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Abstract

While digital humanists have often discussed how digital editing develops students' abilities to read closely and analyze sources, historians adjacent to the discipline have underexamined the benefits of the practice on their own students. This article seeks to provide a perspective supporting the existence of such benefits for history students. It examines an application of ideas regarding the use of digital documentary editing to train students as historians. Using my own experience as a student editor and historian, I argue that digital editing especially facilitates close reading which, in turn, enables highly specified primary source analysis. To accomplish this, I reflect on creating an edition and exhibit on a twentieth-century letter relevant to local history for a digital editing course in the summer of 2020, outlining how the experience developed the skills of both disciplines. My project demonstrates the intersection of digital humanities and public history, a space where even undergraduates can effectively be engaged.

Digital editing increases public access to texts and other documents through modern technology. Readers can often discover and read an edited text much more easily than an unedited facsimile because of its clean design, full-text searchability, and regularized use of language. They also learn much more about a text, through supplementary information that can be added because of features only available in a digital context. Digital editing also holds benefits for editors, since those who create editions and compile all information within them gain insight into the texts they work on in different ways. As someone with experience in digital editing with TEI-XML guidelines for encoding in the humanities, I wanted to investigate how an editor's relationship with and knowledge of a text develops through their work.

In 2020, I participated in a remote summer course on electronic textual editing. Each student contributed to the North Florida Editorial Workshop, an initiative at the University of North Florida that seeks to publish online digital editions of primary source documents related to local history. For my final project, I chose to work on a letter written by Ellen Call Long, the daughter of two-time territorial governor of Florida, Richard Keith Call. Long was a nineteenth-century Floridian planter and an amateur historian. While the project's main goal was to transmit the letter through an online medium, a secondary objective had to do with the process itself, exploring how much information could be gathered from a single eight-page document. My work with the letter demonstrates how editorial work, including regularization and annotation, can facilitate close reading and original research. It shows, furthermore,

how such a process is possible even in the relatively short amount of time of a six-week summer semester.

At the intersection of documentary editing and digital history, digital editing projects like mine require intimacy with the text to create quality scholarly work. My project shares similarities with traditional documentary editing as conducted by historians, a process in which editors attempt to faithfully represent a unique original document. In their influential text *A Guide to Documentary Editing*, Mary-Jo Kline and Susan Holbrook Perdue detail how close reading underscores transcription, the foundation of editorial work, in its section dedicated to the subject. Through studying the text closely, Kline and Perdue state that the editor “will inevitably learn to recognize meaning in patterns of inscription that earlier seemed meaningless or baffling” (113). They also argue that close reading and familiarity with the text is fundamental to the documentary editor’s goal of faithfully representing the original primary source, claiming that, “Only a careful analysis of the sources at hand enables the editor to decide which conventions will least distort the source” (Kline and Perdue 121). These observations on the transcription process foundational to documentary editing apply to digital editions as well.

Digital editions might, in fact, require even more scrutiny of the text. In *Digital Scholarly Editing*, Elena Pierazzo introduces the concept of the paradigmatic edition. Due to the possibilities revealed by using markup, this type of edition obscures the boundary between the traditional documentary editions and critical editions of works with multiple sources, as well as clean reading versions and editions covered in annotations (Pierazzo 28-29). Many different editions can coexist at once with the capabilities of modern computers and editors equipped with encoding knowledge. Pierazzo argues that with this kind of edition “an indefinite amount of information” can be presented to readers and researchers, unlike the hard limits of physical printed editions (81). The

editions created as part of the North Florida Editorial Workshop followed some elements of the paradigmatic model, albeit to a limited extent, by including a transcription, intermediate version highlighting all editorial decisions, and an edited reading version with annotations. Gathering the information required to create multiple editions in one file encourages close reading of the text. Encoding, like transcription, lends itself to developing a closer familiarity between editor and text. This familiarity lends itself to digital history and primary source analysis.

For digital historians, the processes involved in digital editing facilitate their research of primary source documents. Historian Jim Mussell provides one example of this when describing his work on the *Nineteenth-Century Serials Edition*, a project dedicated to editing and publishing several periodicals from the period. One specific element of digital editing beneficial to the project was the use of tags to distinguish names and topics relevant to researchers. While much of the actual tagging of semantic elements was left to data-mining programs, the framework for creating tags prepared by editors like Mussell allows historians to “manipulate historical information” to explore new paths of analysis (86). Reflecting on his experience in digital history, Mussell explains that digital tools like encoded editions reveal “unrealized aspects of this material and the unthought assumptions that have hitherto structured our engagement with it” (89). These tools enhance researchers’ ability to engage with and understand the source, while also providing similar benefits to the tools’ creators. Digital editions not only provide unique benefits to professional scholars like historians but also can enrich the education of students.

In recent scholarship, educators in the humanities have examined the relationship between close reading and textual editing among undergraduate students, as well as the knowledge produced by training students to edit. Examining these questions from the perspective of literary criticism, Erick Kelemen

experimented with training students in traditional critical editing without encoding to teach students about the nature of creating texts. He emphasizes the crucial role of close reading in the work of the editor, particularly in the proofreading of a text (Kelemen 130). By training students in critical editing, students gained such an intimacy with the text that Kelemen asserts that editorial work “involves the students in the production of the very text that they study” (132).

Amanda A. Gailey found that close reading and digital editing contribute to the creation of new knowledge even at the student level. She argues that encoding in digital textual editing is inseparable from reading a piece of writing closely (197). Her digital editing course allowed students to work closely with documents of their choice, an activity that produced significant changes in her students, who became “unparalleled experts on the topics” of their editions (Gailey 198). The students’ close reading and subsequent annotation of a text generated new, highly specific knowledge based on that one text. While the work of Kelemen and Gailey is articulated from within the field of English, my editorial work has involved close reading from a historical, not literary, perspective. The results described by Gailey reflect the potential of highly specified, original analysis resulting from a more historical approach to editing.

Compared to scholars of literature, historians have written much less about using digital editing as a tool to teach students the close reading that aids primary source analysis. An article by Will Hanley presents an example of incorporating digital editing into a history course centered on the twentieth-century *Egyptian Gazette* but does not discuss the practice’s benefits to primary source analysis. Hanley emphasizes training in technical skills and issues of student labor rather than discussing editing as a tool to develop the more traditional abilities of the historian in-depth (156-157). While the students wrote analysis papers on their assigned issues of the *Egyptian Gazette*, he does not elaborate on how the

students’ editing itself might contribute to their grasp of the source and its context, most likely because of his students’ difficulty in analyzing the source (Hanley 157-158). He does briefly address the results of the papers, reflecting on how their analysis was limited by the students’ access to only a small portion of the newspaper’s issues (Hanley 156). The difficult task of training inexperienced students in encoding skills overshadowed any lessons regarding editing’s relationship to close reading.

Other scholars have addressed how the editorial process might be used to teach students the skills of the historian despite technical problems. Describing the outcomes of an assignment involving the transcription of primary sources on her students, Tona Hangen observes that

“students who perform even short stints as volunteer transcriptionists become very curious about what they are reading, which generates open-ended questions without easy answers,” (1199).

The time spent deciphering the document teaches them to closely read the source to understand it, rather than simply search for information that contributes to their thesis. Digital editing especially encourages students to be active in the creation and outreach of history utilizing the accessibility and power of tools like the internet. Mark Sandle believes that digital history projects encourage students’ transition “from being a tourist to becoming an explorer” of historical knowledge (144). As employed and discussed by scholars in literature and history fields, text encoding develops undergraduates’ close reading and historical contributions in original research by choosing methodologies conducive to those ends.

A summary of my work, constituting the remaining pages, outlines an application of these ideas regarding students training in the work of historians through digital editing. It presents a case in which a student avoids the problem faced by Hanley, having grasped the technical aspects of TEI-XML

encoding. Progressing beyond the mechanical steps of editing to conduct original research, a student can thus create a more interpretive edition. The resulting scholarly product, including both edition and its companion exhibit, combines public history skills and the more traditional primary source analysis written for student research papers. In this case, the product sheds light on early twentieth century Florida historiography, discussing niche figures unknown to all but local historians interested in organizations like the Florida Historical Society. This process, therefore, can produce the type of highly specific knowledge described by Gainey but in the realm of history instead. Undergraduate projects like mine can more greatly fulfill the potential of editing by reflecting on each step of the editorial process and discovering how they train them as young scholars.

As the first step in creating digital editions, potential editors must determine an approach to their work, examining editorial theory and other methodologies used by editors. This particular course taught students an editorial methodology prioritizing the preservation of the original features of the text while regularizing antiquated features uncommon to modern readers and other deviations from modern English that would make reading more difficult. As part of this process, editors include physical features of the text like line and paragraph breaks and must scrutinize the text for any incorrect homophones and misspellings. After or while they create a transcription of the text in an XML file, they use the `<choice>` tag to mark any editorial changes made to the document. Whether correcting a misspelled word or adding punctuation, the `<choice>` tag creates two versions of the document which coexist using XML: a transcription of the original text represented as accurately as possible and a regularized version that incorporates all editorial decisions. The project's methodology sought to take advantage of the benefits from the digital format, such as creating multiple coexisting versions of the text and removable annotations.

Beyond the more traditional editorial responsibilities of determining the representation of the text, annotation allowed students more freedom in how to approach their projects. By annotating the edition with the `<note>` tag, students could provide context for understanding the document by concisely presenting their research within the edition itself. Annotations often worked closely with tagging semantic aspects using tags like the `<name>` tag, which highlights names of people, places, and organizations. Another commonly used method for encoding semantic aspects of the text was using the `<title>` tag for titles of literary works, periodicals, and other creations. Creating editorial notes with the aid of these tags, students could define technical terms and identify named people. Using transcription notes, they explained any unique physical characteristics and formatting of the document not visible on the webpage for the digital edition worth acknowledging. Annotations, especially editorial ones, played a key role in my approach to the editorial project.

Taking advantage of the digital nature of my work, my editorial approach sought to make digital as many elements of the edition as possible with citations and links through which readers could learn more about the subjects of the annotations without having to leave the digital environment of the edition. Within annotations visible on the digital edition, these citations provided access to online sources containing further information about specific people, written works, and events. The object was to allow a reader of the edition to learn as much as possible about the text and its context without having to do their own research. Direct links to references within the edition replaced the time, effort, and resources required to locate the information. However, not all annotations had reliable sources which are publicly available through the internet, so I aimed to find as many as possible within the time restraints of a summer semester.

In the process of annotation, my individual approach focused on identifying all individuals named

in the letter and their relationships. While researching these relationships, I discovered the most likely name of a book referenced but not directly identified by name in the text that was key to determining the relationships between two figures that appear in the letter: Edwin Luther Green, the recipient of Long's letter, and William N. Sheats, Florida's first superintendent of public instruction. Long references that Sheats had disparaged Green's ability as a historian in some way, referring to an unnamed work that he had published. After researching Green's bibliography, the textbook *School History of Florida* appeared as the most likely candidate, because it had been inspired by and dedicated to Sheats for use in Florida's public schools. The close reading required by editing and additional research allowed for the construction of a web of relationships which formed the backbone of the annotations, edition, and exhibit.

Thorough examination of the text pervaded each step of creating the edition. As one of the first stages of the editor's encounter with the text, transcription is inherently an exercise of closely reading the text. For example, I had to scrutinize the context of illegible words within a sentence or paragraph in order to accurately interpret the words at times. Making editorial decisions required patience to study the text for the aim of reflecting the text faithfully while remaining accessible to modern audiences. By spending time going over each word in the text while marking features to regularize, an even greater intimacy with the text formed. The editorial process also brought attention to details like breaks in the text, including those separating pages and paragraphs. The physical features of the text, especially page breaks, were valuable pieces of evidence that helped me develop a framework for studying and learning from the letter. The work of editing places emphasis upon this evidence which can often be overlooked. The primary source analysis in the finished exhibit serves as the culmination of the many hours spent with the letter.

The close reading of the letter accomplished through editing facilitated the analysis so fundamentally that it shaped the organization of the exhibit. Weeks of examination showed that the primary source divided naturally into four sections, often along the aforementioned page breaks. First, Long establishes the context of her letter, addressing Green as a potential autobiographer of her father. She then criticizes Duncan Lamont Clinch's account of the Battle of Withlacoochee, one of her father's most controversial episodes. Clinch, the other commander at the battle, took issue with Call's conduct. This discussion leads into her subsequent criticism of contemporary historians of Florida, including the then-definitive historical account of the Second Seminole War during which the Battle of Withlacoochee took place. At the end of the letter, Long expresses her implicit belief that those she considered Floridians were best suited to writing the state's history when discussing Green's previous historical writings on Florida. These divisions, while not easily apparent, guide Long's writing as she transitions between topics. Because the distinctions between topics are not obvious to readers unfamiliar with the letter and its contents, their inclusion represents my careful decisions as an editor with much time invested into the text.

The exhibit and its analysis could not exist without the work dedicated to making the edition. The digital edition, too, relies on the exhibit to expand upon its annotations and interpret the original document. As an exercise of the work of a public historian, the project provides a unique experience to students such as myself. In my experience, the dual roles of digital editor and public historian coexisted without interfering with each other while complicating my understanding of the project. When working on the project, the distinction between the two functions of my work generally disappeared because of their interdependence. As an editor, I aimed to learn as much about the document as

possible to represent it faithfully, which assisted the public history element of informing the users of the North Florida Editorial Workshop website about the context of the document. While improving as an editor, I grew as a historian. The Appendix contains a replication of the exhibit published on the NFEW's website included to demonstrate the product that can result from using the editorial process to support close reading and primary source analysis when synthesizing the role of editor and historian.

After six weeks spent studying the original letter written by Ellen Call Long, the resulting edition produced original research in the form of an exhibit highlighting a topic often overlooked because of its specificity. Taking inspiration from documentary editions and the model for paradigmatic editions, the digital editing project purposefully considers how transcription, encoding, and annotation deepen the editor's understanding of the text and reveal new

methods of interpreting it. As an undergraduate digital history project, the edition and exhibit demonstrate how students can engage in the creation of historical knowledge through editing primary sources. Often students analyze segments of multiple primary sources in research papers. However, my exhibit covered the entire letter in page-by-page detail, due to the page-by-page nature of editing. By taking time to make careful and thoughtful editorial choices and annotations, specific interpersonal information within the text lent itself to larger and more relevant questions regarding the creation of history and Florida historiography within one personal letter. Developing the ability to closely read sources and scrutinize semantic elements that hint at the document's context while editing, I improved both as an editor and as a historian in ways not available in traditional undergraduate coursework.

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Appendix: Replica of Exhibit

A Letter to Defend a Legacy: Ellen Call Long Writes to Edwin Luther Green The Purpose of the Letter

It was approximately the turn of the twentieth century when Ellen Call Long wrote to Professor Edwin Luther Green. Fifty years prior, Florida was granted statehood. In the late nineteenth century, the development of the state was beginning with the construction of railroads. While it would take decades until the majority of the state was developed, the frontier days of Florida were all but over. In the latter half of the nineteenth century, historians and antiquarians worked to research and write the history of the sparsely populated state when it was a frontier for Spanish, English, and American settlers. Long and Green were two such historians, the former having decades of experience writing the history of the state and the latter having recently forayed into Florida history as a young professor.

Ellen Call Long (1825-1905) was a lay historian and promoter of Florida from Tallahassee, Florida. She was the daughter of Richard Keith Call, the two-time territorial governor of Florida. Most of her written efforts were dedicated to preserving his legacy and defending it from dishonor. After the death of her father, she completed the journal he began to detail his life ("Call Journal Description"). Throughout her adult life, she wrote several articles and biographical sketches on Florida history. Her most famous work, *Florida Breezes; or Florida, New and Old*, describes life in antebellum Northern Florida and events in her father's life through the perspective of a fictional protagonist, offering perspectives of Floridian culture of historical value today. Long dedicated the book to her late father from whose "fireside talks and forest ramblings" she learned about his perspectives and memories to use in the finished text (III). The book's narrative takes the fictional protagonist from the North to Florida and covers events from the Second Seminole War and the

Civil War, with a prominent section dedicated to the Battle of Withlacoochee alone (Long 201-206).

At the time of this letter, Edwin Luther Green (1870-1948) was a relatively young professor from Columbia College, South Carolina, and a self-identified "son of Florida" (Green). His most recent work, *School History of Florida* (1898), was a textbook intended to be used by Florida's schoolchildren to learn about the history of their state. Throughout his career, he would write several books on American history and at one point considered writing a biography of Richard Keith Call.

In this letter, the pair's work intersects because of the possibility of Green writing a biographical piece on Call. Long thought that a biographer of her father needed to know him well, and ideally it would be someone with whom he had a close relationship. She likens this ideal biographer to James Boswell, the close friend of the English writer Samuel Johnson who wrote his biography. Despite this, Long thought that Green might have been able to accomplish a deserving biography of her father if he presented his life "fairly and correctly."

The Battle of Withlacoochee and Its Relevance

Because of the possibility of Green writing about her father, Long needed to address the event which permanently tarnished her father's reputation: The Battle of Withlacoochee.

Richard Keith Call (1792-1862) was a man defined by his bold demeanor and actions. He enlisted to fight against Indians at an early age, serving under then General Andrew Jackson. Call became close to Jackson and joined his group of close associates and supporters (Cusick, "Richard Keith Call" 45). After resigning from his military career which spanned the War of 1812 and the First Seminole War, Call made Florida his permanent home in 1822 and entered the law profession. In 1923, he began his term as a delegate of the territory to the United States House of Representatives. Throughout his political career,

he would demonstrate his strong loyalty to Jackson. As a reward to his faithful friend, Jackson appointed Call to the position of Florida's territorial governor for the first time in 1836. The beginning of the Second Seminole War and Call's military response would characterize this first term.

Duncan Lamont Clinch (1787-1849) was a U.S. military commander from North Carolina who served during the Seminole Wars. He is most known for his involvement in the attack on the fortification known as "Negro Fort" during the period of violent conflicts between native peoples and U.S. forces after the War of 1812. As an active member of the U.S. military, Clinch was responsible for the regulars from the U.S. Army at the onset of the Second Seminole War. In 1836, not long after the nearly seven-year war had begun, he resigned from his position. He entered politics as a representative of Georgia in Congress in his later years (McCormick).

After a period of unrest between native Seminole groups and white American settlers wanting continued expansion into the Florida territory, the Second Seminole War began in earnest on December 28, 1835, when Major Francis L. Dade and almost all of the soldiers serving under him were killed in a Seminole ambush known as the Dade Massacre. A few days after this first attack, as they were on their way to attack a Seminole stronghold in the area called the Cove of Withlacoochee, Call and Clinch encountered the Withlacoochee River. The river was much higher than expected, and the soldiers had few safe methods that could be used to efficiently cross. After hours of transport, Clinch's regulars were ambushed by Seminoles led by Osceola while separated from Call and his volunteers by the river. Although many of Clinch's regulars were able to retreat and survive, the conflict, later known as the Battle of Withlacoochee, was another defeat for U.S. forces (Cusick, "Richard Keith Call" 48).

Months after the battle, Clinch blamed Call and his militia for the defeat. He claimed that Call and the

volunteers had not supported him in the battle, which led to the Seminole ambush overwhelming them. He went as far as to claim that Call had prohibited the militia from crossing the river to support Clinch's troops. James G. Cusick, the curator of the P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida, notes, "This accusation became so stinging a blot on Call's record that almost two years after the battle, he ran a point-by-point rebuttal of Clinch's statements on the front page of *The Floridian*, taking up the entire front page" (Cusick, "Richard Keith Call" 49). Call would highlight the impossibility of transporting his troops over the river quickly enough to support Clinch and would continue to repeat his version of events throughout his life.

Despite this controversy, Call had a chance to redeem his reputation when President Jackson asked him to control U.S. forces in 1836 during the early stages of the Second Seminole War (Baptist 156). As commander, he was able to secure significant victories and invaded further into the Seminole's territory, even though his efforts were plagued by logistical problems. He failed to win what historian C. S. Monaco refers to as "the type of traditional battlefield triumph that he promised the president" and was later relieved of command by Jackson himself (86). Although he would be appointed to the position of territorial governor of Florida again in 1841, his failure to succeed in his campaign against the Seminoles to Jackson's satisfaction would ensure that the affair at Withlacoochee would remain a negative mark on his legacy.

Long would continue the defense of her father's actions at Withlacoochee even after he had passed. In *Florida Breezes*, Call is described as having succeeded in crossing the river in a canoe to aid Clinch in his retreat (Long 204). Long also labels him as a hero for his actions during the battle in her narrative (206). Needless to say, Long inherited her father's bitterness towards Clinch for his account of the battle and Call's actions during it. Defending her father's position that it was impossible for all of his volunteers to cross the

river in time to support Clinch, she states that his report was supported by “most honorable witness.” She writes that Clinch’s first report of the battle was “a most flattering account of volunteers in battle” but highlights that Clinch’s second report was the one which would tarnish her father’s reputation. As a consequence of this apparent betrayal, she uses the letter to bring into question Clinch’s character, demonstrated by her unflattering portrayals of Clinch’s resignation from the army and her accusation that he was “turning a deaf ear to all complaint of cruelty by Indians.” In her anecdote regarding Congress’ repayment for damage to Clinch’s sugarcane crop, she makes sure to note that Clinch had not lived in Florida for long. After criticizing Clinch, she turns her criticism towards some of the most well-known historians of her time.

Long’s Criticism of the Existing Historiography of Florida

The historiography of the Second Seminole War and Florida more broadly plays a significant role in the letter. In the final pages of the letter, Long criticizes some of the most highly respected writers of Florida history at the time while she discusses Green’s work.

George Rainsford Fairbanks (1820-1906) is the first target of her criticism. He had been born in the North and started practicing law in New York before he moved to Florida in 1842, where he would spend most of his life (Fleming 5). As Long mentions in the letter, he remained in the law profession in Florida, serving as a clerk to Judge Isaac H. Bronson. One of his earliest works as a historian was delivered in the form of a lecture on early Florida to the Historical Society of Florida in 1857 (Fleming 5). In the decades after, he would gain fame and influence from his published volumes such as *The Spaniards in Florida* and *The History of Florida*. In 1902, he helped to found the Florida Historical Society and became its first president (Fleming 7).

Since Fairbanks was a highly respected writer of history books who was still alive and would soon become the president of the Florida Historical Society, his status makes Long’s criticisms of him stand out. She claims that “[Fairbanks’] history is very narrow; we want a real history.” She also asserts that he “knew little of Florida” as someone not from the state, although she admits that his writings came from the “valuable” manuscript collection gathered by Thomas Buckingham Smith.

Smith (1810-1871) was an antiquarian, manuscript collector, and translator who grew up in St. Augustine. He wrote about the Spanish exploration and conquest of Florida to prove that his state had a rich heritage comparable to that of New England (Kagan 98). Long appears to give Fairbanks’ work some credit for using Smith’s work to write his histories, as Smith was a dedicated Floridian.

The other historian that faces Long’s criticism in her letter is John Titcomb Sprague (1810-1878). Sprague was an American military officer from New England who served in the Second Seminole War from 1839 to the end of the war in 1842. He served as an aide to then Col. William Jenkins Worth and later married Worth’s daughter. After the war, he remained in Florida and was in control of Indian Affairs in the territory. He returned to the North in his later years and spent much of the 1860s and 1870s in New York (“Sprague Collection”).

In 1848, he published *The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War*. It was the first attempt to write the history of the entire war and would remain the only attempt until a hundred years later (“Sprague Collection”). In this book, Sprague drew more from Clinch’s account of the Battle of Withlacoochee, writing,

“Four hundred and sixty volunteers, under Gen. [R.] K. Call, were spectators of this conflict across the river, excepting twenty-seven, who, under Col. Warren and Lieut. Col. Mills, dashed over in

spite of every obstacle, and by their firmness and activity rendered efficient service" (92).

As the most influential work on the conflict in the nineteenth and much of the twentieth century, Sprague's account of the Battle of Withlacoochee in the Florida War cemented the incident as a permanent and public mark on Richard Keith Call's legacy by favoring Clinch's perspective.

Consequently, Long argues that Sprague's work is "altogether partial". She warns Green against trusting *the Florida War*. She questions the credibility of the work by arguing that it was written to benefit Brevet Major General William Jenkins Worth's political career rather than to simply honestly report the events of the war.

Her criticisms of these well-known writers of history served two purposes. One was the defense of Call's account of the events at Withlacoochee, which she needed to present to someone considering writing on her father's life. A failure to address Sprague's presentation of the battle could have resulted in a biography that would be, in her opinion, unfairly biased against her father's account. Interestingly, Green's writing on the battle in *School History of Florida* does not address the controversy over Call's involvement (Green 239). Still, the uncertainty over his stance on the matter would be enough for this to need to be addressed by Long.

The second purpose of criticizing contemporary Florida historians was to defend Green's work in *School History of Florida*.

The Defense of *School History of Florida* and Long's Perception of the Floridian Identity

After criticizing Fairbanks, Long references the criticisms that Green's "present volume" had received. This "volume" is likely *School History of Florida* as it was Green's most recent work and his only work on Florida's history. According to Long, some had labeled his book "an extract from Sprague and

Fairbanks," saying that Green's book was more the work of others than the result of his own research. She then appears to identify one of the critics of the book and dismisses the claims by stating that, "W. Sheats is not a Floridian."

William N. Sheats (1872-1922) was Florida's first state superintendent of public instruction, who served from 1893 to 1905 and then again in 1913 to 1922. He had previously taught in Florida's Alachua County and served as superintendent of education there as well (Cusick, "Regarding Long Letter"). Becoming a well-known Southern educator, he succeeded in making educational reforms and increased funding for schools across the state. However, his positive reforms came with the condition that education be strictly segregated. He refused to allow white teachers to teach black students, going so far as to make it illegal in 1895 as part of a high-profile campaign against the Orange Park Normal and Industrial School, which taught both black and white students (Richardson 399). His efforts to enshrine segregation into Florida's education system remain part of his legacy.

In the preface of *School History of Florida*, Green dedicates his book to Sheats as the person who suggested that he write a history of Florida to be used in schools. Sheats had an interest in a variety of textbooks being available to Florida's schools. One of the major issues of the 1904 election of the state superintendent, among other issues like racial segregation, was Florida state senator H. H. McCreary's proposal for textbook uniformity across the state. Sheats opposed the idea because he believed that the Florida educational system would become a monopoly for a few publishers (White 253). For this reason, it makes sense that Sheats would have encouraged a professor from Florida to write another schoolbook in the years leading up to the election to prevent a monopoly by giving schools another resource that they could use. However, Sheats appears to have been dissatisfied with the completed work to

some extent, prompting Long's refusal to acknowledge him as a Floridian.

The concept of an exclusive Floridian identity is a recurring theme throughout Long's letter. Long had been born in Tallahassee, Florida, and had lived there most of her life. She identified strongly with her state, knowing without a doubt that she was a Floridian. She goes so far as to state that, "Excepting myself, very few know anything about Florida." In her mind, only a true Floridian could understand Florida, and the work of non-Floridians was inherently flawed. This explains her favoring Green's recent article to the work of Fairbanks despite him being an influential and well-respected historian. She draws attention to the fact that he had moved to the state and credits the positive

elements of his work to the manuscripts gathered by Thomas Buckingham Smith, who had grown up as a Floridian. While she acknowledges that Green could improve his writing in the future, she rejects the criticism of those who, in her mind, do not truly understand Florida. This was the reasoning behind the statement that, "W. Sheats is not a Floridian."

Long concludes the letter by giving Green advice to make connections with the *Jacksonville Times-Union* which she thinks would benefit his writing. In the end, it is unclear whether Green ever succeeded in writing about Richard Keith Call's life. Perhaps, he wrote an article that has been lost to time or remains buried in an archive. However, this letter remains as evidence that such an effort was at one point considered.

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