

News from the Archives

Newsletter of Lancashire Archives



 **Archive Service**
update

Happy New Year!

I always like the hope which a new year brings, even though I know there will be challenges ahead. 2018 was a very good year for the archive service, with increased visits and use in every area, and a national volunteer award. All this gives us a good springboard from which to bounce into 2019.

Together with the Friends of Lancashire Archives we are offering our best ever programme of activities and events, with the archive collections themselves at the heart of it. We're building on the success of Family History Fridays, visiting 12 libraries, offering talks and workshops on a variety of subjects, and running art and creative writing sessions inspired by archives. I hope that there is something for everyone and that we'll be able to welcome you to the archives this year.



Lancashire Archives wins national volunteer award

In November volunteers from the crew-list indexing project were presented with the Archives and Records Association's national Archive Volunteering Award for 2018. Fittingly, the presentation took place in the Riversway Control Tower at Preston Dock and even the glass trophy had a maritime theme!

The project was funded by the national Federation of Family History Societies and we were pleased that their chairman,

Stephen Benson, who was also one of the volunteers, was able to be there. Winning the award is a great achievement by the volunteers and a real coup for the archive service too. Special thanks to Alison Ferguson who supervised the project.

What the judges said:

'Ancestors at Sea' was the clear winner in an outstanding field. The new index gives details of over 70,000 seaman from Lancashire, the UK and Ireland and includes a significant number of European and international sailors too. This is a first-class example of a local project with wider national and international relevance that could not have taken place without the strong support of partners and the commitment of the 17 volunteers that took part, generously giving over 2,300 hours of their time. We were particularly impressed that the volunteers were given challenging roles, for example working on a large number of documents and many with difficult handwriting, as well as being trained (and well managed) by the professional staff at Lancashire Archives'

The index is now available on our online catalogue, LANCAT.

Jacque Crosby

Archive Service Manager

A new arrival

Sometimes, a new acquisition can prompt another look at an existing collection, and even items in our library collection. This was the case with a group of letters which arrived in late November from a lady named Jill Sykes.

Jill (née Tallant) and her younger sister Wendy were part of an educational initiative during the Second World War, and her

parents had carefully preserved all the letters she sent home. These have now found a new home at Lancashire Archives and cast new light on a collection already held here.

In 1939, as war came closer, a group of Manchester Quakers saw a need for a safe place to educate younger Quaker children. A former guest house in Yealand Conyers was an ideal venue, and very swiftly the Yealand Manor Quaker Evacuation School was established. The school operated from September 1939 until October 1944 and welcomed over 200 children, including refugees from Europe. It became a true part of the village community and offered families and conscientious objectors respite from air raids and war work.



Jill's colourful, funny and sometimes touching letters show a different side to the experience from that evidenced in the formal minute books, rules and timetables which came to the archives in 1980. Together with a book written by a former pupil which is in the searchroom library collection, the two collections tell the fascinating story of an experimental

enterprise which deserves to be better known.

Yealand Manor Quaker Evacuation School Records
DDX 1340

Letters of Jill Tallant **DDX 3238**

The Story of Yealand Manor School by Susan Vipond Hartshorne **S3 YEA/HAR**

Kathryn Newman

Archivist

Cataloguing the Dalton of Thurnham archive

In the Dalton of Thurnham collection (DDDA) is a manuscript copy of the biography of Mary Emma Dalton, née Cook (originally Cooke). It was actually written by Honoria MacDonnell from Mary Emma's original autobiography. Written in the third person, it is the story of an extraordinary life and one I will attempt to summarise here.

The story starts with Mary Emma's grandfather who, with his wife, moved from Virginia to establish a successful plantation in Tennessee. After spending some time there, and starting a family, the Cookes got 'itchy feet' and on hearing that there is land to be had in Texas, they decided to head out west. Many others joined them on their quest and a wagon train left for Cherokee County. On reaching the Mississippi they chartered a steamboat which nearly sank but a second steamboat took them safely down the river Mississippi and then along the Red River to the settlement of Nacogdoches. They spent a year there while Mary Emma's father, Thomas Cooke, and his brothers joined other young men to fight in the war against Mexico following the battle of the Alamo in 1836. With Mexico defeated and Texas declared as an

independent state under President Sam Houston, the young men returned and the family finally moved to the area of land purchased by Mary Emma's grandfather and set about building Cook's Fort near Rusk, Cherokee County.



The increasing number of settlers staking a claim to land however, soon brought them into conflict with the native people, the Cherokee who had already been forced to move south to Texas because of famine. The Cooke men were soon engaged in war again, this time with the Native American tribes. After things had settled down, Mary's father married and soon after Mary Emma arrived, quickly followed by a sister called Susan – Mary can only pronounce her name as Tood – and later by a brother and two more sisters. As their young family grew Thomas decided to 'up sticks' again and joined another wagon train with his brothers to settle land in West Texas.

There is a fascinating description of the conditions and hardships suffered while their new homes were built. The family enjoyed many years on the banks of the Brazos River until they moved to Hillsborough (later Hillsboro), realising that the town could offer a better education and

more opportunities for the children. It is at this point that Texas – the Lone Star State – was finally taken into the United States. Soon afterwards however, the Civil War broke out and Thomas volunteered for the Confederate Army. Texas was in some ways spared the violence and deprivations of the Civil War, but the absence of many fathers, sons and brothers was felt very deeply, especially when they did not return home. Thankfully for Mary and her family, their father did return to a defeated South where he started to make plans for the future.

Fearing the ramifications of the South's defeat in the Civil War, Mary's family with many others, took the decision to leave for Brazil, where they had heard there was plenty of land for the taking. They boarded a barely sea-worthy ship at Galveston and, during a terrifying storm, found themselves ship-wrecked off the coast of Cuba. No lives or property were lost and they were taken in by a wealthy French plantation owner until they were able to charter another ship, which took them first to New York and then, finally, to Brazil. From here on the account becomes even more exciting. ... (to follow next month)

Victoria McCann

Archivist

A History in Objects: Preston, Lancaster and Barrow, 1890-1940

The Elizabeth Roberts' Working Class Oral History Archive comprises 545 recordings, questionnaires and transcripts of her interviews during the 1970s and 1980s. They are an important source for the history of working-class life in the North West in the early 20th century. The original recordings

are all preserved at Lancashire Archives, while CDs and transcripts are held at the Regional Heritage Centre at Lancaster University. The transcripts have recently been digitised and many are now freely available online:

www.lancaster.ac.uk/users/rhc/resources/archive.

The digitisation project also aims to create an online exhibition alongside the oral history archive. To assist in creating this Emily and Naomi, MA students at Lancaster University, are inviting local people to bring along objects and photographs relating to home, work and social life in Preston, Lancaster and Barrow during the period 1890-1940.

Lancashire Archives will be the collecting point for Preston material so people with photographs or artefacts relating to life in Preston during that period are invited to come along to Lancashire Archives on **Friday 18 January between 10am and 2pm**. Emily and Naomi would like to copy your photographs or postcards, and take photographs of the objects. These might include tools used in local industries, clothing worn in Preston in the early 20th century, utensils from Preston homes, or tickets and programmes for football matches, dances, concerts or other entertainment.

There is no need to book – just drop in. Coffee or tea and biscuits will be provided.

**Our next Saturday opening is
12 Jan and our next Tuesday
evening opening is 8 Jan until
7pm.**

**ANY
COMMENTS?**

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