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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **ELLIS PAPERS**

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# Ellis Papers (D683)

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## Summary

c.400 documents, 1585-c.1850 relating in the main to the administration of the See of Derry and to the management of the diocesan lands at the time of the Plantation of Ulster and afterwards.

The papers are particularly detailed and valuable for the period from c.1603 to c.1720, but, it should be noted that a number of the earlier documents exist as late seventeenth century or early eighteenth century copies. An example of this is a copy of a letter from Sir Lucas Dillon, Irish statesman, to Sir Francis Walsingham, English statesman, 8 September 1585, which discusses the routing of Scottish forces at Clandeboye, Co. Down and the settlement of controversies between Shane O'Neill's sons, the Earl of Tyrone, and Tirlough Luineach, etc.



## **Administration of diocesan lands**

Despite the military failure of the Scots, in the ensuing peaceful conditions of the early seventeenth century, private planters such as Hamilton, Montgomery and others were able to take over most of the lands of the Clandeboye O'Neills, who had weak titles and who ran into debt in the new capitalist environment. Valuable documentation relating to the administration of diocesan lands and related issues includes: the surrender of lands belonging to the see of Derry from George Montgomery, Bishop of Derry, Raphoe and Clogher to James I, August, 1610; list of 'Glebes to be allotted to the several parishes in the Barony of Loughinsolin', c.1630; 'Grant of Glebes to various parishes in Diocese of Derry', 24 May 1626; 'King's letter, 20 Nov. 1629, for issue of Letters Patent for creation of Dean and Chapter of St Columb's, Derry and a note, c.1620, concerning the payment of tithes by corn mills on the estates of the See of Derry.



## **Seventeenth and Eighteenth century disputes**

One of the chief interests of the collection lies in the wealth of material available for seventeenth and eighteenth century disputes, notably between the Bishop of Derry and the Irish Society over fishery rights in the River Bann and Lough Foyle. Indeed, there were many areas of dispute, one such example being documented in a letter, 1 March 1634, from Sir Thomas Phillips, Islington, London to John Bramhall, Bishop of Derry, announcing the success of his suit against the 'Londoners' and referring to their retention of land intended for free schools. Another is a petition, c.1714, to John, Bishop of Derry, from the tenants of Clonleigh, Co. Donegal, opposing 'unreasonable rents' imposed upon them by the Bishop's lessees.



## **Reports concerning the Ulster Plantation**

Researchers should note two particularly important and interesting items in the collection in the form of two reports, 1613-16, by Smithes and Springham and Proby and Springham, respectively, concerning the state of the Ulster Plantation laid before the Common Council in London. The reports present a depressing state of affairs although some efforts were made to ameliorate the situation: 'We found the Church at Coleraine unplastered within, fowl, unwholesome and unhandsome and (a) small store of Pews in the Church, the Church being well frequented with people.... We found the Chief Street in Coleraine unpaved and very fowl, and almost unpassable. We caused it to be paved and saw it done before our departure from thence.... We found that all the Workmen at the Dairy and Coleraine, being about 400, had been long unpaid (viz. at Derry 12 weeks and at Coleraine seven weeks) ... . We paid and cleared all the Workmen both at the Derry and Coleraine and we commanded that there should be no more such abuse offered by any Clerk, and we have displaced the Clerk for that and other misdemeanours.'

