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Close Encounters of the Archival Kind: Affect and Transnational Solidarities in African Diaspora Archives

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Abstract

Recent explorations of affect in the archives have focused on the experiences of users and particularly the distress archival collections could possibly cause them. Perhaps because they have, until recently, been trained to think of themselves as engaged in objective and neutral work collecting and preserving memory, archivists rarely reflect on or talk about their work, how they engage with the materials they manage, and how they personally feel about what they encounter in the course of their professional lives. Using an autoethnographic conceptual framing, this article uses four archival encounters in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division of the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (SCRBC) to reflect on affect of the archives invoked by archival work. Through these encounters, the article seeks to demonstrate archives of the African diaspora as both a locus of transnational African diasporic identities and solidarities, as well as a critical site for the (re)building of the same. Finally, it also hints at how such affective experiences can, in fact, further the cultural and political work of Black archivists and archives.

Keywords: affect; African Diaspora; archives; autoethnography; Ghana

Publication Type: conceptual article

Introduction

One day, as we were processing collections at our adjacent workspaces, I heard my Haitian colleague make a sound that I couldn't adequately describe. It was halfway between a sharp intake of breath and a muted exclamation. I asked him what the matter was. He looked up at me from the document he held and said, "I found my uncle's name." He was processing a collection of documents created during the regime of Papa Doc Duvalier[1], which included materials relating to the infamous Tonton Macoutes.[2] He proceeded to tell me that his uncle had disappeared. They had always suspected he had been taken and possibly murdered by Duvalier's brutal paramilitary goons, but here, some thirty years later, in an archival repository hundreds of miles away in New York City, was confirmation.

Employment ads for archivists almost always note that candidates should be able to lift boxes of a certain weight and sometimes caution about dust allergies. But I have yet to see an archival job ad that warns, "Caution: This might get painfully personal."[3] The gravity of my colleague's discovery regarding his uncle sat with me for a very long while. I do not recall if I asked my colleague whether he ever thought he would come across such a list as part of his professional duties and not as a researcher intentionally looking for the information. But I am certain I did not ask him how he felt about this discovery, for I felt enough for the both of us.

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This incident, which occurred during my first year in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division (MARB) of the New York City Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (SCRBC), is one of four archival encounters explored in this article. The article has two main interconnected objectives. First, highlighting some of the diasporic returns evidenced in some Ghana-related papers housed at MARB seeks to demonstrate the importance of African diasporic archives (as records) in telling African and African diasporan histories. Secondly, through its autoethnographic conceptual framing and analysis of my personal encounters with these Ghana-related papers, the article considers affect in African diasporan archives (as place) as a crucial element in Black archivists' memory work and strengthening of African diasporan identities and solidarities.[4]

Of Archives and African Diasporas: Framing (Black) Trans-Atlantic Solidarities

In September 2018, Nana Dankwa Akuffo-Addo, the President of the Republic of Ghana, officially launched the "Year of Return – Ghana 2019."[5] The year "is a major landmark spiritual and birth-right journey inviting the Global African family, home and abroad, to mark 400 years of the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Jamestown, Virginia." (Tetteh, 2020) In declaring the year, President Akuffo-Addo remarked:

> *We know of the extraordinary achievements and contributions [Africans in the diaspora] made to the lives of the Americans, and it is important that this symbolic year – 400 years later – we commemorate their existence and their sacrifices. (Tetteh, 2020)*

It is an undisputed fact that the toil of Black bodies across the fields and mines of the Americas and in metropolitan centers of Europe fueled the machinery of capitalist development. Yet, President Akuffo-Addo's comments capture just half the account of diasporic Africans' contributions to modern development.

Featuring prominently in the Year of Return were Ghana's forts and castles, which is to be expected. These haunting reminders of the horrific trade that severed the natal connections of an estimated 20 million Africans have become solemn sites of pilgrimage for their descendants. However, centering the narrative on the uprooting suppresses the returns and exchanges that have been occurring between Africa and its diaspora for at least two centuries. These exchanges, particularly in the last seven decades, have significantly affected Africa's socioeconomic development. It also overlooks the rich ways in which continental Africans have enriched the sociocultural and political lives of those in the diaspora. Considering the notable absence of Ghana's national archives in the Year of Return activities, perhaps the half-told story was inevitable. Beyond the archival records located in the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD, formerly the Ghana National Archives), numerous records scattered across state, private, Ghanaian, and diasporic archives reveal the rich nature of these interactions across personal, academic, political, and social lines. Many of these significant papers are located outside of Ghana at the Schomburg Center.

In the 1920s, decades before archival theorists began to question the long-held notion of archives as "neutral repositories for recorded memory" (Jimerson, 2003, p. 91), a view championed by the field's early figures—Hilary Jenkinson and his near contemporary Theodore Schellenberg—

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Black Puerto Rican bibliophile, scholar, and archivist Arturo Schomburg embarked on his project to recover and archive African and African diasporan histories. Schomburg demonstrated a keen understanding of how inaccurate and unequal representation and the interests of power could be, and often was, replicated in archives and archival practice (Bastian, 2013). Adalaine Holton asserts that through this political act of documentation, Schomburg aimed to provide people of African descent with a sense of themselves as a cohesive group with a long-standing, accomplished, and diverse history (Holton, 2007). Holton (2007) further argues that Schomburg made a radical intervention in producing historiographical knowledge by building and popularizing a decolonizing counter-archive of African diasporan history. I would further suggest that Schomburg laid the foundation for building or reinforcing trans-Atlantic solidarities by envisioning and creating an ontological space for this "oppositional collecting" (Holton, 2007, p. 230).

Schomburg's collecting deliberately constructed and affirmed the concept of diaspora, rather than relying on an "inevitable fact" of diaspora (Patterson & Kelley, 2000, p. 20). He built a multilingual, transnational archive of Africa and the African diaspora by leveraging relationships established within various artistic and activist circles. Schomburg's archive, therefore, illustrates, as Patterson and Kelley argue, that diaspora is both "process and condition" (Patterson & Kelley, 2000, p. 20).

The discussion now turns to three archival encounters that occurred in the "imaginary space of diasporic connection [and] real location" (Holton, 2007, p. 222) of materials documenting the African diasporic experience that is the archival center derived from Schomburg's collection. The paper uses these archival encounters in MARB to frame its arguments and demonstrate that beyond their crucial role in telling of African diasporan histories, archives of the African diaspora are both a locus of transnational African diasporic identities and solidarities and a critical site for the (re)building of these connections. Through these encounters, the paper also seeks to suggest how such affective experiences can, in fact, further the cultural and political work of Black archivists and archives.

Archival perspectives of African diasporas in solidarity

After the formal introductions and orientation on my first day at the Schomburg Center, my curator brought me a linear foot-sized box and informed me that this would be my first archival processing project. It was the personal papers of an African American businessman, Robert Freeman, who had moved to Ghana in 1956 to set up an insurance company. She thought it the perfect collection to start me off with—not so much for its size, but because I was from Ghana, and its content, in her words, would "sweeten the deal." I settled into the collection, not really knowing what to expect and being surprised by what I found.

Robert Freeman was an insurance professional who attended Lincoln University, where he was classmates with Kwame Nkrumah, the man who would become independent Ghana's first leader. Intrigued by the question of life insurance in the soon-to-be former colony, Freeman wrote to Nkrumah about establishing the Gold Coast Insurance Company (GCIC), which later became the Ghana Insurance Company (GIC). Freeman and his partner, Vertner Tandy, arrived on the Gold Coast in January 1956, and the GCIC was fully operational by March of that year. They established the Ghana General Insurance Company (GGIC) three years later to sell automobile and fire

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insurance. Three years later, as part of President Nkrumah's conviction that the government should operate in all business to establish the country's economic freedom, Nkrumah co-opted the flourishing companies to form the State Insurance Company (SIC). Freeman and Tandy were asked to remain Director and Deputy Director, respectively.

In one day, I had discovered a virtually unknown associate from Kwame Nkrumah's diasporic past. Robert Freeman was no George Padmore or W. E. B. DuBois, but his contributions were no less significant to the trajectory of Ghana's development. I also learned that what I knew as the premier national insurance company had its beginnings in the diaspora, so to speak—birthed from the social and business capital of a diasporan individual. Suddenly, an institution I had always taken for granted as "mine" now felt like "ours."

The second encounter occurred some months later, sparked by a conversation with my Haitian colleague. The details of our conversation have faded from memory; however, it must have had something to do with my heritage, as it led him to reveal that a hugely popular collection, he had processed some years previously had included folders on Tema, Ghana. He thought these might interest his transnational but fiercely proud Ga colleague—and they did. I immediately set aside what I was doing and fished out the files. In them, I discovered yet another associate of Nkrumah who was involved in the critical aspects of independent Ghana's nation-building: St. Clair Drake was an African American sociologist and activist with roots in the English-speaking Caribbean. He was a doyen of transnational Blackness, Pan-Africanism, and the global African Diaspora (Harrison, 2013), and he articulated an awareness of himself as a "Pan-African Diaspora product" (Rosa, 2012, p. 53). Drake's priority

> was to appropriate the most useful tools from anthropology to make a contribution to Pan-African Studies' mission to contribute to the liberation of African-descended people from all forms of oppression that thwarted self-determination. (Harrison, 2013, p. 448)

Drake was, according to Nkrumah associate Kojo Botsio, "…so vibrant with the spirit of Pan-Africanism" (Botsio to Drake, January 19, 1987).

Drake became associated with Nkrumah, George Padmore, and other leaders of the pan-African movement in London from 1947 to 1948 while researching Black communities in England's sea ports for his doctoral dissertation. A decade later, Drake was in Ghana and appointed to the University of Ghana's Department of Sociology. He soon became its department head after Dr. Kofi Busia resigned to become the opposition leader. The department became part of a research group that explored the effects and projected impacts of the transformation of Tema from a traditional Ga fishing village into a modern industrial port city, focusing on the population's educational, cultural, and socioeconomic outcomes.

The last archival encounter occurred by chance as I looked through the subject list of the division's manuscript collections. The name Laura Adorkor Kofey (sometimes spelled Kofi)—instantly identifying her as a member of the Ga-Adangme people—jumped out at me. Immediately, I was fascinated: Who was she? And how did her collection end up at the Schomburg? However, unlike the Freeman and Drake papers, I discovered Kofey's collection lacked personal papers. Instead, it consisted of research files deposited at the Schomburg Center by Richard Newman, whose seminal work, *Black Power and Black Religions: Essays and Reviews* (1987), included a chapter on Kofey and the African Universal Church she founded in 1927. The research files contain photocopies of telegrams between Marcus Garvey and officials of his

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Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) concerning Kofey, as well as pamphlets and information regarding the African Universal Church.

The details of Kofey's early life are incomplete.[6] She was born either in 1875 or 1893, possibly in or near Accra. Newman believes she came to the United States in the mid-1920s. Kofey claimed that she came to the US at the request of her father, King Knesipi, to encourage African Americans to move to Africa. If that was the case, then her personal reason for coming to the US intersected seamlessly with that of Garvey's UNIA, which she joined in 1926. A gifted orator, Kofey was initially prized by Garvey and sent to speak across the South. However, she fell out of favor with Garvey. At the same time, he was imprisoned when she collected funds from UNIA members, ostensibly to buy a sawmill to send back to Africa and to arrange passage for African Americans interested in returning to Africa.

Kofey's story was captivating on many levels. Her intrepidity as an African woman voluntarily traversing the Atlantic in the early twentieth century was fascinating enough; her involvement with, and influence within, an organization that was "perhaps the quintessential expression of diasporic political consciousness" (Gomez, 2005, p. 177) provided a compelling view of how deeply "common" Africans felt about the pan-African struggle and the lengths to which some would go to participate in the liberation of global Africa.[7]

My encounters with the Freeman, Drake, and Kofey papers led me to consider the intersecting histories of Africa and its diaspora in new ways. It became evident that these archives are valuable for documenting significant moments in Ghanaian and African diasporan histories and revealing how "everyday" diasporic Africans experienced these events. In other words, these letters, photographs, and other documents shed light on affective interactions with significant moments and movements. For instance, Freeman's wife, Mary Freeman, sent a letter to her family in the United States, recounting the festivities of Ghana's Independence Day. The letter radiates her pride and excitement about this historic achievement (Mary Freeman's Letter to her family, 10 March 1957, SCRBC). Ghana's successful disentanglement from colonial chains signaled that the banner of Ethiopia could yet be held aloft across continental and diasporic Africa. For African Americans at the cusp of their own civil rights movement, this represented hope, as the tone of Mary Freeman's letter and the 'who's who' of attendees she lists in it shows.[8]

Freeman's letter further reveals that, apart from the pride in this African achievement, there was also a sense of satisfaction that African Americans were making meaningful contributions to the new nation. The African American press, which had come to cover the independence celebrations, "really took pictures of us and the office," perhaps wanting to report on Freeman's business to connect their readers to Ghana's burgeoning post-independence project. Indeed, that was Mary Freeman's intention as she drew her family in to relive that auspicious day vicariously. However, more than that, she wanted the newly independent state to remain a part of their ontological and political consciousness. "Don't forget Ghana," the last words of her letter appealed. Essentially, she was charging them not to forget its victory, hope, or promise (Mary Freeman's Letter to her family, 10 March 1957, SCRBC).

Nearly ten years after Mary Freeman wrote her letter, St. Clair Drake's wife, Elizabeth Drake, wrote a series of opinion pieces in the Palo Alto News, where she similarly stood in solidarity with the promise of Ghana she had experienced personally. Responding to an opinion piece by Franklin Williams, United States ambassador to Ghana at the time of the coup that overthrew Nkrumah[9], Elizabeth Drake criticized the "indecent haste" with which the United States

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government recognized the transitional ruling council established by the coup leaders and the "good and favourable" relations Washington anticipated with them. Williams, noting that other African countries had also recognized the new government, countered by suggesting that Drake had a "misunderstanding both of the significance of diplomatic recognition and current conditions in Ghana." (Williams, letter to the editor, 15 April 1966, SCRBC). These exchanges are the competing narratives and visions for Ghana. Drake sought vehemently to ensure that the Ghana she knew was not forgotten in the post-coup counter-narrative that Williams represented. One might consider such a concern to be exaggerated. Who, after all, could forget Nkrumah and what he had achieved for Ghana? However, juxtaposed with images of an inferno of Nkrumah archives (Ntewusu, 2017; Milne, 2006) and the seizure and destruction of the personal papers of diasporan associates (or those believed to be) of Nkrumah[10], this fear becomes understandably rational. The potential for memory loss to occur in a context where the victors controlled the records and the power to frame subsequent narratives was, quite sadly, high.

Drake's was not the only evidence of contested visions and understandings recorded in the archive. Unfortunately for Kofey, her falling out with Garvey would turn deadly. Yet, whether at the urging of her father or, as alternate accounts suggest, through spiritual visions compelling her to teach Africans in America, Kofey crossed the Atlantic to passionately relay to African Americans the opportunities available if they were to return to Africa. While the claim cannot be definitively made that Kofey's efforts preceded Garvey's back to Africa project (as has been suggested for Chief Sam, another transnational Gold Coast native with a "pragmatic approach to Pan-Africanism" (Field & Coletu, 2014, p. 121)[11], she, like Chief Sam, are evidence of a reciprocal sense of kinship and connection continental Africans felt towards those in the diaspora. For Kofey, this back-to-Africa message would undergird the African Universal Church she established. It placed Garvey's Black nationalist ideology within a religious framework and stressed that Black people worldwide needed to unite and return to Africa to advance their community. After her death, her followers established a settlement outside Jacksonville, Florida, called Adorkaville.

What these African diasporan archives reveal, then, are the complex identities, imaginings, networks, and contestations operative in the diaspora. Furthermore, these archives offer a corrective to Paul Gilroy's emphasis on routes in his conceptualization of the Black Atlantic, which renders Africa to the periphery of the diaspora, nothing more than a passing reference or an "imagined presence" (Piot, 2001, pp. 155-156). Without eschewing the constantly flowing cultural exchange, improvisation, and transculturation that Gilroy highlights, these archival collections reflect the routes *and* roots of the diaspora. They reveal the affinities between continental and diasporan Africans, borne of shared heritage and struggles, as well as their multifaceted engagements and exchanges. They discovered each other whilst traversing Africa, Europe, and the Americas as artists, educators, students, entertainers, businesspeople, soldiers, activists, religious leaders, and perhaps even archivists (Ashie-Nikoi, 2019).[12]

Still, beyond these essential and somewhat abstract connections, these archives brought into sharp focus the reality that archives could have profound personal significance for the professionals responsible for their care and management. Although separated by decades, there were intersections I noticed between Freeman, Drake, Kofey and my own experiences, prompting me to reflect both on my own positionality as a transnational African archivist and on the memory work in which my colleagues and I engaged at MARB and the Schomburg Center—the quintessential African diasporic memory spaces. What impact, for instance, did confronting history daily have on us professionally and personally? How did we think through, feel, and process—both figuratively, in terms of coming to terms with, and literally, in the sense of

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arranging and describing archival collections—the joys, pains, victories, and losses of the African/diasporan past? These questions hovered beneath the surface, suppressed by the façade of professional neutrality and objectivity. However, at times, the set probing of affective encounters erupted forcefully, demanding to be addressed.

(Re)Living the Past in the Present: Thoughts on Affect and the African/Diasporan Archivist

I return to my colleague's archival encounter recounted in the prologue. I am only now realizing how profoundly this encounter with his own family's past must have affected him. In conversations with his family and former colleagues years later, I found out that he had only ever confided in one other colleague (a fellow Haitian) about his uncle's disappearance at the hands of the Tonton Macoutes; it seems he never shared the archival confirmation of his uncle's likely murder. Drawing from Wilson and Golding's (2016) conclusion that archival records can revive past suffering, I can only speculate that it was simply too painful for him to speak about. I may never have been told about the disappearance or his discovery if I had not been present at the moment of discovery.

In the past decade, there have been a few articles, a major conference, and a book or two on affect in the archives.[13] The weight of the discussion has been on the experience of community members (as creators or subjects of the records) and users, particularly researchers of historical and literary studies, querying, as one special issue puts it, "What kind of affective registers… are invoked by archival research?" (Swaby & Frank, 2020, p. 125). While their influential 2016 article turned its gaze toward archivists, Caswell and Cifor argued for a feminist ethics of care approach and affective responsibility that directed archivists' burden of care towards record creators, subjects, users, and communities and not towards archivists themselves. For users, Caswell and Cifor suggested that "sometimes allowing for affect can be as simple as giving the user space and time to feel" (p. 19), but how that translates for archivists mediating this significant emotional labor was left unexplored. Similarly, Douglas and Mills' (2018) autoethnographic reflection on centering personal archives in archival theory and education programs considered how doing so might inform and impact archivists' understanding of their responsibilities to creators, subjects, and users. Thus, compelling questions regarding the kinds of affective registers invoked by archival work still remain.[14]

Like Caswell and Cifor (2016), Ishmael (2020) recognizes that "collections clearly have an affective element" (Ishmael, 2020, p. 255), which also impacts the archivists who work on them. She suggests exploring the affective impact of archival collections on archivists, which is an area ripe for further research. I concur and argue that it is important because archivists, traditionally trained to view themselves as engaged in objective and neutral work of collecting and preserving memory, rarely reflect on or discuss their work, how they engage with the materials they acquire, appraise, arrange and describe, or how they feel about what they encounter. Nevertheless, as the archival encounters discussed here have shown, affect in the archive is always hovering on the edges.

Although a few archivists and archival scholars have weighed in, there remains an opportunity to explore the connections between affect in the archives and the orientation of archivists' work, identity, and politics. In the context of the Black archival tradition, which documents a past

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fraught with as much trauma as triumph and violence as victory, these are salient interrogations. Indeed, my colleague's encounter illustrates the almost de facto potential for trauma that African diaspora archives present. Still, as the preceding discussion has hinted, examining affect within the context of Black archival traditions can offer insights into transnational African diasporic exchanges and genealogies, as well as the emotions contained within and spurred by these archives.

Foremost is the idea that affective encounters with the evidence of transnational connections between African and diasporan archives can foster a sense of kinship and draw Black archivists into more profound insights into how African diasporas interact and intersect. This occurs in several ways while archivists are engaged in the professional duties of archiving. For example, while processing the Freeman papers, I saw how my history and that of the diaspora were intertwined; I could no longer view this state institution in the same way. Nor could I remain unaffected as my colleague confronted his personal and national past. According to Cifor, "the pain of others that can be found in archives does not simply belong to others; rather, as inevitable witnesses to such pain, archivists are deeply implicated in webs of affective relations" (Cifor, 2016, p. 9). Cifor pivots from this contention to argue for archivists' affective responsibility to affected individuals and communities. However, it also lends weight to Ishmael's (2020) observation that the affective element of Black collections binds people together as a community, offering an opportunity to understand Black communities through radical empathy. Furthermore, Jimerson (2003) suggests that archives are a tangible heritage that can convey emotional and intellectual links to people and events of previous eras. Thus, the acts of collecting and processing, documenting transnational relationships, and confronting the past are affective experiences that reinforce archivists' sense of connectedness not just to archival subjects and users but to one another, transforming the archival space into one that furthers the inherent cultural and political work of archiving.

Implications and Conclusion

In an article exploring divergent modes of belonging to Pan-Africanism through the African Union's built environment in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Mulugeta (2021) suggests that "affect opens up one of the many ways in which we can engage with the concept of Pan-Africanism in contemporary Africa" (p. 535). This paper situated its discussion at the Schomburg Center to show how African diasporic archives provide a similar oeuvre to understanding the ways archival affects generate and strengthen transnational African diasporic solidarities. Through four archival encounters, it illustrated that African diasporic archives are profound and potent affective spaces for the archivists who manage them. Yet, the insights generated by these affective encounters with the African Diasporan archive raise questions relevant to African/diasporan archival work and the profession. For example, how could more open discussions about affect in the archives from archivists' perspectives shape a praxis of care not just for materials and users, but also for archival workers themselves?

The paper's autoethnographic framing hints at how archivists and archival theorists might begin to find some answers, suggesting that this methodological approach is a valuable perspective for archival studies. By connecting the "autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political" (Ellis & Adams, 2020, p. 360) and foregrounding archivists' personal experiences and emotional responses, autoethnography exposes the inherently subjective nature of archival work.

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However, this subjectivity, far from undermining the credibility of archival praxis, enriches the understanding of archives as more than mere repositories of historical documents of enduring value; instead, they are dynamic spaces where personal and collective histories intersect—powerful, living, and affective spaces that profoundly shape memory work and, indeed, identity formation.

By virtue of its history, Ghana holds pride of place among diasporic Africans, as poignantly documented in Mary Freeman's letter to her family. The Year of Return (and the subsequent Beyond the Return)[15] thus provides a fitting backdrop for the arguments and conclusions of this discussion. As much as it is a time of memory and celebration, it is also a time of reflection and learning from the past. The diasporic archives under consideration here contextualize our current moment and relationships. They have demonstrated how Africa's diasporas have been, and can continue to be, engaged in socioeconomic development. They also highlight how personal narratives and affective experiences shape historical representations. Crucially, they invite reflective and nuanced approaches to archival work that ultimately promote the broader cultural and political work of African/diasporan archivists and strengthen the ties that bind.

Endnotes

[1] François "Papa Doc" Duvalier (1907-1971) was a trained medical doctor who became Haiti's president in 1957. Although the Haitian military had assisted his rise to the top, in an early indication of his ruthless and autocratic bent, he dismissed his former military allies once he came to power. After a failed coup in 1958, he instituted the infamous Tonton Macoutes. In 1964, he declared himself president for life. Papa Doc died in 1971.

[2] Formally known as the Volontaires de la Sécurité Nationale (National Security Volunteers), the Tonton Macoutes were a paramilitary force created by Papa Doc in 1959 to suppress opposition. They routinely kidnapped, raped or assassinated real and imagined critics of the Duvalierist regime. Their reign of terror continued until 1986 when Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, who had succeeded his father, was ousted by a popular uprising and fled Haiti.

[3] As Russell (2018) notes, this caution does exist in some archives and libraries for the benefit of patrons, advising them that their collections may cause distress.

[4] Cifor defines affect as "a force that creates a relationship (conscious or unconscious) between a body (individual or collective) and the world[,] at the core of how we form, sustain and break social relations, differences and individual and collective identities" (Cifor, 2016, pp. 8, 10).

[5] Akufo-Addo declares 2019 diasporan return year. https://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/akuffo-addo-declares-2019-diasporan-return-year.html (last accessed October 15, 2024)

[6] For a discussion of Kofey's disputed origins, see Atta-Asiedu, (2021).

[7] It might be an overstatement to call Kofey a commoner, as one who claimed royal heritage and who may have been exposed to corridors of influence where pan-Africanist concerns would

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have been discussed. However, she was atypical in that most continental Africans traveling to points west at this time were male. Additionally, as a woman of privilege, it is significant that she left behind the comfort and conveniences of her life to travel into the unknown, demonstrating that hers was not simply an intellectual preoccupation.

[8] Among the attendees Freeman lists are Dr. Ralph Bunche, Adam Powell, Rev. & Mrs. Martin Luther King, A. Philip Randolph, Norman Manley, Mrs. Louis Armstrong.

[9] Franklin Williams' papers are also on deposit at the Schomburg Center.

[10] Writer Julian Mayfield, for example, had his papers seized by the new government. Consequently, his papers at the Schomburg Center, do not contain much of significance from his time in Ghana.

[11] Field & Coletu, 2014, p. 121. Also see Hill (1987) and Langley (1971) for further discussion on Chief Sam.

[12] Ashie-Nikoi, E. (2019). The possibility that African and diasporan archivists met in diaspora is not too much of an imaginative stretch given that J. M. Akita, Ghana's first native national archivist, received his training abroad, in London.

[13] These include the special issue edited by Cifor and Gilliland (2016), Caswell, Cifor and Ramirez (2016) and Bastian's influential (2003) study which uncovered the affective bonds between records and the communities that created them, helping the field understand and theorize community archives. Related work examines secondary and vicarious trauma among archivists Sloan, Vanderfluit and Douglas (2019), Fernandez (2020); emotional responses to archival work, Regehr, Duff, Aton and Sato (2022); and grief, Douglas, Alisauskas and Mordell (2019) Regehr, Duff, Aton and Sato (2023).

[14] There has been some preliminary exploration such as Ishmael (2020) which hints at how affect factored in the development of Black-led archives in London and impacted those who worked on the collections.

[15] Launched in December 2019, Beyond the Return is a ten-year strategic plan that builds on the successes of the Year of Return campaign. Tagged as a 'decade of African renaissance', Beyond the Return seeks to deepen the connections between Ghana and the African and Ghanaian diasporas and leverage on this for trade, investment, development and innovation.

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