The IU/Liberian Digital Archiving Project

A Collaborative Project for the Center for National Documents & Records Agency (Liberian National Archives), The IU Digital Library Program, & The IU Liberian Collections

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Megan S. MacDonald, IU Liberian Collections

IU Digital Library Program Brownbag
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Photos: Kara Alexander, Megan MacDonald, James Weegi & V. Stone
Liberia in West Africa
3.1: Rehabilitation of Land Deed Records

- Core requirements from World Bank grant
  - Secure and preserve all Deed Registers & Public Land Sale documents in one location
  - Transform records into a digital system that is secure, searchable, and publicly accessible

- Liberian Governance Commission Project
  - Land Commission
  - Ministry of Lands, Mines and Energy
  - Center for National Documents and Records Agency
Long-term Liberian & IU Relationship

- First IU faculty research in Liberia during 1930s
- Stones’ involvement began in 1950s, 1970s
- IULC’s work began with 2004 assessment trip
  - British Library’s Endangered Archives Programme
    - Funded three IU/CNDRA projects from 2005-2011
      - Tubman Papers and Photographs
- Governance Commission asked for a land records rehabilitation and preservation plan in 2007
  - Rewrite of EAP proposal became the IU digitization proposal
Liberian Deed Registration Process

1. Buyer obtains copy of Seller’s Deed
2. Buyer delivers copy of deed to Licensed Surveyor who publishes intent to survey (must give 5 days notice, exclusive of Sunday)
3. Lawyer completes search of either MOFA (Archives) or CNDRA depending on date of last conveyance (date of deed) MOFA – deeds between 1800s and 1989 CNDRA – deeds from 1989 - present
4. Buyer obtains completed deed from Surveyor and pays fees (professional fees due to private surveyor and not GoL)
5. Buyer delivers completed survey report to Lawyer to request transfer of property
6. Lawyer/Buyer completes search at the Bureau of Internal Revenue of the Ministry of Finance to check for outstanding taxes on premises
7. Lawyer visits Probate Court to probate transfer of property (will be completed within 5 working days)
8. Lawyer/Buyer registers new deed at Archives (CNDRA Registry)
Liberian Deed Registers

- Span 1830 to present
- Record private/public land transactions
- Deeds hand-copied into ledgers verbatim

- Flawed land registration system
  - Accessibility & transparency of public land records
    - Lacks indexing (requires tedious manual searches)
    - Only CNDRA & MoFA staff see originals
  - Deterioration of bindings & pages
  - Storage conditions & locations
  - Security
    - Missing volumes & pages, forgeries
19th Century Deed Registers
(1832, 1838, 1839)
Liberian Deed Registers
Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1822-1974)
Liberian Deed Registers
CNDRA (1975 to Present)
# Inventory of Liberian Deed Registers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location/Ledger Type</th>
<th>Volumes</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CNDRA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Modern” Ledgers</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>320,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Classic” Ledgers</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total CNDRA</strong></td>
<td><strong>690</strong></td>
<td><strong>345,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Classic” Ledgers</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unbound pages &amp; Fragile Ledgers</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total MoFA</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>500,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liberian Deed Registers</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,690</strong></td>
<td><strong>845,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Deterioration of Bindings & Pages
No Working Index
Forgeries
Goals of CNDRA/IULC Workplan

• Transport all Deed Registers to CNDRA
• Establish Digital Scanning Center within CNDRA
  – Train DSC Technicians
• Digitize and index 1,700 registers/850,000 pages
• Establish online public access to digitized land records
  – Reading room on local area network (LAN)
  – Liberian Research & Education Network (LREN-IU/UL)
  – ACE (Africa Coast to Europe) cable connects to WWW
Project Partners & Their Contribution

- **CNDRA (Lead)**
  - Project Leadership & Local Expertise
  - IT Consultant
  - Funding
  - Member of Land Records Rehabilitation Workgroup

- **IU Liberian Collections**
  - Project management
  - Archival, preservation & workflow expertise & consultation

- **IU Digital Library Project**
  - Digitization expertise in procedures & equipment
  - Consultation & guidance in IT digitization infrastructure
The Liberian CNDRA Team Leaders

CNDRA Director-General
Philomena Bloh Sayeh

CNDRA IT Consultant
Ounzuba Kemah-Gama
The IU Team

Paper Preservation Specialist
Megan MacDonald

Digital Scanning Specialist
Kara Alexander
Training the DSC Technicians

• Why travel to Liberia?
  – Training manual
  – Setup & calibration
  – Teaching & tutoring
  – Assessment & quality assurance
  – Material handling & repair
  – Certificate presentation upon completion of training
Digital Scanning Training Commences At CNDRA

Carter Center, GOL

Society to know what FOI is and what it brings along.

According to a participant, Solomon Watkins, he said, "The event was so geared towards knowing what FOI should do for citizens, if the nation must develop and policy makers must be held accountable for their actions." For him, FOI is the means of experiencing transparency and accountability in public institutions and among public individuals.

For her part, Madam Laura Neuman, J.O. Manager of Carter Center Global Access to Information project said, "The Carter Center sponsored event today held in collaboration with the Liberia Freedom of Information Coalition is related to the right to access information." According to her, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through IREX, the center is able to carry the project aimed at enhancing citizens' access to information.

Dr. Stone disclosed that he wrote a couple of proposals to the British Library thereby beginning the process of cooperation with the Archives in Liberia.

Dr. Stone said further that the project they are undertaking is meant for sustainability whereby Libyans who are in the line of duties at the Archives Center would benefit from the modern way of preserving national documents and records through technology transfer.

"Some will be scanning technicians, others will be scanning paper perforation technicians," Dr. Stone disclosed during the interview.

He expressed optimism that those selected to attend the TOT will seek new knowledge on technology transfer for onward extension and education to others in the interest of preserving documents of various kinds in the post-war country.

Meanwhile, CNDRA Public Affairs Director, George N. Williams, Jr., said the agency has long awaited the opportunity to enhance the land registration process as well as minimize many land disputes in Liberia.

According to him, Director-General Sayeh hailed the Liberian Government hailed the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) with support from the World Bank for coming to the aid of the agency.

Scores of employees at the Center for National Documents & Records Development Agency have began a digital scanning training to expose them to technology transfer at the entity.

The training is expected to last for two weeks, is likely to prepare 15 staff from the CNDRA who would later help to train others in the use of the Digital Scanning facilities that have been exposed to the use of the technology transfer at the entity.

"Be Law Abiding"

He pointed out that although their challenges are enormous, but with their collective commitment and dedication and the continuous support of their development partners, they will overcome those challenges and that to achieve these goals, officers and men of the Service must consider cardinal necessities which make up a professional security entity; Discipline and courtesy.

The new Police boss also warned all armed robbers and petrol bombers who have vowed to terrorize the lives of peaceful citizens that the police will leave no stone unturned in protecting peaceful citizens and all other residents within the Liberian borders.

He said: "While I am here, it is only in their criminal activities you will be arrested and charged accordingly. We are especially calling on the Motor Cycle Union of Liberia to warn their members not to form part of the marauding criminal gangs that are currently occupying illegal hawker stalls in Monrovia and its environs immediately relocate December 15, 2011."

He warned that there was no further compromise on this matter and that failure to adhere to this advice will leave the Liberia National Police with no alternative but to continue the immediate clearing of side-walks being occupied illegally by hawker stalls."
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Scanning Specifications for the Center for National Documents and Records Agency (CNDRA)

These technical standards are intended to summarize the current best practices used at Indiana University and other leading international digitization institutions such as the Library of Congress. These standards provide guidance on producing a "master" image to be retained and preserved as well as used to create a variety of derivative images for distribution.

In library best practices, TIFF master files are produced to different standards depending on the intended use of the files as well as based on the material itself. For CNDRA (Liberian National Archives), fine quality color TIFF image files are to be produced to preserve the color information as well as the content of the extremely important artifactual item itself. The image files are to follow the established naming convention for the CNDRA workflow for preservation and retrieval. The files will be uncompressed TIFF to maintain as much integrity as possible and will contain the embedded color profile AdobeRGB1998 to ensure a wide color gamut and accurate reproduction matching the original physical documents. All scans are to be at 400 dpi on devices that will optically produce a minimum of 400 dpi at 100 percent scale of the original physical item/artifact. This will ensure that the digital master file will contain a minimum of 3000 pixels in the longest dimension and conform to international preservation standards.

The entire original item is required in capture. There is to be no cropping of actual documents. A border of approximately ¼ inch or less of scanned area beyond the physical item will be maintained in each scan and all pages will be included in the digitization including covers, spines, and folio edges that contain writing. In situations where an even border is impractical (such as aligning one edge to a scanner edge), include the even border on the 3 free edges and be sure to not crop into the item on the alignment side.

Digitization and master file creation will occur with no manipulation to color, size, compression, or file type after scanning. All adjustments and setting will take place prior to scanning to ensure an accurate as possible master reproduction. If during quality control a file is found lacking, the items will be re-scanned to meet standards and expectations.
A Launch Of The Center For National Document And Records Agency Digital Scanning Training In Pictures

CONSULTANT: Obinna Ezechioma briefing staff about the nature of the training.

CONSULTANT: Information Officer George M. Williams Jr giving the Director General.

A general view of some of the center staff undergoing training.

Some members of the Indiana University training staff at the Digital Scanning.

Staff monitoring trainees during the training session.

A moment of serious training session at the Digital Scanning.

Contact Information: Tel: 06-393297 or 077920246, Email: inprofilecontact@gmail.com
granted premises, that they are free from
inviolability, that all three good light
for all and forever unto the said travel
G. Beard his heirs and assigns forever, as
forever; and that all of said my heirs, exec
utors and administrators, and assigns
dwell warrant and defend the same to the
said Beard G. Beard his heirs and assigns
forever, against the lawful claims
and demands of all persons.

In witness whereof, I, Deacon
Yardnial, have hereunto set
my hand and seal the 27th
day of May in the year of
the sign, sealed, signed, sealed, and delivered, one hundred and eighty
in the presence of me (A.D. 1812)
of Frederick C. Robt. Yardnial
Harry Beard
Kosciusko County, Indiana

Warranted from said Yardnial to said
G. Beard for part of said No. 3 situated
at Township of Kosciusko, Section 20,
County of Kosciusko, State of Indiana.
As

Thompson, Commissioner of the
probate court, Kosciusko County, issued
the 29th day of May, 1814, March
at the House of the Monthly and probate
Court, Kosciusko County, registered
according to law and sealed.

J. B. B. A. Mayor's registered Kosciusko
County, offered for subscription by
court, for sale, the 2nd Scena law office.
the said The Republic of Liberia has and assigns forever against the lawful claims and demands of all persons.

To the said Oscar J. Bural, 1978.

I, Marcus Morgan, do hereby certify that I have this day received and paid the sum of five hundred dollars ($500.00) to Oscar J. Bural of the city of Monrovia, in consideration of the sum of seven hundred ($700.00) dollars paid to me by Oscar J. Bural of the city of Monrovia, in the
Know all women and men by these presents

Grace Wulue

is now certified as a Digital Scanning Technician
at the Center for National Documents and Records Agency by successfully completing
Standards Training in Archival Digital Creation and Preservation
in accordance with International Standards and Best Practices.

Issued and endorsed with all faith and support by Indiana University,
World Bank, and Center for National Documents and Records Agency of Liberia.

In witness thereof, we set our hand to this document on the ninth day of December in this year Two Thousand Eleven.

Dr. Verlon Stone
Coordinator of Indiana University Librarian Collections
Indiana University

P. Wish Sayeh
Director-General
Center for National Documents and Records Agency

Megan S. MacDonald
Archivist and Preservation Specialist Indiana
University Librarian Collections
Indiana University

Kara Alexander
Digital Standards and Preservation Specialist
Indiana University Libraries
Indiana University

Gunzuka Remeh-Gama
Information Technology Consultant
Center for National Documents and Records Agency
WOMEN, VOTE TO MAKE YOUR VOICES HEARD!
W. V. S. TUBMAN MEMORIAL MUSEUM
1895 - 1971
Benefits from International Partnerships

- Enriches personnel and institutions of all partners
- Provides unique technical, personal, cultural experiences, and growth
- Enables sharing of expertise and materials
Challenges in International Projects

- Usually larger and more complex, costing more in time, money and other resources
- Require hi-tech solutions and highly skilled personnel
- Often require that goals, strategies and agendas be aligned and realigned among multiple agencies
- Obtaining necessary multi-agency, multi-national contracts and MOU agreements and approvals
- Complying with different, sometimes conflicting, technical and legal standards
- Dealing with worldwide intellectual property rights and Liberian privacy, national security and the new Freedom of Information Act