

RESEARCH NOTES: SIERRA LEONE HOLDINGS IN UNITED METHODIST ARCHIVES *

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The research possibilities in primary documents and in rare publications held by the archives of The United Methodist Church¹ for the study of Sierra Leone history have not been widely known due to the lack of readily available published information as to the extent and nature of the holdings. The purpose of this article is to report on the several archives of The United Methodist Church whose collections bear on the history of Sierra Leone, with a view toward assessing their value for the research scholar. The two primary holdings are the E.U.B. Archives in Dayton, Ohio and the collection in the Missionary Affairs Office, Freetown.²

The first section of the paper deals with the holdings in each of the archives. The second section analyzes and assesses the contents of some of the relevant rare publications and documents.

The Commission on Archives and History

The Dayton Archives holds the largest collection of materials.

The following series of periodicals are retained there.

1. *Church and Home*, Vol. I (Jan. 1, 1964) to date, preceded by, *Telescope-Messenger*, Vol. CXIII (Jan. 1, 1947) to Vol. CXXIX (Dec. 31, 1963), preceded by, *Religious Telescope*, Vol. I (Dec. 31, 1834) to Vol. CXII (Dec. 31, 1946.)
2. *World Evangel*, Vol. LXVI (1947) to date, preceded by, *The Evangel*, Vol. XXXVII (1918) to Vol. LXV (1946), preceded by, *Woman's Evangel*, Vol. I (1882) to Vol. XXXVII (1918.)
3. *Sierra Leone Outlook*, Vol. I (1910) to 1968. (The microfilm copy is complete; issues are missing from the originals.)
4. *The Missionary Telescope*, Vol. II (Jan., 1859) to Vol. IV (Sept., 1861.)

* This is a revised draft of an earlier article, "United Methodist Archival Materials Relative to the History of Sierra Leone," *The Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion*, Vol. XI, 1969, pp. 45-51, and is printed here with permission of the editor of the *Bulletin*.

¹ The United Methodist Church is the successor of The Evangelical United Brethren Church (1946-1968), the Church of the United Brethren in Christ (1800-1946) and the Mendi Mission of the American Missionary Association (1840-1883), all of which sponsored mission work in Sierra Leone.

² Dr. Ness is primarily responsible for the information on the E.U.B. holdings, Commission on Archives and History, located in Dayton, Ohio. Dr. Reeck is responsible for the information on the Freetown holdings and the contents analysis.

5. *The Search Light*, Vol. I (Jan., 1895) to Vol. XI (July, 1905.)
6. *The Missionary Advance*, Vol. I (Aug., 1905) to Vol. IV (Dec., 1908.)
7. *The Missionary Visitor*, Vol. I (July, 1865), to Vol. XXXI (1895.) (About ten volumes are missing from this series.)
8. *Minutes of the Annual Sessions* (Seventy-first to Eighty-eighth) of the Sierra Leone Conference (1951-1968), preceded by, *Minutes of the Annual Sessions* (First to Seventieth) of the West Africa Conference (1880-1950.) (The records are complete for 1897-1954 with microfilming of the series from 1955-1968 being prepared.)
9. United Brethren in Christ, *Proceedings of the General Conference*, 1815-1946.
10. Evangelical United Brethren Church, *Proceedings of the General Conference*, 1946-1968.
11. United Brethren in Christ, Board of Missions, *Minutes*, 1854-1946; Executive Committee, *Minutes*, 1867-1946.
12. Evangelical United Brethren Church, Board of Missions, *Minutes*, 1946-1968; Executive Committee, *Minutes*, 1946-1968.
13. United Brethren in Christ, Woman's Missionary Association, *Minutes*, 1872-1946.
14. Journals of missionaries to Sierra Leone:
Daniel Kumler, 1855, one volume;
Daniel Flickinger, 1855-1900, three boxes of papers and journals;
William Shuey, 1855, one volume;
Walter Schutz, 1923-1951.

In addition, the Commission on Archives and History has in the EUB Archives a number of rare books, files of missionary letters, microfilms of dissertations on Sierra Leone, and a partial collection of *Sierra Leone Studies*, old series.

The books include several volumes by Daniel K. Flickinger, whose connection with Sierra Leone began in 1855 and whose first book was published in 1857.³

The letters are primarily from missionaries to the mission boards about routine business, although there are descriptive sections concerning trips taken, people encountered, and social conditions faced. The personal files of approximately sixty-five missionaries are sealed until 1975. The open files include indemnity matters arising from the 1898 Hut Tax War. Files are open until 1936 and number more than 4,000 pieces. A box of papers concerning the trials of the Rev. Daniel F. Wilberforce of Imperi, 1906 and 1913, for cannibalism, is open too. A collection of pictures, some unidentified, numbering approximately 1,500 items from the early 1900's to 1960 discloses scenes, people and institutions.

³ *Off-hand Sketches of Men and Things in Western Africa* (Dayton: United Brethren Printing Establishment, 1857.)

Also worthy of mention is the collection of artifacts of tribal cultures, consisting of masks, drums and other musical instruments, beads and jewelry, cloth and other curios. The present collection, numbering more than 500 items, is being doubled by additional accessions.

Missionary Affairs Office, Freetown

Unfortunately, valuable pre-1898 materials formerly held by the mission in Sierra Leone were destroyed along with most of the rest of the mission properties during the 1898 Hut Tax War. However, duplicates of some post-1898 Dayton holdings are available to researchers in Freetown.⁴ The holdings were stored in 1969 in boxes in a dry room at the residence of the Field Representative.

The serials in these archives are as follows:

1. *The Evangel*, Vol. XXXVII (1918) to Vol. LXV (1946), preceded by, *Woman's Evangel*, Vol. XIX (1900) to Vol. XXXVI (1917.)
2. *Sierra Leone Outlook*, Vol. I (1910) to Vol. XLIV (1953.)
3. *Minutes of the Annual Sessions* (Seventy-first to Seventy-sixth) of the Sierra Leone Conference (1951 to 1956), preceded by, *Minutes of the Annual Sessions* (Nineteenth to Seventieth) of the West African Conference (1899-1950.)

The *Evangel*s and the *Outlooks* are bound in hard cover. Though some of the bindings are disintegrating badly, and margins of the *Outlooks* from 1910 through 1918 have been chewed off by rodents, the documents are nevertheless quite legible. The *Minutes* are mostly in their original soft-cover bindings and are in fair condition.

In addition the Missionary Affairs Office has possession of some folders containing typescript station reports and correspondence from missionaries to the mission office. Presently these are disorganized and have not been assessed.

Analysis and Assessment

Interest in these materials arises largely because they constitute a major source of primary information on pre-Protectorate and Protectorate Sierra Leone. Contrary to the Freetown fixation of the Wesleyan and Church Missionary societies, the American missionaries focused their main efforts on the hinterland from the beginnings in mid-nineteenth century until the present, disregarding Freetown entirely until after 1900 insofar as the establishment of mission work is concerned.

⁴ The Rev. Clyde Galow, Field Representative, Missionary Affairs Office, The United Methodist Church, Freetown, was most courteous in making these materials available for research purposes.

From 1843 until 1875 stations were located entirely in coastal Sherbroland from the Bum-Kittam to the Kagboro Rivers, including Sherbro Island. Rotifunk station and the Bumpe chiefdom come into view about 1875, the Yonni and Kpaa Mende areas about 1885, and Upper Mende and Konoland in the first and second decades of the twentieth century. Information on colleagues serving stations of other missions outside these areas is sometimes reported, especially in the *Outlook* from 1910 to 1925. Only the areas noted, however, were extensively reported by first-hand observers.

The particular interests of the missions workers relative to their tasks and goals determined the nature of their observations and reports. All the missionaries saw themselves first as evangelists; particular individuals also had special roles as teachers, medical practitioners, agriculturalists, promoters of small industries, guardians in charge of homes for boys and girls, and administrators. Therefore not the African culture of itself, but how it responded or failed to respond to evangelical activity; and not the colonial Government, but how its policies impeded or facilitated mission work were the typical concerns. Some articles and reports, however, describe aspects of the social setting for their inherent interest.

Each periodical catered to special interests. The minutes and proceedings of conferences and boards furnished statistical information on mission stations, churches and institutions; policies on issues of concern to the church; and biographical details of mission workers.

The *Woman's Evangel* was concerned before 1905 primarily with the Rotifunk, Mano, Moyamba and Taiama stations, as well as with the Yonni country. Hardly an issue lacks a letter or report of interest to the scholar concerning these areas. Between 1905 and the present the *Evangel* reported on all the stations in Sierra Leone, but after 1915 Sierra Leone news was reduced as mission work expanded in Asia and in the Western U.S.

The *Sierra Leone Outlook* took up where the *Evangel* left off in concentration upon Sierra Leone. Published monthly until 1941, then bi-monthly until the 1950's, and irregularly since then, the *Outlook* has constituted the official publication of the West Africa (Sierra Leone) Conference since 1910. The articles cover a wide range of interests, and furnish pertinent information on the social, economic and political *milieux* within which the mission functioned. The "Notes and Personals" column recorded the activities of important persons in all spheres of Colonial and Protectorate life. The "General Church News" column reported the activities of the Church of Sierra Leone, the United Methodist Church, the Wesleyans, the Radical United Brethren (or United Brethren of America) Mission, the Christian and Missionary Alliance Mission

and the American Wesleyan Mission from 1910 to 1923. Inasmuch as most of these groups did not produce their own journals then, this column would be particularly important for church historians concerned with the early twentieth century.

The *Outlook* provides a source for the biographical study of several important Sierra Leoneans, particularly those who attended Albert Academy.

Educational history can be mined out of the *Outlook* for its writers commented regularly and at considerable length on educational patterns and processes of the educational system maintained by the Sierra Leone Conference, as well as on its relationships to the social and economic conditions of the Protectorate peoples and to the Department of Education.

Finally, the *Outlook* provides insight into the history of the development of African interpretations of the social, political and religious life of Sierra Leone.⁵ Africans were published from the first, and A. T. Sumner, S. M. Renner, T. B. Williams, J. K. Fergusson, G. Max Gorvie, S. B. Sawyerr, S. B. Caulker, B. A. Carew, A. M. Bailor, William H. Fitzjohn, S. E. Warratie, several members of the Tuboko-Metzger family, J. Karefa-Smart and others contributed articles.

The *Church and Home* and its predecessors promoted the interests of the whole denomination, not just of Sierra Leone. But because the Sierra Leone mission figured prominently in the denomination in the nineteenth century, reports on Sierra Leone were frequent then. In the twentieth century, however, Sierra Leonean items have been less frequent, though of high quality.

Two other sources deserve special mention. One is the daily journal of the Rev. Walter Schutz, covering his period of service from 1923 to 1951. This journal has been only recently deposited by his widow. Mr. Schutz was an avid commentator on everything of importance that came to his notice. He lived in Taiama, Rotifunk and Freetown and travelled widely. It is fortunate that his journal has been deposited in the EUB Archives, where it is now accessible to scholars.

Another autobiographical source is the life of the Rev. T. F. Hollowell as told to Walter Schutz, printed in installments in Vol. LXII (1943) of *The Evangel*. This source vividly portrays many facets of pre-Protectorate life in the Koya and Bumpe chiefdoms and in Yonni country from 1894 to 1920. It is about twenty-five typed pages in length.

To whom will these archival holdings be of value? To students

⁵ See Darrell L. Reeck, "United Methodist Publishing History and African Autonomy in Sierra Leone," *Methodist History*, VIII, No. 2 (January, 1970), pp. 49-52.

of church history in Sierra Leone, above all. Also to researchers interested in the social history of the Sherbro, Kpaa Mende, Kono and Yonni areas. Third, to biographers. Finally, students of tribal cultures and economies, and of African responses to missions and the impingement of the West, will find observations and other data that may confirm or call into question conclusions based on other sources.