Introduction

This is a history made from found objects. The objects are primary sources on nineteenth- and twentieth-century sub-Saharan Africa that have survived as remnants of the recent past. They have been discovered and assembled here into a narrative recognizable as history, an account of the period recalled in later times. Just as found objects can be assembled and framed as "found art," in this collection these remnant sources together become a "found history."

What are these sources? How did they come to be? History teachers regularly use documents, commonly understood as records generated in the historical moment. Technically defined, they are unique accounts kept on paper. Because its history was largely oral, singularly important documents are not as rich or deep for African history as for the history of some other world areas, and they tend to overrepresent official, colonial, elite, or European perspectives. But historians of Africa have been creative in finding other sorts of primary sources, a wider category than documents. These include interview transcriptions, photographs, remnants of material culture, and song lyrics. Such materials offer invaluable insights into the African past.

Intellectuals, nationalist politicians, and rural and urban "ordinary folk" from all over sub-Saharan Africa originally created the works that became entries in this book. Non-African contributors include colonists, officials, and other interested observers. Usually the producers weren't thinking of posterity when they created the pieces assembled here. Certainly, few of them could have imagined they would be contributing to a general history of a century that had not yet finished, in a continent

whose past was mostly not preserved on paper. But the people whose expressions and experiences are arranged here lived significant lives and reflected on them in ways worth remembering.

How This Book Came to Be

I started this collection as an aid to my teaching. Then, my students joined the search, through course assignments or in research assistantships. We found these remnant objects through dedicated effort and happy accident. Next came the task of arranging them into a narrative history of Africa – and that meant decisions about periods, places, topics, and authors. Which periods are the same and which are different? Which places are more and less important? Which topics are representative and which are singular? I try to explain those decisions in chapter and entry introductions, but while arranging the material I developed some guidelines worth a brief summary here.

This book discusses Africa during the colonial period. It picks up during the mid-nineteenth century, when connections with Europe existed but were not yet powerful enough to qualify as an age of European empire. The age of empire took form during the "Scramble for Africa" in the 1880s. This book charts the colonial existence of Africa and Africans until the aftermath of the Second World War. Around that time, the story becomes more pointedly about the end of European empire and the establishment of African nation-states. That decade-long process will be the subject of a second volume.

The place covered in this book is sub-Saharan Africa, including the West, East, southern, and Central regions. Each of the chapters integrates material on each region. It would be appropriate to include North Africa: there were and are powerful continuities across the Sahara and excluding North Africa can be awkward. On the other hand, including it would raise the problem of how to separate out the rest of the Arab, Muslim, and Mediterranean worlds. Because much of the story of sub-Saharan Africa is about the ways that racial identities and categories from Europe and the Americas were established there, this book stresses connections across the Atlantic more than those across the Sahara.

The seven chapters in this book were originally conceived chronologically and the ordering is still broadly successive, but eventually the chapters came to be about important themes within overlapping periods.

Precisely because the periods arise from historians' analysis, not from within the past itself, defining them is a tricky task. Change happened at different times in different areas, or different spheres of life changed at their own pace. When introducing major long-term trends, I tried to find evidence about initial developments. Many of the accounts come from memories collected at a later date, sometimes orally transmitted to a literate person who wrote them down. In a couple of cases, I have contravened the strictest rules about chronology and evidence by using ethnographic evidence, meaning from a later period, to shine light on the past. This is a common and productive convention in African history and I have tried to follow it with care and transparency.

Within chapters, topical subchapters set off key developments and draw attention to broad changes in political economy as well as everyday events in ordinary individual lives. The subchapters are the heart of the book, signaling the main themes of colonial Africa.

The selection of entries requires explanation. My student assistants and I followed the principle of finding *balance* between types of sources. The danger in a sourcebook is to rely too heavily on elite authors, so I have consciously limited their number and been wary of using them as representative of all Africans. The inclusion of photographs, interviews, and song lyrics helped to secure space for nonelite experiences and memories. We have worked hard to find records by women, but they are still a minority.[1] We trust the total effect of our preference for nonelite sources will not be essentializing or romantic. Ordinary people, too, engaged in politics, so understanding their accounts requires attention to context. This collection shows it can sometimes be hard to make sense of such sources, but the exercise of reading them critically will help underscore the distance between the present and the past. Men and women who originated outside Africa were also part of this history, so we include entries created by Europeans, Asians, white South Africans, white Americans, and African Americans. The entry introductions

[1] The excellent Women Writing Africa sourcebooks include otherwise unpublished archival sources from this period: M. J. Daymond, ed., *Women Writing Africa: The Southern Region* (New York: Feminist, 2003); Esi Sutherland-Addy and Aminata Diaw, eds., *Women Writing Africa: West Africa and the Sahel* (New York: Feminist, 2005); Amandina Lihamba, ed., *Women Writing Africa: The Eastern Region* (New York: Feminist, 2007). See also Judith Lütge Coullie, *The Closest of Strangers* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2004).

provide information on the source itself, when it was created, and how it came to us.

People from the past speak to us only through filters created through the production and preservation of sources and our own reading. My editing of this collection created another filter, as the found objects became raw material for a new narrative. I tried to be true to the character of the pieces as I edited and wrote commentaries. My goal was to present diverse perspectives, be gentle with the found objects, and provide enough of a structure to hold the work together. I also tried to develop a consistent approach to individual documents.

In choosing what part of any source to reproduce, my assistants and I gave priority to the coherence of the entire sourcebook over the individual integrity of a single source. While my assistants suggested what should be included, the final decision was mine. Abridging entries to convey a core message, we sometimes left out phrases, paragraphs, and pages. Our policy was to edit out repetition, references to other parts of the text, excessive detail, and, in some circumstances, lines of thought that detracted from the message we felt was central to the piece. Because editing marks such as ellipses and brackets are inevitably distracting to me as a reader, I chose to make edits silently, without explicit markings where I have condensed and deleted text. Apart from condensation, our editing was extremely light: we did not change wording, but on a very few occasions we corrected spelling and grammatical errors that obstructed the meaning of the text. When errors did not interfere with meaning, we sometimes let them stand, but avoided interjections of "[*sic*]" because I find the intrusion is jarring. Sometimes we removed language that is widely offensive today, but was less charged when originally used. For those entries I have edited most substantially, I say so in the introduction. Some of these pieces have been featured elsewhere and my introductions draw on the work of previous editors. But, to minimize distractions, I have removed footnotes and editorial inserts from the source itself. I follow this approach with hopes of making the read smoother and more compelling for beginning students and general readers, who do not need to engage the source as a whole. I understand that this is not standard practice for materials intended for professional historians, and that this approach will make the work less useful to researchers. Because we obtained nearly all the sources through lending libraries or from the Internet, I trust that researchers in need of an unedited document will be able to obtain it.

My goal is to give readers a workable narrative about Africa's past that will stimulate a process of learning more than provide a set of answers. My interpretations are provisional and the sources will speak for themselves in ways I cannot anticipate.

How to Read This Book

Readers should view this material critically, mindful of the distance between themselves and the narratives. Readers always have to triangulate their position between what they read and what they already know. But the variation among the entries could put them in the unsteady position of continually making adjustments. Each of the entries must be read differently and, as always with history, with an eye to its context. To that end, the introduction to each piece provides some historical background. Because the context of how the piece was produced is important, each introduction contains information on production too; often some useful detail is in references, so read those as well.

For a visual representation of the political context, look at the Animated Atlas of African History (AAAH) at www.Brown.edu/AAAH. The AAAH maps the entries in this book against a year-by-year portrayal of changing boundaries, political conflicts, imperial power, and type of government after decolonization.

Here are questions to aid reading and reflection, to help connect context and content:

- What are the politics of the production and preservation of this source? What was the context of its production? What is the distance between the events described and the creation of the text? Who produced it, for which audience? What was the probable role of intermediaries such as editors, translators, and interviewers? What allowed it to survive as a remnant of the past? How does knowing the politics of this piece as an artifact change the way you understand it?
- What do you see as the powerful forces that shaped the world depicted in this piece? How did the people in this piece see their relationship to those forces? Did they see the forces as hostile or benign? Did they see themselves as powerful or weak? How does their assessment of their situation compare to yours?
- What is the relation of the separate entries with each other and the historical context? Look at the map and make a timeline to bring them together in time and space.

- Compare the orientation within this text to others in the chapter or related entries in other chapters. What factors of the authors' positions, historical context, and further history of the source itself can account for commonalities and differences?
- What do we learn from "reading it with the grain," meaning according to the author's understanding and intent?
- What do we learn from "reading it against the grain," meaning contrary to the author's understanding and intent?
- Where in this piece do you see the most distance between your own thinking and the author's? Where is your understanding of this piece most fragile?
- What is the significance of this text to you, a critical reader in a different time and context?
- Thinking over the collection as a whole, where have you felt most confident in your readings? Where has your understanding seemed the least robust? Which pieces have seemed most pivotal in the larger narrative? Which have seemed the least significant? Why?

Last, please absorb the entries reflectively, more as you would poetry than a newspaper. Some are very short but have a lot of meaning, especially when considered in connection with other readings. Some are images, so pause to contemplate them. Meaning cannot be simply downloaded and applied. Allow it time to distill in your mind, where it can become more than it was on the page.

A Note on Country Names

The following list of contemporary territories gives names as of 2014, dates of independence, names changed since independence, a selective list of colonial names, and colonial rulers since the late nineteenth century. It does not list names of all territories that were amalgamated in the early decades of colonial rule. Colonies that were part of the federations of French West Africa and French Equatorial Africa are marked (FWA) or (FEA). A slash under "Date of Independence" denotes that the process of independence from European empires was not accomplished in a single watershed event. A slash in other columns denotes successive names or rulers, while an ampersand conveys that separate colonies under different rulers were amalgamated around the time of independence.

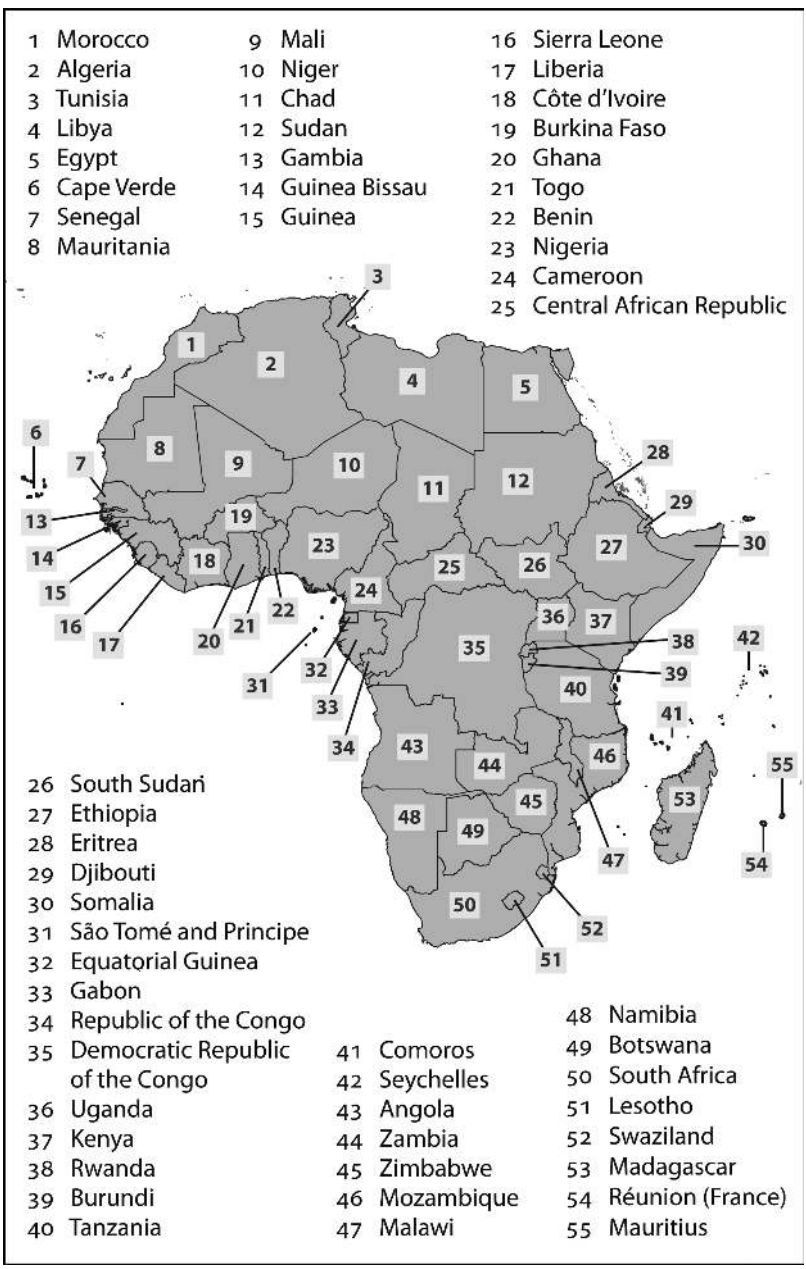

FIGURE 1. Africa in 2014.

Current Name	Independence	Other Names since Independence	Former Colonial Nam
1. Morocco including Western Sahara	1956		Spanish Sahara was W only
2. Algeria	1962		
3. Tunisia	1956		
4. Libya	1951		
5. Egypt	1922/1952		
6. Cape Verde	1975		
7. Senegal	1960		(FWA)
8. Mauritania	1960		(FWA)
9. Mali	1960		French Soudan (FWA)
10. Niger	1960		(FWA)
11. Chad	1960		(FEA)
12. Sudan	1956		
13. Gambia	1965		
14. Guinea Bissau	1974		Portuguese Guinea
15. Guinea	1958		French Guinea (FWA)
16. Sierra Leone	1961		
17. Liberia	1847		

18. Côte d'Ivoire	1960		Sometimes "Ivory Coa d'Ivoire" is preferre
19. Burkina Faso	1960	Upper Volta	Upper Volta (FWA)
20. Ghana	1957		Gold Coast & British
21. Togo	1960		Togoland/French Togo
22. Benin	1960		Dahomey (FWA)
23. Nigeria	1960		
24. Cameroon	1960		
25. Central African Republic	1960	Central African Empire	Ubangi-Shari (FEA)
26. South Sudan	2011		Sudan
27. Ethiopia		Abyssinia	
28. Eritrea	1993		
29. Djibouti	1977		French Somaliland
30. Somalia	1960		British Somaliland & Somaliland
31. São Tomé and Príncipe	1975		

Current Name	Independence	Other Names since Independence	Former Colonial Nam
32. Equatorial Guinea	1968		Spanish Guinea
33. Gabon	1960		(FEA)
34. Congo Brazzaville, Republic of the	1960		Middle Congo, Frenc
35. Congo Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the	1960	Zaire	Congo Free State, Belg
36. Uganda	1962		Buganda
37. Kenya	1963		
38. Rwanda	1962		Ruanda-Urundi
39. Burundi	1962		Ruanda-Urundi
40. Tanzania	1961/1963		German East Africa/T Zanzibar
41. Comoros	1975		
42. Seychelles	1976		
43. Angola	1975		
44. Zambia	1964		Northern Rhodesia
45. Zimbabwe	1965/1980		Southern Rhodesia/Rh
46. Mozambique	1975		Portuguese East Africa