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FURSCA

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End of Summer Report

My FURSCA project for the Summer 2022 term was titled “Seven Ill Years in Scotland: Encoding a Premodern Disaster”. For my research, I searched both online forums such as Early English Books Online and the Edinburgh University archives to find manuscripts (handwritten documents such as letters and death certificates, and printed documents such as proclamations and government documents) that I would then transcribe and encode into XML using the coding platform Oxygen. The goal of this project was to create a list of these sources and encode as many of those documents on the list as possible, and then develop a website where the encoding form of these documents would be published.

The result of 10 weeks of research, transcription and coding resulted in the website titled [*Unfortunate Creatures*](#), a website created by my advisor Dr. MacInnes to store all of the completed work for the project. My original goal for the number of transcribed documents was anywhere between 5-8 documents. In total, I was only able to complete two of the transcriptions and encodings. I was able to transcribe more than two documents into a Google Document, which makes it easier to encode them into XML, but I mistook how long that piece would take. One of the things I did for this project was create my own schema, which is what I used to make tags in the documents I was working on. Getting used to the schema I created as well as working with XML code took longer than I expected, and thus I was not able to get more documents transcribed than I planned.

Another aspect of this research project that did not go to plan was the actual acquiring of primary sources. I was supposed to take a trip to Edinburgh, Scotland, for this project, but was unable to due to medical issues that had me seeking treatment during the time in which I was supposed to take the trip. However, Dr. MacInnes did travel to Scotland, but when trying to enter the Edinburgh University Archives was told he needed to make an appointment and was not allowed to enter. As a result, I was unable to get pictures of handwritten documents, and only worked with printed forms found on the online database Early English Books Online. This also ended up taking time away from the transcription and encoding process.

My summer research allowed for the creation of a website that makes primary sources detailing the reactions to natural disasters from the premodern period more accessible to those who would seek to use these documents for more analytical purposes. I currently do not have any dissemination plans, as my final semester at Albion College will be Fall 2022. However, another person who worked on this project over the summer will still be attending Albion during the Elkin Isaac seminar, and may be able to explain this project there. This summer, while being one where I had many challenging personal experiences, was very enriching for the fact that I learned more about what an English degree would allow me to do for a professional career path. I really enjoyed learning more about XML and about the disaster I worked with itself. I am extremely grateful for my advisor Dr. Ian MacInnes, FURSCA directors and advisors Renee Kreger and Elizabeth Palmer, as well as FURSCA donors for allowing me to have this experience.

Seven ill Years

A period in Scotland of successive harvest failures resulting in a widespread famine that claimed the lives of anywhere between 5-15% of Scotland's total population.

Narratives

Encoded

Scotland Privy Council. "Proclamation for a solemn National Thanksgiving." Edinburgh, Printed by the heirs and successors of Andrew Anderson, 1695.

Scotland Privy Council. Proclamation for a solemn national fast. Edinburgh, Printed by the heirs and successors of Andrew Anderson, Printer to the King's most excellent Majesty, 1700.

Stubs

The following narratives have not yet been encoded. If you are interested in participating, please email editors@unfortunatecreatures.org.

Anonymous. The causes of scotland's miseries a poem in imitation of the VI. ode of the third book of horace. Edinburgh, Printed by James Watson, 1700.

Anonymous. Scotland's lament for their misfortunes. Edinburgh, 1700.

Anonymous. The people of scotland's groans and lamentable complaints, pour'd out before the high court of parliament. Edinburgh, 1700.

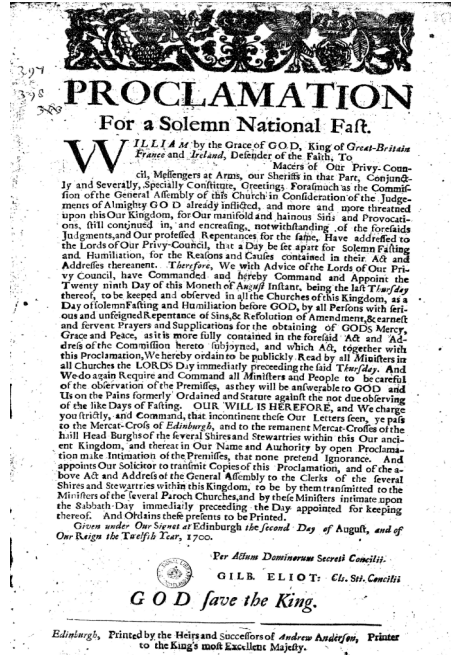
Anonymous. A letter from one in the country, to a member of parliament, intreating this session, may take to their consideration, the lamentable condition of the poor. Edinburgh, 1700.

Anonymous. A Call to Scotland for Threatening Famine, or A Discourse. London, 1690.

Anonymous. Present state and condition of the clergy and Church of Scotland. London, 1690.

Sibbald, Robert Sir, 1641-1722. Provision for the poor in time of dearth and scarcity, where there is an account of such food as may be easily gotten when corns are scarce, or unfit for use: And of such meats as may be used when the ordinary provisions fail, or are very dear. Edinburgh, Printed by James Watson, 1699.

Walker, Patrick. Some Remarkable Passages in the Life and Death of Mr. Daniel Cargill. Edinburgh, 1732.



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Unfortunate Creatures

Pre-modern Natural Disaster Narratives

Unfortunate Creatures is a peer-reviewed crowd-sourced site devoted to making available primary sources reacting to natural disasters in the pre-modern period.

History
Edged