

CHAPTER II

AN OUTLINE OF THE HOLDINGS OF THE PUBLIC ARCHIVES OFFICE

Simply put, holdings is all records in the repository of a record centre or an archival institution. The holdings of the Archives is presently located on the fourth floor of the John F. Kennedy Building and on the ground floor of the University Building, at Fourah Bay College. At the Kennedy building there are two large rooms which are used as the repository, the first having five stacks, this room is also used as a search room for researchers. The second room consists of nine stacks where the bulk of the records are kept. At the University building the Archives is also occupying two large rooms, one is used as a Record Centre and office for the Director and the other is used as repository and bindery section, which still needs to be fully equipped with bindery materials.

Indeed, it will not be possible for me to give a detailed description of each of the holdings of the Archives, taking into consideration the nature and scope of this research work. I will give an outline or survey of the records available, as a 'summary' of the catalogue.

The total holdings of the archives office is about 63,000 linear feet of records on dexion shelves. Some of these documents which are files are put in boxes but most are wrapped in brown papers. The rest in book-form are bound.

The oldest document in the collection is the 1788 treaty between King Naimbana and the British, 'purchasing' that portion of land which later developed into the colony of Sierra Leone. Other records in the archives include documents relating to the Sierra Leone Company, the colonial period, and the post-independence era. The bulk of the archives in the repository date from 1788-1919. The major part of them consist of despatches transmitted between the Governor and the Colonial Office in London, and Minutes Papers, i.e. correspondence and internal memoranda of the secretariat.

"Despite the ravages of the climate and the neglect of the administration material of considerable value has been preserved. Of particular importance is the international aspect of these records which relate to the activities of the Liberated African Department, which concerned itself with the slaves from all parts of the coast, freed in Sierra Leone, and of those records which relate to the control exercised from Freetown from time to time in the Nineteenth Century over parts of the present territories of Ghana, Nigeria and Gambia. Sierra Leone is also rich, by comparison with other territories similarly circumstanced, in material relating to the earliest history of the hinterland, the old protectorate"⁹.

The Governor: He was originally President of the Legislative Council until the appointment of a Speaker. His office in the early days was an important one, as he was head of the Executive, President of the Legislature, and Commander-in-Chief, he initiated most policies and was the link with the Secretary of State in the Colonial Office.

The Colonial Secretariat: (C.S.O. - Colonial Secretary's Office). The records of the Secretariat constitute the largest and most important group in the public records of the colonial government in Freetown.

⁹. L., Bell, Organization of National Archives: Sierra Leone, (UNESCO, Paris, April 1966, WS/0466.106, CUA)p.2

Registers:- Provide a brief record of correspondence. The information recorded includes the source, date received, action taken, summary of contents, and other references in the case of files.

Entry Book:- record full copies of summaries of documents entered as memoranda or precedent.

Acts:- manuscript or printed, were submitted by the colonial government to the colonial office or its predecessor for assessment by its legal advisers and approved by the privy council.

Sessional Papers:- Usually include records of Legislative and Executive Council proceedings and administrative reports of various departments of colonial governments.

Gazettes:- are official publications of notices on such matters as appointments, promotions and the award of contract.

Blue Books:- Contain information on government departments.

Native Affairs Department:- was in charge of the district administration and act as intermediaries between the natives and the colonial government.

By the 1870^s the British Colonial Government had adopted Arabic as an official language of correspondence with indigenous rulers and had employed several scribes, interpreters, and messengers on the local colonial staff in Freetown, as agents of communication in the Arabic language.

"The British later maintained economic, and generally also political, relationships with African Muslim leaders. Through them the colonial government received intelligence reports on the trade routes and on the political activities of the Guinea/Sierra Leone systems".¹⁰

¹⁰. Gladys M. Jusu-Sheriff, "Libraries in Sierra Leone", (Freetown: 1977), p.338.

These accounts can be found in several volumes of Arabic and government interpreters "letter books", and in Minutes Papers and Letters of the Aborigines Department, which are located in the archives. In these books the letters of the Chiefs are written in Arabic and are then translated to english.

The Protectorate Ordinance was passed in 1896, and in that same year began the protectorate over the chiefs and people in the British sphere of influence. For purposes of administration there were to be five districts, Karene, Ronietta, Koinadugu, Bandajuma, and Panguma, each under a commissioner. Later the Panguma and Bandajuma Districts were renamed respectively Railway and Northern Sherbro. In 1920 a reorganisation took place and three provinces were created. The Northern Province includes four districts, Koinadugu, Karene, Bombali, and Port Loko, the Central Province includes four districts, Konno, Pendembu, Kenema, and Moyamba, while the southern Province comprises the five district of Mano River, Fajehun, Sumbuya, Gbangbama, and Bonthe.

There are also books in the Archives relating to the Provinces of Sierra Leone which are titled, Decree Books and Intelligence Diary, these are very useful for anyone trying to find background information on the present day twelve districts of Sierra Leone. The contents of these Books deal with matters such as boundary disputes, trade, amalgamation, and other general information.

The table below gives the present division of the original five districts:-

<u>KARENE</u>	<u>RONIETTA</u>	<u>BANDAJUMA</u>	<u>PANGUMA</u>	<u>KOINADUGU</u>
Port Loko	Moyamba	Bo	Kenema	Koinadugu.
Kambia	Part of Bombali	Pujehun	Kono	
Part of Bombali	Tonkolili		Kailahun	

For a very long time during the colonial period Bonthe Sherbro was administered as part of the Colony of Sierra Leone, or as a separate entity from the other provincial districts, with the coming into effect of the Railway and Northern Sherbro Districts, information on Bonthe could be found in Northern Sherbro decree and Intelligence books. While also information on parts of Moyamba, parts of Pujehun and Kailahun could be found in Railway District decree books and intelligence diary.

In 1827 the villages of the colony were grouped into three districts, each under a manager, or district commissioner, who was responsible for everything within his area, from settling palavers to building bridges and planning new villages; his was a most difficult duty. He also acted as intermediaries between the government and the "Chiefs", who own and administered their own chiefdoms, enjoying real self-government under the guidance of the British political officers

These districts were:

<u>EASTERN OR RIVER DISTRICT</u>	<u>CENTRAL OR MOUNTAIN DISTRICT</u>	<u>WESTERN OR SEA DISTRICT</u>
Kissy	Wilberforce	York
Wellington	Leicester	Kent
Hastings	Gloucester	Banana Islands.
Waterloo	Regent	
	Bathurst	
	Charlotte	
	Grassfields	

There was a point in time when Waterloo was known as the Headquarters district, which extended from the borders of Freetown over the rest of the colony as far as the Ribbi River. Furthermore, the Western Area (Freetown) was also categorized as follows, from the Eastern Police Station to Wellington was the first Eastern District, Hastings and Waterloo as the second Eastern District. From the Eastern Police Station to Krootown Road was the central district, the areas around Regent Road and Circular Road were known as Southern District. From Krootown Road to Juba was the western district and around Goderich to York was the York Rural District.

The bulk of the holdings are arranged according to the principle of provenance, that is by the office of origin. The main sources of records are from various government agencies and government statutory bodies. These materials are sent to the National Archives as stipulated under the Public Archives Act of 1965, Section 4(1) gives the Director and any officer of the Public Archives Office authorised by him power to examine any Archives which are in the custody of any government office, and to advise such office as to the care, custody there of. Between 1965-1985 large quantities of documents were transferred from the Provincial headquarters of Bo, Kenema and Makeni to the Archives repository at Fourah Bay College. The Archives have also been receiving documents from individuals but this is not often.

ITEMS

Treaty of 1788, signed by King Naimbana and the British and effecting the transfer of the colony of Sierra Leone to Britain.
Manuscript Journal of Lieut. John Clarkson, R.N. Governor of Sierra Leone - 1792.

- Autographs (Manuscript Orders from the Directors of Sierra Leone 1791
Caulker Manuscript.
- Despatches from Secretary of State to Governor: 1808-1919.
(inclusive - Confidential, Circular, Acknowledgements, W.A.F.F.
West African Frontier Force, Secret despatches - 1920-1931).
- Despatches from Governor to Secretary of State: 1811 - 1919.
(inclusive - Confidential, W.A.F.F., West African Frontier Force,
enclosures in the despatches. Government House-Visitors book:
1869-1892).
- Foreign Office - Despatches to and from Foreign Secretary - 1855-1897
- General instructions for Consuls 1855
- The Gambia - Gambia despatches to Secretary of State - 1866-1870
" " - Governor's Letter Books - 1866-1900 (inclusive Confidential
and enclosures).
- " " - Correspondence 1900-1919, Gambia Ordinance, Gambia
Treaty 1827.
- Gold Coast - Governor's Letter Books - 1874-1900, inclusive
confidential.
- Lagos - Governor's Letter Books and Despatches - 1886-1900.
" - Correspondence (inclusive N and S Nigeria, and
Nigeria) - 1904 - 1919.
- Liberian Boundary Papers 1869-1879, Liberian and the Sierra Leone
Boundary - 1912, 1913, 1924 and 1931.
- Guinea - Boundary between Sierra Leone and Guinea 1896,
Files relating to Sierra Leone and Guinea.
- West African War Council, Civil members meeting agenda and
conclusion of meeting 1943. Minute and Memoranda of London meeting
in November 1949.
- West African Command - Mobilisation Scheme.
- Colonial instructions to Governors of Colonies - 1847.
- Colonial Office list 1897 - 1948.

Sierra Leone Militia Master Roll - 1858.

Crown Agents for the Colonies - Accounts and papers unbound 1854-1866.

" " " " " - Account book 1868 - 1872.

" " " " " - Letters to Crown Agents - 1886-1896.

Return and address to West Coast of Africa ordered by the House of Commons Acts of Parliament Orders in Council 20th April 1855.

Leave Certificate Book 1891-1933.

Colonial Secretary's Letter Books - 1820-1896

Colonial Secretary Office - Entry Books - 1835-1867

" " " - Miscellaneous Return Book - 1844-1847

" " " - Emigration Book - 1894-1896

" " " - Letters received - 1850-1919, inclusive Minute Papers.

Local Letters Received - 1854-1919, inclusive Confidential, Governor McCarthy miscellaneous, Governor Cardew 1895-1900, Herman - 1900.

Governor's Office Minute Book 1899 - 1908.

Liberated African Department: Registers of Liberated African 1-84307

" " " Statement of disposals 1821-1833

" " " Letter Books 1820-1847

" " " Indexes of Letters Received 1834-1843

" " " Miscellaneous Return Books 1826-1861

" " " Daily State Book 1849

" " " Charlotte School Letter Books 1882-1891

" " " Register of Alien Children 1870-1889

" " " Register of Escaped Slaves - 1875-1894

Aborigines Department - Government Interpreter's Letter Books 1873-1889.

" " - Letters to Native Chiefs 1862-1889

" " - Confidential 1889-1898.

Department of Native Affairs - 1891-1899 - inclusive confidential

" " " " Minute Books 1889-1902. Diary 1894-1895.

" " " " Minute Papers - 1877-1890

Sherbro Letter Books - 1878-1892, inclusive Governor and Colonial Secretary.

Miscellaneous Letter Books 1870-1899.

Local and Miscellaneous Letters 1900-1919

Charity Commission 1887-1894. Surveyor's Department: 1852-1857

Blue Books - 1876-1938

Sierra Leone Gazette - 1870-1970

Ordinances - 1800-1920 inclusive Montagu's and Wilbraham's Ordinances.

Oath Books - 1831-1931

Local Letters Books - 1808-1900 inclusive Confidential, Governor Hamilton and Kennedy.

General Account Books 1831-1868.

Minutes of Councils - Governor's Council: 1830-1863

" " " Executive Council : 1863-1920

" " " Legislative Council: 1863-1920

" " " Legislative Council: Letter Books: 1866-1901.

" " " Appeals to Council: 1850-1851

" " " Council Papers: 1855-1884

Legislative Council Debates - 1920-1957

Laws of Sierra Leone: 1925 and 1946

Treaties: 1788-1895 - inclusive those with Native Chiefs.

Stipend Books Vol. I - III.

Intelligence and Decree Books for Bandajuma, Bombali, Kenema, Koinadugu, Moyamba, Panguma, Port Loko, Railway, Ronietta, Sherbro and Karene Districts.

House Tax Journal 1898-1902.

Records of Paramount Chiefs - 1899

Protectorate Trade Report 1899

Information regarding Protectorate Chiefs - 1912.

Provincial Administration, Annual Reports - 1946 and 1947.

Record of Commissioned Chiefs and of distribution of sticks of office - 1894-1901.

Chalmers Report: Insurrection in the Sierra Leone Protectorate: Evidence and Documents Part 2, Chalmers Report: Oral Evidence.

Panguma/Bandajuma District: Information about Chiefdoms and Towns 1906.

Governor parting words to the Gallinas Chiefs 1888.

Bonthe Sherbro: Commandant Letter Book 1847.

Commission of Enquiry into the Freetown Riots, and Report, 1955.
Commission of Enquiry of Chiefdom Disturbances 1956.
Anti Syrian Riots: 1919, Claims made by Syrian as a result of
the 1919 riot.
Mohammedan Education and Diverse Matters.
Fourah Bay Mosque Case 2 : 1897-1901
Fourah Bay Mosque Case : 1965
Letter Patent 1863
Births and Death Registers: 1863-1894, inclusive First Eastern,
Second Eastern, Western, Freetown, Waterloo, Mountain, Sherbro and
Northern District: Isle de los.
Wilberforce Hall: Report on the transfer.
Board of Education: 1882-1899.
Mixed Commission Books: 1852-1868.
Proclamations: 1881-1897.
Protectorate Circuit Court Proceedings 1904-1914
~~Coburn~~'s Report.
Circuit Court Miscellaneous Correspondence 1907-1911.
Court for the easy and Speedy recovery of small debts - 1869-1884.
Court Criminal : 1908-1921.
Court: Civil cases 1918-1922, Court of Request 1873-1938.
Police Court Records - 1853-1960.
Waterloo- inclusive court of Request, Police Court Records,
Commissioner's Court 1864-1947.
Court Records: Hastings and Waterloo 1828-1838.
Police Office Procedure: Cases heard by the Police Magistrate from
1843-1865. Police Office Rough fees and Fines Book.
Supreme Court: Protectorate Judges' Note Books, Criminal Cases,
Protectorate and Colony - 1918-1960.
Sessions Cases Books, Summon Case Books: 1826-1934.
Queen's Advocate Letter Book 1901-1906.
Mountain District Proceedings of Cases heard by Police Magistrate.
Moyamba District Court Proceedings, 1911-1946.
Karene District.
Nongowa Kenema District
West African Court of Appeal Judges's Note Book.
Proceedings of Commission of Inquiry into the issue of Alluvial
Diamond Mining Licences, 1957.¹¹

¹¹. Location Books, Public Archives Office, F.B.C.

There are Minute Papers from 1876-1899, in approximately 750 bundles. They deal with matters from the Aborigines Department, Native Affairs Department and the Colonial Secretary's Office. Each bundle has approximately 100 files.

There are also Minute Papers from 1900-1909 in 672 bundles, these are not label on any departmental basis, but emanate from Colonial Secretary's Office (C.S.O.). They cover wide range of issues for this period (1900-1909), on internal and external matters. Each bundle has about 100 files.

With regards to documents covering 1910-1919, which are about 500 bundles, these are labelled on departmental or on other forms of identification. They include the following:-

C indicating Confidential	M indicating Medical	G.C. indicating Gold Coast
P.W. " Public Works	E. " Education	P.M. " Police Magistrate
P.O. " Post Office	W.D." War Department Hq.	" Headquarters
C.A. " Crown Agent	F.G." Foreign Govt.	S.C. " Supreme Court
P. " Prisons	R. " Ronietta	R.G. " Registrar General
A. " Audit	RY. " Railway	F.F. " Frontier Force
C.P. " Comm. of Police	RC. " Railway Construction	H.W. " Harbour Works
Circ." Circuit	Pe. " Petition	CJ. " Chief Justice
F.D. " Forestry Dept.	W.A." West Africa	Ga. " Gambia
Misc." Miscellaneous	Cen." Census	S.B. " Savings Bank
R.E. " Road Engineer	San." Sanitary	L.M. " Local Matters
C.S. " Col. Secretary	Mu. " Municipal	Ns. " Northern Sherbro
SS. " Sec. of State	F.O." Foreign Office	T. " Treas.
Ag. " Agriculture	Cus." Customs	PWD. " Public Works Department.
N.N. " Northern Nigeria	S.N." Southern Nigeria	N. " Naval
DC. " District Commissioner	S.S." Sec. of State	K. " Karene
A.G. " Attorney General	H.M." Harbour Master	

G. indicating Governor W. indicating Water Works
Ko. " Koinadugu I.E. " Intestate Estate.
Sh. " Sheriff

Furthermore from 1920-1960 there are Minute Papers in bundles and boxes, totalling 713. These were arranged according to the new format used during the workshop in April 1991. Code 1 signify Confidential series, while Code 2 signify Open Policy Files.

(Example 1/1 will mean Confidential on Import general, and 2/1 will mean Open Policy Files on Revenue and Expenditure (Public Finance).

The list below shows the series so far available at the time of writing this paper.

C.S.O. 1 = Confidential Series

- 1/1 Import General
- 1/2 Customs and Excise
- 1/3 Miscellaneous
- 1/4 Sierra Leone Harbour
- 1/5 Defence
- 1/6 Mass Media
- 1/7 Minute Papers
- 1/8 Police and Criminal Jurisdiction
- 1/9 Public Finance
- 1/10 Allocation of Crown Lands and Mining Sites
- 1/11 Agriculture, Forestry and Industry.
- 1/12 Establishment of Civil Engineering Scheme P.W.D.
- 1/13 Transport and Communication
- 1/14 Education
- 1/15 Labour Services
- 1/16 Postal Services

C.S.O. 2 = Open Policy Files

- 2/1 Revenue and Expenditure (Public Finance)
- 2/2 Allocation of Crown Lands and Mining Sites.
- 2/3 Navy and Royal West African Frontier Force.
- 2/4 Railway and Communication Services
- 2/5 Foreign Affairs
- 2/6 Commerce and Industry
- 2/7 Clerical and other Junior Services
- 2/8 Agriculture, Forestry and Industry
- 2/9 Customs and Excise
- 2/10 Miscellaneous Files
- 2/11 Government of Sierra Leone Administration.
- 2/12 Criminal Jurisdiction
- 2/13 Medical and Health
- 2/14 Conditions of Service
- 2/15 Postal Services
- 2/16 Public Works Department

C.S.O. 1 = Confidential Series

- 1/17 Legislature
- 1/18 Foreign Affairs
- 1/19 Provincial Administration
- 1/20 Railway and Communication Services
- 1/21 Armed Forces of West Africa
- 1/22 Board of Survey
- 1/23 Armed and Royal West African Forces
- 1/24 Colonial Governors and Administration of Sierra Leone
- 1/25 Medical and Health
- 1/26 Export of Palm Kernel
- 1/27 Secret
- 1/28 Judicial Proceedings
- 1/29 Mining
- 1/30 Personal
- 1/31 Circular

C.S.O. 2 = Open Policy Files

- 2/17 Sierra Leone Harbour
- 2/18 Motor Transport Services
- 2/19 Annual Board of Survey and Publication Services.
- 2/20 Provincial Administration
- 2/21 Defence General
- 2/22 Judicial Proceedings
- 2/23 Dangerous Drugs
- 2/24 Agriculture
- 2/25 Education
- 2/26 Circulars
- 2/27 Arms and Ammunition Services
- 2/28 Personal (non policy) but open
- 2/29 Mass Media
- 2/30 Sports
- 2/31 Civil Aviation
- 2/32 Prisons Department
- 2/33 Legislature
- 2/34 Minute Papers
- 2/35 Aborigines
- 2/36 Audit Department.

There are some open policy and personal files relating mainly to the period when Dr. Davidson-Nicol was Principal of Fourah Bay College. There are also 90 bundles from the former Ministry of Interior relating to the twelve districts, Freetown City Council and Rural Area Councils, covering the period 1930-1964.

The Archives Office has a good collection of pictures on the Second World War, in which West African troops were prominent. There are also pictures on the Railway, some Paramount Chiefs, and other prominent civil servants during the colonial period.

The microfilm collection is very small, about 200 microfilms on C.S.O. letters received and Governors despatches for the late 19th century.

There ~~are~~ maps of the country and individual maps on the various districts.

There are also about 85 plans relating mainly to some projects undertaken during the colonial period.

* The Public Archives Office unfortunately does not have Newspapers as part of its collections, this can be obtained from the Fourah Bay College Library.

The office has a small library, with books and journals on Archives administration and Records Management.

* The Public Archives Office is presently keeping Newspapers as part of its collection.

P/S Photocopying and posting all these material is very expensive in Sierra Leone terms, money as all expenses were personally undertaken by me. Nevertheless, I do hope that the benefits that will accrue to Sierra Leone will be great.