

METHODOLOGY (EAP1501 Project)

The EAP1501 Project consisted of the digitalization of notarial documents from the period 1908-1950 of the First Notary Office of the city of Montería, located in the south of the Colombian Caribbean, which also housed during the period in question an important river port that allowed connecting, through the Sinú River, the city of Montería with the coast of the Caribbean Sea. These documents are located in the General and Historical Archive of the Department of Córdoba in the aforementioned city. During the application process for the grant to the Endangered Archives Program of the British Library, it was decided to present the proposal around the notarial documents for the following reasons:

1. Due to its importance in the social, economic, political and cultural life, not only of Montería City, but also of the Colombian Caribbean in general during the chosen period. These documents reflect different types of social transactions that involved all social sectors of Montería and Sinú.
2. Due to its antiquity, since notarial documents are the oldest papers in the general and Historical Archive of Córdoba.
3. Due to the general state of the documents, some notarial protocol books are in an advanced state of deterioration, but the majority are preserved and allowed the digitalization of the documents and their content in an optimal way, which, given the humidity and the manipulation of the books, was an urgent task to be carried out in order to save the content of the documents.

However, during the digitization process, important decisions were made regarding the projection of the number of documents to be digitized and other contingencies that are set out below:

1. The projection of the number of pages to be digitized, according to the Grant, was 90,000, projected in about 250 notarial protocol books. However, despite the projections made in some detail, reality showed us that the number of pages of the documents was much higher, resulting in the last five years of the proposed period for digitization, that is, 1946-1950, not being able to be done completely because it exceeded the working capacity of the team, the stipulated time and the resources. Given this situation, it was decided to digitize two books for each year between 1946 and 1950 so that such years would not be left without an important random sample. Despite this, the total number of images obtained was 199,898, which doubles the number projected in the Grant, distributed in 206 notarial protocol books.
2. In the process of digitizing notarial protocol books, inserted documents were found such as sketches of farms, herds and estates that, given their size, required adapting the work

area to be able to capture the image in an appropriate manner, that is, in a flat manner. The same situation was required for press documents that were also inserted in the books.

3. Sometimes, cube-shaped objects had to be obtained to serve as a platform to achieve an adequate height for the cameras, beyond the height allowed by the table and tripods in order to give stability, balance and a better angle to the cameras and capture the images of the documents in a convenient manner.

4. At certain times, due to the high number of documents to be digitized, it was necessary to request special permission from the authorities of the General and Historical Archive of Córdoba to work on some Saturdays outside the Archive's normal working hours, which made it possible to advance a little more than usual in the digitization work.