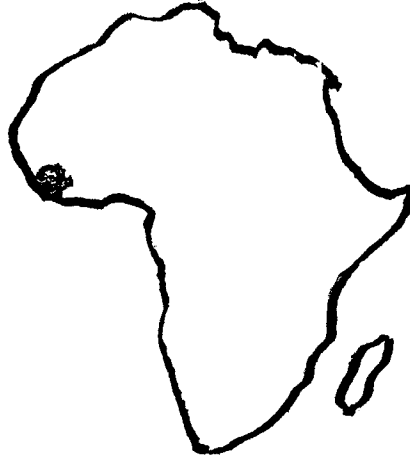


* brochure

SIERRA LEONE PUBLIC ARCHIVES OFFICE
FOURAH BAY COLLEGE
MOUNT AUREOL, FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE



Map of Africa showing the location of Sierra Leone.

Know all Men
That these presents
Shall come in
Witness whereof
we have hereunto
set our hands
at London
the 22nd day of
February
1788

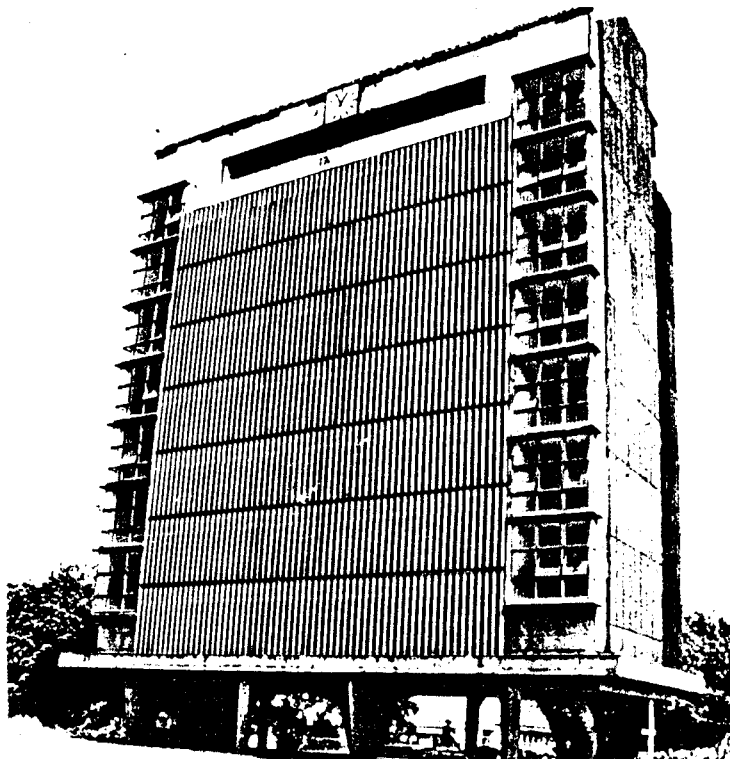
Agreed by the said
Contracting Parties
That the said
Articles shall be
observed
and performed
in all things
according to
the true intent
and meaning
thereof
and that the
said
Articles shall
be binding
on the said
Parties
and their
Heirs
and assigns
and shall
be observed
and performed
in all things
according to
the true intent
and meaning
thereof
and that the
said
Articles shall
be binding
on the said
Parties
and their
Heirs
and assigns
and shall
be observed
and performed
in all things
according to
the true intent
and meaning
thereof
and that the
said
Articles shall
be binding
on the said
Parties
and their
Heirs
and assigns
and shall
be observed
and performed
in all things
according to
the true intent
and meaning
thereof

And it is also
Agreed by the said
Contracting Parties
That the said
Articles shall be
observed
and performed
in all things
according to
the true intent
and meaning
thereof
and that the
said
Articles shall
be binding
on the said
Parties
and their
Heirs
and assigns
and shall
be observed
and performed
in all things
according to
the true intent
and meaning
thereof
and that the
said
Articles shall
be binding
on the said
Parties
and their
Heirs
and assigns
and shall
be observed
and performed
in all things
according to
the true intent
and meaning
thereof

The oldest Document in the Archives (The Treaty of 1788)

The Sierra Leone Public Archives Office

The Sierra Leone Public Archives Office was formally established with the enactment of the Sierra Leone Public Archives Act, No.44 of 1965. The Archives Office is an arm of the Ministry of Education, Youth & Sports. The Act mandated the Public Archives Office to make provision for the preservation, arrangement, custody, repair and rehabilitation of all public records which had value for posterity. The holdings of the Archives Office are presently stored in the public repositories currently located at the fourth floor of the John F. Kennedy Building and on the ground floor of the University Building at Fourah Bay College. The total holdings of the Archives consists of 63,000 linear feet of records on dexion shelves.



Picture of Kennedy Building



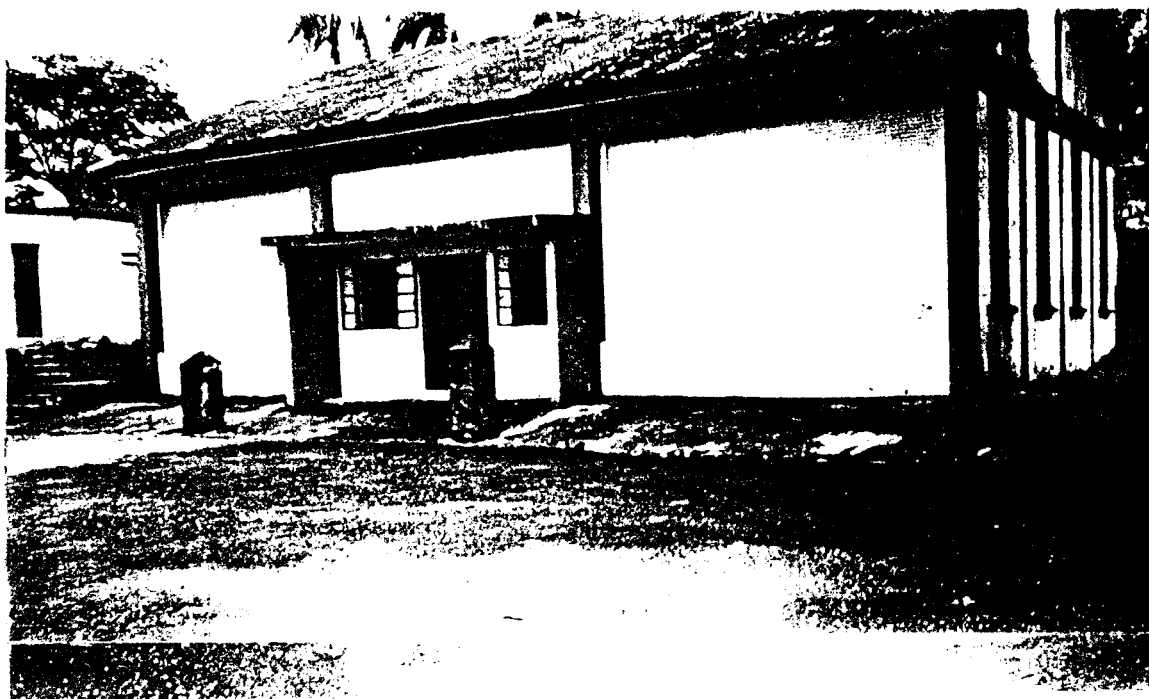
Picture of University Building

THE PUBLIC REPOSITORIES

The records in the Public Repositories cover many aspects of Sierra Leone history from the 18th century to the contemporary period. The repositories holds information on the evolution of Sierra Leone from the Province of Freedom to marging of the colony with the Protectorate in 1898. The documents pertain to the activities of the Sierra Leone Company, repatriated Africans, the Crown Colony administration and relationships with neighbouring African peoples. Original copies of treaties and agreements, Birth and Death Registers for 1858-1893 are among these documents. The office also keeps materials on anti-slavery and abolitionists activities in the 19th century. There are also travelogues and reports by European and African travellers, Decree Books and Intelligence Diaries which provide a wealth of information on the interactions between African rulers and the Europeans, geography, natural resources and societies in the hinterland of contemporary Sierra Leone.

A large collection of official correspondence covering political, diplomatic, administrative, financial, agriculture, forestry, police, judicial, education, welfare, labour matters during the colonial and post-colonial period are stored in the archives. There are also records specifically covering the twelve districts, the Freetown City Council and Rural Areas between 1930 to 1964. A fairly good collection of maps of Sierra Leone and pictures on the Second World War, the railway, paramount chiefs and civil servants during the colonial period are also available. The oldest document is the 1788 treaty between King Naimbana and the British, 'purchasing' that portion of land which later developed into the colony of Sierra Leone. The most recent documents are yet to be declassified as a twenty-five year limitation rule is in operation.

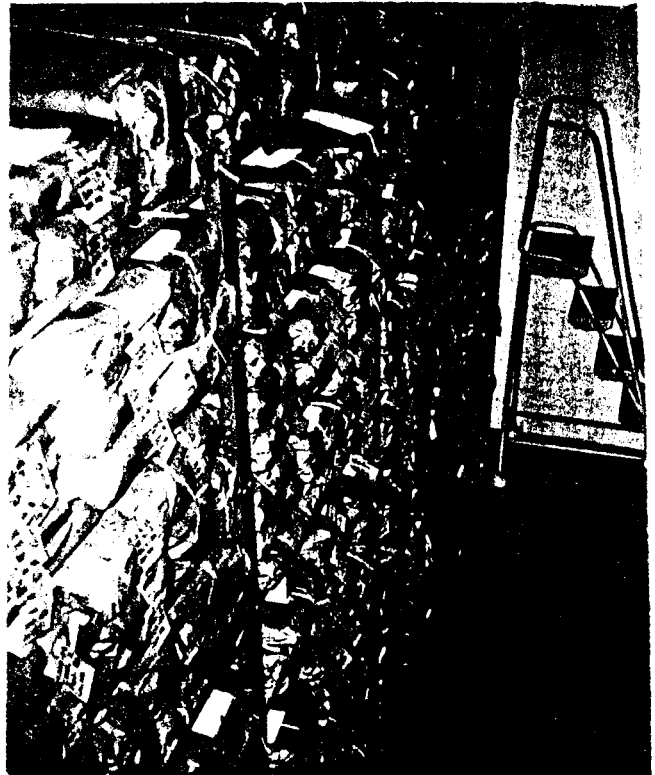
The Interim National Records Centre, (former William Conton School), Civil Service Training College Compound, Tower Hill, Freetown. Tel: 227509.



Picture of the Interim National Records Center



Before



After



Staff at work at the Records Centre

Background:

In 1995, the former William Conton School was renovated and equipped with racks as an Interim National Records Centre pending the construction of a permanent National Archives and Records Centre building. The funds for the initial exercise was provided by the British High Commission and coordinated by the Establishment Secretary's Office.

What is a Records Centre?

It is a building dedicated to the provision of cheap storage space, serving the object of reducing storage costs, improving the accessibility of records and ensuring the prompt destruction of ephemeral material while providing for the retention of records needed for current administration or, later, for archives.

Access and use of the materials in the Centre is controlled. Only authorised staff of the depositing agencies are allowed access to their records.

Advantages of the Centre

- The Centre is strategically placed
- It is in close proximity to departments
- It is equipped with the basic gadgets of a modern records centre.
- The Centre can provide a shelving capacity of 4,244 boxes.
- Staff guarantee an average of three minutes to collect and process records from the shelves.

An Acrostic to illustrate benefits of the Records Centre

R elease of Office space
E conomy in management
C onfidentiality
O rderly storage
R etention of important material
D estruction of unimportant material
S afety

The Importance of Archives

As in most developing countries, the value of Archives is yet to be appreciated in Sierra Leone. Many important documentary materials are poorly maintained or destroyed before they could reach their final destination - the Archives. Several valuable personal diaries, photos, documents, newspapers and letters are still locked up in private collections without the thought of passing them to the Archives for posterity. Ministries and government departments which are the main record creating agencies also need to take cognizance of the value of preserving, properly maintaining, and eventually transferring records to the Archives Office.

The Sierra Leone Public Archives Office has an important role to play in the collecting, preserving and safeguarding these precious public records. If scholars of the present and the future are to be able to reconstruct our experiences and endeavours then the Archives must be supported and encouraged in its role of guardians of the nation's and people's memory. Summarizing the value of Archives, Sir Arthur Boardman, the Dominion Archivist of Canada, stated.

"Of all national assets, archives are the most precious; they are the gift of one generation to another and the extent of our care for them marks the extent of our civilization."

The statement is a clarion call for the recognition of the vital role of Archives in a country and people's development. The Sierra Leone Public Archives, therefore, appeals to all who possess or know of documents, books, papers, diaries, pictures, maps or printed matter bearing on Sierra Leone's past and in danger of being lost or destroyed to seek for them the refuge of the Public Archives Office. The preservation of all sources illuminating the historical experiences of Sierra Leone is a matter of government and general concern. Any success in this endeavour will bequeath an invaluable legacy to posterity.

Oral History Project

The Sierra Leone Public Archives Office intends undertaking projects to keep oral history as well. Many Sierra Leoneans are non-literate and few of our citizens will write their memoirs, biographies or leave papers for use by future generations. Oral accounts of past and contemporary experiences and lives will complement the documentary collections already held in the repositories and the centre.

Schedule of the Office

The Repositories are open for inspection of documents from Monday to Friday, 9.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. The office is closed on weekends and statutory public holidays. Potential users should obtain an application form from the Assistant Archivist in charge. The form should be completed with recommendations from an academic staff member or person of similar standing in the community. Users are expected to pay a yearly fee at the following rates:-

Resident Sierra Leonean Students	:	Le1,000:00
Sierra Leoneans	:	2,000:00
Non-Nationals	:	US \$100:00

A readers ticket, valid for a year, is given to users. Users may consult and make copies of documents in the Repositories. Users are expected to observe all regulations which may be in force at the time of their use of the office.