



T. STRAUSS (comp.) and C. SAUNDERS (ed.). *Cape Town and the Cape Peninsula post 1806: a working bibliography*. Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town: Cape Town, 1989. 141 pp. Price unknown. ISBN 0 7992 1194 X.

The aim of this bibliography is to assist those researching aspects of Cape Town life and history since the British occupation of the Cape in 1806. It includes material, published up to 1987, in the J.W. Jagger Library of the University of Cape Town, the Library of Parliament and the South African Library. The criteria for inclusion were the following: a book, if substantial reference was made to Cape Town, and a journal article if it related directly to Cape Town. Entries are arranged by broad subject listed in the table of contents. Items are listed once only, even if they could be placed under more than one heading. At the end of sections, cross references to other entries are found and at the back of the book there is an author index.

This bibliography is to a great extent a duplication of existing bibliographies listed in section 1, as well as the *South African bibliography* by Sidney Mendelssohn, *A South African bibliography to the year 1925*, *Retrospective South African national bibliography* and *South African national bibliography*. Although credit is due to the compiler and the editor for attempting such a project, one must carefully consider the value of publishing a bibliography in 1989. In a small country like South Africa there is always the problem of duplication. A time-consuming and expensive exercise, not only for the compiler but also for the user, it gives in published form that which a search in SABINET (South African Bibliographic and Information Network) could provide — a list of monographs on Cape Town in all South African libraries linked to the database and not only in the three principal Cape Town libraries. The bibliography could have been of some value had it included journal articles, since there is at present no central database in South Africa which includes all journal articles published in and on South Africa for the period 1806-1986. But again the bibliography duplicates material already indexed in the *Index to South African periodicals*. It also does not cover all journals available in the three libraries mentioned.

The organization of the items by broad subject is never a very successful one for the user of a bibliography. The compiler chooses the subject most obvious to him but one which might not be the subject under which the user will search for information. The sources which the user might find useful thus remain virtually untraceable. Neither the cross references at the end of each section nor the author index compensate for the absence

of a subject index. Not all the authors mentioned in the entries are given in the index.

This bibliography was intended to be a research tool for researchers interested in aspects of Cape Town life and history. For the inexperienced researcher, however, this might be a trap if he does not establish that it is an incomplete duplication of more extensive existing bibliographies. If historians want to contribute to reference material in this field, it is advisable that they do it in the areas where the biggest gaps exist. All researchers are faced with the absence of indexes to South African newspapers, and journals up to 1940 (when the *Index to South African periodicals* was started). A far more valuable contribution would therefore have been an index to newspapers published in Cape Town, e.g. *Die Burger* and *The Cape Argus*, or to journals published before 1940. On a larger scale and to the benefit of all historians an index to *A South African bibliography to the year 1925* would have bridged the gap which individuals so often try to fill by publishing bibliographies on a small scale.

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