

A sample of thickly scattered pottery was taken along the Chache-Ferry road which is the approach across the Black Volta to Bouna. This is now in the Department's collection.

A visit to the Tong Hills was made where the presence of pottery pavement was noted in several of the compounds at Tengzugu. A brief visit was made to the Tongo shrine in the accompaniment of the Tendana and elders of Tengzugu.

(Much of the above work was done in close collaboration with J. Goody and several short joint notes on some of this work will be out at a later date).

R.W. Mathewson

A NOTE ON PRESS-ARCHIVES RESEARCH AS  
AN APPROACH TO WEST AFRICAN HISTORY

Many of those currently working in the fruitful field of West African history have for many years now been discovering a particularly rich mine of primary source material. It lies dispersed at various points in the archival world, in the form of collections of the old journals and newspapers produced in or dealing with the various ex-British colonies, as well as Liberia<sup>1</sup>.

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1. But not the French-language areas, to the same extent. See Pere J. de Benoist: "The position of the Press in French-speaking West Africa", in Report on The Press in West Africa, produced by the Committee on Inter-African Relations, and circulated by the Extra-Mural Department, University College, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1960.

Many books and numerous articles to be found on almost all current lists today teem with references to this press. An "early" work like J.E. Casely Hayford's Gold Coast Native Institutions (1903) had a chapter (V: "Landmarks") on our journalistic beginnings and the significance of those first efforts made during the last quarter of the outgoing century. Today the more modern works on West Africa - of Coleman, Kimble, Wilks, Ajayi, Coombs, Fyfe, Porter, Bartels, and others - have drawn heavily on the old West African files, either to make a case or to confirm major as well as minor statements or propositions<sup>2</sup>. Coleman, Fyfe, Kimble, and Bartels have made perhaps the most intensive use of these vital records to date, and the only limitation to the efforts of some of the others in this respect is the fact that the African Press, unlike that of England (1621) or America (1690), or even the British West Indies (Jamaica, 1718), does not go back far enough in time to help illuminate the histories of the pre-1800s.

Even so, it is still true to say that only a fraction of those who could use our newspaper archives - limited as these are - to their own academic advantage and to the instruction and inspiration of others, have so far done so. Moreover, even in such cases much of the existing material has not been used, and the reasons for this are many. Chief among them are: (a) "public" unawareness of the existence of certain sections as well as items of the historical West African Press, and (b) the wide dispersal of the collections, with its consequence of the immense cost, in time and money, of getting at the material. The experiences of and the facts gathered over the years by the present writer will illustrate both (a) and (b) above.

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2. The works of all these authors are of course familiar, and need not be listed here. But attention is hereby called to the significant contribution just added to the bibliography by Francis L. Bartels, whose The Roots of Ghana Methodism was issued by C.U.P. and the Ghana Methodist Book Depot Ltd., towards the end of 1965. This is a book whose religious title conceals the fact that it is almost as much a story of Gold Coast nationalism as it is of Gold Coast Methodism.

Until 1957 only a handful of individuals could have known anything about the true genesis of the Gold Coast Press. Moreover, persistent search by this writer has so far tended to show that none of those few who knew about it have ever made their knowledge public. Neither Casely Hayford in 1903 nor J. Magnus Sampson<sup>3</sup> in c 1934 - the first "historians" of this press - seems even to have stumbled on the fact that a fully printed newspaper had been started by Sir Charles MacCarthy in Cape Coast as long ago as 1822. This was some 35 years before the first (African) efforts were made by two of the Bannerman brothers of Accra (in 1857/9), to whom the honour of innovation has been indirectly accorded ever since about 1903 and the Casely Hayford book.

The present author was himself on the point of helping to confirm this piece of false history in 1957 when he suddenly "discovered" MacCarthy's paper, the Royal Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer, 1822-1824, in a single bound volume at the Royal Commonwealth Society library in London. The collection, of copies of most of the issues of the first-ever Gold Coast newspaper, is a unique and priceless source of first-hand information on such prime-interest subjects as Sir Charles MacCarthy himself; the 4th Ashanti War; MacCarthy's adversary and conqueror in that clash, the equally historical Osei Tutu Kwamena, otherwise known as Osei Bonsu; and Captain A. Gordon Laing, the famous discoverer of the source of the River Rokelle and most probably<sup>4</sup> one of the keys to the nagging residual mystery still surrounding MacCarthy's folly in going to war against Osei Bonsu in the circumstances he did. (For he was innocent-minded, and unprepared for the disastrous consequences of the Battle of Nsamanko (1824) to himself and the British Government of the day).

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3. Who did a pamphlet sketch entitled A Brief History of Gold Coast Journalism (no date, no price).
  4. The complex character of Alexander Gordon Laing, and the probability that as one of MacCarthy's chief officers he was partly - though perhaps also indirectly only - responsible for his superior officer's rashness, are problems engaging the attention of the present author.

As to point (b), the facts are simple - and hitherto crushing for the researcher without benefit of a heavy grant-in-aid. For until but a few years ago the bulk of the newspaper archives of West Africa - like so much else in our archival sources<sup>5</sup> - lay somewhere other than in West Africa: in London principally, but also here and there on the European Continent, in Scandinavia, and in the United States. This writer, for one, had physically to go to all these countries in order gradually to begin just to compile the essential chronologies without which an historical account of the role of the West African Press in our modern development is impossible.

Mainly as a result of this personal experience, and of the glaring need it thus exposed, the Institute of African Studies was able to enlist the immediate interest of the Balme Library in a move towards a closing of the gap. In short, the Institute persuaded the Balme Library to acquire for the University, as a nucleus, microfilm copies of a selection of past Ghana newspapers being used at the time by the writer at the British Museum Newspaper Library at Colindale, north London. Fortunately for all concerned, the required copies could easily be taken off a set of master-spools then just produced on the order of ex-President Nnamdi Azikiwe of Nigeria, whose own collections of such historical materials are among the most impressive under private ownership anywhere<sup>6</sup>.

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5. Dike summarised the position adequately, in the address he gave to the First International Congress of Africanists at the University of Ghana, Legon, in December 1962, entitled "The Study of African History". Said he: "It is time to make available the bulk of the written material on African history in Africa itself. In the past, the study of African history has been held up by the quite remarkable dispersal all over the world of the relevant source material. This material includes important African works taken out of the continent by colonial rulers and other visitors. The centralisation of this material, in Africa, will relieve scholars of the enormous trouble and expense involved in so many unnecessary journeys from one end of the world to the other, in quest of material for the study of our own land" See The Proceedings of the First International Congress of Africanists (Lalage Brown and Michael Crowder, editors), published for the Congress by Longmans, 1964.

6. See Jones-Quartey: *A Life of Azikiwe*, Penguin Africa Series, 1965, Epilogue.

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The collection thus acquired in 1964, and now available for research at the Balme Library, consists of the following:-

Gold Coast Times	-	1874-1885
Gold Coast Chronicle	-	1894-1901
Gold Coast Independent	-	1895-1898
Gold Coast Express	-	1897-1900
Gold Coast Aborigenes	-	1898-1902
Gold Coast Leader	-	1902-1929

The Balme Library, better still, decided to expand this material as rapidly and as completely as possible; thus it placed its own orders with the British Museum for microfilms of other papers, including some from the other states of West Africa. As a result, the following have also recently been received:-

### GHANA

Gold Coast Assize	-	1883-1884
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NIGERIA

Anglo African	- 1863-1865
Lagos Times	- 1880-1883
Lagos Observer	- 1882-1888
Eagle and Lagos Critic	- 1883-1888
Lagos Mirror	- 1887-1888
Lagos Weekly	- 1891-1921
Lagos Standard	- 1895-1920
Nigerian Chronicle	- 1908-1915
Nigerian Times	- 1910-1911
(also known as Times of Nigeria)	- 1914-1920
Nigerian Pioneer	- 1914-1917; 1920-1934

SIERRA LEONE

African Interpreter and Advocate	- 1867-1869
The Independent	- 1874-1878
The West African Reporter	- 1876-1877; - 1879-1884
Daily Mail	- 1918-1919; 1926; 1958-1962

Meanwhile, and indeed before the University of Ghana entered the field so comparatively recently, the National Archives enterprise, especially since 1949 - as well as the historical sensibilities and patriotic generosity of private individuals like Mr. W.S. Kwesi Johnston of Cape Coast, has resulted in valuable collections being assembled by the Ghana National Archives. The headquarters establishment of the Archives in Accra and its sub-branch at Cape Coast house collections of a broad spread of items. The Methodist Book Depot headquarters office at Cape Coast is also in possession of a collection which formed part of the basic source material used by Francis Bartels for The Roots of Ghana Methodism, and which the Managing Director (George N. Baffoe) has said is at the permanent disposal of all bona-fide researchers.

The following are the Cape Coast holdings (the list under National Archives being stopped at Daily Echo, - 1936, though that is by no means its full extent).

#### AT NATIONAL ARCHIVES, CAPE COAST

Gold Coast Times	-	15 Nov. 1880 & 14 Sept. 1937
Gold Coast Meth. Times	-	6 July 1897-31 Aug. 1897
Gold Coast Leader	-	23 June 1906-14 Sept. 1929
Youngman's Adviser	-	26 October 1912
Gold Coast Nation	-	20 Mar. 1913-14 Sept. 1937
Af. Tel & Gold Coast Mirror	-	Dec. 1914 <sup>7</sup> - 28 Jan. 1915

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7. Vol.1, Nos. 3 and 5

55.

INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH REPORTS

Gold Coast Independent	- 14 Dec. 1918-26 Mar. 1932
Literary & Social Guide	- 27 Oct. 1919 - June 1921
Voice of Africa	- 10 Aug. 1920-29 July 1922
Voice of the People	- 10 Aug. 1920-29 July 1922
African World	- 30 Sept. 1920-5 Jan. 1924
Gold Coast Truth	- 8 Aug. 1928
Gold Coast Spectator	- 18 Jan. 1930 - 26 May 1934
Spectator Daily	- 31 Mar. 1930-14 Oct. 1954
West African Times	- 10 Jan. 1931 - 14 Dec. 1932
Times of West Africa	- 12 Dec. 1931 - 6 July 1937
Gold Coast Guardian	- 10 Sept. 1932 - 18 Apr. 1951
Gold Coast Observer	- 12 Aug. 1933-5 Mar. 1954
Morning Post	- 14 Nov. 1934-17 Jan. 1955
Vox Populi	- 12 June 1935 <sup>8</sup>
Daily Echo	- 10 Aug. 1936-22 May 1955



INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH REPORTS

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AT METHODIST BOOK DEPOT HEADQUARTERS

CAPE COAST

Gold Coast Chronicle

December 13 1890 - February 1892

Gold Coast Aborigines

January 1 1898<sup>9</sup> - December 31 1898

May 1899 - November 1899

June 1905 - August 1906

Gold Coast Leader

June 28 1902<sup>10</sup> - June 20 1903

July 1917 - June 1918

( 18 bound volumes, with many gaps)

Gold Coast Nation

March 21 1912<sup>11</sup> - March 1913

March 1913 - March 1914

March 1915 - December 1915

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9. Vol. 1, No. 7

10. Vol.1, No. 1

11. Vol.1, No. 1

The details of other collections will be published in subsequent editions of the Research Review, in particular those of the National Archives, Accra. The writer would, meanwhile, appreciate any further information on collections and holdings of Ghana newspapers other than those given or indicated above, especially of the period 1874-1937.

K.A.B. Jones - Quartey