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FEDERATION OF NIGERIA



**Second Report**  
of the  
**Department of National Archives**

1957-58

NINEPENCE NET

1960



THE 2ND REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF THE FEDERATION OF NIGERIA,  
1957-58

INTRODUCTION

The first Report on the work of the Nigerian Record Office covered the period 1954/55. This report will deal primarily with the period 1st April, 1957 to 31st March, 1958. The developments that took place during the period 1955/57 when no annual reports were issued are, however, incorporated briefly in this Report.

2. Two important events marked the period covered by this report. The first was the passing during the August session of the House of Representatives in 1957, of the Public Archives Bill which was promulgated into an Ordinance on the 14th of November (Ordinance No.43 of 1957). The Ordinance did not create a new department. It renamed an existing establishment, the Nigerian Record Office, defined its duties and gave it a statutory existence. The main significance of the Public Archives Ordinance is that it provides a basis for the department to function effectively. It can never be over-emphasized that the precursor of an ordered archive service is legislation.

3. The draft Public Archives Bill was the work of Professor K.O. Dike, the Supervisor of Public Records, and of Sir Stafford Foster Sutton, the former Chief Justice of the Federal Supreme Court and first Chairman of the Archives Committee. The Public Archives Ordinance of the Federation of Nigeria forms an Appendix of this Report.

4. The other notable event that took place during the period covered by this Report is the completion and occupation of the first permanent block of the department of the National Archives at Ibadan on the 3rd of March 1958. This modern archival building, the first of its kind in British West Africa, is situated in the grounds of the University College, Ibadan. When the principle of an archive service for the Federation of Nigeria was accepted by the Federal Government, measures were taken to ensure that the public records collected during the survey period of this department (1951-54) were properly housed. To this end, a sum of £51,000 was provided in the Federal Government's Economic Programme for the period 1955/60. In planning our first building, enquiries on the basic requirements of modern repositories were directed to Europe and America, where modern archival buildings already exist.

5. It soon became clear that the Nigerian archive structure was likely to be the first of its kind in West Africa and that its design must be a work of research by an architect conversant with the designs of tropical buildings. After consultations with the Chief Federal Architect, the work of designing the building was entrusted to Mr. A.M.D. Halliday, B.Arch. (Liverpool), A.R.I.B.A., of the firm of Design Group Nigeria, Ibadan. In designing this building Mr. Halliday worked in the closest co-operation with one of our archivists - Mr. T.C.M. Eneli and adequate provision was made for the peculiar archive problems of a tropical climate. A special report on the design of this building forms a chapter in this report. The contract for the building was awarded to the Ibadan firm of T.A. Oni & Sons, General Contractors and Builders. Work was begun on the site allocated to the Department by the University College, Ibadan in December 1956 and the Building was ready for occupation in March 1958.

6. Before the foundation of the Nigerian National Archives, it is broadly true to say that the historical records of this country were in danger of total destruction. In Government departments non-current files for which there was no storage space were frequently burnt; the few records housed in the so-called 'strong rooms' at Lagos, Enugu, Ibadan and Kaduna were exposed to the ravages of insects and climate. Today the position has completely altered. The Nigerian National Archives, with its excellent facilities for the preservation and repair of historical manuscripts, is now well known not only to all the Departments of State - whether Regional or Federal - but



also to Missionary Societies, Commercial bodies, Statutory Corporations and other non-Governmental and private bodies which have records to preserve. In short, this Department has now become the repository for all historical material, whether public or private, in the Federation of Nigeria. But for its work, the historical records of Nigeria from which the history of this country will be written would have been lost or destroyed.

7. The period covered by this report has been one of steady expansion in all the activities of the department. In the quarter January to March 1955, the number of letters issued from or received in the Headquarters Office was less than 400. In the corresponding quarter in 1958, the number rose to over 1,050. On the 1st of April 1956, there were 13 persons, all told, on the staff of the department. At the same time in 1958, the number had increased to 50. In addition to the Branch Office established during the survey period in the basement of the Eastern House of Assembly at Enugu, another Branch Office was opened at Kaduna in June 1957.

8. All these developments show that there is an increasing awareness in the country of the importance of a National Archives Service and that the department is making every effort to meet the demands put upon it. The details of these developments are narrated in the following chapters.

9. STAFF. The actual strength of the staff of the National Archives on the 1st of April 1956 was as follows :-

Supervisor of Public Records	1
Archivist-in-Training	1
Chief Archive Clerk	1
Archive Assistants, Grades I, II & III	7
Typist	1
Repair and Binding Staff	1
Driver/Mechanic	1
Total :	<u>13</u>

10. On the 1st of April 1958, the position was as follows :-

Supervisor of Public Records	1
Archivists	3
Executive Officer, Grade I	1
Assistant Executive Officers	2
Chief Archive Clerk	1
Archive Assistants, Grades I, II & III	14
Photographic Assistants, Grade III	2
Binder/Repairers	2
Repository Assistants	3
Typists	4
Driver/Mechanics	2
Driver	1
Messengers	5
Watchmen	2
Cleaners	3
Gardeners	4
	<u>50</u>

11. In the departmental estimates for 1956/57, provision was made for five posts of archivists, which included a post for an Arabist/Archivist. One of these posts was already filled by Mr. T.C.M. Eneli who was recruited in January, 1955. Two other posts were filled by Messrs. S.S. Waniko and L.C. Gwam in September and October 1956 respectively. Mr. Waniko transferred to the Department from the Northern Region Service whilst Mr. Gwam was transferred from the old Nigerian Secretariat Lagos. The hope, expressed in the first report, of appointing an Arabist/Archivist has not materialised.

12. The department has experienced some difficulties in its attempts to fill the two vacant posts of archivist. This is partly to be accounted for by the fact that the demand for qualified men all over the country cannot meet up with the supply, and partly by the fact that archive administration is largely an academic affair. This requires us to recruit (except in special cases) only men who have taken an honours degree in history. This Department intends to keep up the high academic tradition maintained by



archival organisations all over the world. In the meantime we have assigned to executive officers certain responsibilities which properly belong to the professional officers. This is clearly unsatisfactory and will be discontinued as soon as professional men are available.

13. Perhaps one of the most difficult posts to fill in any archival organisation is that of Binder/Repairer. Following the practice in other archival institutions, no educational qualification is attached to this post, but recruits are required to demonstrate evidence of natural skill for the crafts before they can be accepted for training in the first instance. The real problem to be faced in selecting candidates for the posts of Apprentice Binder/Repairer is that of discovering from a host of candidates a few who possess artistic skill.

#### ORGANISATION OF THE DEPARTMENT

14. The occupation of the first permanent block of the National Archives has enabled the various sections at the Headquarters Office to function properly. The sections that existed at the time of the first report were the Administration, Liaison and Repository Sections. Three more sections have been created, viz: the Repair and Bindery Section, the Library and the Photographic Laboratory. A similar sectionalisation will take place at the Branch Offices at Enugu and Kaduna when these offices are fully developed.

15. The Administration: In the National Archives this section carries out the work normally done in large offices by the Registry, Correspondence, Finance and Establishment Branches, and Stores. The peculiar feature of this section is that it has served as nursing ground for other sections of the department. The expansion of the Department during the period under survey has thrown increased responsibilities on this section of the Headquarters Office.

16. The Library: The Library has been placed under the direction of the Archivist in charge of the Liaison Section. An Archive Assistant is directly in charge. Until the occupation of the permanent block, no effort was made to organise the departmental Library for the simple reason that there was no room. The Library now occupies an important wing of the new building and holds over 1,000 volumes, mostly reference works and government publications. The first set of books was acquired from two main sources, namely, the old Nigerian Secretariat Library and the Cowan Collection. The Cowan Collection, comprising nearly 700 volumes, was acquired in 1956 from the late Mr. A.A. Cowan of Birkenhead, through the agency of the Librarian of the University College, Ibadan at a cost of £1,357. 10. Od. The National Archives is grateful to the Federal Government for providing the funds for this invaluable collection and to the University Librarian for housing the collection till the completion of the archives building.

17. The Liaison Section: As the name suggests, this section establishes contact with all the Federal and Regional government departments, corporate bodies such as Missionary Societies, or private persons who possess important historical material, and arranges for transfer to the National Archives all records judged worthy of permanent preservation. Proposals have been put forward to the Federal Government for the implementation of Section 12 of the Public Archives Ordinance. With the implementation of this section the work of the Liaison Section will be regularised.

18. Touring has been and will long remain a main feature in the work of the Liaison Section. For this purpose, one 5-ton lorry and two kitcars have been provided. The details of the tours made in 1955/56, 1956/57 and 1957/58 are as follows :-

<u>Year</u>	<u>No. of Tours</u>	<u>Distance Covered</u>	<u>No. of Documents Acquired</u>
1955/56	11	13,000	86,000
1956/57	15	13,400	165,000
1957/58	14	14,918	20,931



24. The guiding principle in the evolution of class-marks is that these fictitious quantities must in some way be suggestive of the provenance of the documents. As a general rule, documents emanating from the same source are arranged in an order approximate to their arrangement in the office of origin. The documents that have been classified so far in the Ibadan Repository in the period covered by this report occupy about 675 footrun of shelving.

25. Dehumidifiers: Some of the greatest agents in the deterioration of paper are moulds and other forms of fungi. The notorious brown decay on most papers housed in the tropics is due to the action of these agents. Fortunately for the interests of paper preservation, it has been recognised that these noxious agents can only develop in an atmosphere where the humidity is above 65%. In a tropical country such as Nigeria where the humidity is scarcely ever less than the figure quoted above, a constant battle must be waged against humidity.

26. Accordingly the National Archives has acquired three dehumidifiers from F.H. Biddle Ltd., 16 Upper Grosvenor Street, London, W.1 at a cost of £283.16/-. These have been installed to keep down the humidity in the Repository at the Headquarters Office where a constant watch on humidity is being kept with the aid of such humidity instruments as Hair - Hygrograph and Thermo - Hygrograph, obtained from G.F. Casella and Co. Ltd., Regent House, Fitzroy Square, London, W.1.

#### The Repair and Bindery Workshop:

27. For much of the period covered by this report, the repair workshop was not in operation as there was neither space to assemble the machines which have been acquired by the department since 1954 nor trained men to put these machines into use. With the occupation of the permanent block on the 3rd of March, work was begun in the workshop in a small way by one Apprentice-Binder/Repairer who was at Headquarters; the other was then undergoing training at the Ghana National Archives. Much of the work was then confined to the binding of old newspapers. It is hoped that full scale production will begin when the first qualified craftsman returns from Ghana in April.

#### The Photographic Laboratory:

28. The Photographic Laboratory was idle during the period covered by this report and will continue to be so for sometime. However, with the occupation of the first permanent block, it was possible to assemble all the photographic equipment in the Photographic Laboratory, and an invitation was sent to the Senior Photographer of the Federal Information Service, Mr. D.J. Pendall, to arrange for the installation of the various pieces of photographic equipment.

#### BRANCH OFFICES

29. Enugu Office: The broad policy of this department is to ensure that all documents of purely regional interest are deposited in the region of origin. In accordance with this policy, the basement of the Eastern House of Assembly was secured in 1952 for use as office and storage space. We were able to secure this accommodation through the good offices of Mr. E.U. Eronini, Clerk of the Eastern House of Assembly. The storage space in the basement has already proved inadequate for our needs and appeals were made in 1956 to the Federal Government to provide adequate office accommodation. This appeal resulted in the provision of a sum of £10,000 under Head 603 of the Public Works Extraordinary Estimates 1957-58, for the erection of two floors of the Repository Wing of the proposed Enugu Office and Repository. The contract for this building was awarded to the Eastern General Contractors, Enugu. Work started on the construction of the building late in 1957, and it is hoped that the building will be ready for occupation before the end of 1958.

30. The staff position of the Enugu Office has long remained unsatisfactory. Throughout the period covered by this report, the office has been manned by two Archive Assistants and a messenger. It may be necessary before long to station an Archivist in Eastern Region.



31. Until adequate accommodation and staff have been provided for the Enugu Office, it will be impossible to undertake vigorously the work of classifying the documents stored there.

32. KADUNA OFFICE: As far back as 1953, negotiations were opened with the Northern Regional Government for the purpose of acquiring an office at Kaduna to house the public records created in the Northern Region. The result of these negotiations was that the Northern Regional Government offered this department two dilapidated bungalows - Nos. 6 & 13 Keffi Road. £2,500 of Federal funds was initially provided for the reconditioning of these bungalows. The offer of No. 6 was, however, withdrawn in July 1957.

33. On the 28th of June, 1957, an Archivist, Mr. S.S. Waniko, was posted to Kaduna to lay the foundations of the Northern Branch Office and temporary office accommodation was provided for him in the newly completed Federal Block of Offices. Mr. Waniko left for Britain for training in September 1957. Owing to the shortage of trained staff in the department, it was not possible to post another Archivist to Kaduna until the beginning of March 1958. Additional storage space was acquired when the department took possession of No. 13 Keffi Road bungalow and the work of centralising the archives of the Northern Region is now in progress.

#### TRAINING SCHEMES

34. In the last departmental annual report, mention was made of the importance of organising training schemes for various classes of posts in the department. Since the writing of that report, three classes of training schemes have been worked out and put into operation as follows :-

35. ARCHIVISTS: An archival institution is not only an administrative department; its functions, as already indicated, are academic. Accordingly, the basic qualification for anyone seeking to take up the profession of archivist in the National Archives is a good honours degree, preferably in history, from a recognised University. In special cases, a holder of a good general degree may be accepted for the appointment.

36. The training so far organised for the post is as follows :-

- (i) Six months training "on the job" in the National Archives,
- (ii) Six months attachment to the Records Revision Section of the Colonial Office and the Public Records Office, London.

The first stage of the training is designed to enable the trainees to appreciate the practical problems confronting the Nigerian National Archives. In the Records Revision Section of the Colonial Office, the trainees are made to acquire practical experience, on a departmental level, in such archive practices as weeding, transfer of records, and "limbo" organisation. In the Public Records Office, London, they are made to study the principles and techniques of Archive Science and Administration under British experts.

37. This training scheme was established after Professor Dike had studied the existing training schemes in England and Europe during his visits to Europe on archive business (1954, 1955 and 1957). He decided that the courses of instruction given by such institutions as the Institute of Librarianship and Archive Administration of London and Liverpool Universities, and by the School of German Archivists at Marburg, were not relevant to the needs of archive establishments in tropical countries. Accordingly a scheme relevant to Nigerian conditions was evolved and under it Messrs. T.C.M. Eneli, L.C. Gwam and S.S. Waniko, the first three Nigerian Archivists were trained. The combination of local training with training abroad enables the Nigerian archivists to understand the problems or archive science in his own country as well as to keep abreast of the latest archival developments in Europe and America.

38. PHOTOGRAPHERS: An effective photographic section forms an important section of any archive organisation. Accordingly, as far back as 1954, plans were put in hand for the establishment of a Photographic Section in the National Archives. Much of the needed equipment has been acquired, and



a training scheme for photographers was put into operation in July 1957. This training will comprise one year's attachment to the Photo Section of the Federal Information Service, Lagos and a course of professional training in photography in the United Kingdom. Two candidates are at present undergoing the first stage of the course at the Photo Section of the Federal Information Service, Lagos.

39. BINDER/REPAIRERS (CRAFTSMEN): Candidates of artistic ability selected for this post are required to undergo a period of apprenticeship. The duration of this apprenticeship depends largely on the ability of the individual and the training itself comprises attachments to the Head Binder of the University College Library and the Records Preservation Branch of the Ghana National Archives, Accra. When the trainees have gone through these attachment courses, it is hoped that the most promising candidates will be sent on further attachment courses to the Repair and Bindery Workshops of the Public Records Office, London for the purpose of acquiring more skill and experience.

40. GENERAL: Nearly all the schemes described above are still in their experimental stages. When sufficient men have been trained in the various skills, it will be possible for all the training required for various posts in the department to be carried out in the National Archives.

#### ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

41. In the 1954/55 Report, mention was made of the appointment of an Archives Committee. This Committee held its first meeting in Lagos in January 1956 under the Chairmanship of Sir Stafford Foster Sutton, the Chief Justice of the Federation. The committee examined in particular the question of an Archives Ordinance and appointed a sub-committee to prepare a draft Bill.

42. Since this meeting, a Public Archives Ordinance has been promulgated into law. The Ordinance provides, among other things, for the appointment of an Archives Committee. It is hoped that a new committee will be appointed as soon as possible.

#### SENIOR STAFF QUARTERS

43. The hope expressed in the first report of building two more staff quarters at Ibadan in 1955-56 has not materialised. This failure is due to a change of policy by the Federal Government in 1956-57 in the matter of the housing of its senior staff. As from that time, all the housing requirements of senior Federal Government servants posted in each Region are to be met from a common pool under the control of the Regional Housing Committee. On account of this policy, the sum of £5,000 voted for the housing of the senior staff of the National Archives was allocated to the common pool. At the moment, the only staff quarter available in Ibadan to the Senior Staff of this department is the bungalow purchased from the University College in 1955. A flat has, however, been allocated by the Northern Region Federal Housing Committee to the Archivist posted at Kaduna.

#### SPECIAL REPORT ON THE DESIGN OF THE FIRST BLOCK OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, IBADAN

44. GENERAL: The scheme has been designed to accommodate the four functional categories connected with the collection and control of public records i.e. administration, (offices for archivists, general offices, etc.), operations (reception, treatment and repair of documents), stack rooms (storage documents) and public areas for research. Attention has been paid to the special problems of circulation and inter-relation of these functional requirements in an endeavour to produce an integrated and harmonious entity, properly orientated and related to the levels of the site.

45. PLANNING: The core of any archives building is the repository block containing the stack rooms for the permanent storage of documents. All the administrative, service and mechanical facilities have been grouped around it with easy access at all levels.



46. The repository block, which was required to accommodate 15,000 linear feet of shelving space, has been planned on three floors only, since to go higher than this would have necessitated the introduction of a lift or lifts - an expensive and not altogether reliable item in this country. Open steel adjustable shelving has been provided in the stack room, made up in stacks 18" deep, 20'0" long and five tiers high, with 18" heights between shelves. The stacks are placed back to back with a 3'0" wide gangway between each pair of stacks and a 3'0" wide gangway running the length of the stack room. These dimensions have determined the size of the structural bay and the repository block has been divided into 6'0" wide bays along its length. Each floor of the repository block is divided into equal parts in its length by a fire division wall with steel communicating doors, and a fire escape staircase is provided at the end of the block which, at a future date, can also provide the connecting link for another repository block of the same size.

47. Complete through ventilation has been provided on all floors of the repository block by standard adjustable glass louvred windows with steel bars on the inside for protection against burglars. It is hoped, as and when funds become available, to instal individual dehumidifying units. It is estimated that four units will be required per floor. In the meantime, however, good controllable ventilation is provided.

48. Sun protection to the external walls is provided by the vertical fins between each window and by the horizontal sun-breakers immediately above the windows; both the fins and the sunbreakers project 1'6" from the external wall face, protecting the whole of the face of the walls from direct sunlight during the heat of the day.

49. Entrance to the stack rooms is gained from the broad landing at each level, the landings are interconnected by the main staircase which runs through the whole height of the building.

50. A secondary wing accommodating the Administrative Section, the public areas and the Operations Section, runs at right angles to the repository block. This wing is also planned on three floors. On the ground floor is found the Operations Section, which has its own entrance and covered unloading bay, and is approached from the service road at the rear of the building. This entrance gives on to a wide reception area and can be closed at night by a pair of vertically operating roller shutters. There is direct access to the three main operations rooms from the reception areas, i.e. the reception and fumigation room, the processing, boxing and labelling room and the repair workshops. There is also direct corridor access to the photostat laboratory and the microfilming and straight photography laboratory with their common dark room. Treated documents are transported to the three floors of the repository block by means of a small hoist situated on the landing of the main staircase. It will be necessary to provide an air conditioning unit in the dark room.

51. The public area, consisting of library and exhibition room, a cataloguing and classification room and two extensive sections for search rooms (these sections may be divided up with moveable partitions as and when desired), is situated on the first floor of the administrative wing. The public should have no direct access to the Operations Section of the building, to the stack rooms or to the administrative offices, and consequently a separate entrance and staircase have been provided. This library has been built on stilts over the public entrance; this permits good through ventilation to the library and a covered approach to the public entrance.

52. The second floor of the administrative wing is devoted to the administrative offices, i.e. the office of the Chief Archivist with a private balcony as added protection against the sun, and a private w.c. and cloakroom; offices for the Executive Secretary and Senior Archivist; senior and junior staff lavatories; a stationery store and a general office. The administrative offices are approached from the main staircase and have their own entrance at ground floor level off the main approach road. A similar form of sun protection is employed on the first and second floors of the administrative wing as on the repository block, with projecting fins and sunbreakers, with a base constructed of local stone. Double skin flat roofs have been provided



- (3) Nothing in this section contained shall affect the power of any competent court to order the production of any document in any proceedings instituted before such court.

Authenti-  
cation of  
copies and  
use in  
evidence of  
such copies

7. The Director shall have an official seal which shall be judicially noticed. When any copy or reproduction of a document in the custody of the Director is certified to be a true copy by the Director or by an officer of the Department of Federal Archives authorised by him in that behalf and is authenticated by such official seal, such copy or reproduction shall be admitted in evidence as proof of the contents of the original document as if it were the original document.

Functions  
of Director  
in relation  
to Regional  
public records.

8. The Director may exercise such functions in relation to any public records of the classes set out in paragraphs (a) and (b) of the definition of archives in section 2 as may, with the consent of the Governor-General, be conferred upon him by the Government to which such records belong.

Appoint-  
ment of  
National  
Archives  
Committee

9. (1) For the purpose of the permanent preservation of important archives and to provide an orderly method for the disposition of such archives, there shall be established a permanent committee on National Archives, to be called the National Archives Committee, which shall consist of:-

- (a) the Chief Justice of the Federation, who shall be the Chairman;
- (b) the Director; and
- (c) such other persons, not exceeding seven in number, as may be appointed by the Minister, of whom one shall have been nominated for appointment by the Governor in Council of the Northern Region, one by Governor in Council of the Western Region, one by the Governor in Council of the Eastern Region, one by the Commissioner of the Cameroons, and one by the Senate of University College, Ibadan.

(2) The persons appointed under paragraph (c) of subsection (1) shall hold office for such period as may be determined at the time of their respective appointments.

Functions  
of National  
Archives  
Committee

10. It shall be the duty of the National Archives Committee:-

- (a) to advise the Minister on all matters of Archives;
- (b) to examine the requests of public offices for the destruction or other disposition of archives;
- (c) to make recommendations for the approval of the Minister on all applications for licences for the export of original records, documents or literary manuscripts;
- (d) to supervise the publication of any records or lists or calendars of archives authorised by the Minister to be published.

Restriction  
on exportation  
of historical  
documents.

11. (1) The exportation from Nigeria of documents which are archives or which relate to Nigeria and which have been certified by the Director to be of historical value is prohibited except in accordance with the terms of a licence to export issued by the Minister.

(2) A licence issued under the provision of subsection (1) of this section shall specify each document to which the licence relates and may contain such conditions as the Minister may think fit.



- (3) Any person who contravenes the provisions of subsection (1) of this section shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding one hundred pounds.

Power of  
Minister to  
make  
regulations

12. (a) The Minister may make regulations providing for the admission of the public to offices of the Director and the inspection by the public of the archives;
- (b) the transfer of any archives from the custody of any public office having control thereof to the National Archives;
- (c) the examination, disposal or destruction of any archives which are not of sufficient value to justify their preservation in the archives office or elsewhere;
- (d) the fees to be paid in respect of services provided by the Director; and
- (e) generally the better carrying out of the objects and purposes of this Ordinance.



