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# **Africana Collections and Librarianship at the University of California, Berkeley: A History Since 1960**

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## *Campus History*

The University of California, Berkeley was established in 1868 as a public land grant institution. The new university was a merger of the public Agricultural, Mining, and Mechanical Arts College and the private College of California. Berkeley served as the flagship campus of the University California system as new campuses were added throughout the twentieth century. With the state experiencing a population boom after World War II, the California Master Plan for Higher Education was developed in 1960. The UC Regents and State Board of Education created a multi-tier system with UC campuses representing the top tier. Academically, the plan coordinated degree programs across the state with UC campuses focusing on research-intensive disciplines covering mainly the Arts and Sciences. The Master Plan helped direct academic programs which in turn grew library collections. Interest in international area studies among US academic institutions also increased at this time. Africana scholarship at Berkeley began to flourish as well, though initially without a program specifically facilitating research and instruction on this region.

## *Early Africana in The University Library*

The Charles Franklin Doe Library was completed in 1912. As the campus Main Library, it holds primarily the Arts and Humanities and Social Science collections. The University Library includes many subject libraries such as Bioscience, Natural Resources and Public Health,

Environment Design, and Music. The campus also has several affiliated libraries including Ethnic Studies, Institute for Governmental Studies, and Law. These libraries support over one hundred graduate programs. Africana collections are strong in many campus libraries. The majority reside in the Main Stacks, built underground connecting Doe and the Moffitt Undergraduate Library.

Early Africana materials obtained were partially the result of gifts and exchanges from other institutions, both national and international. This numbered roughly one-third of the collection. Initial funding for purchases began in 1887 from the state legislature while regular appropriations from the Regents started in 1891.<sup>1</sup> Among these early collections were European travel narratives. By 1960 Africana expanded beyond the Doe Library to include some branches, including Biological Sciences and the Anthropology Library. Related materials also appeared in other campus libraries at this time, but on a smaller scale. With most titles housed at the Doe Library, the stage was set for a major growth of Africana collections.

### *Developing a Foundation for Africana Collections*

Physical collections for Sub-Saharan Africa at Berkeley, as counted in 2015, comprised over 200,000 volumes, with an additional 95,000 for North Africa. Materials include monographs and online databases, extensive journal holdings, newspapers, government documents, microform, maps, photographs, sound recordings, manuscripts, maps, and video collections. A large portion of the collection developed over a forty-five-year period from 1960 to 2005 under the stewardship of Lee Petrasek and Phyllis Bischof. This period also mirrors the growth and decline of US government support for area studies through Department of Education Title VI

funding. The Library received small supplemental acquisitions funding from Title VI grants for many of these years. Campus budgets also increased, supporting a growth of courses and academic programs for African Studies. In this changing academic landscape, The Library allotted increased staff time to focus on area studies acquisitions.

Lee Petrsek was the first Librarian for Africana Collections at Berkeley. He began these responsibilities around 1960, simultaneously serving as Assistant Director of the Acquisitions Department. Although Petrsek was not appointed full-time to collect Africana, he was very dedicated. According to Phyllis Bischof, who succeeded Petrsek, he regularly used vacation time for acquisition trips to African countries. These visits laid the foundation for the Africana collection to grow.

The acquisitions model at Berkeley has always been based on country of publication. Petrsek's primary responsibility was to collect African imprints. Materials related to Africana, published outside the continent, were the responsibility of other subject and area studies librarians.

Collections travel was important during this time to help survey the publishing and book trade landscape in newly independent African countries.

Petrsek conducted at least three acquisitions trips to Sub-Saharan Africa during his tenure. The first documented trip was to west and central Africa during six weeks in December 1962 and January 1963. Petrsek visited nine countries; Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Upper Volta (Burkina Faso). His travel report suggested that he looked for locally produced materials. Government documents and academic materials, largely from Nigeria and Ghana, were noted. However, Petrsek lamented that newly independent countries visited had titles only from England and France if anything at all. The few

local publications found were published abroad. He suggested Nigeria was the only country putting forth a strong effort to publish local writers.<sup>2</sup> Bookstores, universities, and research institutes were cited for future purchase inquiries. Blanket approval plans with commercial vendors covering Africa were largely unavailable at this time. The Library of Congress Nairobi office opened in 1966 but did not supply titles to multiple US libraries until 1992. Africana bibliographers like Petrasek were compelled to make acquisition trips to multiple African countries, contact numerous bookstores, universities, church missionary societies, research institutes, and government agencies to obtain locally produced publications. A lack of bibliographic control with few national bibliographies or lists of available titles was another issue hindering this work. Petrasek's first acquisitions trip was instrumental in building Berkeley's strong collection of African monographs, serials, government and non-governmental documents, and research reports.

Petrasek used personal vacation time, in 1965, to visit the capital cities of ten countries from multiple regions on the continent. Most were different from his previous trip. They included Congo-Leopoldville (now Democratic Republic of the Congo), Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Tanganyika and Zanzibar (Tanzania), Uganda, and Zambia. He also made return visits to Ghana and Nigeria. Petrasek listed two principle aims for his trip as:

- 1) Contact government printing offices in each country's capital to see their willingness to provide for blanket orders of publications available.
- 2) Buy non-government publications from local bookshops.<sup>3</sup>

Apart from two countries, Petrasek felt he largely accomplished these goals. Much like his earlier trip, he found a lack of African published materials remained. This included unreliable

access to government publications and newspapers. Petrasek visited government printing and other agency offices as many countries did not centrally publish all official documents. He was able to make connections with bookstores, universities, and government agencies to begin deposit accounts, where feasible, to obtain materials. This work, especially with government printing offices and agencies, is reflected in Berkeley's collection of unique and little-held African government documents.

Petrasek penned a brief overview of the Berkeley collection for the *Handbook of American Resources for African Studies*. Published in 1967, his entry notes Africana was actively collected shortly after the university opened in 1868. Petrasek discussed the wide variety of subjects reflected in the collection from early travel accounts to Biology and Life Sciences materials. He noted few holdings existed for Religion, African vernacular languages, or archival materials. The decision to acquire little related to special collections was twofold. First was the Bancroft Library's emphasis on Latin America and Western Americana. Berkeley's proximity to the Hoover Institute at Stanford, which held African ephemeral materials, was the second factor. Other material types were the focus of acquisition. He suggested Berkeley's greatest strength is its holdings of serials and documents.<sup>4</sup> This is evident in full runs of publications from African institutes and European colonial organizations such as the Institut français d'Afrique noire (IFAN), Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, and the South African Institute of Race Relations to name a few. Berkeley has long been an official depository for United States government publications and for United Nations documents dating back to its founding in 1945. Together with African government publications acquired, Berkeley developed an extensive documents collection. He also noted newspaper subscriptions which totaled thirty-five representing twenty-five different

African countries. Acquisition trips played a significant role in providing this breadth of newspaper coverage, monographs, serials, and government documents.

Petrasek's third documented trip was likely in 1970. According to The Library's newsletter *CU News* he visited Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Kenya, Mozambique, and South Africa. He continued to encounter a lack of African-produced or African language materials. This was evident in Liberia where Petrasek did not find a single Liberian published book while visiting a large bookstore. The opposite was true in South Africa where locally produced books in English and Afrikaans were available. This was due to censorship imposed by the Apartheid government and high import duties.<sup>5</sup> He also noted the influence of the United States on libraries and publications. In Kenya, Petrasek was told the best store to purchase current magazines was at Woolworths. His visit to Ethiopia included a tour of the newly built John F. Kennedy Library at the Haile Selassie University. This attests to the economic and political influence the United States sought in newly independent African countries. The growth of African area studies programs at US academic institutions, during the height of the Cold War in the 1960s, was crucial in the growth of Berkeley's Africana collection.

#### *National-Level Cooperative Acquisitions: Early Participation*

The early development of area studies in the United States is traced to the Soviet Union's launch of Sputnik. In response, the US government helped expand African Studies programs in the 1960s from the few that existed a decade earlier. Scholars began national coordination of programs and research through the formation of the African Studies Association (ASA) in 1957. One of the initial committees formed by the ASA was the Archives-Libraries Committee (ALC)

in 1958. Petrasek regularly attended ALC meetings. The *Farmington Plan Newsletter* lists him among attendees of the March 1964 “African Libraries-Archives Committee” meeting at the Library of Congress.<sup>6</sup> Robert Pfeiffer, Berkeley’s Art and Anthropology Librarian, also attended. His library held important Africana collections that served the research needs of distinguished faculty in the Department of Anthropology. As one of the early ALC meetings, its minutes indicated various bibliographic projects and support for archives in Kenya. Petrasek and Pfeiffer were designated “Associate Members” for this meeting, meaning they did not hold leadership positions. They did comprise two of the fifteen librarians in attendance and were from only one of three institutions with multiple representatives present.

Berkeley was also active in another newly formed group, the Cooperative Africana Microform Project (CAMP) of the Midwest Inter-Library Center (now Center for Research Libraries or CRL). CAMP was established in May 1963 with the purpose of acquiring little-held Africana materials. CRL invested an initial \$3,000 and asked institutions to co-invest. Berkeley, along with eleven other institutions, gave \$8,000 and promised annual pledges going forward.<sup>7</sup> As a founding member of CAMP, Berkeley faculty and student researchers had access to unique materials including books, newspapers, and manuscripts filmed from holdings largely held at North American institutions. This was important as Berkeley held few archival and ephemeral materials concerning Africa at that time. Berkeley’s membership in CAMP has proved rewarding throughout the years. While largely borrowers, Berkeley did contribute materials that enhanced CAMP holdings. Most notable was the *Yoruba Collection of William and Berta Bascom*.



*Continued Development and Transition: The 1970s*

Lee Petrasek had over ten years of experience building the collection by the early 1970s. This was accomplished through travel, using resources from colleagues in the ALC and CAMP, and international contacts. A clear purpose and scope for Africana collecting took shape. He articulated this in a collection development statement. Drafted in December 1974, the statement noted the geographic scope of his collection responsibilities as limited to African imprints for current publications. The policy mostly concerned materials housed in Doe Library collections including the Main Stacks, Documents, Reference, Newsprint and Microforms. Government documents were purchased by librarians in the Documents Department with separate funds. Petrasek collaborated on these purchases as indicated in his travel reports. He also developed Africana housed in multiple subject libraries throughout campus. This was accomplished together with bibliographers at Anthropology, Bioscience, and Law to name a few.

Acquisition trips created the basis for country coverage. His statement lists primary and secondary countries of importance for Berkeley's collections. Countries listed as primary included:

West Africa: Especially Nigeria and Ghana, Ivory Coast and Cameroon

East Africa: Especially Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, also Ethiopia and Zambia

Southern Africa: Especially South Africa and Madagascar

Central Africa: Zaire (Now Democratic Republic of the Congo)<sup>8</sup>

Petrasek visited nearly all these countries in the 1960s. He had first-hand knowledge of the publishing landscape. They included some of the strongest in Sub-Saharan Africa at this time. Opportunities to obtain scholarly publications, for which the policy strongly preferred, were promising. Countries designated primary were important to instruction and research at Berkeley. It is not surprising most were English speaking, former British colonies, or of strategic importance to United States foreign policy during the Cold War.

Countries with secondary importance to the collections also received mention. Many were smaller and non-English speaking. Others were not heavily researched by faculty and students at the time, but later would become more central, such as Rwanda, Senegal, and Zimbabwe. No matter of primary or secondary importance, Petrasek suggested collecting at a comprehensive level for most African countries, if the budget allowed, was difficult. Collection depth was also scaled back given Berkeley's proximity to Stanford and UCLA, home to major African Studies collections and academic programs. This meant some countries were less heavily collected, like those in Lusophone Africa, as UCLA had prominent faculty specializing in those countries.

The statement demonstrated how the collection grew without having a campus administrative center devoted exclusively to African Studies. Doctoral dissertations on Africa completed in the departments of Art History, Comparative Literature, Economics, Geography, History, Linguistics, Philosophy, and Sociology were cited. This research fell squarely within the scope of Main Stacks collections. Petrasek listed the following subjects, with notes on degrees of coverage, as most significant for Africana in the Main Stacks; Art and Art History, Philosophy, Religion, African Literature, Language and Linguistics, History, Journalism, and the Social Sciences. History is labelled a high priority and an area of collection strength. African Literature largely concerned titles in English, French, and Portuguese. Swahili titles were selectively

purchased. Finally, Economics, Political Science, and Sociology were the main social science subjects noted. Emphasis was given to materials on colonialism, Pan Africanism, revolutionary movements, and political writings.<sup>9</sup> These topics continue to be heavily researched and taught on campus. The many doctoral dissertations produced on Africa were a testament to these strong library collections.

The late 1970s saw transition as Lee Petrasek passed away in 1978. The last national gathering he attended was the 1977 ALC meetings at the African Studies Association conference. The following spring the ALC announced the Lee Petrasek Book Fund to purchase Africana for Berkeley in his memory. A remembrance in the *Africana Libraries Newsletter* noted his strong knowledge of the publishing landscape in Africa, work towards building Berkeley's collection through acquisition trips, related bibliographic and reference work.<sup>10</sup> The work of Petrasek to develop Berkeley's Africana collection was recognized nationally. This foundation helped facilitate campus research and academic programming which in turn helped direct and further grow the collection.

#### *Cooperation with Stanford: The Joint Center for African Studies*

African Studies courses and research were present for many years on campus by the late 1970s. Graduate work within departments produced many doctoral dissertations, perhaps nearly equal to UCLA, which had an African Studies Center since 1959. This changed twenty years later as The Center for African Studies was established at Berkeley in 1979. It partnered with Stanford that year to form the Berkeley-Stanford Joint Center, a federally funded National Resource Center for Africa. The Joint Center supported various interests of Africanists representing numerous

departments on both campuses. Throughout the years it supported focused research programs on South Africa in Transition, Natural Resources and Management, and the Horn of Africa. In the late 1980s Berkeley was designated lead US institution partnering with African Studies institutes in the former Soviet Union and China. The Joint Center also coordinated language instruction, lectures, public outreach, and assisted with library acquisitions and collections travel.<sup>11</sup> Small annual funding helped fill collection gaps, special purchases, travel, and supporting CAMP. Berkeley's Librarian for Africana Collections served on the Center's Executive Board with teaching faculty and staff, gave lectures on Africana collections and librarianship, and supported programming. The Joint Center also facilitated easier access to its respective library collections for faculty and students. Materials were discoverable through the RLIN online catalog with expedited lending available between campuses. While the Joint Center subsided after it failed to secure NRC designation in 2005, a working relationship between the libraries remains.

A cooperative acquisition program developed in the 1970s. Karen Fung, African Studies Librarian at Stanford, and Berkeley's Phyllis Bischof drafted the initial framework. When combined, Africana holdings at Berkeley and Stanford are the most comprehensive in the nation. Their strength came from strong legacy collections and in part from research priorities facilitated by the Joint Center. It also came from dividing collection responsibilities.

The program sought to increase the overall collections between these campuses by minimizing duplication among subjects and formats little-held at one institution. For example, Stanford would continue collecting ephemeral and archival materials, housed primarily in the Hoover Institute. They also collected newspapers more heavily. Professional schools and subjects not taught at Stanford such as Architecture, City and Regional Planning, Forestry, Journalism, Library Science, and Public Health were assigned to Berkeley. The program also used tools such

as the Research Libraries Group Conspectus to set collecting levels. As academic priorities evolved, collection responsibilities shifted and became ever more granular based on subject, country, and vendor. When budgets were reduced during the economic crisis in 2008, library administrators at both campuses moved to formalize the agreement for African Studies. This program is similar that that between Duke and the University of North Carolina, with two institutions sharing similar missions and scope in collection, also geographically close to each other, enter bilateral agreements.<sup>12</sup> Another aspect of the Berkeley-Stanford program was sharing duplicate monographs and serials. It was extended to UCLA, and to a lesser extent UC Davis and UC Santa Barbara, with duplicates shared between the campuses. This cooperation strengthened collections between institutions deeply devoted to supporting African Studies.

*Twenty-Five Years of Growth and Challenges: 1980-2005*

Phyllis Bischof assumed the duties of Librarian for Africana Collections in 1978. Bischof first joined The Library in 1973 as Reference Librarian and later library liaison for African American Studies. As the Africana selector her acquisitions portfolio initially included both Sub-Saharan and North African countries except for Egypt. This arrangement changed in 1983 when Middle Eastern bibliographer Richard Cooper began covering North Africa. During her nearly thirty-year tenure as the Africana bibliographer Bischof's stewardship increased the collection's prominence on campus and far beyond. She was a strong advocate for Africana bibliography and reference, and for the importance of cooperation and collegiality in Africana librarianship.

Bischof inherited a solid foundation of acquisition agreements through subscriptions, exchanges, and contacts developed by her predecessor Lee Petrusek. However, acquiring materials from

African countries was never an easy proposition. Bischof discussed these challenges in her article “Publishing and the Book Trade in Sub-Saharan Africa.” She cited issues related to the economic, political, and social context African countries experienced during the 1980s as creating tremendous difficulties for African publishers and booksellers. They included repayment of loans under Structural Adjustment Programs to the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, burdening African counties with social and economic austerity. Continued independence struggles, civil wars, famine, and public health crises were other factors she suggested negatively affected the publishing and book trade.<sup>13</sup> The so-called “book famine” made the work of African acquisitions more challenging than even. These difficulties came at a time of increasing interest in the continent among students and scholars.

Bischof navigated these issues during her collections travels to the continent. She traveled to Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal, and The Gambia in March 1982. Bischof attended the Ife Book Fair in Nigeria where the Noma prize for best African published book was awarded. She noted the fair offered a wonderful opportunity to acquire numerous Nigerian imprints, something not easily done from afar given Nigeria’s infrastructure issues. She also discussed the rapid change in Nigerian society at all levels, from oil revenue growth, curtailing military rule, and increased press freedom as helping grow publishing efforts.<sup>14</sup> This trip helped accelerate the growth of Nigeriana in Berkeley’s collection. Monographs, serials, conference proceedings, and newspapers increased. Most unique was the work to secure state-level government documents through subscriptions and exchange. This trip set the foundation for these materials to be obtained in greater numbers throughout the next two decades. While some US libraries collected Nigerian federal-level documents, fewer obtained documents published by its states which grew

to thirty-six by 1996. Nigeria, home to a quarter of all Africans, continues to be an important focus of historical and contemporary research by Berkeley faculty and students.

Bischof's time in Senegal was also important. She initiated exchanges with the University of Dakar, the Institut fondamental d'Africaine Noire (IFAN), and the National Archives in Dakar. Her visit to the National Archives would later prove fruitful. In 1992, Bischof and Berkeley graduate student Dennis Galvan partnered with the Direction des Archives Senegal. They sought funding, from CAMP, to film and preserve colonial era court records from regional Senegalese capitals. CAMP later approved the project and Yuusuf Caruso, Africana Librarian at Columbia University, brought it to fruition. Original records were preserved and kept in Senegal while filmed copies became available to member institutions outside the continent.

May 1993 saw Bischof travel to South Africa. Apart from acquisitions work, she presented the paper *Publishing in Africa: A California Perspective* in Pretoria at the INFO AFRICA NOVA conference. She also visited six universities, speaking to library school courses and librarians, concerning potential collaboration between African librarians in South Africa and their counterparts throughout Southern Africa. This was an extension of earlier work in 1988 and 1990 mentoring South African librarians who studied at Berkeley under the auspices of the campus's South African Career Development Program. Concerning collections, her focus was twofold. First, she collected government documents related to public health issues. Topics of interest to researchers included HIV/AIDS, drug resistant tuberculosis, and the effects of famine. Documents covering these topics were not widely held in US libraries at the time. Second was purchasing materials related to the new South African constitution. The Library granted funds for Bischof to acquire current publications on this important political process.<sup>15</sup> The transition from Apartheid to representative democracy for all South Africans was a historic time. Materials

reflecting the many debates and positions helping shape the new constitution were of excellent value to not just for faculty and students but a great many beyond campus. She met with vendors in Cape Town and Johannesburg, and university exchange partners throughout the country, to help obtain these materials. Titles received increased Berkeley's standing as a premiere institution in the US for research and instruction on Southern Africa.

Acquisition trips were expensive and logistically difficult. Although she travelled only a few times, they laid the groundwork for long-standing approval plans and firm ordering. These plans were developed, by 1986, with vendors like Hogarth Representation covering Nigeria and other West African countries. They provided monographs, serials, and government information. Imprints from eastern and southern Africa, mostly journals and newspapers, came with more regularity by 1992 via the Library of Congress Nairobi field office. LC was also a reliable source for non-governmental organizations (NGOs) materials, especially those covering human rights. These titles supported courses in the popular undergraduate major Development Studies, as well as other classes focused on African NGOs. Titles from South Africa were received on firm order from Clarke's Book Shop in Cape Town and Thorold's in Johannesburg. While approval plans were not without problems, they were cost-effective methods for acquiring materials throughout the continent.

Bischof tirelessly developed Africana in campus libraries during her tenure. Most humanities and social science materials were housed in the Main Stacks of the Doe Library. Berkeley's place of publication collections model meant Bischof referred titles to colleagues in Doe and Moffitt library units including Documents, the Media Center, Reference, and Bancroft. Selecting Africana to populate over twenty branch libraries was even more challenging. Bischof also recommended titles from African vendors and LC for purchase consideration to branch



librarians. She helped facilitate approval plans for Documents, the Law Library, and the nearby Graduate Theological Union Library. Other branches, like Bioscience, contributed funds when they were referred titles and ordered many Africana titles on their own from European and North American publishers. This diligent work was necessary as the budget for African imprints was one of the smallest among Berkeley's area studies collections. Yet Africana was important to faculty and students not just in the humanities and social sciences but also the life sciences, and professional schools such as Law. Bischof's work maximized funding available to meet the evolving teaching and research needs of Africanist faculty and students.

A measurement of this collaboration was documented in 1986, noting the scope and quantity of the collection. The *African Studies Information Directory* updated the profile Petrasek published in 1967. Twenty years later Africana had grown considerably. The directory lists the Main Library and twenty-two branch libraries as holding items. Highlights of the list included:

Books: 71,000 volumes

Periodicals: 1,800 titles, of which 1,000 are current

67 Newspapers for current, ceased, and filmed titles

Government Publications: 4,500

African Language Materials: 1,500, mostly in Swahili

Maps: 8,716 sheets

Microfilm/Microform: Over 2,000 reels and sheets<sup>16</sup>

These figures represented years of collections work by Bischof, Petrasek, and numerous library staff. In 1993, Bischof authored a pamphlet detailing Africana collections throughout the campus libraries. The introduction noted 90,000 volumes were held within the Main and Moffitt Undergraduate libraries, twenty-three branch libraries encompassing many subjects, and remotely at the Northern Regional Library Facility in Richmond, California.<sup>17</sup> The guide highlighted collection strengths at the Main Library. Foremost were periodicals. In 1992, Berkeley was one of only four US libraries to receive a Foreign Periodicals Grant from the federal Department of Education. Adding to an already impressive collection, the grant supported the addition of over two hundred new subscriptions. For reference materials dictionaries and grammar books in hundreds of African languages, with particular strength in Arabic, Swahili, and Yoruba, were collected. Bibliographies, biographical sources, and encyclopedias were also mentioned as held in sizeable numbers. Document types strongly collected were national census, central bank annual reports, demography, development plans, and statistical abstracts. Microfilm of periodicals and archival collections were also discussed. Special attention was also given to Bancroft Library materials.

### *Special Collections and the Prominence of Berkeley Anthropologists*

The Bancroft Library is one of the premier special collections in the United States. Its historical strength lies in rare and unique materials related to Latin America and Western Americana. Coupled with the Stanford agreement designating it as lead for Africana special collections, Bancroft's Africana holdings are small but not insignificant. Many manuscripts, diaries, and photographic collections of American and European travel narratives are held. This includes

accounts from Mark Twain. Scholarship on language and culture, including the Oberi Okaimé language in Nigeria, can also be found. Local social protest collections, from the Bay Area Committee to Save Biafran Children (1968-1970), to records of campus Anti-Apartheid organizations at Berkeley and Stanford, are also available. More prominent materials concern the Africana scholarship of Berkeley Anthropologists.

Collections donated by Anthropology Professor William R. Bascom and Dr. Betta Montero Bascom became available in the early 1980s. A major exhibit in 1985 entitled “The University and West Africa: The Bascom Collection” occurred in Bancroft, Main Library, and the Lowie Museum (now Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology).<sup>18</sup> Bascom, a scholar of Yoruba folklore and history, was a Berkeley faculty member from 1957 until 1979. He was the first American anthropologist to conduct fieldwork among Yoruba peoples in Nigeria. He was also the first PhD student of Melville Herskovits at Northwestern University, graduating in 1936.<sup>19</sup> The Bascom collection includes nearly 180,000 pages of field notes and other writings related to his research and career. The *Yoruba Collection of William and Berta Bascom* comprise 470 volumes of early Yoruba language publications dating back to 1911. A wide array of subjects is included, from grammar and conversational phrase books, early histories of Ibadan, to a list providing African medicinal plants with Yoruba names and English translations together with their remedies. These titles were filmed by vendor Norman Ross, with a copy of the film placed in CRL and available for purchase by other institutions. Preservation and access to these materials was tremendously important because several of the early Yoruba language materials in this collection are unique. Bischof’s work towards filming the Bascom collection, curating the corresponding exhibit, and collecting contemporary Yoruba language materials cemented Berkeley as a leading destination for Nigeriana collections.

Bancroft also contains collections from other prominent Berkeley Anthropologists. These include the papers of archeologist J. Desmond Clark, faculty from 1961-1986. He conducted fieldwork concerning early human history in eastern and southern Africa. Bancroft holdings mostly concern his research in Ethiopia and Kalambo Falls, Zambia. The papers of Elizabeth Colson, a faculty member from 1964-1984, contain her work among the Tonga people of the Gwembe Valley in Zambia. Fieldwork on Mauritius and Seychelles is highlighted in the Burton Benedict papers. The collection of William A. Shack, a scholar of the Gurage history and culture in Ethiopia, is also housed in Bancroft.

Africana special collections are also housed in the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology. Hearst, an early major benefactor of the Berkeley campus and first female regent, helped fund the creation of the Department of Anthropology in 1901. While not part of The Library, the Hearst Museum has been a crucial site of teaching and research since it was relocated from San Francisco to the same building housing Berkeley's Department of Anthropology in 1959. Few Africana materials were held until William Bascom led the museum from 1957 to 1979. Nearly 20,000 items, from art objects, artifacts, and photographic archives were added to the collection. Nigeria is a major focus as Bascom donated many pieces. Items from Ghana and other areas of West Africa are also emphasized.<sup>20</sup> These collections and the work of prominent Berkeley Anthropologists like William Bascom richly enhanced Africana library and archival collections throughout campus.

### *Exchange Programs*

Exchange programs played a prominent role in building area studies library collections in the US. They were not new during Petrasek's tenure, for agreements with some European scholarly institutions dated back to the nineteenth century. For regions where commercial vendors did not operate, exchange programs with libraries, archives, universities, and research institutions were the only acquisition method available. Berkeley's Africana collections benefitted from this arrangement. As mentioned in reports by Petrasek and Bischof, exchange partnerships were developed during travels to the continent. When Bischof began in 1978, Berkeley had agreements with over 120 African institutions, including those in North Africa. This attested to the efforts of Petrasek in collaboration with knowledgeable staff in the Gifts and Exchange unit. Their meticulous work helped add little-held monographs, serials, and documents from African institutions. In turn, Berkeley sent books and journals published by the University of California Press, and sometimes duplicate materials, to these same institutions. Most had few means to collect US publications otherwise. Bischof suggested this arrangement was mutually beneficial. African institutions were constantly short on foreign exchange. US libraries were able to stretch acquisitions budgets while acquiring publications often difficult to obtain.<sup>21</sup> This arrangement is reflected in complete or near complete runs of publications of research institutions, as well as a large collection of conference proceedings, and government documents held. Exchange agreements outside of the continent also enhanced the collection. Notable were those with institutions in the former Soviet Union. The Library received most books and serials published there on Africa-related topics since World War II.

The Library publicly recognized the importance of exchange in 2001. Bischof and Frank Carothers, Gifts and Exchange coordinator, co-curated a major exhibit entitled "International

Exchange and the Library.” The exhibit highlighted the crucial role exchange played in building international collections at Berkeley. The program was first established in 1884. It grew to over 4,000 partners by 1990, making it the largest among American academic libraries. By 2001 it numbered 3,000 active partners. Annually, they contributed 5,000 monographs and nearly twenty percent of all current serial titles.<sup>22</sup> While Africana was not even a tenth of the total partner institutions or materials received, exchange programs exponentially grew Berkeley’s area studies collections.

Institutional support for gifts and exchange greatly waned after 2008. Many factors led to the dramatic reduction in exchange. They included retirements and staffing issues due to budget shortfalls, increases in shipping costs to African countries, and the cancellation of free and reduced cost publications available for partners. Higher operational costs and reduced staffing saw library administrators advise area studies librarians to obtain materials through commercial vendors. While more cost efficient for certain countries and publications, commercial vendors in the Global North and on the African continent are not always able to provide serials and non-monographic research reports on a regular basis. Coupled with price increases, the decline of exchange partners further increased collection gaps.

### *Contributions to Africana Librarianship Beyond Campus*

Berkeley librarians were influential in professional organizations. Lee Petrasek attended early meetings of the Archives-Libraries Committee and the African Studies Association. He was also active in CAMP, helping Berkeley become a charter member. Involvement in these national organizations became even stronger during Phyllis Bischof’s career. She served as chair of the

ALC from 1990-1991, chaired the Bibliography Subcommittee from 1984-1990, and worked in other capacities from the Conover-Porter Award Selection Committee to the Book Famine Taskforce in the late 1980s. In CAMP she served on the Executive Board and partnered with Northwestern to film holdings of Nigerian state-level government documents. These materials are now accessible to all CAMP members. Bischof also co-chaired the local arrangements committee for the 1996 ASA Annual Meeting in San Francisco with Martha Saavedra, Associate Director of the Center for African Studies.

Bischof was very passionate about Africana acquisitions. In her capacity as ALC Chair, in 1990 she led an initiative seeking Congressional approval for a West Africa office for the Library of Congress like their East Africa office in Nairobi. She provided written testimony to the US House of Representatives Subcommittee on Legislative Branch Appropriations in support of this proposed field office.<sup>23</sup> The following year she traveled to West Africa as part of a delegation including LC Africa specialists James Armstrong, Beverly Gray, and Valerie Mwalilino, to examine the feasibility of this office. They visited five capital cities; Abidjan, Accra, Dakar, Lagos, and Lome. Accra was recommended by the delegation. Although an office was not built in Accra, the initiative did result in funding for West African acquisitions and in LC offering a participant program for West African publications in addition to their East African acquisitions program.

Travel conducted by Bischof reflected in publications such as her scholarly article “Publishing and the Book Trade in Sub-Saharan Africa: Trends and Issues and Their Implications for American Libraries.” It was a primer and overview of Africana acquisitions and librarianship for a broader audience of library professionals. Reference and bibliography publications were also constantly produced by Bischof. During her entire career she annually contributed to the *African*

*Book Publishing Record* and served as editor of its “Africana Reference Works: An Annotated List of Works” from 1993 to 1995. She was co-compiler of *Bibliographies for African Studies, 1987-1993* as well. These publications assisted colleagues with acquisitions work and served as important research tools. She also wrote and co-edited, with Alfred Kagan, the African section of Robert Balay’s *Guide to Reference Works*. Balay’s was a valuable resource used by librarians providing general reference service and instructional support.

*Maintaining the Collection in Times of Transition: 2005-2024*

Phyllis Bischof retired in 2005 after twenty-seven years as Librarian for Africana Collections. Her efforts were lauded by Berkeley colleagues in 1999 as she was named a Distinguished Librarian. Her work, collectively with Lee Petrasek and other library staff, developed Africana collections at Berkeley into one of the strongest in the United States. This is evident in the high rankings The Library received from Title VI grants awarded the Center for African Studies. It also reflected in the scope of activities among Africanists on campus. In 2005 the collection supported over forty-five faculty representing twenty-four disciplines and over one hundred graduate students in twenty-two programs.<sup>24</sup> While uncertainty for sustained national funding of African area studies programs increased during this time, Berkeley faculty and students did have a rich collection from which to consult.

Emilie Songolo was hired as Librarian for Africana Collections in 2006. She was the first African to hold the position. Songolo served in leadership positions in the African Studies Association (ASA), ALC, CRL, CAMP as well as the Title VI African Studies Librarians group.



After leaving Berkeley for the University of Wisconsin-Madison, most notably, she collected and digitized a collection of commemorative fabrics from many African countries.<sup>25</sup>

In 2008, Jason Schultz began as the Librarian for Africana Collections, staying at Berkeley until 2014. Maintaining acquisitions at the level of his predecessors proved difficult given budget reductions affecting collections and staffing. With library and Center support, Schultz traveled to South Africa in 2012. He attended the Cape Town International Book Fair and visited book shops in Cape Town and Johannesburg. He also went to Senegal, presenting at a UC-sponsored conference on archives in the post-colonial world. His talk concerned the history of CAMP and its work supporting capacity-building projects for archival collections in Senegal and Uganda. The following year Schultz became Chair of the CAMP.

Berkeley hosted the Spring ALC and CAMP meetings in 2013. This was the first time these groups had met on campus in over twenty years. The meetings were timely given the reorganization of staff and shifting budgetary priorities for area studies at Berkeley. Other participating institutions faced similar challenges. Colleagues shared concerns about print and digital collections, reference, instruction, and outreach. Digitization efforts focused on archival materials in Uganda, along with preservation of print and electronic newspapers, were discussed by CAMP. The group also piloted a project to archive African websites. These issues demonstrated growing expectations librarians faced to collect and make easily available an increasing range of electronic and print sources. Berkeley, housing many African Studies materials as part of a world class area studies collection, served as a fitting location for meetings navigating the road ahead for Africana collections and librarianship.

Adam Clemons was hired in 2017 as Librarian for African and African American Studies to support the multidisciplinary research and teaching needs of Berkeley faculty and students interested in Africa and the Diaspora. He continued the institution's tradition of active involvement with ALC and CAMP, attending all meetings during his tenure including serving a two-year term as Member-At-Large in 2018.

Clemons traveled to Kenya and Rwanda in the fall of 2018 with library support. While there he visited the Library of Congress, Nairobi Office, attended the Nairobi International Book Fair, browsed the holdings of several local bookshops, and met with librarians at the University of Rwanda, among other activities. Later in 2018, he worked closely with the Center for African Studies administration on a successful application for grants under the US Department of Education's National Resource Center and Foreign Language and Area Studies. This marked the first time since 2010 that the Center for African Studies at Berkeley received this award. It provided significant funding for travel to the continent, hiring new personnel for African language instruction, and supporting graduate students with research interest in African Studies. Additionally, \$12,000 annually was allocated to the library to support the acquisitions of Africana materials for the four-year duration of the award. Clemons left the position in 2019.

Susan Edwards, Head, Social Sciences Division, managed Africana collections from 2020 to 2023. During her tenure she conducted an analysis of African Studies related dissertations completed between 2017 to 2021, in all subjects, at Berkeley. Edwards determined that given the broad scope of departments using material from Africa, it was difficult to prospectively buy in all areas of potential interest to researchers, necessitating a more targeted approach. Edwards continued collaboration with UCLA Library developing a shared collections model based on the Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisition Program. Their work to de-duplicate the LC

Approval Plan, alongside expedited cross-campus borrowing enabled by a newly adopted UC wide union catalog, resulted in cost savings Edwards repurposed for on-demand purchases from suppliers in Africa to support Berkeley's wide ranging research needs. Edwards continued Berkeley's involvement with ALC and CAMP and was active in the ALC working group concerning decolonizing collections. Edwards also served as co-chair of the UC Libraries Africana Common Knowledge Group (CKG) and was an active participant in the International and Area Studies in the 21st Century (IASC21).<sup>26</sup>

In 2023, Michele McKenzie was hired as Social and Cultural Studies Librarian with liaison areas in Anthropology, Linguistics, African Studies and later added African American Studies. She was an alumni of the first cohort of the American Library Association Spectrum Scholarship Program, established in 1998 to help diversify the library profession. Also in 2023, the Anthropology Library was closed as a separate circulating collection. Its materials, including many Africana titles, were moved to the Main Stacks, Bancroft, or remote storage. McKenzie continues the collaboration with UCLA, ensuring titles in all formats and languages available through LC Nairobi, are acquired for borrowing between campuses.

McKenzie attended the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) World Library and Information Congress in Rotterdam, Netherlands with the support of Berkeley's Center for African Studies and the Anthropology Department. This trip afforded an opportunity to network with African librarians and visit the African Studies Centre Leiden for presentations on their collections and digital archives initiatives. McKenzie served on the local area planning committee for the African Studies Association Meeting in San Francisco in late 2023 and attended the ALC Spring Meeting hosted by the Library of Congress the following year. She serves as Secretary for the ALC Collections and Users Services Group and is the

Berkeley representative for CAMP. She is also a member of the newly formed UC Berkeley Library Global and Area Studies Interest Group.

*Postscript: Collecting Africana in a Changing Landscape*

The COVID-19 global pandemic in 2020 forced changes to acquisition practices at many institutions. Area studies collections were particularly vulnerable. At Berkeley, approval plans managed by private book distributors based in Sub-Saharan Africa were largely abandoned. For a while, the Library of Congress Cooperative Acquisition Program in Nairobi became the primary reliable source of print materials published in Sub-Saharan Africa. Other volumes were acquired from African Books Collective, based in England. The pandemic also prompted an increased demand for online resources and a preference for e-books despite many area studies materials being available only in print. Cooperative collecting and open access publishing initiatives persist as effective means to extend limited financial resources. While some Demand-Driven Acquisition (DDA) programs from major Global North publishers now include African publishers and publications, the increased reliance on DDAs and Evidence-Based Acquisition (EBA) plans marginalize Global South and small publishers, threatening the bibliodiversity that African Studies collections help enrich at Berkeley and other institutions.

The work to decolonize and contextualize area studies collections in US academic libraries serves to destabilize white supremacy by unapologetically centering indigenous voices and perspectives. The development of African Studies collections at Berkeley, particularly items available via Africa-based publishers, African languages materials, or African-authored titles documenting the African past, its cultures, literature, and systems of knowledge, have supported

these efforts. Collecting practices informed by the research needs of students, faculty, and community stakeholders, can help confront these challenges and ensure area studies collections at Berkeley support transformative scholarship.

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