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## THE PAPERS AND HISTORY OF PANTON, LESLIE AND COMPANY, AND JOHN FORBES AND COMPANY

by WILLIAM S. COKER

**T**he research project the Papers of Panton, Leslie and Company, which began at the University of West Florida in the summer of 1973, officially ended in the summer of 1987. The annotated bibliography at the end of this report lists the publications that describe the research, collection, and writing associated with the project. But the acquisition of several significant collections of papers, as well as an article about one of John Forbes's descendants, have added to our knowledge of the companies,, their owners, and their families.

The acquisition of the Panton family papers from Mrs. Jean A. Vaughn of Bray, Berks, England, in November 1987 was the first of the collections acquired by the University of West Florida library after the project formally ended. Mrs. Vaughn is a descendant of Christian, one of William Panton's sisters.<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Vaughn's grandfather collected the papers in an unsuccessful effort to secure the remaining assets for the family from the Panton, Leslie and Forbes companies. He felt— and rightfully so— that the family had been cheated out of its legacy. The papers, nearly 1,600 pages, contain a wealth of information about the two Indian trading companies. The documents date from 1795 to 1978, almost 200 years. Most of the collection consists of letters from members of the companies, law suits and related letters from lawyers, and correspondence between the heirs in their efforts to secure compensation.<sup>2</sup>

The next collection acquired by West Florida is the Innerarity family papers purchased from Hardie Maloney of New Orleans in 1992. It consists of 114 documents ranging in date from 1794 to 1904. These are the papers of William Panton Innerarity and his

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1. Jean A. Vaughn to William S. Coker, July 24, 1987, in author's possession.
2. See William S. Coker, "Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: A Spanish, French, and English Documentary Project," in *The Hispanic Experience in North America: Sources for Study in the United States*, ed. Lawrence A. Clayton (Columbus, 1992), 113-15.

immediate family of Pensacola and Mobile. William was the son of James and Heloise Innerarity. James headed the operations of John Forbes and Company in Mobile. The collection includes letters and documents to, from, and about members of the family, as well as William Panton. Among the subjects covered are Panton, Leslie and Company, trade with the Indians, rental of slaves by John Forbes and Company, Indian relations, the Seminole War, Mexican War, Civil War, land speculation, John Innerarity's personal notebook, the Apalachicola Land Company, and other materials relating to the family and business interests of Innerarity.

The documents in these two collections are located in the Special Collections Department, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida, Pensacola. The papers may be seen by interested persons in the Special Collections Department. A 1989 article by D. A. Farnie about one of John Forbes's descendants, "Enriqueta Augustina Rylands (1843-1908), Founder of the John Rylands Library," supplements these recent acquisitions by providing considerable information about several of the descendants of John Forbes.<sup>3</sup>

John Forbes, a native of Scotland, resided primarily in East and West Florida from 1784 until 1817. During these years he was a partner in Panton, Leslie and Company (1792-1801); subsequently he headed John Forbes and Company (1801-1817), the successor firm to the Panton Company. Forbes moved to Cuba in 1817 where he became a partner in a sugar plantation, La Reunion Deseada, in Matanzas Province.<sup>4</sup> Forbes died of dysentery on board a ship bound for New York on May 13, 1823.<sup>5</sup> His two daughters, Sophia (1797-1827)<sup>6</sup> and Juana,<sup>7</sup> inherited his estate valued at about

3. *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 71 (Summer 1989), 3-38. Unless otherwise noted the information herein is from Farnie's article.

4. His partners were Joseph Bellechase and Forbes's son-in-law Francisco Dalcour. See John Forbes's will, October 2, 1820, Will Book I, 153-57, Probate Court, Mobile County Courthouse, Mobile, Alabama.

5. A. H. Gordon to James Innerarity, June 2, 1823, Greenslade Papers, Florida Historical Society, Tampa.

6. Sophia Forbes was born in Mobile on July 16, 1797, the daughter of Isabella Narbone and John Forbes. She was baptized on December 10, 1797. See Baptismal Records, book 2, 67-a, Records of the Chancery, Diocese of Mobile, Alabama.

7. No date of birth or death for Juana Forbes is known. Her father's [John Forbes] will of October 2, 1820, listed her as a minor daughter. Juana married Edmund DePestre in Cuba. See *John and James Innerarity & the Heirs of John Forbes v. United States*, case no. 1830-2637, Historic Documents Section, Judicial Building, Pensacola, FL, William S. Coker and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Gainesville, 1986), 359.

\$150,000. Sophia married Francisco Dalcour [also Dalcourt] apparently soon after she arrived in Cuba about 1817.<sup>8</sup>

Sophia and Francisco Dalcour's daughter—Forbes's granddaughter—Juana Camila Dalcour (1818-1855), married Stephen Cattley Tennant (1800-1848) on March 19, 1840. Tennant was an English merchant living in Havana. There were five children from this union, including a set of twins, Enriqueta Augustina (1843-1908) and José Esteban (1843-1914). José later changed his name to Stephen Joseph. Considerable information about the family and some about Enriqueta's early years is included in Professor Farnie's study. Enriqueta eventually moved to Manchester, England, and there converted from the Roman Catholic faith to become a member of the Cavendish Congregational Chapel.

In Manchester, Enriqueta became a good friend and companion of Mr. and Mrs. John Rylands. Rylands, a wealthy businessman, had already been widowed once, and his second wife, Martha, died on February 13, 1875. Some seven months later John Rylands married the thirty-five-year-old Enriqueta. They were married thirteen years, when on December 11, 1888, Rylands died.

Enriqueta inherited well over £2.5 million from Rylands's estate. Subsequently, she spent much of her time and a great amount of money on the construction of the John Rylands Library in Manchester, which she dedicated to her husband. She also assisted the library in acquiring many valuable manuscripts and books. The library was formally inaugurated on October 6, 1899. Enriqueta's twin brother, Stephen Joseph, who was associated with her in the founding of the library, also served as a trustee, a member of the council, and as honorary treasurer of the library.<sup>9</sup> In 1972 the John Rylands Library and the University of Manchester Library merged.<sup>10</sup>

In 1903 Henry Guppy, the librarian, edited the first volume of the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*. Volume seventy-three of the *Bulletin*, now the *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* appeared in 1992. A picture of the statue of Mrs. Rylands unveiled in

8. Will of Don Francisco Dalcourt, Matanzas, Cuba, March 24, 1838, copy in Charleston County Wills, vol. 42, pp. 29-31, South Carolina Department of Archives and History, copy provided by William Miller of Carmichael, CA, Coker and Watson, Indian Traders, 358-59.

9. "In Memoriam. Mrs. Enriqueta Augustina Rylands," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 1 (October 1908), 353,358.

10. Stephen Roberts, et al., *Research Libraries and Collections in the United Kingdom: A Selective Inventory and Guide* (London, 1978), 162-63. In 1978 the combined libraries had 2,650,000 volumes and 8,000 current periodicals.

the main hall of the John Rylands Library on December 12, 1907, may be found in volume I, no. 1 of the *Bulletin*. Her obituary— she died on February 4, 1908— appeared in the *Bulletin* for October 1908.<sup>11</sup>

It is obvious from the two manuscript collections acquired by the University of West Florida and from Farnie's article that the research and writing about these two Indian trading companies and the families associated with them is not yet complete. The following is a chronological, annotated bibliography of articles and books written as a result of the documentary project, the Papers of Panton, Leslie and Company. Collectively, they provide an in depth look at the research, bibliography, and history of these companies.

William S. Coker, "Entrepreneurs in the British and Spanish Floridas, 1775-1821," in *Eighteenth-Century Florida and the Caribbean*, ed. Samuel Proctor (University Presses of Florida, 1976), 15-39. A brief overview of the early studies written about the Panton and Forbes companies in Spain and a biographical sketch of each of the early partners.

\_\_\_\_\_, *Historical Sketches of Panton, Leslie and Company* (University of West Florida, 1976). Includes a reprint of the aforementioned article from Proctor's volume and a paper, "William Panton: Loyalist and Activist," read at the 26th Annual Conference, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, March 2, 1976.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Papers of Panton, Leslie and Company," *Ex Libris, Journal of the University of South Florida Library Associates* 2 (Fall 1979), 13-15. Describes the Panton Leslie project and provides a brief bibliography of pertinent studies.

\_\_\_\_\_, et. al., trans. and ed., *John Forbes' Description of the Spanish Florida, 1804* (Perdido Bay Press, 1979). This is a translation of a report written by Forbes for the Spanish government following the Louisiana Purchase of 1803.

\_\_\_\_\_, "John Forbes and Company and the War of 1812 in the Spanish Borderlands," in *Hispanic-American Essays in Honor of Max Leon Moorhead*, ed. William S. Coker (Perdido Bay Press, 1979), 61-97. Describes the difficulties that the company faced

11. "In Memoriam. Mrs. Enriqueta Augustina Rylands," 351-59.

in Mobile and in East and West Florida after the British arrived during the War of 1812.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Una Compañía privilegiada (John Forbes), en La Florida española durante la guerra de 1812," *Revista de Indias*, nos. 159-62 (Enero-Diciembre 1980), 219-54. A Spanish translation of the foregoing chapter, "John Forbes and Company and the War of 1812 in the Spanish Borderlands," from the Moorhead festschrift.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Last Battle of the War of 1812: New Orleans. No, Fort Bowyer!" *Alabama Historical Quarterly* 43 (Spring 1981), 42-63. Shows that it was John Innerarity, a member of John Forbes Company in Pensacola, who sent a rider— Paul Revere style— to warn the Americans in Fort Bowyer that the British planned to attack the fort. This was the first attack upon the fort in September 1814.

\_\_\_\_\_, and Thomas D. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Panton, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (University Presses of Florida, 1986). Provides an in depth study of these two Indian trading firms and the personalities associated with them.

William S. Coker, "A History of the Papers of Panton, Leslie and Company Project and its Antecedents," in *The Papers of Panton Leslie, and Co.* (Woodbridge, CT: Research Publications, 1986), v-vi. This is a brief overview of the history of the collection of the documents. The main purpose of this 764-page guide is to provide names, dates, and a brief summary of each document in the twenty-six-reel microfilm collection of company documents available from Research Publications, Inc., 12 Lunar Drive, Woodbridge, CT 06525.

\_\_\_\_\_, "How General Andrew Jackson Learned of the British Plans Before the Battle of New Orleans," *Gulf Coast Historical Review* 3 (Fall 1987), 85-95. Reveals that Jackson learned about the British plans from James Innerarity, head of Forbes & Co., in Mobile in August 1814, some four months before the Battle of New Orleans.

\_\_\_\_\_, "The Columbian Exchange in the Floridas: Scats, Spaniards, and Indians, 1783-1821," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 3 (Summer 1994), 305-25. Paper read at Santa Fe, New Mexico, symposium "Old World and New: New Mexico and the Columbus Quincentennial," October 14, 1989. This shows that while the biological exchange cannot be overlooked, the eco-

conomic exchange between Europeans and southeastern Indians also had a devastating effect upon the latter.

\_\_\_\_\_, "Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: A Spanish, French, and English Documentary Project," in *The Hispanic Experience in North America: Sources for Study in the United States*, ed. Lawrence A. Clayton (Ohio State University Press, 1992), 107-15. A paper read at the Library of Congress, which briefly reviews the history and accomplishments of the Papers of Pantón, Leslie and Company project to 1987.