journal articles into one database.

But I have probably saved the best for last. For the Bibliography of West Florida is not simply a bibliography project; it is also a collection. Over the past thirty years, as items were located for the bibliography, the University of West Florida Library tried to obtain copies of these identified materials. These materials were placed into file folders and filed with the BWF notation number in-house. Books were cataloged and placed in the Rare Book Collection, and all of these materials stored together in the Special Collections Department. Today, the Bibliography of West Florida collection comprise fourteen five-drawer file cabinets. Roughly 90% of the citations in the BWF are owned by the University, a marked change from early years. In short, the Bibliography of West Florida has been used also as an accession tool, helping the Library identify items that should be in their collections.

There have been numerous spinoffs from the Bibliography. The Pensacola office of the Environmental Protection Agency produced a KWIC index of environmental publications. They literally
reproduced 90% of their environmental citations directly from the Bibliography of West Florida. New citations found since the retirement of Mr. Servies have found their way into his new Bibliography of Florida, with two volumes published to date.

What does the future hold for the Bibliography of West Florida? Since today’s work is done electronically, we are exploring the possibility of merging all the published filed into one electronic and searchable database. We won’t replace our published work but perhaps supplement it with faster access and user tools. We have already received requests for distribution by disk but the advances in the Internet and World Wide Web are leading us down a road of making this tool universally accessible. And the advent of desktop publishing has turned nearly every household into their own printing plant; we continue to get, on an almost daily basis, new imprints—personal memoirs, genealogies, newsletters and publications, and other materials produced about all aspects of West Florida. Some of these items seem ephemeral but it is perhaps too early to pass judgement. For example, the numerous sightings of UFOs in Pensacola and Gulf Breeze in the last five years have led to a rash of published literature, MUFON conference proceedings and
the like. I faithfully added these materials to the Bibliography and was shocked to find a University Professor teaching a course on UFOlogy with emphasis on Pensacola during this past year. His students were thrilled with the bibliographical entries on the subject, many unlisted elsewhere.

We are including citations to the abortion bombings and killings that have placed Pensacola in the limelight of the country on this controversial issue. And we continue to add to the Bibliography of West Florida all the time. Thirty years of effort begun by Servies and continued by myself and other library staff continue to help our library, our users, and indeed history and allied professions in research and study. That is the real purpose of any bibliography and the guiding element of the Bibliography of West Florida project at the University of West Florida.

i. See G. Thomas Tanselle's discussion of types of bibliography enumerated in his essays "Bibliography and Science" and "Descriptive Bibliography and Library Science" in his Selected Studies in Bibliography (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1979). The history and methodology of bibliographic theory is beyond the scope of this paper, but the author has used some of Tanselle's comments to explain the major differences in types of bibliographies.

ii. Personal conversations by the author with James A. Servies, 1981.


