

BIBLIOGRAPHY.

A NOTE ON THE CUMBERLAND COUNTY RECORDS.

By J. L. Kirkby.

The Cumberland County Council Record Office (at the Citadel, Carlisle) has now been recognised by the Master of the Rolls as a place of deposit for manorial records. Already it contains a great many of other records of interest to historical students. These are now being cleaned and made available as quickly as possible. Apart from the records of the Council itself, which begin in 1889, all classes of records may be consulted by students. These records fall into three main groups, the records of Quarter Sessions, Diocesan records and deposited documents.

Quarter Sessions Records. The earliest surviving record of Cumberland Quarter Sessions is a Minute book covering the years 1668-1695, the first of a continuous series. Sessions were then held at Penrith at Michaelmas, at Cockermouth in January, and at Carlisle at Easter and Midsummer. In the early years the minutes of Sessions are brief and lack detail. They usually contain lists of justices, of jurors, of recognizances, of persons indicted and of persons taking the Test and other oaths, as well as orders of the Court and notes of other business. With the passage of time the minutes become more informative and other series of books, supplementary to the Minute books, begin. The titles of most of these series of books are self-explanatory. They begin with the dates shown in the following list, and except where otherwise indicated they are all fairly complete down to at least 1889: Indictment books, 1689, Private Order Books, 1709-77, Public Order books, 1730, Abstract books (containing abstracts of indictments and presentments) 1787-1864, Convictions books, 1769, Recognizance books, 1770-1834, Report books, 1839-74.

Papers (and parchments) received by the Court at each Session were made up into three files, of Petitions, Recognizances and Indictments. The files were rolled up and tied in bundles, one for each year. Some files have survived for every year since 1686, although they are very incomplete for the early years.

Most of the files contain other subsidiary documents, not belonging to one of the three classes named. The indictments and recognizances supply all the details omitted from the Minutes, but the most interesting files are the petitions. These illustrate the extraordinary variety of subjects on which the Court was required to adjudicate, and give a detailed picture of several sides of the social history of Cumberland.

Such are the records of the Court of Quarter Sessions, but in the eighteenth century it was far more than a court of law. In the administration of the County, Quarter Sessions, with its Clerk of the Peace, created and collected many other kinds of records. Many of these are still unsorted and only a few of the more important can be mentioned here. The County Treasurer's Vouchers, 1739-1855, contain a mass of papers collected by officials, such as Constables and Overseers, in the course of their duty, and presented to the Treasurer as proofs or justifications of expenditure. Account books of the Treasurer survive for 1757-68 and parts of the 19th century. Many records contain lists of personal names, sometimes with other details, which are of genealogical as well as of more general interest. Such are: declarations against transubstantiation and oath of allegiance, from 1696; land tax assessments, 1780-1829; Deputations to gamekeepers, 1729-1843 (i.e. the notification to the Clerk of the Peace of the appointments of gamekeepers by lords of the manors); Jury (freeholders') lists 1714-1832 and freeholders' books, 1730-1822; Commissions of the Peace from 1711, and qualifications of justices, deputy-lieutenants and Militia officers from 1758. (The qualifications are the oaths of the persons appointed to offices declaring that they were possessed of the property qualification which the law required). Many documents were deposited or enrolled with the Clerk of the Peace in accordance with a Parliamentary statute. Of these the most interesting class is the Enclosure awards. There is an almost complete set of these awards, affecting almost every parish in Cumberland. The earliest award was made in 1760. There are also some related documents such as enclosure agreements and minute books.

Diocesan Records. All the tithe awards and the Bishops' transcripts of parish registers relating to Cumberland have been transferred to the County Record Office from the Diocesan registries at Carlisle and Lancaster. Both series of records are almost complete for the County, although the Transcripts rarely

begin before 1660, and in many cases considerably later. Occasionally they cover a longer period than the surviving registers in the parishes.

Deposited Documents. This group includes both the records of other authorities which have been transferred to the County Council, and official and unofficial records which have been given or deposited. Transferred records include those of the Alston Poor Law Union and Highway Board, the Longtown Union, the Longtown Rural Sanitary Authority and the Longtown Highway Board, and the Petty Sessions Records of the Cumberland and Longtown Wards. Parish records relating to the following places have been deposited for safe custody: Carlatten, Culgaith, Holme Cultram, Middlesceugh and Braithwaite, Midgeholme, Newton Reigny, Plumpton Wall, Seascale, Sebergham, Skirwith, Staffield, Tallentire, Uldale and Watermillock. About three hundred deeds relating to places in Cumberland, a number of letters, accounts and family papers, estate maps and plans and county maps have been given or deposited.

It is impossible in a short note to do more than indicate the kind of records which are available. Detailed typewritten lists are being prepared, and may be seen by anyone who is interested.