Conservation and Restoration Documents
Title VI Librarians and CAMP
Indiana University Liberian Collections Project (LCP), Verlon L. Stone, Project Coordinator,
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Application for Grant to Conserve and Restore the Papers of President W.V.S. Tubman

Summary:
Requests a $35,000 grant to pay preservation and transportation costs in a project to rescue and microfilm the personal papers of former Liberian President W.V.S. Tubman (30,000 documents). Supplements a project grant application to the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme for US $96,000 (50,000 UKP) whose guidelines prohibit its grants from covering any conservation costs. Project planned to run a year starting July 1, 2005.

Introduction:
Since the Liberian Collections Project's first presentation to the Africana Librarians Council/Title VI Librarians/CAMP at the 2003 African Studies Association meetings, the ALC/Title VI Librarians/CAMP members have been very supportive of the initiatives undertaken by Indiana University's Liberian Collections Project. The Title VI Librarians group and CAMP helped underwrite a trip to Liberia in August 2004 for Elwood Dunn, Sewanee-University of the South, and Verlon Stone, Indiana University, to assess document repositories. ALC members may recall the trip report and pictures concerning the conditions of three repositories presented at the 2004 African Studies Association meetings in New Orleans. Based on analysis of the trip's findings and in consultation with ALC/CAMP members and archival specialists, three grant proposals were developed and submitted to the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme (EAP). Following review, the EAP invited the Liberian Collections Project to submit detailed grant applications for:

Rescuing Liberian History

- Preserving the Personal Papers of William V. S. Tubman, Liberia's Longest Serving President
- A Pilot Study to Preserve and Enable Access to Liberia's Presidential Archives
- A Pilot Study for Preserving 19th Century Documents of Africa's Oldest Republic

The two six-week pilot projects will survey and sample documents at the National and Presidential Archives to locate and assess the condition and content of the target documents. A
plan for conservation, description and arrangement, and the selection of materials for microfilming will be prepared, from which grant proposals to execute these plans will be submitted to the Endangered Archives Programme.

This proposal addresses processing needs to prepare the personal papers of William V. S. Tubman, Liberia's longest serving president, for microfilming, including transportation costs to the E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory at Indiana University where they will be dried, flattened, and necessary restoration work done, cost categories that the Endangered Archives Programme will not cover.

Background:

In August of 2004, Elwood Dunn and Verlon Stone located the personal papers of William V. S. Tubman, Liberia's longest serving President in the library of the unoccupied mansion on the Tubman family estate in Liberia. Twenty-five years earlier, Professor Christopher Clapham, a consulting African specialist from Lancaster University, UK, now at Cambridge University, had come to this same library and prepared a report for President Tubman's widow stating that the papers were of great historical importance and estimating that about 30,000 documents were stored in six file cabinets and four large trunks. Dunn and Stone found the papers in deteriorating condition. During Liberia's most recent civil war in 2003, rebel soldiers had rummaged through the file cabinets in search of valuables, tossing folders and papers onto the floor, leaving them limp and damp in Liberia's tropical climate. Immediate conservation and preservation measures are needed for the papers, followed by restoration of organization to the collection and then microfilming for long-term preservation of the papers' content.

Clapham reported that the materials showed the nearly complete integration between Tubman's personal and political lives during his presidency from 1944 until his death in 1971. The bulk of the collection clusters at the beginning (1944-1950) and end (1961-1971) of his administration. Of the collection's importance, Clapham stated that given Tubman's stature as an African head of state during the de-colonization era, these papers will be of particular value for the study of the Organization of African Unity's early years, as well as for the study of West African diplomacy.

The Plan:

The following six-stage plan has been developed to rescue, restore and microfilm this valuable collection of President W. V. S. Tubman's papers. Project time is estimated to take one year.

**Stage I: Packing and Shipping to Indiana University**
A team trained to pack fragile documents will take special shipping containers to the library of the Tubman Estate where they will retrieve the Tubman papers, flatten and pack them into the containers. Because facilities do not exist in Liberia to deep-freeze and freeze-dry the damp, insect infested collection, the containers will be air shipped back to the E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory at Indiana University where the conservation work will proceed under the direction of Jacob Nadal, Head of the Craig Lab.

Stage II: Freeze-Dry Papers

The containers with the Tubman Papers will be deep frozen at -10 F to stop mold growth and exterminate insects, then placed in a freeze-drying facility at 28-30 F for several months.

Stage III: Conservation and Restoration

Professional conservators at the Craig Preservation Laboratory will inspect the condition of the dried documents. Damaged documents will be restored whenever possible. When original documents can not be saved the imaging staff will take necessary measures to capture and preserve their content.

Stage IV: Description & Arrangement

A professional archivist, supervised by Philip Bantin, Director of the Indiana University Archives, will inspect each document and restore the filing order described by Dr. Christopher Clapham during his 1979 visit to the W. V. S. Tubman Library of Presidential Papers. Finding aids will be written and prepared for Internet display via EAD (Encoded Archival Description) coding.

Stage V: Microfilming

Once organized, the entire collection will be microfilmed. Procedures following the RLG Preservation Microfilming Handbook guidelines will enable the microfilms to be digitized later.

Stage VI: Return Tubman Papers to Liberia

The complete physical collection of the President W. V. S. Tubman Papers will be shipped back to Liberia. Additional sets of microfilms will be shipped for distribution to the University of Liberia, Cuttington University College, Center for National Documents & Records/National Archives and the Tubman family.

Costs:

Total project cost is estimated at $131,000 (68,000 UKP), of which $96,000 (50,000 UKP) is requested from the Endangered Archives Programme. This proposal to the Title VI Librarians
and CAMP requests $35,000 (18,000 UKP) to pay the conservation components in Stages I, II & III: shipment to/from Indiana University, deep-freeze and freeze-drying, document conservation and restoration.

Air-freight Tubman Papers, to & from-----19,500 US**
Deep Freeze & Freeze Dry Documents-----2,000
US Inspection & Repair-----------------------13,500 US
Total-----------------------------------------35,000 US

Estimates based on 30,000 documents.
**Estimating air freight costs FROM Liberia TO Bloomington, Indiana has proven to be nearly impossible. This figure is based on a DHL quote (much lower than FedEx), but we continue looking for a less expensive carrier and mode.

Attached is EAP027-Tubman Papers-Research Grant Application Form.doc, the grant application submitted to the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme on 25 February 2005. The $1.00 was then worth 0.527 UKP.