

# **Report to the Title VI Librarians/Cooperative Projects**

**04 May 2006**

## **Liberian Document Recovery Projects:**

**W.V.S. Tubman Papers**

**E. Reginald Townsend & Evelyn Diggs Townsend Papers**

**Bai T Moore Papers**

**Liberian Collections Project  
Archives of Traditional Music  
Indiana University  
Bloomington, Indiana**

**Photos: K .A. MacDonald & V. Stone**

# Report to the Title VI Librarians/Cooperative Projects

04 May 2006

## ***Rescuing Liberian History:***

### ***Preserving the Personal Papers of William V. S. Tubman, Liberia's Longest Serving President***

Stage I shipping costs, and Stages II & III supported by the Title VI Librarians. Travel costs, arrangement and microfilming supported by the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme.

**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.

- The Tubman materials were in worse condition than anticipated. Although not as damp as found in August 2004, the papers had more rodent and insect damage than expected. Many documents were missing and others were missing chewed sections: sometimes only around the edges; sometimes rendering the document an unusable paper doily.
- Twenty-two (22) boxes of documents and photos were retrieved, packed in wooden boxes and air-freighted to the E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory at Indiana University. Originally LCP estimated fifty (50) boxes of materials would be retrieved, but significant quantities of the collection were either missing or had deteriorated. The observed volume also included far more photos and photo books, which were beyond the scope of the project originally proposed to the Africana Librarians Council and the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme. The remaining photos and photo books were retrieved from the Tubman Estate in January 2006 and are temporarily stored in Monrovia.

**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.

- After arrival at Indiana University, the Tubman boxes went into the deep-freezer for one week of extermination freezing on August 31, 2005. Because the materials were not soaked, but only limp from high humidity, freeze-drying was not necessary. Air-drying was determined to be the best drying method for such damp papers.

**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, under the direction of the Head of the Craig Lab, will take necessary measures to capture and preserve their content.

- A team of five students supervised by Garry Harrison, preservation specialist at the E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory began the actual conservation work on September 23, 2005, working outside in the sunshine and crisp, dry fall air whenever possible. The conservation work was completed on March 8, 2006, yielding 43 document center boxes of clean, stable, flattened papers. Most papers at least required being flattened and brushed clean. Because of fecal matter from bats, rats and mice, many of the materials first required washing in a disinfectant bath by workers wearing lab safety gear: gloves, lab coats and masks.

#### **Stage IV Description & Arrangement**

- Colleen McCorkell began work as the W.V.S. Tubman Archivist on December 1, 2005. She first developed a processing plan based on analysis of the Tubman papers and her study of the Tubman presidential era. Approved by Philip Bantin, IU Archivist, Elwood Dunn and Verlon Stone in March, the plan will be periodically reviewed and updated as experience dictates. In March Ms. McCorkell finished the box inventories and began sorting the papers into series and subseries. She reports that 58% of collection has been sorted into folder title groups as of May 1, 2006.

#### **Stage V Microfilming**

- Following arrangement, McCorkell will prepare the W.V.S. Tubman papers for microfilming. Microfilming is expected to be completed by December 31, 2006.

#### **Stage VI Return Tubman Papers to Liberia**

- The timing for the return of the Tubman papers to Liberia will be determined by the Tubman family, which is weighing the storage and access options that will be available in Liberia.

**Additional Conservation & Archival Processing Supported by Title VI Librarians/Cooperative Projects:**

**E. Reginald Townsend & Evelyn Diggs Townsend Papers**

- On March 23, 2006, the conservation team completed work on the Townsend papers. The processing went quickly because the collection consisted of only seven boxes of materials, all in quite good condition.

**Bai T. Moore Collection**

- As of May 1, 2006, Garry Harrison estimated 30% of the Bai T Moore papers have been processed, expecting to finish the work by the beginning of August. The Moore collection also includes many books, slides and audio tapes, which will be processed separately. Plans are to hire a slide preservation specialist and an audio tape preservation specialist to develop conservation plans for the materials and to train the team of work-study students to work on the slides and tapes after the papers and books are finished.

**Financial Considerations:**

|  | <u>Original</u> | <u>Tubman</u>   | <u>Moore/Townsend</u> | <u>Estimated Actual*</u> |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Air-freight Papers to/from US          | 19,500          | 5,500           | Included              | 6,500                    |
| Deep Freeze & Freeze Dry Docs          | 2,000           | 2,000           | 500                   | 2,500                    |
| Inspection & Repair (Labor & Supplies) | <u>13,500</u>   | <u>13,500</u>   | <u>13,500</u>         | 3,500                    |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>\$35,000</b> | <b>\$21,000</b> | <b>\$14,000</b>       | <b>\$12,500</b>          |
| <b>Balance to Support Project</b>      |                 |                 |                       | <b>\$22,500</b>          |

Conservation costs continue to be extremely low, primarily because nearly 80% of the student conservation team has been eligible for the work-study program, requiring the Liberian Collections Project to only pay benefits and 10% of the hourly wage. ***With the approval of the Title VI Librarians/Cooperative Projects, the LCP will continue working on the Moore and Townsend materials until the funds are exhausted.***

The proposed work sequence would be:

- Complete current conservation processing of the Bai T Moore papers and books
- Conservation processing of Bai T Moore slides and tapes
- Digitize Bai T Moore slides and describe in the LCP slide database
- Transport remaining photos and photobooks to Indiana University for conservation processing
- Archival arrangement of the E Reginald Townsend & Evelyn Diggs Townsend Papers with EAD-coded finding aids
- Archival arrangement of the Bai T Moore Papers with EAD-coded finding aids
- Prepare Moore and Townsend Papers for microfilming

\* A detailed financial report will be submitted to the Center for Research Libraries office after the last pay period of the Spring 2006 semester, ending May 6<sup>th</sup>, is posted to the IU Financial Management System.



**Initial Recovery of Tubman Papers from Tubman Estate Library**



**Recovery Team in Library at Tubman Estate**



**Jacob Nadal Recovering Tubman Papers in Library Closet**



**D. Elwood Dunn Examining Recovered Tubman Papers**



**Cleansing Tubman Materials at the IU E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory**



**Cleansing Tubman Materials at IU's E. Lingle Craig Preservation Laboratory**



**Pressing & Drying Tubman Materials**



**Colleen McCorkell, Tubman Archivist, Inspecting Documents after Conservation Completed**



**Cleaned and Pressed, but with Insect and Rodent Damage**



**McCorkell, Dunn and Philip Bantin, IU Archivist, Ponder Arrangement Strategy Alternatives**