The IU/Liberian Digital Archiving Project

From Vacant Liberian Mansion to the ICO: The William V.S. Tubman Photography Collection

A Collaborative Project of the Center for National Documents & Records Agency (CNDRA)
The IU Digital Library Program, Office of Archives & Records Management, E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory & The IU Liberian Collections

Verlon Stone, Head, IU Liberian Collections
Megan MacDonald, Archivist, IU Liberian Collections
Sarah Keil, Student Archivist/Librarian, Wells Library African Studies Collection

Digital Library Brown Bag Series-Wednesday Noon Talks
20 March 2013

Follow presentation & contribute to discussion on twitter: #dlbbspring2013
Go to http://breeze.iu.edu/diglib to view and listen to the presentation

Photos: Kara Alexander, Megan MacDonald, James Weegi & V. Stone
Liberia in West Africa
IU Liberian Collections

• World’s Largest Publically Accessible Collection of Liberian Materials
  – “Go to” Source of Rare Liberian Materials
    • Academics & Development Consultants
    • International & Liberian Agencies
  – Growing Digital Presence Well-Received
  – Larger Repositories Not Fully Accessible
    • NARA only lightly processed, no digital content
    • National Presidential Archives awaits processing
Mission Statement

The ATM Liberian Collections Project will

• Collect
• Preserve
• Make Available

a comprehensive range of materials & information about Liberia for researchers, students, & teachers,

• with special emphasis on reaching Liberians in Liberia & the Diaspora.
• When feasible, digitizing collections is the preferable strategy for promoting widespread public accessibility.
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 to the World Bank
IU Bestows Honorary Degree (2008)

• Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
  – First woman elected as an African President (2005)
  – Nobel Peace Laureate (2011)
• IU Delegation Reciprocated with Monrovia Visit (2008)
• IU/UMass School of Medicine 4-year renewable initiative
  – Center for Excellence in Health and Life Sciences (2011)
CNDRA Signs MOU with IU Libraries/IU Liberian Collections

20 September 2012
2012 IU/CNDRA MOU

2012-2016 AGREEMENT OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION
BETWEEN
INDIANA UNIVERSITY LIBERIAN COLLECTIONS / INDIANA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
AND
CENTER FOR NATIONAL DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS AGENCY, R. L.

In recognition of the long years of partnership and in order to enhance the holdings and professional status of both institutions, this Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation between the Liberian Center for National Documents and Records Agency (CNDRA) and the Trustees of Indiana University on behalf of the Indiana University Liberian Collections / Indiana University Libraries, under which our two institutions plan to cooperate in order to advance our mutual interests, the following activities are agreed upon during 2012-2016.

The CNDRA and Indiana University Liberian Collections / Indiana University Libraries will continue to collaborate in seeking external and internal funding and support to accomplish the following goals:

- Mutual exchange of all digitized copies of Liberian public documents held by IU’s Liberian and African Studies Collections and by CNDRA for public access by each organization’s users
  - Make digitized copies of CNDRA’s Liberian documents available on IU Libraries web site
  - Store backup copies of digitized Liberian documents and land records on IU’s Scholarly Data Archive (SDA)
- Upgrade archival and management skills of CNDRA’s professional staff. Key archival professionals require long-term education programs resulting in advanced diplomas or certificates. All staff can continue to benefit from workshops, professional exchanges and conferences
- Advise CNDRA regarding facilities design and utilization of archival and library facilities as CNDRA renovates and remodels the purpose-built facility in Sinkor
- Establish an archival document digital scanning center and public information access areas (Reading Rooms with networked workstations)
- Continue archival processing (organization, conservation, preservation and digitization) of materials in the Presidential Archives to make their contents available for public and scholarly access
- Continue digitizing all Liberian land records, making them searchable and publicly available

Each host institution will provide study and research privileges equivalent to those available to resident faculty members and graduate students.

On behalf of CNDRA:

Philemona B. Sayeh
Name: Director-General
Title: Director/General
Date: 9.20.12

On behalf of the Trustees of Indiana University:

Verlon Stone
Name: Dean
Title: Coordinator
Date: 9.20.12

Brenda Johnson
Name: Vice President
Title: Provost & Executive Vice President
Date: 7.24.12

David Zaret
Name: President
Title: Vice President for International Affairs
Date: 8.12.12

Lauren Robbi
Name: President
Title: Vice President
Date: 8.12.12
2004 Assessment Trip: Liberian Document Repositories
Liberian National Archives
(1990-2011)

Joseph Jenkins Roberts House
First President of Liberia
Executive Mansion
Monrovia
Liberian Presidential Archives
Main Upstairs Workroom & Vault
Repositories Identified

- Liberian National Archives
  - Established by Legislative Act in 1977
- Liberian Presidential Archives
  - Executive Mansion Central File Room
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Land Registers
- Former Ministry of Foreign Affairs Building
- Bureau of Lands & Mines Cartography Building
Personal Papers Identified

- W.V.S. Tubman Papers & Photographs
- Bishop George Daniel Browne Papers
- Bai T Moore Papers
- E. Reginald Townsend & Evelyn Diggs Townsend Papers
“Rescuing Liberian History”

- A Pilot Study to Preserve & Enable Access to Liberia’s Presidential & National Archives
- Preserving the Personal Papers of W.V.S. Tubman, Liberia’s Longest Serving President
- Preserving the Photographs of W.V. S. Tubman, Liberia’s Longest Serving President
- Establishing a Microfilming Capability at the Liberian National Archives
- Preserving & Making Liberian Land Records Accessible
Project Funding

- British Library Endangered Archives Program
- Title IV Librarians – Africana Librarians Council – CAMP
- World Bank/Liberian National Archives (CNDRA)
  - Total Project Grant Funding > $400,000
- IU African Studies Program
- IU Work-study Program
- IU Libraries Units – In-Kind Collaboration
  - African Studies Collection
  - Digital Library Program
  - Office of Archives & Records Management
  - E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory
- IU Archives of Traditional Music
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William V. S. Tubman Collections

Tubman Farm
Project Stages

• I  Recovering & Shipping Papers to IU
• II  Deep-Freeze and Freeze-Dry Papers
• III  Conservation & Restoration
• IV  Description & Arrangement
• V  Microfilming
• VI  Return Tubman Papers to Liberia
Recovered 22 Cu. Ft.

Originally Estimated 55 Cu. Ft. (30,000 documents)
Project Stages

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E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory
Your Excellency,

I have the honor to bring before you this afternoon, the maltreatment that I have received from Capt. Geo. N. Morris, Capt. of Police; I have issued four aliens' slips to four Hawaiians, because they can't write and they offered me four dollars ($4.00) at one dollar ($1.00) each; after this Capt. Morris went down waterfront and had the aforesaid slips collected.

After the collection of the slips, he convened a court martial for me to be disciplined; in this court martial, I was suspended for two months effective as of the 10th instant, fined ten dollars ($10.00), and one half of my salary diminished.

On Saturday, the 23rd. instant, the aforesaid Capt. Morris called me in his office and plainly expressed the following words—"Burr, kindly, you are dismissed from the service and to be prosecuted for extortion; charge of me, take him and put him in the guard house, for he is a prisoner."

As a free citizen of this soil, I should like to know if a man can be imprisoned, who does not steal or commit murder without a process being issued upon his body; another thing is the minute he dismissed me from the service, his jurisdiction over me ceased.

I therefore appeal to you as the President and father of this country for your intervention in the above mentioned actions of Superintendent Geo. N. Morris.

I have the honor to be,
Mr. President,
Your obedient servant.
Deciding the Organization: Series & Sub-series
22 Sorting Passes Required to Organize
William V.S. Tubman Papers, 1904-1992

Summary Information

Repository
Liberian Collections
Liberian Collections
Indiana University
504 North Fess Avenue
Bloomington, IN 47408
Phone: (812) 856-0782
Email: liberia@indiana.edu
http://www.onliberia.org

Creator
Tubman, William V.S.

Title
William V.S. Tubman Papers, 1904-1992

Collection No.
LCP2005/014 and Endangered Archives Programme EAP 027

Extent
21 cubic feet; 21 records cartons

Alternate Form Available: 48 microfilm reels (1 restricted)

Language
Materials are primarily in English

Abstract
William V. S. Tubman (1895-1971), Liberia's longest serving President, served from 1944–1971. Tubman’s presidency was marked by great changes in the economy, politics and social environment of Liberia. The materials in the collection include papers from the years of Tubman’s presidency, his personal correspondence and memorabilia from Tubman’s family.
Tubman Town,
Cape Palmas.
January 2, 1946.

His Excellency
Wm. J. S. Tubman,
president of the Republic of Liberia,
Monrovia.

His Excellency,

I am sick with an abscess in my body caused from the fall I had sometime ago from the motor truck and the beat at Webbs, and the bruised matter formed into an abscess. I have been down since November, my eyes and neek also is affected. I was instructed by Doctor Onuehine to get to Monrovia as early as possible for operation.

There is no way for me to get there as I haven the money, and to get in Monrovia it is trouble. I need a good examination and an early treatment,

I would be thankful if you would be so kind as to send me a permit to return to enter the Hospital and to be treated, I have tried many ways to enter but have failed, I don't be treated something might likely.
William V.S. Tubman Papers, 1904-1992

Liberian Government Papers
The Executive Branch Administrative Files
Bureau of Civil Service
Annual and Special Reports, 1944, 1946, undated
View Item(s)

Liberian Government Papers
The Executive Branch Administrative Files
Bureau of Civil Service
Central Office, 1947-1967, undated
View Item(s)

Liberian Government Papers
The Executive Branch Administrative Files
Bureau of Police
General Correspondence, 1968, undated
View Item(s)

Liberian Government Papers
The Executive Branch Administrative Files
Bureau of Public Health and Sanitation
Annual and Special Reports, 1945-1953, undated
View Item(s)

Liberian Government Papers
The Executive Branch Administrative Files
Bureau of Public Health and Sanitation
Budgets, 1950
View Item(s)
My dear dearest,

I was very much disappointed when you didn't meet your appointment last evening and more so when you didn't send an excuse as you always did to state your disappointment. I had looked forward for that meeting.

Mr Byano came and informed me yesterday that the Thursday flight is all booked out and the only two flights this week by Pan Am would be today and Sunday. I should therefore see when I would like to leave. Well, I told him to book for today hoping I would see you last evening to tell you of the change of flight. As it is now, I don't know what to do because I have booked for today and I can't go without seeing you to tell me what to do please.

I hope that you are well after all your engagements these two days. I am waiting to hear from you soon.

Your very special
Rescuing Liberian History

- A Pilot Study to Preserve & Enable Access to Liberia’s Presidential & National Archives
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AGREEMENT

We, the undersigned family of the late Liberian President, W.V.S. Tubman, grant the Liberian Collections Project at Indiana University permission to pack the collected papers of President W.V.S. Tubman located at Tubman Estate in Bong County and to ship them to Bloomington, Indiana to be dried, restored, arranged and microfilmed for use by Liberian and international researchers and scholars.

Once these steps are concluded, the refurbished collection will be returned to Liberia and into the possession of the Tubman family. The collection will eventually be deposited in the Center for National Documents and Records/National Archives or similar facility when preservation, security and access conditions are met to the Tubman family’s satisfaction.

At the same time microfilm copies of the Tubman papers will be deposited with the University of Liberia, Cuffington University College, Center for National Documents and Records/National Archives, and the Tubman family to give local access to Liberians for the Tubman papers’ content. International access to the Tubman papers’ content will be via microfilms deposited at the Liberian Collections Project-Indiana University, the British Library, and with the Center for Research Libraries (CRL), which is the central repository for the Africana Librarians Council.

Mrs. Antoinette Tubman 21/2/05

Mr. William V.S. Tubman, Jr. 21/2/05

Mrs. Wilhelmina Tubman-Tucker 21/2/05

Mr. John Hilare Tubman 21/2/05

Mr. William Elia Tubman 21/2/05

NB:

Notwithstanding anything contained in the documents relative to the “Preservation and archiving of the President William V.S. Tubman Papers”, the undersigned heirs in no way or manner convey title or copyright privileges to the Preservation Project to any person or entity hereto. The heirs retain these rights and privileges to themselves.
Preparing for Scanning

- Frozen at E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory
  - Garry Harrison & Preservation Lab Team

- Photos removed from Albums
  - Foldered by album and ordered as appeared in album
    - Captions retained if separate from photo
    - Retroactively reviewed albums for additional written and other information.

- Photos impossible to yield information or repair digitally removed from scanning queue, especially if similar photos existed.
  - Ongoing process as other photos removed through scanning process.
  - Relatively low bar: Criteria was for visual information.
Scanning at DLP

- Used National/International Standards
  - Provided by DLP
    - Uncompressed TIFF files
    - 600 dpi resolution
    - 24-bit color

- Used DLP’s VAA naming convention

- Scanned photos ‘as is’ for accurate representation of image

- Showed borders around photos
Quality Control of Digitized Images

- DLP ran auto QC ensuring files were formatted correctly
- IULC ran manual QC making sure that images were
  - Correctly oriented
  - Weren’t cropped,
  - Files colors accurately represented the photos colors
PhotoCat

- Metadata Design
  - Good & Bad Ideas
  - Training
  - Changing expectations & functionalities
    - Batch loading
    - Synonym search returns
President and Mrs. Tubman pose for portrait with US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, his wife, "Lady Bird" Johnson, Vice-President Hubert Humphrey, and his wife Muriel Humphrey.

Tubman, William V. S., President of Liberia; Tubman, Antoinette Louise Padmore, First Lady of Liberia; Johnson, Lyndon B., President of the United States; Johnson, Claudia Alta "Lady Bird" Taylor, First Lady of the United States; Humphrey, Hubert H., Vice President of the United States; Humphrey, Muriel Buck, Wife of US Vice President.

Group portraits, Guests, Government officials.

1968

North and Central America

United States of America

District of Columbia

Washington, D.C.

NA

Orphan Work

Black & White Print
PhotoCat2

- Provided added functionalities
  - Batch editing
  - Locating parallelisms or lack thereof
  - Import/Export
Successful Strategies

- Always used TGM I for Topics, but...
  - Too many unnecessary Topics used
  - Lack of consistency among coders
    - Terminology, spelling, punctuation
- Asked Sarah Keil to address the issue
  - Develop a limited Topics list
  - Train current and new coders in use
  - Adjudicate all Topics questions
- Now Sarah the Topics Czar will detail
Goals for Topical Headings

• Provide a description of what the photograph is of, not what it is about.

• Provide accuracy for users but not at the expense of users getting bogged down in detail.
Process for Creating Topical Headings: Initial Steps

- Visually scan (peruse) photographs
- Read about: Tubman’s travels, timelines, and other miscellaneous documentation
- Write down themes, objects, types of people, setting

With the goals:
- Building knowledge
- Compiling extensive list of possible topics
- No more than 20 topic terms

***Key aspect: Disregard TGM at this point
Process for Creating Topical Headings: Building the List

• Organize and pare down list of possible topics (originally ~50)
  – Example: many photos of vehicles; initially labeled as cars and trucks → automobiles
  – Goal: to be concise without being confusing

• Important steps:
  – Consult TGM to find actual approved topics
  – Analyze other photo archives (at IU and elsewhere)
  – Anticipate searches
Process for Creating Topical Headings: Testing the List

• Test topics against various sections of the photos:
  – My results versus student coder results
• Resulted in more edits to the list
• Final outcome:
  – 28 topic terms, divided into 4 categories:
    • events, locations, objects, people
Guide to Topical Headings: Preparation

- Guide to walk coders through the process
- Developed from experience plus DLP guidelines
Guide to Topical Headings: Steps

- Describe the subject of the photograph
- Determine the index for what the photo is of: an event, location, object, or people, or some combination of those categories as a starting point for selecting topical headings.
- Focus on the core topic when selecting topical headings from the provided list.
  - Limit of 3 topics
  - Most specific
  - Process to add a topic
Training and Release of Coders

- Sample photographs
- Group coding
- Individual practice
- Release – email communication, semi-regular meetings
Challenges & Opportunities

- **Technology/PhotoCat2**
  - Autocorrect
  - Maintenance
  - Standardization (plurals, capitalization)

- **Coders:**
  - Cultural/historical knowledge
  - Constraint
About William V.S. Tubman Photograph Collection

William Vacanarat Shadrach Tubman (1895-1971) was Liberia's longest-serving president, in office from 1944 to 1971. During his presidency Tubman travelled extensively, visiting many African countries both pre- and post-independence, Haiti and Trinidad as well as other Caribbean countries, the United States and many European countries. In turn Liberia received frequent return visits by Heads of State and other high-ranking officials. The William V. S. Tubman Photography collection contains over 5,500 photographs, most documenting official functions such as trips, inspection tours, formal receptions and inaugurations. Tubman family member appear in many of the photographs in an official capacity, but the collection also includes family photographs. Most photographs were taken by official photographers for Liberia or the host governments.

For more information, visit the Indiana University Liberian Collections.

view all images
Liberian President William V. S. Tubman shares a meal with Ghanain President Kwame Nkrumah and Selassie, Haile, Emperor of Ethiopia; Nkrumah, Kwame, President of Ghana; Tubman, William V. S., President of Liberia.

Title/Caption

Person Pictured: Selassie, Haile, Emperor of Ethiopia; Nkrumah, Kwame, President of Ghana; Tubman, William V. S., President of Liberia.

Topic: Portraits, Guests, Receptions, Government officials.

Date Taken: circa 1959-1969.

Continent: Africa.

Country: Ghana.

Photographer: NA.

Agency: Ghana Information Services.

Film Type: Black & White Print.

Print Size: 8 x 10.

contact the curator.
Title/Caption: Portrait of Pope Pius XII and Tubman party

Person Pictured: Tubman, Antoinette Louise Padmore, First Lady of Liberia; Tubman, Wilhelmina (Coocoo), Daughter of President Tubman; Pius XII, Pope; Tubman, William V. S., President of Liberia; King, Olubanke (Banke); Tolbert, Victoria A. D., Wife of Vice President Tolbert

Topic: Spiritual leaders, Visits of state, Group portraits

Date Taken: 1956-09-23

Continent: Europe

Country: Italy

Photographer: NA

Agency: Orphan Work

Film Type: Color Print

Print Size: 8 x 10

contact the curator
Lessons Learned

- Don’t build boxes too big to save money
- Quality control, quality control, quality control
  - Start immediately
  - Check the checkers
  - Keep records
- Paucity of information on many pictures
  - Too many fields, unprioritized approach at first
  - Should have
    - treated each album as a series or sub-series
    - Retained page and placement info
- Train for consistency
  - Punctuation, capitalization, spelling, etc.
Google: Indiana Tubman Photo
http://OnLiberia.org

Facebook: Indiana-University-Liberian-Collections

Twitter handle: @iulc1

YouTube: liberiaiu

stonevl@indiana.edu

liberia@indiana.edu
To Find, Google:

- Indiana Liberia Papers
- Indiana Liberia Photos
- Indiana Liberia Tubman
- Indiana Liberia Tubman Papers
- Indiana Liberia Tubman Photos
Liberian Collections Project

Inauguration Weekend 2006, Broad Street, Monrovia, Montserrat County, J. Weegi

Quick Links
Read more about LSA and LCP Collections:
- Liberian Studies Association
- Liberian Studies Journal
- LSA39
- Holsoe Collection
- d'Azevedo Collection
- Tubman Collection

Today In Liberia
Liberian News Sources:
- Liberian Observer
- The Analyst
- TLC Africa

Total visitors
- Nigeria: 36
- Spain: 30
- Switzerland: 30
- Ghana: 29

9,163 visitors from 97 countries

Visiting Bloomington | Credits | Site Map
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