Lambeth Palace Library Research Guide

Using QAB data

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1   The project

The Church Commissioners undertook to research into historic links into transatlantic chattel slavery. The resulting report is available here. This involved looking at the origins of the Commissioners' endowment fund, which was based partly on the funds of its predecessor body Queen Anne's Bounty (QAB), dating back to 1704. The main report includes information about the methodology of the research, but this brief document provides some guidance about the archival sources on which this research and report was based.

2   The archive sources

Chapter 1 of the report here gives a historical account of QAB, but for an overview of its archive, which is held in Lambeth Palace Library, see here.

The project produced a large volume of detailed information about entries in specific series of records in the QAB archive, including numerous names of people and places which appear in the records. Data compiled by the project for the purposes of this analysis has been imported into the Library's online catalogue. The way in which information was selected and transcribed from the volumes was dictated by the requirements of the project.

The main record series used by the project were firstly the **accounts or ledgers (ref: QAB/4/1/2-8)**, which are summarised here.

The records reviewed were several hundred years old and handwritten, in various degrees of legibility, also including many words and names that had either been abbreviated, spelt in numerous different ways or which are no longer widely used in contemporary English. As such, a degree of interpretation was needed to record the details which appear in each entry in the database. The database will very likely contain errors that are attributable to this. In some instances, it was not possible to determine the precise identity of the benefice to be augmented (e.g. due to illegible handwriting). In these circumstances only the words that could reasonably be identified were recorded. Users are encouraged to refer to the original documents for verification.

Each QAB Treasurer had their own style, both in terms of handwriting and methodology for recording entries in the ledgers. Some Treasurers recorded a lot of detail, others much less so. Some Treasurers also appeared to group certain transactions together, which others split out. The transcription aimed to remain as true to the original record as possible, albeit at times amendments had to be made to ensure that the approach adopted for analysis was consistent.

Certain abbreviations were adopted for the sake of efficiency, in particular regarding the identity of the benefice to be augmented:
   a. "Vicarage of xxx" and "V of xxx" are used interchangeably
   b. "Rectory of xxx" and "R of xxx" are used interchangeably
   c. "Curacy of xxx" and "C of xxx" are used interchangeably

Other abbreviations include c and d for county and diocese of…

Within the data captured for the project, entries are recorded in varying degrees of detail – typically, entries relating to benefactions were recorded in more detail than other entries (e.g. for fees that were paid to the Treasury). In some cases a "receipt" or "payment" is recorded, because it was not necessary to record certain transactions in detail for the purposes of the project analysis.

Although the majority of entries were recorded on a line-by-line basis, for the purpose of the project analysis certain types of transactions were grouped together, so that several lines in the original QAB Ledgers will be recorded as a single item in the database. This particularly applies to augmentations, which were grouped in accordance with the following criteria:

a. For those augmentations where the QAB governors matched benefactions and the funds were used to acquire land (typically between £100 and £200), all augmentations that were made on a single day were recorded as a single item in the database (e.g. if the QAB made four augmentations of £200 each on 12 July 1743, a single entry of £800 was recorded in the database on that date).

b. For those augmentations that were stipend payments, the project simply added up all of the payments that were made in the year and recorded a single figure in the database (normally called "interest on augmentations", "payment of interest for the augmentation of livings" or variations thereof). This was because these payments were very voluminous (often numbering in the hundreds every year) so it would not have been efficient to record each entry individually and this level of detail was not required for the project analysis.

The second main series of records used by the project were the **benefaction registers (ref: QAB/4/3/1/1-3)**, which are summarised here.

As with the QAB Ledgers described above, the nature of the original source material presented various challenges, perhaps even greater in respect of the Benefactions Registers, which appeared to have been annotated or overwritten at various points in history.

For this series, where a date span is given for an entry, the first date is the date donated, and the second the date augmented. Where a single date is given, it refers the date of augmentation. Particularly from page 280 onwards of the Benefaction Register (QAB/4/3/1/1) the style of the written record changes and the benefaction dates are much less frequently recorded. For this reason the date donated is wanting for many of the entries.

Where no augmentation date was provided, the benefaction date was used (however, as set out in the project report, it is known that these were often different). This was necessary for the purpose of the project but may not be strictly accurate.

From time to time the entries in the Benefaction Registers record the total amounts of the benefation (i.e. the amount originally given by the benefactor COMBINED WITH the matched amount provided by the QAB governors). In these situations, only the net amount was recorded by the project - i.e.. the amount actually donated to the QAB. This was to

ensure comparability with the amounts recorded in the QAB Ledgers and consistency in the project analysis.

3   General reference sources

The records refer to various ecclesiastical terminology and it may be useful to use reference sources, for instance see this glossary.

Note also that the records were originally created for specific organisational and financial purposes and are somewhat technical in nature. Users may wish to consult reference sources, for example (although these do not relate specifically to this record series) this website or the publication by Rosemary Boyns, Trevor Boyns and John Richard Edwards, *Historical Accounting Records: A guide for archivists and researchers* (Society of Archivists, 2000) [copy at Lambeth Palace Library ref: MF5616.B6].

4   Access to the sources

The key sources used for the project have been digitised and are available on the Library's online image database:

Accounts QAB/4/1/2-8

Benefaction registers QAB/4/3/1-2

These volumes in digital format are linked from the relevant entries in the catalogue database. Once you have identified material of interest from the catalogue database, you can refer to the digital volumes to see images of the original records. The QAB sources appear online in book format, so you will need to navigate through the volumes page by page.

The original records are also available in the Library Reading Room to registered readers. For information about how to access them, please see the Library website.