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From Roanoke to Aden: Colonial Maps in the National Archives of the United Kingdom

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Abstract

The National Archives in London (hereafter TNA) holds one of the world's largest and most varied accumulations of maps¹. They were made or collected by the departments of state responsible for colonial administration and for the foreign relations of England, Wales and the United Kingdom since the sixteenth century. This remit means that not only does it hold maps of Britain's former colonies and dominions, but also maps of other powers' former colonies.

In addition to the map libraries of the former Colonial Office, Foreign Office and War Office, TNA holds many maps scattered through its holdings which may be of interest for research in colonial cartography. Many were made or gathered by colonial governors and civil servants, or by diplomats or military personnel when abroad.

The timespan represented by these records ranges from Raleigh's Roanoke to the post-war era of Aden and Cyprus. There are both manuscript and published maps, from the phases of exploration, military reconnaissance, boundary definition, colonisation and administration. Maps may show the location of tribal areas, types of produce, prevalence of tropical pests and diseases. There is much material about the process of surveying and mapping.

MAPS AND PLANS IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

This information paper is intended to draw the attention of researchers to the very important and rich sources for the field of colonial cartography held by TNA. These archives record the activities of central government from the present day back to the 'Domesday' book of 1086, the first major written cadastral survey of England ordered by that masterful coloniser William the Conqueror. The archives has one of the world's great holdings of maps, plans, charts, surveys and architectural drawings (hereafter called 'maps'); the exact quantity is unknown, but a conservative estimate puts the total number at more than six million. These maps date from the fourteenth century to the 1980s and relate to most areas of the world. Their geographical and thematic spread is probably unsurpassed. Colonial maps range in date from a map of Carolina drawn in 1585 at the start of British overseas expansion to maps of Aden and other dependencies in the news as the British empire waned after the Second World War.

¹ The National Archives was formed in 2003 by joining the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission.

An important part of these archives are the records of the departments of state responsible for colonial administration and for the foreign relations of England, Wales and the United Kingdom since the sixteenth century, and there are many tens of thousands of maps, plans and surveys of places overseas among these holdings. The records are arranged by the government department which created or used them, not according to theme, geographical area or publisher, and so it is useful for researchers to have a broad awareness of the remit and timespan of these various offices. The most important departments were those of the Secretaries of State (the State Paper Office), the Board of Trade and Plantations, the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the Commonwealth Relations Office, the Commonwealth Office, and now the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (though the latter was created after the symposium end date of 1950).

Early colonial period (late sixteenth century to c.1780)

The first attempts to plant an English colony were made in the late sixteenth century, when England set sights on America. TNA holds possibly the earliest English map of part of North America based on direct observation, a map probably made in 1585 and showing the location of the experimental colony of Roanoke (Figure 1). Observations on the map give information useful to the prospective coloniser, such as an abundance of fish and grapes.

The Roanoke experiment failed, but this did not deter further English settlements in America and the West Indies through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There was also trade and settlement in the East Indies and West Africa from the mid eighteenth century, with slavery a major factor. In these early days of English colonial empire, plantations (as colonies were then termed) were regarded mainly as sources of raw materials and labour. This link was reflected in the aims of various committees set up to develop and govern the colonies under the aegis of the Privy Council, culminating in the Board of Trade and Plantations (1700-1782). The main focus of all these bodies was on the development of British commercial gains from overseas colonies.

This aim generated interest in geographical information, maps and surveys of countries abroad. The Board appears to have taken an active role in acquiring this information. In 1676 colonial governors were instructed to procure and send home maps of territories for which they were responsible. The Board acquired manuscript maps and plans, and purchased commercially printed maps. It also commissioned surveys, such as those of de Brahm and Samuel Holland in North America. There was interest in both overland routes and at sea, so charts were considered important, as well as maps. Until the British Navy set up its own Hydrographic Office in 1795 captains were reliant upon commercially published charts.

Colonial business generally declined after the loss of the American colonies, following the American War of Independence, at which point the Board of Trade and Plantations was abolished.

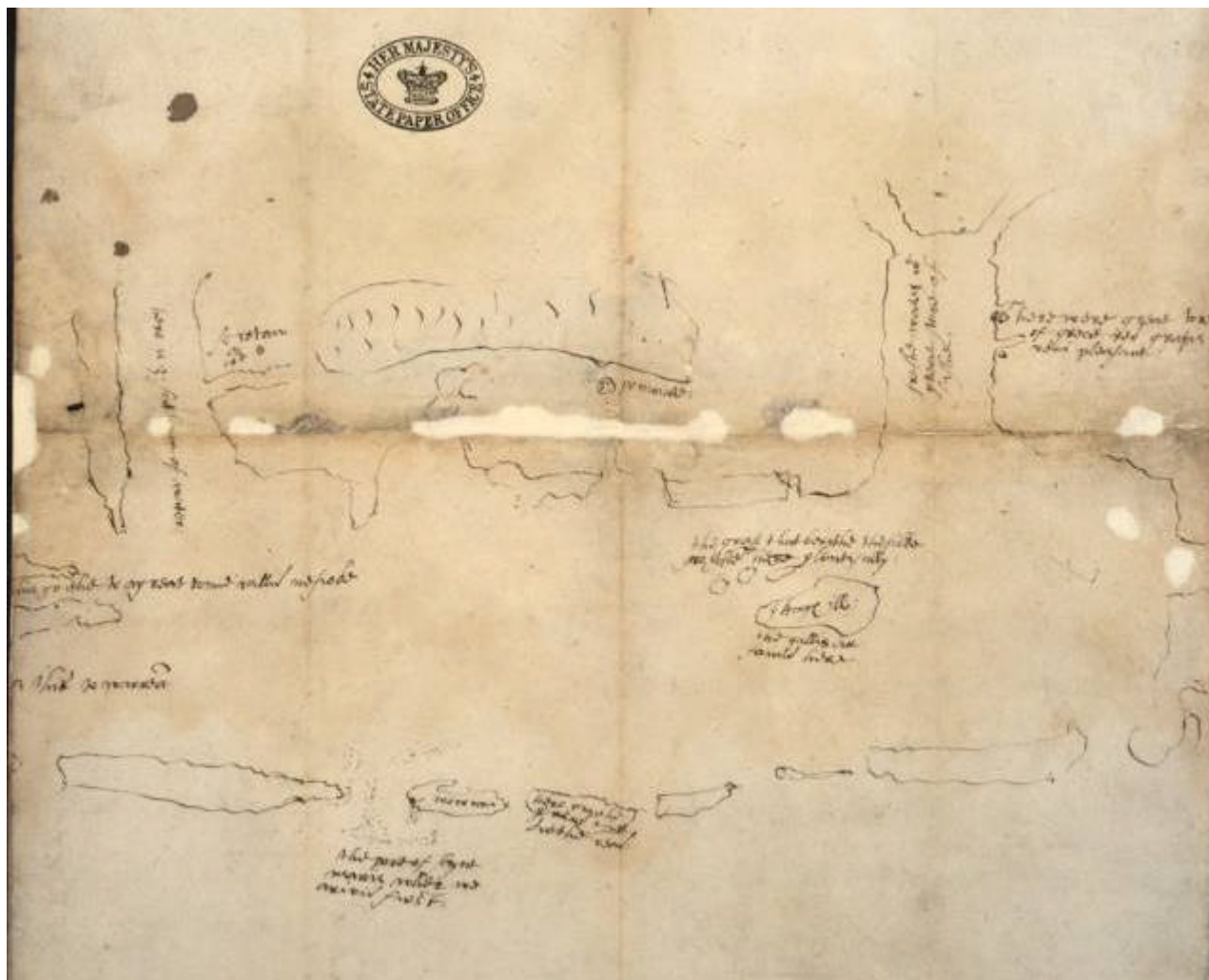


Figure 1. Map of the coast of North Carolina, made in about 1585, showing King's (now Roanoke) Island at lower right, shortly to be settled as the first experimental English colony.²

While some maps and charts of the early colonial period are to be found among the State Paper Office record series the majority, along with those of the Board of Trade and Plantations, were subsequently inherited by the Colonial Office and Foreign Office.

Main colonial period (c.1780 to c.1900)

Britain was at war with France for most of the period 1793 to 1815, motivated on both sides to a large extent by trade and colonial ambitions. What colonial business remained after the loss of the American colonies - largely that of the West Indies and of the settlement of Australia - came under firstly the Home Secretary then the War Secretary, until after the end of the Napoleonic wars. European conflict was continued in the colonies of Britain and France overseas, and many Caribbean islands changed hands during this period, some of them a number of times. This means that

² The National Archives (hereafter TNA): Public Record Office (hereafter PRO): MPG 1/584 extracted from CO 1/1. All images reproduced with permission from The National Archives.

TNA holds maps and other records of islands usually considered as part of the French empire, for the periods when they were under British rule.

At the end of the wars there was renewed interest in expansion of empire, for example in what is now Canada. Colonisation by means of cheap land grants to former soldiers was doubly attractive in that it provided a means of having ready-trained militias if the United States of America were to try to invade and at the same time it disposed of a post-war surplus unemployed population. Responsibility for colonial affairs remained tied to military matters until the outbreak of the Crimean War in 1854, when the overall volume of business required the War and Colonial Department to be divided to form the War Office and the Colonial Office. The latter body inherited maps acquired by its predecessors and these formed the beginning of what became the Colonial Office Map Library. This collection burgeoned with the deposit of mapping during the latter half of the century, now including that of Africa, Asia, South America and New Zealand.

The Colonial Office was not the only major department involved in overseas matters over the last few centuries. The Foreign Office, which came into being in 1782, was responsible for political relations with foreign powers included briefing the Government on overseas affairs, enhancing British influence over other nations and developing commercial links. Maps and plans often accompanied reports and dispatches sent to the Foreign Office by diplomatic and consular officials. Many others were acquired from mapsellers in order to assist comprehension of diplomatic and territorial relations abroad. The War Office and the Admiralty were involved in the business of overseas exploration and reconnaissance, and trained surveying officers accompanied expeditions.

Each of the first three offices usually placed maps in the custody of departmental libraries; their map libraries have been transferred to TNA (the respective record series are listed in Table 1). These map libraries represent an *ad hoc* accumulation and are rich sources of printed and manuscript maps. They consist of maps inherited from earlier departments coupled with newly acquired maps. Many maps were gathered by diplomats when abroad or by colonial governors and civil servants, usually upon standing instruction from the Office concerned. A number of maps were commissioned or purchased from mapsellers in the United Kingdom, to ensure that cartographic information supplied to the Office was up to date. Officials of all kinds might make or have maps made to illustrate their reports on official matters.

The Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty from its inception in 1795 was responsible for the collection and dissemination to the Royal Navy of hydrographic information, principally by publication of Admiralty charts. To do this, surveys were commissioned and charts made in an official capacity were collected to inform the publication programme. The Historic Archive of the United Kingdom Hydrographic Office is presently held at their office in Taunton, but it is proposed that it be transferred to TNA over the next few years. This will complement the other records of the Admiralty held at TNA, among which there is much overseas material, in the

form of views in ships' logs such as those of Captain Cook, manuscript charting of exploratory surveys and plans of dockyards and defences abroad³.

Table 1: Record series at The National Archives of interest for colonial cartography research

(note: this lists the major sources and some others but is not comprehensive)

CO 700	Colonial Office Map Library Series I	1595 to 1927
CO 1045	Colonial Office Map Library Series II	1779 to 1947
CO 1054	Colonial Office Map Library Series III includes maps of the Colonial Office's successors and some maps collected by the Foreign Office after 1940	1897 to 1984
FO 925	Foreign Office Map Library	1700 to 1940
WO 78	War Office Map Library	
MPG 1 and MPGG 1	The extracted map series for Colonial Office records	
MPH 1 and MPH 1	The extracted map series for War Office records	
MPI 1 and MPII 1	Dominions maps may be found in this general extract series	
MPK 1 and MPKK 1	The extracted map series for Foreign Office records	
MF 1 and MFQ 1	Series for extracted flat maps	
MR 1 and MRQ 1	Series for extracted rolled maps	
DO 35	General correspondence of the Dominions Office, among which maps may be found	1915-1971
DO 118	Material relating to treaties and agreements, amongst which maps may be found	1856 to 1965
DO 119	Maps of southern Africa can be found amongst correspondence of the High Commissioners	1843 to 1965
	Maps may also be found within original correspondence of the colonies concerned eg for the Bahamas in CO 23, Hong Kong in CO 129 and Sierra Leone in CO 267. Consult the online Catalogue to find the series for other colonies.	
FO 302	Maps and plans of the North American Boundary Commission	1872-1876
CO 441	Plans acquired by the West Indian Incumbered Estates Commission	1770 to 1893
OD 6	Mapping of some of West Indies islands mapped under the Directorate of Overseas Surveys	1930s

End of empire

The main government departments mentioned above continued to deal with overseas affairs into the twentieth century, with changes in name and administrative function, occasioned mainly by the world wars.

Britain continued to gain dependencies, notably in formerly German areas of Africa mandated to Britain after the First World War, and in parts of the Middle East. Other countries became British protectorates. In the late 1920s and early 1930s Britain still saw herself as the centre of a vast empire of countries, interconnected by strong communications and trade links, as shown by a poster commissioned by the Empire Marketing Board at Figure 2.

³ Admiralty charts are widely scattered among the records at The National Archives, which does not hold a discrete or comprehensive collection, in chart number order. The largest readily accessible collection of published Admiralty Charts is held by the Map Library of the British Library and the other legal deposit libraries: Cambridge University Library, the Bodleian Library, the library of Trinity College Dublin, the National Libraries of Wales and Scotland

By the third decade of the twentieth century, however, there was also a movement towards decolonisation. Some former colonies changed status to dominions and some gained independence. The dominions were administered from 1907 by the Dominions Division of the Colonial Office until the formation of the Dominions Office in 1925. There are significant quantities of maps and plans among Dominions Office records, including those relating to treaties and agreements (see Table 1).



Figure 2. 'Highways of Empire': a propaganda poster produced for the Empire Marketing Board in 1927 by MacDonald Gill. The placing of the British Isles at the centre of the map emphasized Britain's role as the hub of the Empire.⁴

Another new body was the Directorate of Overseas Surveys. Strictly speaking this body, founded in 1946 as the Directorate of Colonial Surveys and part of the Colonial Office, arises rather late on the scene to be of interest within the time parameters of the symposium. It is worth mentioning here, because it was a late flowering of a much earlier interest in colonial survey, and also because it has left a substantial body of records which date back to the nineteenth century and are thus well within the period now in view.

Systematic colonial surveys had been proposed as far back as the aftermath of the Crimean War, when the War Office suggested that colonial surveys might be a useful means of occupying military surveyors in peacetime. Disagreement between the military and the Ordnance Survey over who should be responsible and other

⁴ TNA, Public Record Office, CO 956/537A.

demands meant that it was not until the Boer War and the lack of adequate mapping it revealed that the call for colonial surveys was made again. The First World War and ensuing economic difficulties meant that colonial surveying did not start as a programme until the 1930s, and then was interrupted by the Second World War.

The Directorate of Overseas Survey remit was to set up national geodetic frameworks and then provide mapping for colonies or increasingly for former colonies. By this date, there was a strong role for aerial photographs in the making of maps. The activities of this directorate built up a vast body of manuscript and published maps, surveys, air photographs, and information about sixty countries and their boundaries. Responsibility for overseas surveys passed to Ordnance Survey, and its last incarnation Ordnance Survey International wound up in 2002. The Ordnance Survey International Collection, as it is now known, was no longer required for operational purposes and has been deposited at a number of institutions. The Royal Geographical Society has a full set of maps produced by the Directorate of Overseas Surveys and allied bodies; the Air Photograph Archive Library has gone to the new British Empire and Commonwealth Museum at Bristol; and Cambridge University Library and other bodies have taken remaining parts of the Collection. TNA will take the International Boundary Archive, selected registered files and survey records, and map production samples⁵.

MAPPING THE WORLD: FROM TROPICS TO ARCTIC WASTES

I have given above a broad history of the bodies within central government responsible for the colonies. It is beyond the scope of this paper to give a breakdown of the extent of the British empire across time or to give an account of each colony and the mapping held for it at TNA. I can however make some general observations on our holdings.

A vast area of the world is represented by maps among TNA. It is fair to say that there are generally more maps for former colonies such as North America, the West Indies and Australasia than there are for other areas. For example there are few maps for the Celebes, part of the Dutch empire, but many more maps for neighbouring Borneo, because of British interest in the area via the British North Borneo Company. Likewise in the Caribbean there are many maps for Jamaica, but few for the Dutch colony of St Eustatius. There are hundreds of maps for Gibraltar dating from the early eighteenth century, yet only a handful for the much larger Iceland for a few decades in the twentieth century, since it was of much less strategic interest to Britain.

In addition to Gibraltar, there were other places in Europe which were British colonies, even if some were so only briefly. Britain was one of a long succession of masters of the Ionian islands until they were ceded to Greece in 1864, and there remain maps from this period, and in particular plans of the fortifications built by the British. Military maps also form a large part of TNA's extensive holdings of maps of Malta.

⁵ Information about the history, work and location of the records is on the Ordnance Survey website at <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/aboutus/international/collection>

The wider foreign and military remit of the records means that TNA not only holds maps of its own colonies and dominions, but also maps of other powers' colonies. These might be acquired as commercially published maps, through participation in international boundary commissions as a neutral party, by capture, and from diplomats and military officers stationed abroad. As I indicated earlier, there was also much exchange of some islands and countries between powers, and in these cases it is possible that TNA may hold mapping for a country under Foreign Office or War Office sources as well as Colonial Office ones, for different dates, as the country was considered to change status from others' colony to British, and vice versa. In addition to the respective map libraries of these offices, maps may be found in their respective series of correspondence relating to overseas countries. It is well to be aware that records relating to a foreign power's colony will be filed under that power, not separately under the colony; for instance, maps and records for Martinique will be found under the heading of France.

Those interested in the mapping of the period of British administration of India and Burma, through the East India Company and later the India and Burma Offices should note that this has not in the main passed to TNA.⁶

While for some countries mapping may be sporadic or available only for a certain time period, it is fair to point out that TNA does hold a wide range of types of mapping for some countries from the time when they first became British colonies, if not from before. My first example was taken from early North America, and the holdings of mapping for the original states up to independence is particularly fine. There are maps from the local level of land grants and plans of the original layout of townships, charts of the coast and river navigation, to mapping of vast expanses for exploration and international boundary purposes. In this case colonial mapping ceased fairly early.

In the case of Australia there is a more comprehensive cartographic record. TNA holds many maps of Australia. Perhaps the earliest are charts from Cook's voyages around Australasia in the 1760s and 1770s. Later maps show the developing townscapes of Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide (Figure 3).

Other maps show allotments of land beyond the towns, and there are also a number of maps showing explorers' routes, some of them published. There follow geological maps, with the search for gold and other minerals. Then there are maps showing aspects of colonial administration: postal and electoral districts, livestock statistics, plans of the offices of colonial government, coaling stations for Naval and merchant shipping.

The wealth of colonial mapping for Australia is mirrored for New Zealand, with the additional genre of military mapping. The Maori Wars between 1845 and 1872 provided the impetus for military maps of great topographical detail. Thus much of the early mapping of New Zealand is to be found in War Office map series. The

⁶ The India Office Records are public records administered by the British Library. They comprise the archives of the East India Company (1600-1858), of the Board of Control or Board of Commissioners for the Affairs of India (1784-1858), of the India Office (1858-1947), of the Burma Office (1937-1948), and of a number of related British agencies overseas.

initial English settlement of New Zealand was made under the auspices of the New Zealand Company, and TNA holds a number of the Company's maps.



Figure 3 A manuscript map of the site of the city of Adelaide made in 1837 to illustrate the suggested relocation of initial settlement from swampy ground on the coast to a better site inland and the suitability of parts of the coast as harbours.⁷

On the question of colonial mapping, Australia and New Zealand are two cases where there are examples of mapping from all the main phases of European settlement: exploration, military reconnaissance, boundary definition, colonisation and administration. Each colony followed its own timescale through these phases, and for some countries there may be British mapping for only some of these phases. For example a cache of seventeenth century defensive plans of Tangier date from the

⁷ TNA: PRO: CO 700 South Australia2

period when it came to England as part of Catherine of Braganza's dowry on her marriage to Charles II in 1661 but was then relinquished in 1668.

Exploration and military reconnaissance

These first two phases of overseas expansion often went hand-in-hand, and both produced mapping as a record and as an aid to further expeditions. Exploratory navigation was the province of the Royal Navy, which gave specific instructions in the late eighteenth century to its captains such as Cook and Vancouver to explore and chart the coasts of the far north-west of America and Australasia. In the 1820s and 1830s William Owen was given similar instructions to chart the east coast of Africa, with an additional aim of assisting in the suppression of the slave trade there.

The English exploration of the interior of Africa was initially undertaken by private individuals; Mungo Park's first exploration had been made under the auspices of a private society. However, Park's account of this trip brought him to the attention of the British government, and Park's second journey to trace the course of the River Niger 1805-1811 and subsequent major expeditions were government-funded⁸. There are many manuscript maps of War Office provenance made as a result of military survey from the early nineteenth century onwards, where the focus was on topography and defensibility. TNA holds much mapping of the British colonies in Africa, in particular of Southern Africa; some of this has been researched by members of the ICA Working Group on the History of Colonial Cartography⁹.

Boundary delimitation

Europeans took to the colonies notions of statehood which entailed the delineation of international boundaries, especially where colonies of different powers adjoined. The records of many international boundary commissions are in TNA and are in some cases still used in settling disputes. The records in its custody contain much information about mapping and surveying undertaken by or for British government departments; they also shed light on mapping produced by overseas governments and which the British government acquired for reference. As one might expect, TNA holds maps produced for those boundary commissions on which Britain was an active party, where a British colony was affected. However, maps for the same boundary delimitation may also be held under Foreign Office references, where they involved a colony of a foreign country. Thus in the case of the British Guiana (Guyana)-Venezuela boundary for instance, TNA holds the manuscript Schomburgk map which was the basis for many later maps of the boundary; atlases of maps compiled by both countries for submission to arbitration in CO and FO series respectively; and maps published but whose sale was prohibited abroad.

The archives include maps, surveys and other records relating to international boundaries in a much larger number of areas of the world than one might expect. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries particularly, British surveying expertise

⁸ Records of this expedition are in TNA: PRO: CO 2/2.

⁹ In particular Professor Elri Liebenburg, Dr Christopher Board and Mr Lindsay Braun

was universally respected, with the result that there was often a British commissioner on international boundary commissions as a 'neutral' party even when Britain had no direct colonial or commercial interest in the area surveyed. The job of these usually military surveyors was to define and demarcate the boundary in question. It was common practice for a certified copy of the boundary survey to be brought back to London by the British commissioner and deposited among the archives (usually) of the Foreign Office. As time has passed, archives in many countries have been destroyed by war, natural disaster or political upheaval. As a result, documents now in TNA may constitute the sole surviving record of earlier boundary surveys.

Colonisation and administration

Boundary definition at a more local level was important in these next phases of settlement. TNA holds many maps which show how colonies were divided into districts, in some cases taking into account information such as the location of tribal areas. There are also many maps showing land grants and ownership.

Maps in TNA illustrate all phenomena and activities of interest to the colonial administration. Communications were vital and there are many maps of colonial railways and roads, also postal routes and offices. Geological maps were made with a view to exploitation of coal, metals and diamonds. Other maps were made to show to the governor types of produce and markets of his colony; and also the incidence of tropical pests and diseases.

Architectural drawings depict the sites and buildings that supported British expansion overseas: fortifications, barracks, dockyards, hospitals, schools, prisons, cemeteries and governors' residences.

Types of map

There are topographical and cadastral maps, sea charts, triangulation and survey diagrams. In terms of format, there is much unique manuscript material in TNA which was made or collected by officers or civil servants in the course of their duties. There are large holdings of commercial published mapping relating to matters such as the division of Africa among European powers, and the exploration of Australia and the North West Passage. In addition many manuscript maps considered important were published by or for the War Office. The Colonial Office and Foreign Office similarly issued important maps with accompanying despatches as Confidential Prints.¹⁰

One subject on which these offices collected and issued many maps and other papers was that first of the Atlantic slave trade and later of attempts to suppress the Indian Ocean slave trade. There are charts of the coast of Africa showing slave caravan routes, ports and forts and sea routes for the slavers. There are also a number

¹⁰ Colonial Office confidential prints are in series by place: eg for Africa see CO 879; for Australia CO 881; and for West Indies CO 884. The Foreign Office confidential series are by country and are numerous; there are also series for subjects such as the slave trade (FO 541) and opium (FO 415). Much War Office confidentially printed material is in WO 33, including maps.

of maps of West Indian plantations which sometimes show slave quarters or allotments of land to former slaves.

Colonial surveyors

While some colonial maps in TNA were commercially produced, many were made specifically for the government to help it in its colonial business, like the one at Figure 4. Many maps were made by people for whom this was not their main occupation. Colonial governors, civil servants and diplomats stationed or travelling abroad might turn their hand to making maps to illustrate a report on a particular aspect of colonial administration or matter of interest such as the slave trade.

Some maps were made by professional cartographers. Once colonies were established, it was common practice for surveyors to be appointed to carry out mapping to assist the administration of the colony. While many of the finished maps were sent back to the Colonial Office, the products of the day-to-day work of colonial surveyors, such as notes, drawings or other survey documents, as with those of other colonial administrators, were generally left behind in the colonies when colonial rule ended.¹¹

The military also provided specially trained surveyors who undertook specific work overseas. In the Army, the Royal Engineers (officers) and the Sappers and Miners (other ranks) consistently provided the largest corps of military surveyors and mapmakers. Surveying was often part of the training of a Royal Navy officer; TNA holds charts made by Captain Cook, Nelson and Bligh, and many other naval officers made as part of their official duties.

Military mapmaking was not confined to members of the specialist survey units, and many other soldiers made maps in the course of their duties, whether to illustrate reports and despatches, to record reconnaissance expeditions or to provide intelligence to the War Office, the Admiralty, the Foreign Office or the Colonial Office. Military attachés stationed at British embassies overseas would send to the Foreign Office reports and maps relating to conflicts in areas where they were stationed. Many maps were made by quite humble army officers, and include maps by men enlisted in native regiments, not just those in the British army. These maps are thus a rich source of information about a wide spectrum of people.

As well as minor figures, more famous men represented as mapmakers. TNA holds a map made by Kitchener for the Khartoum relief expedition in 1884,¹² and Mackenzie's map of his exploration of the Mackenzie River in eastern Queensland dated about 1795.¹³ There is also a map made by David Livingstone to illustrate his letter of October 1859 to the Foreign Secretary Lord Russell in which he described the topography, local people and agriculture seen on his African travels. He referred

¹¹ The National Archives does not generally hold domestic records of overseas governments, except in a few cases such as Tangier and the Ionian Islands, for particular periods.

¹² TNA: PRO: MPI 1/462/3

¹³ TNA: PRO: CO 700/America North and South54

dramatically to the area shown on the map: “no white man had ever traversed the country before”.¹⁴

How to find colonial maps in The National Archives

Looking for a map in TNA is a very different experience from using a map library. Maps are arranged, like other records in the archives, not according to theme, geographical area or publisher, but according to the government department which created or acquired them. In addition to the map libraries of the Colonial Office, Foreign Office and War Office mentioned above, TNA holds many maps scattered through its holdings which may be of interest for research in colonial cartography. Other government departments tended to acquire maps when they needed geographical information or when a correspondent or informant sent or used a map, perhaps to illustrate a report to the Admiralty about a voyage of exploration, or to request funds from the Treasury to build a new government house.

The first place to begin a search for colonial mapping, or indeed any other kind of record, is the TNA’s online Catalogue at <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/searchthearchives>

This Catalogue is keyword searchable, and descriptions of maps and plans are gradually being added. There are two ways to consult this Catalogue. The search facility allows a search by place, subject or person, perhaps adding the term ‘AND map’. Alternatively, browse through the series lists in numerical order for example for the map libraries of the Colonial Office the Foreign Office and the War Office (see table 1 for details of these series). For detailed advice on searching the Catalogue see the online Research Guide *Using the National Archives to search for Maps, Plans and Architectural Drawings* (Domestic Records Information Leaflet 132).

Names of countries and places have not been expressed consistently over the years. Entries in the Catalogue may use a variety of names and spellings: some are contemporary with the records described; some were in use at the date of original cataloguing - this may have been done many years ago, so that the place name as given in the Catalogue is contemporary neither with the document nor with present-day nomenclature. It is advisable, therefore, to search on a number of variants – ‘Bechuanaland’ and ‘Botswana’, for example, will produce different results. It is also worth searching on more general terms such as ‘West Indies’, ‘East Indies’ etc.

In searching for combinations of places or particular aspects of places, it may be necessary to make several searches and collate the results. This principle is well illustrated by the records of the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office. To find a map of the boundary between British Honduras and Guatemala, search for ‘Honduras AND Guatemala AND boundary’. This will produce many hits, the majority of which relate to records of the Foreign Office. These include not only maps specifically so described but also volumes of original correspondence and confidential print, within which it is very likely that there will be maps and plans which are not separately described. In this case, none of the hits relating to records of the Colonial Office mention maps and virtually none of the hits dates from before the middle of the twentieth century. This is because the Colonial Office was more prone than the

¹⁴ TNA: PRO: FO 63/871

Foreign Office to focus only on the territories for which it was responsible. A search using the terms 'Honduras AND boundary' and limited to CO will produce a very different result.

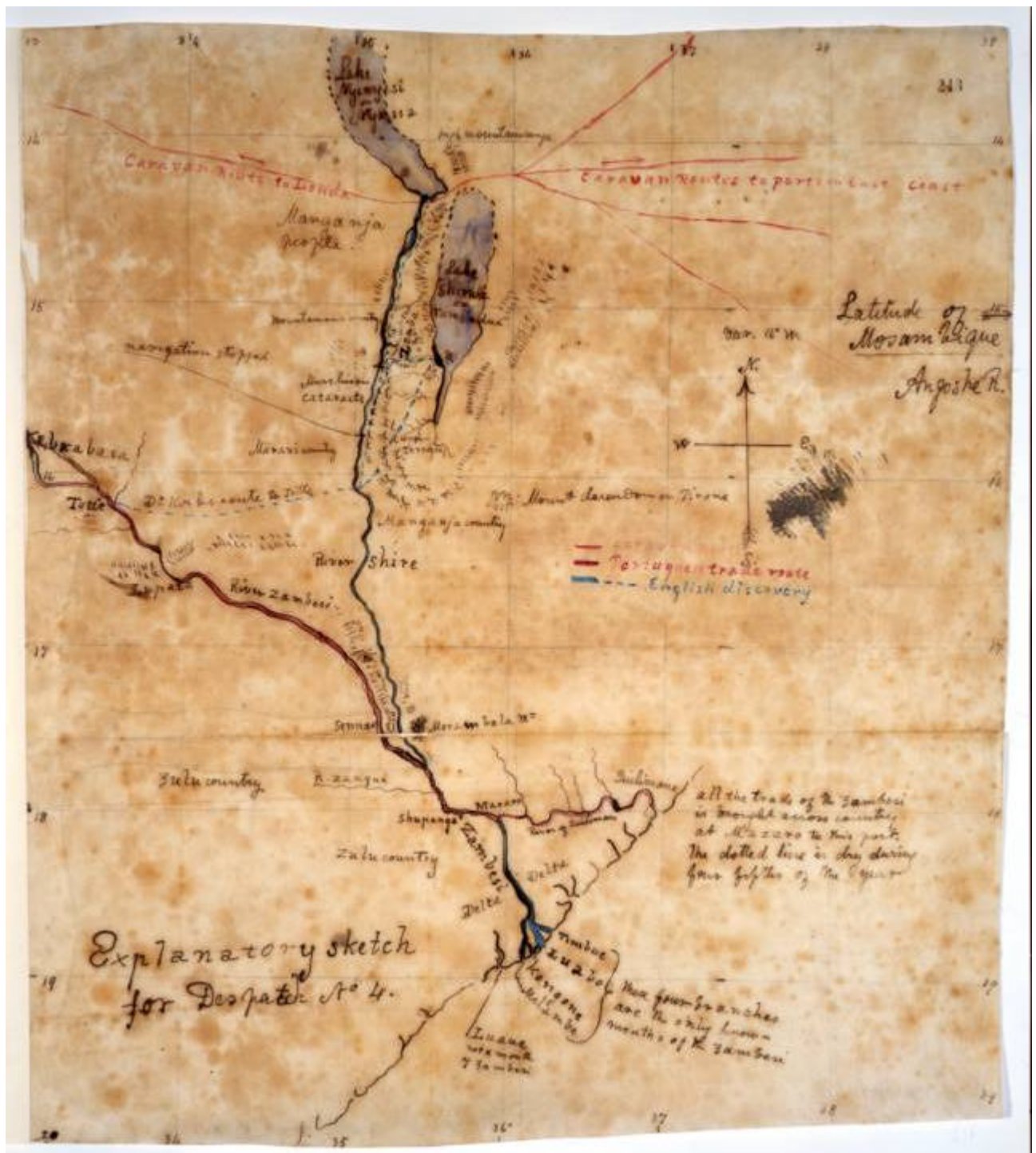


Figure 5. Map drawn by Dr David Livingstone in 1859 to show English discoveries along the River Shire, Lakes Shirwa and Nyassa, and the mouths of the River Zambesi. The area shown is now in Malawi and Mozambique¹⁵.

¹⁵ TNA: PRO: MPK 1/422/1 extracted from FO 63/871

Another useful leaflet is Maps and Plans: Overseas Relations (Overseas Records Information 6)

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/RdLeaflet.asp?sLeafletID=64>

Not all maps are yet described in the online Catalogue. There are published map catalogues for the Americas, Africa and Europe (listed below) where arrangement is by colony or country and by date, and these are still an important source of information for colonial mapping. Beyond these sources, where it seems likely that TNA will hold mapping you seek, you may need to visit and carry out a search for example among Colonial Office correspondence for the country concerned, or use a card index and other hard copy finding aids on-site.

While some maps may readily be found by description in the online and other catalogues, it is known that many thousands of maps remain unidentified and uncatalogued among the records. The majority of the maps which are now in TNA were transferred together with the letters, reports, registered files or other documents with which they were originally associated in the course of official business. If you are looking for a particular map which does not appear to be described in any of the catalogues, a certain amount of lateral thinking may be necessary; ask yourself which government department is likely to have made, used or acquired the kind of map you wish to find. It will be necessary to make a search for relevant documents, among which maps may lie.

The descriptions represent but a fraction of the material still to be found within these records, making it a potentially fruitful field for research. This is particularly true for areas of the world for which catalogues have not been published: in particular Australasia, of which TNA holds many maps, and Asia.

When searching, remember that the Catalogue and other wider finding aids of TNA were compiled from the wider perspective of the whole archives. It is only in the case of the published map catalogues and research guides specifically on maps that one can assume a priori that the item described is a map.

One benefit of the union catalogue is that it makes it easier to find non-cartographic items related to a search for maps of a particular colony or area. TNA holds much material about the process of surveying and mapping. This may not just be the maps, also photographs, survey diagrams and other survey records, and also the policy files containing papers directing such surveys. There are ships' and captains' logs, and instructions for surveys such as George Vancouver's instructions from the Admiralty to survey the north west coast of America and despatches from him to the Colonial Office while making this epic survey, 1791-1793.¹⁶ There are also requests by surveyors for loan of instruments and claims for expenses, which can throw light on the survey work. The Catalogue includes descriptions of reports and policy files relating to surveys, survey diagrams, and photographs (Figure 6).

¹⁶ TNA: PRO: CO 5/187 (Vancouver). For logs see the series lists for ADM 51, ADM 53 and ADM 55.



Figure 6. This photograph is one of a series recording the work of the North West Boundary Commission working on the demarcation of the boundary between the United States and Canada between 1872 and 1878.¹⁷

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¹⁷ TNA: PRO: FO 302/30. Maps made by the survey parties are also in FO 302.

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