



# **INTRODUCTION**

## **DOBBS PAPERS**

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# Dobbs Papers (D162)

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## **Summary**

c.160 letters, petitions, notebooks, diaries, pamphlets and other documents, c.1568-1917, principally of Arthur Dobbs, 1689-1765, Governor of North Carolina, 1754-1765, and well-known eighteenth century Irish author and statesman.



## **Political Career**

Dobbs was high sheriff of Antrim in 1720 and in 1727 was returned for Carrickfergus in the Irish Parliament of 1727-1730. He was appointed Engineer-in-Chief and Surveyor-General in Ireland by Sir Robert Walpole and appears to have been a man of wealth and broad and liberal views as well as considerable attainments. As an author he published extensively, including an Account of an Aurora Borealis with a Solution of the Phenomenon, 1726, and an Essay on the Trade and Imports of Ireland, 1729 and 1731, which reflected his views on the trade of Great Britain and Ireland, and the making of British colonies in America more use than they had hitherto been.



## America

His lifelong interest in America is also epitomised in his major publication, 'An Account of the Countries adjoining Hudson's Bay, containing a description of the Lakes and Rivers, Soil and Climate, etc', (London, 1744). The work contains much valuable and interesting information and Dobbs strongly argued that the rapacity of the Hudson's Bay Company in dealing with the Indians had thrown the fur trade into the hands of the French in Canada.

In 1754, Dobbs was appointed Governor of North Carolina and brought out as gifts, from the King to the province, several pieces of cannon and 1000 muskets. He adopted a conciliatory policy with the Indian tribes, and commissioned Colonel Waddell of Rowan County to treat with the Catawbas and Cherokees. During Dobb's government the administration of justice in the province was much improved, but its chief characteristic was an interminable series of petty squabbles with the legislature, arising from a somewhat high-handed assertion of the royal prerogative on the part of the Governor and stubborn resistance on the part of the colonists. Dobbs died at his seat, Town Creek, North Carolina, on 28 March 1765.



## **Canadian and American Papers**

Not surprisingly, given the nature of Dobb's career, the main interest of the collection is Canadian. Of prime importance is the earliest volume called Henry Kelsey, his Book, being the gift of James Hubbud in the year of our Lord 1693. It details the life of an officer of the Hudson's Bay Company from 1683 to 1722, and contains several accounts of explorations made by him during that time. In 1689 he journeyed on foot to the north of Churchill and encountered the musk ox. During the two following years he travelled amongst the Indians and seems to have lived in their fashion, sharing their privations, which included periodical famine. He describes the great buffalo of the plains and the fierce bear-'which is man's food and he makes food of man'. Later there is a short account in this important journal of a voyage to the Eskimo country.

There is also an anonymous diary (about 8000 words in length) apparently kept by an officer of Wolfe's staff and relating to the Quebec campaign. It commences on 27 June 1759, with the landing at St Laurent, and closes with the fall of Quebec with a vivid account of Wolfe's death.

Other Canadian and North American related material includes a number of letters concerned with Dobbs' dispensation of his patronage in Canada, letters focussing on the role of the Hudson's Bay Company and manuscript notebooks pertaining to the Quebec campaign of the Seven Years' War, 1754-1765. Dobbs was particularly interested in increasing commerce between Britain and Ireland and America and he corresponded on this subject with senior figures in the British administration, including Sir Robert Walpole and the 1st Earl Granville, 1727-1731.



## **Irish Papers**

The part of the archive relating to Ireland, and Co. Antrim in particular is also of considerable interest. This includes a 90-page manuscript volume, c.1568-c.1689, containing information about Carrickfergus Corporation detailing that in 1683, there were 105 freemen and 41 burgesses, of whom 17 were aldermen. There is also a bound manuscript copy of a translation of Carrickfergus charter, 14 Dec.1612, a rental of Carrickfergus, 1680, and a Council Order, 1 Feb.1637, approving of the payment of £3,000 to Carrickfergus for the surrender of one-third of the town's customs. There is an 1822 statistical account of the Parish of Carrickfergus, with valuable information about the area and various leases and title deeds, 1917. The rent roll of Viscount Dungannon's Estate for 1766 gives some interesting particulars as to the tenants in the district lying between Holywood and the vicinity of Shaw's Bridge, Co. Down.

In relation to the 1798 Rebellion of the United Irishmen, there is a list of officers and men serving in the rebel army and depositions, 1798, taken at Newtownards and Saintfield against various persons alleged to have been at the battles of Antrim and Ballynahinch.

