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## A GUIDE TO SPANISH FLORIDA SOURCE MATERIAL

by CHARLES ARNADE

AS THE YEARS PASS the Spanish period of Florida still remains the longest of its history. Not until the year 2091 shall our American era have reached the same length as the Spanish rule. Yet historical research on Hispanic Florida is now all but stagnant compared to what is being done in thy American period. Serious research on the Spanish epochs is largely dependent on what is available from Spanish sources.

With the move of the Stetson photostats to the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida the necessary initial step has been taken to bring a new era of research and writing on Spanish Florida, almost neglected for the past two decades. The passing or inactivity of such scholars as Woodbury Lowery, James A. Robertson, Herbert E. Bolton, Irene A. Wright, Jeannette Thurber Connor, A. M. Brooks, Joseph B. Lockey, Verne E. Chatelain, Michael Kenny, and Maynard Geiger almost brought research on Spanish Florida to a standstill, excepting such scholars as Mark F. Boyd of Tallahassee and David True of Miami. But already a few professors in the social sciences have shown interest in the large Stetson Collection and several graduate students of the University of Florida are searching for possible material for their required theses. Three papers at the recent centennial meeting of the Florida Historical Society in St. Augustine were written from the Stetson papers. The availability of the collection in Florida undoubtedly has been responsible for this renewed interest in serious research on Spanish Florida. And these photostats serve well for the purpose of bringing primary sources of Spanish Florida within easy reach of the researcher.

The merits of this collection of more than 7,000 carefully selected documents were outlined by this author in a past number of this journal (XXXIV, 1955, 36-50). Further reading and more research on Spanish Florida have solidified his opinion. At the same time it must be said that these selections are not inclusive, and that much more Spanish Florida documentary

material is available. Unfortunately, documents of Hispanic Florida are dispersed all over this nation and the world.

For example, the Library of Congress remains a vital place for Florida research. For the second Spanish period it is the main source, and for the first Spanish period this great institution in Washington must be consulted. The main architects of the Stetson Collection, besides John B. Stetson, Jr. were the two great scholars, James A. Robertson and Irene A. Wright. Both historians left a considerable amount of private papers which represent their own interests in Spanish Florida. These Robertson and Wright papers lie unprocessed in the Library of Congress and are said to be very valuable for Spanish Florida research. These might well supplement the Stetson Collection. Miss Wright, who photographed the manuscripts in Spain for the Stetson Collection, provided a description of each one of the manuscripts and these descriptions are contained in the files of the now defunct Florida State Historical Society, whose records are also in the Library of Congress. There, too, rest the Lowery Collection (on microfilm at the P. K. Yonge Library) and most of the Lowery and Karpinski maps.

Dr. Hill's *Catalog of the Papales . . . de Cuba* (included in the *Bibliography* which follows) gives a brief description of the Florida material in that depository. In addition, all other great depositories in Spain such as the Archivo General de Simancas, the Archivo Historico Nacional, the Biblioteca Nacional, and the Academia de la Historia have Florida material. The archives of other countries also contain some manuscripts of Florida. It is true that the Stetson photostats are today the most important single depository of Spanish Florida historical material, but the task of gathering is far from completion.

Therefore, students of Spanish Florida first must acquire the necessary bibliographic knowledge about Spanish Florida source material in order to know where the needed documents rest. The project by Rollins College some years ago to establish a Union Catalog of Floridiana was a worthwhile undertaking. It was reported at the Southeastern Conference on Latin American Studies held at the University of Florida in 1956 that the Catalog is again being assembled.

Before consulting these bibliographic guides, it would be worthwhile to read a few solid works that have been written about Spanish Florida. Their texts are excellent, their bibliographies very helpful, and their citations constitute one of the best guides to sources. Such books are Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands; a Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven, 1921); Verne E. Chatelain, *The Defense of Spanish Florida* (Washington, 1941); Michael J. Curley, *Church and State in the Spanish Floridas, 1783-1818* (Washington, 1940); Jean Delanglez, *El Rio del Espiritu Santo* (New York, 1941); Lawrence Carroll Ford, *The Triangular Struggle for Spanish Pensacola* (Washington, 1939); Maynard Geiger, *The Franciscan Conquest of Florida* (Washington, 1937); Michael Kenny, *The Romance of Florida* (New York, 1934); John Tate Lanning, *The Spanish Missions of Georgia* (Chapel Hill, 1935); Woodbury Lowery, *The Spanish Settlements . . . in the United States* (New York and London, 1901-1905), 2 vols.; and Richard K. Murdoch, *The Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1793-1796* (Berkeley, 1951). Together they furnish a survey of Spanish Florida. Several masters' theses at the University of Florida, such as Robert E. Rutherford, "Spain's Immigration Policy for the Floridas, 1780-1806" (1952); Marion F. Shambaugh, "The Development of Agriculture in Florida during the Second Spanish Period" (1953); Helen H. Tanner, "The Transition From British to Spanish Rule in East Florida 1783-1785" (1949); Sister Leo Xavier, S. S. J., "Missionary Labors in East Florida" (1945), give interesting new leads. Their bibliographies can be valuable.

The works already mentioned should not only be considered a starting point for research but also they will interest the student in Spanish Florida. Thereafter, more detailed bibliographic guides of Spanish source material should be consulted. The following items are recommended for a more thorough knowledge of Spanish Florida manuscripts. These volumes are in the Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida.

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