

News from the UK National Archives

A new cataloguing project – ‘Your Caribbean Heritage’

The National Archives of the UK has recently received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to catalogue Colonial Office correspondence relating to the Caribbean, and has appointed three full-time staff to work on the cataloguing and on associated outreach activities. The 25 record series included cover the former British colonies in the region including the mainland territories of British Honduras and British Guiana and the Atlantic island of Bermuda, and consist primarily of correspondence from the successive governors to the secretary of state for the colonies (or other responsible official) in London. There are also very small collections for Guadeloupe, Havana, Martinique, Santo Domingo, and St Eustatius for periods when they were temporarily in British hands. The earliest records in these series date from the late 17th century, and in general the series continue until 1951, although as the later records are already catalogued the project will be covering only the period until 1925/6, when the Colonial Office introduced a registered file system. As the earlier records, to 1739, are well covered in the published *Calendar of State Papers Colonial, America and West Indies, 1574-1739* (HMSO, 1860-1994; CDROM edition, Routledge, 2000) a decision on how to treat that material will be deferred to a later stage in the project.

The project started in April, and we are currently working on three record series, CO 37: Bermuda, CO 137: Jamaica, and CO 321: Windward Islands. In order to introduce staff to cataloguing techniques at a period when the records are of a fairly standard format we began in the 1870s, although we are now beginning to move to other time periods. We have also completed the two volumes of CO 117: Havana, 1762-1763.

A small pilot project covered five volumes of the Turks and Caicos original correspondence,

CO 301/62-66. You may be interested to see the results on the online Catalogue at

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>. From the Catalogue home page, key CO 301/62 (or 63 etc.) into the [go to reference] box. This gives the overall description for the volume ‘Despatches, Offices and Individuals 1874-1878’ – the only catalogue description available until now. Click on ‘browse from here’, which brings up a list of individual items within the volume. Click on an individual item reference, e.g. CO 301/62/10, for the full item description and additional details. There are 51 items within CO 301/62. Expanded descriptions include:

Item 1 (CO 301/62/1)

Vacant judgeship; application from Mr Dillett 'a gentleman of colour'; appointment of William John Anderson, son of the attorney general of the Bahamas currently practising as a barrister in the Bahamas.
Sir John P Grant, Governor of Jamaica, Turks Islands No. 1, 6 January 1874

Item 10 (CO 301/62/10)

Memorial of David Durham asking for compensation for the loss of his son Zaccheus (alias Ezekiel) Durham, one of the crew of the *Virginus* executed by the authorities at St Iago [Santiago] de Cuba on 7 November 1873. With certified copies of Zaccheus Durham's baptismal certificate, and of his last letter to his mother, Harriet Durham. Request forwarded to Foreign Office.
Includes certificate of Notary Public with applied wafer seal, 6.5 cm, with royal arms at top, ship in cartouche at bottom, and inscription 'Victoria dei gratia Britanniar [sic] Reg. F.D. Turks and Caicos Islands
Sir William Grey, Governor of Jamaica, Turks Islands No. 16, 31 December 1874

Item 17 (CO 301/62/17)

Complaint of J N Reynolds, merchant, regarding two actions for libel, and urging an

enquiry into the working of the constitution of the colony. With details of exports of salt.
Sir William Grey, Governor of Jamaica, Turks Islands No. 12, 19 December 1876

Item 28 (CO 301/62/28)

Management of the hospital of the poor house at Grand Turk. Includes list of persons dying in the hospital during 1876; printed rules and regulations for the management and discipline of the hospital; and dietary scale for inmates of the poor house.

Sir Anthony Musgrave, Governor of Jamaica, Turks Islands No. 14, 21 December 1877

Although 'Your Caribbean Heritage' was initially conceived simply as a cataloguing project, we recognise the need to ensure that people and institutions with an existing interest in Caribbean history, and Caribbean studies more generally, are aware of the rich sources to be found within these record series. In addition,



we hope to open the documents up to new audiences. The project will therefore include a number of outreach activities including two exhibitions – one online and the other a travelling exhibition of facsimiles – and a document workshop. Our emphasis here has to be on UK audiences, but we are, of course,

also concerned that our work will be of use to archivists, academics and other researchers in the Caribbean itself. We will be delighted to answer any queries you may have about the project, or to receive your comments. The project email address is: caribbean@nationalarchives.gov.uk, or you can write to me at Research, Knowledge and Academic Services Department, The National Archives, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 4DU, UK.

Mandy Banton

The National Archives, UK ■

Case Studies on Managing Records and Information Systems Now Available

The International Records Management Trust conducted a series of case studies on managing records and information systems in relation to three core areas of public sector reform (human resource, financial and legal and judicial). The case studies, funded by the World Bank, are now available to download free of charge from the Trust website at:

<http://www.irmt.org/downloadlist/development.html>

Thirteen case studies were carried out in eleven developing countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America, in order to gain an understanding of the issues involved in moving from paper-based to electronic systems for managing the records needed to support core government functions. The case studies provide a valuable resource for educators and students and may be helpful to development planners.

Please acknowledge the International Records Management Trust and the World Bank when using them. ■