



REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
UNITED STATES SOUTHERN COMMAND
9301 NW 33RD STREET
MIAMI, FL 33172-1217

MEMORANDUM FOR the Secretary General, Pan American Institute of Geography and History, Ex-Arzobispado No. 29, Col. Observatorio, 11860 México, DF, México

From: Dr. Bradley Coleman, U.S. National Section

Date: March 5, 2012

Subject: Final Report, HIST.01.2011, Technical Assistance to the National Archives of Haiti

Summary. Part of the Organization of American States (OAS), the Pan American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH) promotes cooperation among countries of the Western Hemisphere through projects in the fields of cartography, geography, geophysics, and history. In February 2012, PAIGH supported a still picture digitization workshop at the National Archives of Haiti (ANH). Using PAIGH grant money, PAIGH project coordinator Bradley Coleman and Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) director Brooke Wooldridge purchased a Canon EOS suite for the Haitian archives. Together with dLOC programmer Mark Sullivan (University of Florida), they delivered and installed the equipment on 30 January. Sullivan then led a two-day workshop on the utilization and maintenance of the PAIGH equipment, a system that saves electronic images on network servers at the University of Florida. The PAIGH initiative advanced ongoing efforts to preserve and perpetuate archival collections endangered by the 2010 earthquake. It strengthened Haitian institutions through meaningful professional interaction—and increased access to valuable historical records in Haiti.

Background. Located in Port-au-Prince, the National Archives of Haiti is the official repository for Haitian state and civil records. Its collection includes government records (presidential, ministerial); records of social works and civil governance; and birth, marriage, and death certificates. In addition, after the earthquake, President Rene Préval (2006-2011) asked Haitian archivists to recover and protect active government records located in fallen buildings. The archives, however, lacked the resources required to accomplish this work. In a report dated 26 January 2010, ANH director Jean Wilfrid Bertrand identified the immediate needs of the institution. During the weeks thereafter, a series of national and international meetings produced coherent and complementary plans for overcoming earthquake-related problems.

During the annual meeting of the U.S. National Section, PAIGH, in Redlands, California, March 2010, U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) historian Bradley Coleman spoke to delegates about his experience with U.S. military forces in Haiti after the earthquake. Located in Miami, Florida, USSOUTHCOM is the Department of Defense headquarters for U.S. military forces in Latin America and the Caribbean; Coleman provided historical support to the U.S. armed forces during the humanitarian/disaster relief mission in Haiti. In California, the U.S. National Section president Mark DeMulder then asked delegates to consider ways PAIGH could help Haiti

recover from the natural disaster. In the field of history, the U.S. National Section considered organizing an international meeting on the rehabilitation of Haitian archives and libraries. The USSOUTHCOM historian left California with instructions to develop a proposal for a PAIGH-supported conference.

A few days later, back in Miami, Coleman connected with dLOC director Brooke Wooldridge. Established in 2004, dLOC is a cooperative network of libraries and archives in the Caribbean. Its central administrative office is located at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami, Florida. The dLOC director had been actively organizing assistance to Haitian repositories with international partners such as the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization; Libraries without Borders; Association of Caribbean University Research and Institutional Libraries; Blue Shield; International Federation of Library Associations; and major academic institutions such as Brown University (Providence, RI), Duke University (Durham, NC), and University of Florida (Gainesville, FL).¹ Rather than a conference, Wooldridge suggested that PAIGH help Haitian archivists acquire electronic equipment to digitize vulnerable collections.

Project Proposal, Evolution. After contacting the ANH director, Coleman wrote a proposal requesting PAIGH support for the digitization effort at the National Archives of Haiti. In April, Jean Parcher, vice president, U.S. National Section, sent the package to the PAIGH headquarters in Mexico City. Signed by USSOUTHCOM civilian deputy to the commander Ambassador Paul Trivelli and the U.S. National Section president, the solicitation included letters of support from professionals in Canada, Dominican Republic, Haiti, and the United States. In spite of the unusual characteristic of the proposal—PAIGH does not normally allow delegates to purchase equipment with grant funds—members of the directing council, PAIGH, announced their support for the project during their meeting in Lima, Peru, in November 2010. The secretary general, PAIGH, formally notified the U.S. National Section of the decision in a letter dated January 25, 2011. (Attached)

Soon thereafter, turbulence in Haiti delayed the implementation of the technical assistance project. The ANH director and others asked PAIGH to hold the project until the internal situation improved. In May 2011, following the inauguration of President Michel Martell (2011 to present), archivists agreed to move forward. Since the event would occur after 1 October 2011, the project coordinator formally requested a waiver to use PAIGH funds during the next fiscal year.² The secretary general, PAIGH, approved Coleman's request. Since USSOUTHCOM could not legally receive the money, PAIGH released the funds directly to the dLOC account at the FIU Foundation in August. (Documents attached)

¹ *The Miami Herald* published a major article on Wooldridge's work just before the PAIGH conference in California. See Audra Burch, "Preserving Haiti's Memories: Digital archivists work to save rare books, historical documents from quake-rattled libraries," *The Miami Herald*, February 27, 2010, 2E, 3E. See also Brooke Wooldridge, "Protecting Haitian Patrimony Initiative, Initial Assessment and Recommendations," February 26, 2010, at www.dloc.com.

² Project organizers originally scheduled the workshop for October 24-28, 2011. A medical emergency forced the group to postpone until early 2012.

The original proposal, submitted in 2010, envisioned flatbed scanners and computers for ANH textual records. The requirements of the archives, however, changed during the summer of 2011. During the year since the writing of the proposal, the National Archives had received some of the equipment through dLOC and other international organizations. For example, a separate OAS project—focused on the digitization of birth and death certificates to reduce voter fraud—brought important resources to the National Archives. Then, in July, ANH employees attended a digitization training at the University of Florida, during which they used the university’s Cannon EOS digitization suite. The system, they observed, would be ideal for converting their large holding of photo negatives into high resolution digital images. For these reasons, the PAIGH project coordinator approved changes to the ANH order. Coleman and Wooldridge purchased the camera and other equipment in the United States. (Receipts attached)

Project Execution. Coleman, Wooldridge, and Sullivan arrived in Port-au-Prince on Monday morning, 30 January 2012. Members of the U.S. Military Liaison Office (USMLO) received the group at the airport. Throughout, the USMLO provided transportation and logistics support to the PAIGH mission. After meeting with officials at the U.S. embassy, Coleman, Wooldridge, and Sullivan delivered the PAIGH-furnished equipment to the National Archives. Haitian archivists unpacked and installed the equipment in the digitization laboratory at Historical Archives on Poste Marchand in downtown Port-au-Prince. Specifically, the PAIGH provided a camera, light table, lighting system, computer, printer/scanner, and related accessories. After some initial testing of the suite, the group traveled to the ANH administrative center at Delmas 75. There, ANH director Bertrand formally accepted the equipment on behalf of the Haitian government. (Agreement Attached)



ANH director Jean Wilfrid Bertrand signs the project equipment agreement in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, January 30, 2012.



Thor Burham (University of British Columbia), Watson R. Denis (National Section of Haiti), Brooke Wooldridge (Digital Library of the Caribbean), Farah Elizabeth Francois (National Section of Haiti), and Bradley Coleman (U.S. National Section) at dinner in Port-au-Prince, Monday, January 30, 2012.

On Tuesday, January 31, the dLOC director met with Haitian librarians at the National Library of Haiti (BNH) on Rue de Centre in Port-au-Prince. In addition to the PAIGH electronics, the U.S. Department of State had purchased for the Haitian government a CopiBook high definition book scanner, ideal for the digitization of bound material. Per an agreement between the U.S. and Haitian governments, the CopiBook scanner would be installed at the National Library. Several historical repositories in Port-au-Prince agreed to share the CopiBook scanner and EOS system. At the library, Coleman, Wooldridge, and Sullivan made arrangements for the installation of the scanner; they then met with Friar Brother Ernest Even, director, Haitian Library of the Brothers of Christian Instruction (BHFIC), the first deposit library in Haiti. Located across the street from the National Library, BHFIC possesses an impressive array of printed materials, including the best collection of Haitian newspapers in the world.

The following day, Mark Sullivan led the EOS digitization training at National Archives of Haiti. Employees from the National Archives, National Library, and Library of the Brothers of Christian Instruction attended the workshop. The training included step-by-step French language instruction on the proper use of the PAIGH equipment. Specifically, the group practiced converting photo negatives—taken during the U.S. occupation of Haiti (1915-1934)—into high-resolution digital images.

Attendees began by staging the negatives on the light table. They then captured images with the Cannon camera, controlled by archivists using software on the new computer. With the photograph saved on a local drive, technicians practiced adjusting and editing the electronic pictures. Sullivan then taught the archivists how to create derivative images, such as low resolutions files for the ANH websites and social media platforms. Finally, the group reviewed the techniques for data tagging scanned material—and the process for uploading electronic records to the dLOC computer servers at the University of Florida. By the end of the day, each attendee had reproduced, edited, catalogued, and uploaded at least one image.



Digital Library of the Caribbean programmer Mark Sullivan (arm raised) teaches archivists how to use the EOS digitization suite at the National Archives of Haiti, February 1, 2012. PAIGH provided the light table, camera, computer, printer, and related accessories.



Haitian librarian Cerette Lubin prepares a photo negative for digitization during the PAIGH-supported training, February 1, 2012.



Sample photograph preserved during the workshop in Port-au-Prince. It is one of 300 images now available on the internet at www.dloc.com as a direct result of the PAIGH effort.

The group reconvened at the National Archives for additional practice on the PAIGH equipment on Thursday morning, 2 February. That session focused on using the digitization suite without supervision from the dLOC programmer. That is, Sullivan tested the archivists to ensure that they could manage the equipment after he returned to the United States. Haitian technicians were encouraged to answer each other's questions, rather than relying on Sullivan. All of the archivists demonstrated proficiency with the equipment. The Haitian archivists who had trained with the Cannon suite at University of Florida in 2011 were especially capable. Later that day, the dLOC director presented certificates to seven individuals for having successfully completed the PAIGH-sponsored training: Bernado Alexis (ANH), Jean Kern Belizaire (ANH), Dalmissa Belizaire (ANH), Fenton Charles (ANH), Gertha Café (BNH), Luc Steve Honore (BNH), and Cerette Lubin (BHFIC). The group then moved to the National Library to work on the Department of State furnished CopiBook scanner, an effort which occupied the PAIGH team until they returned to the United States on Friday evening.

Conclusion. Through technical project HIST.01.2011, PAIGH delivered state-of-the-art equipment to National Archives of Haiti. The Cannon EOS digitization suite and related training enabled the preservation of endangered historical images. Through a partnership with dLOC, a growing number (300+) of those photographs are now accessible to citizens and scholars around the world. Supporting this project, PAIGH addressed a clear and immediate need in Haiti. Its flexible response to unique post-earthquake circumstances—allowing the project coordinator to use grant money to acquire electronic equipment—had tangible impacts in Haiti and beyond. The project coordinator expects that Haitian technicians will use the PAIGH equipment for years to come. PAIGH likewise promoted professional cooperation among archivists and librarians in the Americas. In the past, Haitian authorities, especially the twentieth century dictators, suppressed archives, libraries, and academic establishments in Haiti. Today, national and international forces are working to develop these institutions, which are vital to the future of the country. Indeed, patrimony is a critical part of the long-term plan to promote stability, security, and prosperity in Haiti. PAIGH directly contributed to this movement by providing technical assistance to the National Archives of Haiti in 2012.

Attachments

20120305 HIST.01.2011 Attachments (Coleman).PDF