# Archives of Uganda

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THE Uganda Protectorate came into being under the British Foreign Office with the declaration by the British Government, dated June 18, 1894, of a protectorate over the kingdom of Buganda, the region immediately northwest of Lake Victoria in east central Africa. This protectorate was gradually extended over neighboring states and tribes, and its administration was transferred to the Colonial Office as of April 1, 1905.

European explorations of the region began in 1862, with the expedition of Speke and Grant from Zanzibar to the hitherto unknown feudal kingdom of Buganda (or Uganda, as Speke's Swahili interpreters called it). In 1875 Henry M. Stanley, in Buganda, decided it was a ripe field for evangelization and sent a letter to the London *Daily Telegraph*, urging the coming of missionaries. From this followed the Christianizing of the native tribes (by both Protestant and Catholic missions), missionary pressure in England which forced the government to declare the protectorate, and the thwarting of German and Belgian plans to annex the region and of Arab plans to establish there a Moslem dominion. The building of the railway from Mombasa to Lake Victoria provided communication between Uganda and Britain's sea empire and led to the establishment, for the safety of the railway, of the British East Africa Protectorate, now Kenya.

By an agreement of 1880, East Africa was divided into British and German spheres. The British sphere was administered by the Imperial British East Africa Company. In Buganda, the Protestants and the Catholics had become political parties, with the former favoring British control and the latter, the "French party," opposing it. After a period of civil war a peace settlement negotiated by an agent of the British company assigned five provinces, including the metropolitan area, to the Protestants, four to the

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Catholics, and three to the Mohammedans. The East Africa Company's directors finally, however, decided that the cost of administering the area was too great to be borne, and Uganda was declared a protectorate of the Crown.

The archival series of the central government of Uganda, as preserved in the Secretariat at Entebbe, begin in January of 1893. The Secretariat's building is a one-story agglomeration of rooms built over a basement where the archives are kept. When I arrived as Archivist of the Secretariat in 1951 — the first archivist to be employed in any of the British East African territories — I found that I was also to be librarian and that I was expected to undertake, as a priority job, the organization of the mass of pamphlets, periodicals, and miscellaneous printed matter that had been accumulating year after year in the office. In the basement such material — a good many cubic yards of it — was heaped at random; if anything specific had to be produced, clerks must burrow into the pile in the hope that by chance they would come across the required document. The section that housed most of these documents was infested with termites, which had made heavy inroads in the paper.

I sorted out the mass of unbound printed matter and arranged the items under countries of origin. Of course, by far the greatest number originated in Great Britain. At first I arranged them in convenient bundles under a simple series of numbers. As collections of printed matter were passed over to me from various sections of the Secretariat, however, this series became unwieldy for easy reference. Eventually I arranged the material according to sources, in a primary order under Arabic numerals, from 1 to 51. Nos. 1-6 represented Great Britain; nos. 7-13 were left unassigned for possible expansion of this first section; no. 14 stood for Latin America; 15 for Canada; 16 for the United States; and so on to 50 for Uganda (nonofficial sources) and 51 for Uganda (official sources). The numbers for Great Britain were assigned as follows: 1, Colonial Office; 2, other British government departments; 3, unofficial organizations; 4, book catalogs, descriptive pamphlets, and the like; 5, periodicals; and 6, miscellaneous material.

These primary numbers were further modified by the addition of capital letters to indicate subgroups and series. For example, no. 1 (without a following letter) comprised pamphlets on the civil service and its recruitment; 1K, annual general reports on Uganda; and 1KA, annual reports on other territories (each distinguished by an added lower-case letter); 16 (without following letter), *Newsweek*; 16A, *Time*; 16C, U. S. State Department pamphlets; 51 BB,

annual reports of the Uganda agricultural department; and 51BT, annual reports of the Uganda public works department. These categories were further subdivided if necessary — chronologically in the case of periodicals — by small Roman numerals in brackets; and in a few cases additional subdivisions were made by lower-case letters. The items within these divisions and subdivisions were tied in bundles for storage on shelves.

In view of the constantly increasing number of documents and the resultant increasing complexity of the pamphlet library, the system by 1953 was in need of further overhaul; this, however, I did not have time to undertake.

The book library, which had been in existence for 30 years, had been overhauled and classified just before my arrival, and I kept the system I found. This system, too, was largely geographical, but by subject rather than by country of origin. The letters A to J were assigned to books on various subjects not specifically regional; L comprised Africa in general; M, North Africa; N, East and Central Africa; and so on. These classes were subdivided; for example, NC, Uganda; and NI, Belgian Congo. Most books had still further classification and bore a four-letter symbol; for example, NDEB, the Masai; and LABD, the vegetation and soils of Africa.

As for archives, I found the files of early correspondence in cupboards which, years before, had been specifically constructed for them but which were currently being used for the storage of stationery also. Correspondence had been put into punch-files at some time in the past. These were obviously not the original files, however; it was clear that the documents when first received had been folded, endorsed with number, correspondent, date, and subject, and stored in bundles.

There were a few odd papers dated before 1893, but in January of that year the regular files of incoming and outgoing letters began. For the first 2 years the files of local correspondence were labeled "Staff and Miscellaneous"; thereafter these two subjects were separated. There were also files, from 1893, of correspondence with the British Consul General at Zanzibar, under whose authority in the foreign service the Commissioner of Uganda functioned; and there were files of correspondence with the Foreign Office, begun when the Commissioner was authorized to correspond directly instead of through the Consul General.

In 1900 the "Staff" series was changed by being broken up by provinces. At that time Uganda had almost twice its present area, extending eastward nearly to the site of Nairobi and including all

that stretch of the Rift Valley that is now in Kenya. Files were therefore maintained for the Nandi and Baringo provinces until 1902, when those provinces were transferred to the East African Protectorate (Kenya); so that records of such matters as the founding of the port of Kisimu are on hand not in Kenya but at Entebbe.

There were also files of correspondence with various organized bodies — the Uganda Railway, the Church Missionary Society, the White Fathers' Mission, and the governmental organizations of German East Africa (now Tanganyika), the Sudan, and India. Correspondence with the Consul General at Zanzibar was gradually superseded by correspondence with the East Africa Protectorate.

In 1906, with the transfer of Uganda's administration from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office, the former office's system of filing letters in chronological order under general headings was superseded by the latter's system of subject minute-papers kept in numerical order (within which letters were filed) and a card index. Until 1909 a new series of minute-papers was begun each year; after that the numbers ran continuously until 1929. In that year a new numbering system was instituted, in which subjects were divided into categories under capital letters, such as A for personnel, E for education, H for agriculture, and W for finance. Each letter was followed by a file number. Additional minute-papers on subjects related to those of minute-papers already existing were given the existing number with an additional number added after an oblique line. This process was, if it seemed convenient, repeated — resulting in such symbols as R.123/1/1.

In classifying the archives I assigned the letter A to correspondence, B to indexes and registers; C to treaties, agreements, and other basic documents; D to the records of the executive council; E to those of the legislative council; F to those of interterritorial bodies; G to those of the Railway Administration; and H to those of miscellaneous committees and similar bodies. I did not have time before I left Uganda to classify further categories of archives.

Within the above groups I gave a class number to each series or type of documents; for instance, A.1, letters prior to 1893; A.2, Staff and Miscellaneous, letters received; A.3, Staff and Miscellaneous, letters sent; B.1, letter registers; C.1, treaties (three in number, written on printed forms furnished by the Imperial British East Africa Company) made with chiefs southwest of Lake Albert.

For the convenience of students of the archives and to save wear and tear on the original letters, I made a calendar of the documents in classes A.2 and A.3, incoming and outgoing correspondence, for

the years 1893 and 1894, in the hope that eventually the same might be done for all the early correspondence. Among the matters discussed in this correspondence are the withdrawal of forces from the West (Toro and what was then southern Bunyoro) — over the strong protests of the local commander, Major Owen — to within the border of Buganda, and the subsequent reoccupation of these regions; reports of military expeditions to Wadelai (near the Mahdist border) and to the west side of Lake Albert; the attempt of a representative of the Imperial British East Africa Company to reassert the authority of the company in eastern Uganda; the final attempt of the Mohammedans to seize power, which cost them the provinces that had been assigned to them; accusations and counteraccusations of political intrigue by the two missionary societies; the creation of a police force; and the laying out, by the medical officer in command at Fort Kampala, of streets and lots in the insanitary "Swahili Town" below the fort — which was the birth of the modern metropolis of Uganda, Kampala.

For the convenience of archival students and others I compiled a historical map of the Uganda Protectorate at its greatest extent. The outlines on this map were copied from the one compiled by Macdonald and issued by the War Office in 1901; in many cases, therefore, it shows geographical features not as they are now known to be but as they were thought to be when the country was still imperfectly surveyed and in many parts still unexplored. On this very account, however, I thought the outlines suitable for my purposes, as being in themselves a part of the history of the country. Moreover, a modern map would be no more accurate than Macdonald's in regard to the location of many places that appear on the latter but that no longer exist.

My map was compiled mainly from printed records — the books published by explorers and early administrators and the official correspondence printed by the Foreign Office. Among its annotations it showed the routes of the early explorers; the sites of forts; battlefields of the religious wars and of British western campaigns; and miscellaneous events, noted against the places where they occurred — for instance, the spot from which Speke first saw Lake Victoria, and the camp where the 1898 Sudanese mutiny broke out. Insets showed such details as the allotment of provinces to the religious factions after the Protestant-Catholic war; African empires of the period before the expansion of Europe; the metropolitan area of Buganda (including Kampala, Mengo, and Rubaga) in 1890; the Uganda Protectorate in 1900, with its provinces and dis-

tricts and the dates when some of these were detached; a plan of the township of Jinja in 1904; and a plan of part of the township of Entebbe in 1906.

These then, are the accomplishments of over 2 years' work in Uganda. In themselves they may seem, to an archivist in a well-ordered agency, rather meager. They represent, however, a beginning at a task that has needed doing for over half a century, and I flatter myself that they show that in the modern Englishman the instinct for pioneering has not died out. Perhaps my successors will find that they have more elbow-room to work in because I made a clearing for them.