

Briefing Note No. 5

Economic History

These notes are intended to complement the VCH Guidance Notes on the 'Economic History' section of a parish history and should be read in conjunction with them. You'll find the Guidance Notes at: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/local-history/writing-parish-history/economic-history>

The Guidance Notes include detailed advice on the key sources on which your account should be based. These notes aim to draw your attention to sources relating specifically to Cumbria. Your account should be structured thematically, and should cover the following topics:

- Agricultural History
- Manufacturing
- Mining and Quarrying
- Other businesses and service industries
- Economic History since 1945

There will be something to say about Agricultural History for all rural parishes/townships and you should aim to include material on Economic History since 1945 whatever the nature of the community. How much material, if any, you include under the remaining headings will depend on the place.

Woodland: you will see that the Guidance Notes go into some detail about woodland, even though it is not given a separate sub-heading above. If there is a significant amount of woodland in the parish/township, I suggest that it should be treated in a separate section, which should give its extent, nature and ownership, drawing a distinction between '*ancient*' (i.e. *semi-natural deciduous woodland*), the uses of which (charcoal manufacture; swill-making, for example) should be charted, and *forestry plantations*, which should be treated as a separate aspect of economic activity.

Essential Starting Points

Ordnance Survey Six-Inch maps and 1:2,500 plans. Where economic activity affects the landscape – a forestry plantation, mill, mine, quarry or factory, for example – large-scale OS maps and plans enable you to pinpoint it on the ground. Comparing a succession of editions of the 6"/1:10,000 maps should allow you to chart such features from the mid-19th century to the present day.

Directories. Trade directories often mention such activity as mining, as well as listing businesses. Again, consulting successive directories, from Parson & White (1829) to Kelly's Directories of the early 20th century, will provide an overview of economic activity at local level in the modern era.

Census Returns. Check the population statistics on the project website (click on the appropriate ward under 'Census for Cumberland and Westmorland 1801-2001' at <http://www.cumbriacountyhistory.org.uk/resources-progress-vch-cumbria-project>) to see whether there are any comments on the reasons for population increase or decrease (new mines opening, for example). See also below ('Census Enumerators' Books').

Seventeenth-century antiquaries. For earlier periods, the writings of some of the antiquaries can be useful. In particular, Thomas Denton (*Perambulation of Cumberland and Westmorland, 1687-8*) provides a considerable amount of evidence for economic activity in the later 17th century. Sir Daniel Fleming's 'Description of Cumberland, Westmorland and Furness' (1671) and Thomas Machell's account of southern Westmorland in 1692 (printed as *Antiquary on Horseback*, ed. Jane M Ewbank (1963)) are also worth consulting. For a later period, John Housman's 'Notes' at the foot of the page in William Hutchinson's *History of Cumberland* (1794) also provide some local economic information.

1910 Valuation Office records ('Lloyd George Domesday'). The 'Domesday Books', which are held in Cumbria Archive Centres, provide details of land holdings and businesses in 1910. The much more detailed 'Field Books' (TNA, IR 58) provide much more detail on the use of buildings, etc.

Two obvious sources of evidence for local economic history may simply require too much time-consuming analysis for the purposes of a VCH parish/township article, though you might consider whether they might be sampled or whether you might be able to make use of analyses carried out by other local historians:

Census Enumerators' Books. The occupational data recorded from 1841 (heads of household only; comprehensively from 1851) to 1911 provides a very fine-grained picture of economic activity, including (under the name of the proprietor) details of the numbers of men employed on farms and in other businesses. For a modest-sized township or parish, extracting the latter data would not be too time-consuming. Remember also that for parts of north Westmorland only a census of 1787 survives, which provides comparable data: published as *Vital Statistics: the Westmorland 'Census' of 1787*, ed. Loraine Ashcroft (1992).

Probate inventories. A vital source for reconstructing local economies in the period c.1550 to c.1750. For farming, they often provide details of crops grown and livestock kept, and valuations of tools, raw materials or stock in trade can provide evidence of crafts and manufacturing. Full analysis of all inventories across this period would be very time-consuming, even for a small rural community. Sampling might be possible (all inventories over a couple of 10-year periods?) or selected inventories might be examined, using the details of occupations given in published lists of probate bundles (e.g. *Index to Wills proved in the Consistory Court of Carlisle 1661-1750*, ed. Susan Dench (1998), which contains a place index).

Key Sources

The following lists are merely a starting point; you will find other sources described in the Guidance Notes.

Agricultural History

- Manorial and estate records (surveys, estate plans, manor court records, estate accounts, etc, from 13th century to 20th)
- Tithe plans (Cumbria Archive Service, DRC 8): for patterns of occupation and land use c.1840; also field-name evidence of past land use patterns.
- Enclosure awards: CAS, QRE/1 (for Cumberland) and WQ/RI (for Westmorland)
- Agricultural statistics: parish summaries, 1866 to late 20th century (TNA, MAF 68)
- National Farm Survey, 1941-3 (TNA, MAF 32)
- Common land database: searchable database, giving acreage of each common and number of rights registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965, at: <http://common-land.com/>

Mining and Quarrying

- OS maps and plans; directories (see above)
- Records of mining and quarrying companies (check CASCAT)
- Manorial and estate records (since mineral rights were usually vested in the lord of the manor)
- Two secondary sources, which provide a wealth of information on individual mines are: John Postlethwaite, *Mines and Mining in the Lake District* (1913) and Oliver Wood, *West Cumberland Coal 1600-1982/3* (1988)

Manufacturing and Business

- Trade directories (from 19th century)
- Local directories (common in middle decades of 20th century).
- Local newspapers (advertisements, as well as reports)
- Company records (check CASCAT)

Economic History after 1945

- Oral testimony
- Local newspapers

- Community and parish plans (will also be useful for Social History section): for overview of occupations etc in early 21st century. These were prepared for over 70 parishes in Cumbria: for a list, see http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/images/uploads/Parish_Plans_Gazette_October_2004.pdf. Those for Carlisle District are available in full at: http://www.carlisle.gov.uk/business/rural_communities/community_and_parish_plans.aspx

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