

Early Attempts at Architectural Photography in Lagos, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This paper takes a historical look at the introduction of photography to old Lagos. It examines the early attempts at the craft of architectural photography and the factors that predisposed architecture and the built environment to the early pioneer photographers. The paper also identifies key pioneers of architecture photography in Lagos and their contributions to the development and propagation of architectural styles through their pioneering work. Finally, this work debates the need for architects and enthusiast alike to further their knowledge and appreciation of the workings of photography in order to maximise the potential of the craft as a key non-verbal language for the communication of architectural aesthetics and thoughts.

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Introduction

Photography is a language. And like any other medium of communication, it has a long history. We owe the name *Photography* to English man Sir John Herschel who first used the term publicly in 1839 (Leggart 1999). The story of photography however did not start in 1839. While the year is popularly referenced in text as the year photography really took off, the truth remains that the origin of the craft of *writing with light* dates further into antiquity. In its most basic form, the practise of creating imagery through the transmission of light on a surface first started amongst early Arabian scientist around the 11th century with the use of a contraption later to be known as a camera obscurer. The development of the craft was gradual – partly due to suppression by the Catholic Church on account of sorcery. It wasn't until 1827 that Joseph Nicphore Niepce, the French lithographer successfully created what was later termed the world's first photograph – an image of his farmyard in central France. This photograph took an unimaginable eight hours to register on the asphalt coated plate. Not long after, through collaborations and knowledge sharing amongst the pioneers, a forty two year old scenery designer and impresario Jacques M. Daguerre perfected the process and on January 7, 1839 an

announcement and presentation of finding was made before the French Academy of Science. The response was outstanding and thus photography was officially born.

From inception, architecture was the central subject of photography. Two things endeared architecture to photography. The first being the immobility of architecture. This presented early photography with a perfect subject as the early camera mechanism could not handle the speed required to ‘freeze’ moving objects. Higgott and Wray (2012) aptly captures the notion this way; ‘From the very earliest days of its invention, the photographic medium has had a particular resonance with architectural subject matter (...) buildings being one of the few subjects that would withstand long exposures, but the affinity goes much deeper, photography seemingly having a unique ability to explore and represent architectural space and form, and even to express fundamental architectural ideas and concepts.’

The second factor that fired photography’s affinity for architecture was borne of the fact that architecture is a fertile canvass for cultural visualisation. This will suggest that to a meaningful extent, architecture can tell a lot of the place, time and practice of a people. These positions predisposed architecture to early photography and has remained one of photography’s most popular subject. Since the 19th century, photography has developed as a key tool in the visual documentation and enunciation of forms (and aesthetics) that present a challenge to words. If one recounts the popular saying that a photograph is worth a thousand words, then what immensity of words have been spoken on (and for) architecture through the centuries. In recent years, the usefulness and centrality of photography has become even more pronounced in our daily personal and professional communication that a

discipline such as architecture can no longer afford the ridicule of want for the historical and working knowledge of the craft. It is against this backdrop that this study takes a historical look at the early attempts at architectural photography in Lagos. This is with a bid to understand the early approaches and intentions of the practise. The study also seeks to identify pioneers and their contributions to the art of recording architecture visually for the purpose of appreciation and posterity which in itself – and to a fine extent – is worthy of disciplinary scholarship.

Source materials for this study are mainly archival documents from the National Library archive in Lagos and National archive in Ibadan (University of Ibadan). Further materials were reviewed through the online portal of the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Foreign Commonwealth Office, London. Photographic review was also done through the online portal of The National Archives Image Gallery, UK. This portal however features practically the same works from the Royal Commonwealth Society and the Foreign Commonwealth Office corpus. The materials of the Lagos State Records and Archives was also reviewed. Materials reviewed at the different photography archives was to give a context to historical timelines for the practise of photography within the study area. Desk research also played a key role in organising the thoughts and discuss around early photography history in Nigeria.

The scope of the study is primarily Lagos, though the study considered information from other areas in the fringes of Lagos that featured in the development and practise of photography. For the purpose of clarity, this author has prescribed a categorisation for the introduction and growth of photography in Nigeria into three periods. The Early Period: 1860s – 1914; Colonial Period:

1914 – 1960; Post-Independence Period: 1960 till date. Though the author posits that the Post-Independence Period can be further divided into two epochs, the detail and justification for this is however out of the scope of this paper. This paper will mainly deal with the Early and Colonial Periods.

Early Entry of Photography: Africa, Nigeria and Lagos

We can agree that there is no unified history of photography in Africa. The different parts of the continent came in contact with photography at different times mostly within the mid to late 1800s and they reacted to it in different ways. What is consistent however in the different regions is that the craft was introduced by colonial incursion, scientific exploration or missionary crusades. Photography developed at the point when scientific adventure and colonisation were rife. Thus, this gave energy to the spread of the craft into areas with allure and potentials for new horizons to capture. Only three months after Louis Jacque Daguerre presented his findings to the Academy of Science in France in 1839, enthusiast were to be seen in Cairo producing daguerreotypes (as the photographs were called then) of lions making Cairo in photography's first port of entry into Africa (Howe, 1994). Further evidence show that as an addendum to the research and exploratory activities thriving in the area at the time, the Egyptian monuments provided a perfect subject for the army of amateurs of the new craft as early as the 1840s. Between 1844 and 1864, at least ten amateur photographers from Europe published albums illustrating Egyptian antiquities and scenery (Killingray and Roberts, 1989). By the 1850s, studio photography already existed in Algiers (Musso, 1976). Many other studios

specialising in portraiture dotted several parts of Africa as early as the 1860s.



Photography in the 1800s. Source: Author

Fig. 1: Map
of Africa
showing
the entry of

Somalia has photographic evidence in the work of French naval officer Charles Guillain with dates as early as 1845 (Killingray and Roberts, 1989). Killingray and Roberts quoting an

1857 material; *Voyage à la côte oriental d'Afrique* authored by Guillain himself, shows the naval traveller journeyed from Somalia to southern Tanzania making drawings and daguerreotypes. Dias (1991) presents that individual European freelance photographers were available in Angola and possibly Mozambique and Cape Verde as early as 1860. The work asserts that by 1870 at least two photographic studios were fully operational in Luanda. The instructive work of G. Prins (1992) gave prove that photography had reached Zambia well before mid-1880s through itinerant missionaries who engaged photography to galvanized their position as men of “greater” powers to the ordinary minded villagers. In Ethiopia also, missionaries were in the forefront of the propagation of photography. Henry Stern is probably the first photographer in Ethiopia. Stern arrived in 1859 and will later publish twenty engravings based on photographs he created among the *Falashas* (Pankhurst, 1976).

Blier and Terpak (2014) discusses the photographic work of French explorer Edouard Foà in Africa. Foà worked and explored East and South Africa extensively between 1886 to 1897 taking well over 500 photographs and purchasing others from the few commercial studios operating in coastal cities. Compiled in seven albums with annotations, the photographs document such indigenous people as the Amatongas, Ndebele, Zulus, Khoikhoi, and San. Foà’s collection include views in modern-day Nigeria, Benin, Ghana, Togo, Sierra Leone, Lesotho, Swaziland, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi (Blier and Terpak, 2014). The trend that saw explorers and missionaries travelling with cameras into Africa and other exotic regions continue to flourish well into early 20th century. The diffusion of the craft into different parts of the continent was by no means methodical. It can

best be described as spontaneous waves that hit the different major locations (usually port cities) under varying circumstances.

The exact year photography entered Lagos (then Lagos Colony) and under what circumstance is still unclear. This is still a well discussed issue among the history of Lagos aficionados. There are unconfirmed reports that photographs were taken in Lagos in 1860 (Killingray and Roberts, 1989). While evidence of this may appear obscure, it is not far reaching as many missionary groups were known to equip their field workers with ‘cameras’ at that time. By the mid-1850s the CMS already had a fairly grounded presence in the Lagos Colony and while many of their early missionaries were more interested in linguistics, local history, religion and culture, it will not be reckless to speculate that photography may have been introduced by them at least by the late 1850s. Early indications of an interest in photography among missionaries in tropical Africa abound. Gottfried Deimler, a Basel-trained missionary who was recruited by the CMS had learned photography in Stuttgart in 1854 on his way to his missionary posit in India (Jenkins, 1993). Jenkins (1993) also records a Scottish Methodist pastor Daniel West who visited West Africa in 1856 carrying a daguerreotype camera with him. He is said to have created some of the earliest photographs in mission context from Ghana – West was also recorded to have taken photographs in Lagos and Abeokuta around the same time. This lends credence to the assertion that Lagos came in contact with photography as early as the late 1850s.

In 1841, a campaign sponsored by the evangelical progressives in the British government under the leadership of Sir Fowell Buxton was a significant exercise that recorded a number of firsts. The expedition which is known as the 1841 Niger Mission

comprised of three main vessels (H.M.S *Wilberforce*, *Albert* and *Soudan*) loaded with personnel and equipment – their aim was to explore and civilize the inner countries of the Niger River. Many of the areas visited came in contact with Europeans for the first time. One can only reason that many exchanges ensued between that host and the visitors as it was the practise in those ancient times. The adventurers brought several items of interest to the natives and a good number where objects of professional practise such as metrological instruments, survey, medical and agricultural instruments, navigational equipment such as the hand held telescope, books (Bible), embroidered metal sword and so on. On account of the sheer size and importance of the expedition entering into the hinterlands (a mostly unchartered area to Europeans), it is easy to see why ideas have been floated that photography may have entered ‘Nigeria’ through this 1841 movement. Hinging on the detailed accounts of the expedition by Captain William Allen (The Commander of the Wilberforce), it becomes rather clear that while quite a planning had gone into the selection of the relevant professional personnel for the trip, photography was not part of this arrangement (Allen, 1848). This author is of the opinion that the apparent omission of photography as a tool for documentary is not unusual in this case. Photography at that point was still largely the specialty of the French and though some headway had been made by Englishman William Henry Fox Talbot with his work on negatives and the reproduction of calotypes, this could not match the popularity of the French Daguerreotype (Goldberg, 1993). Thus, the fervour with which the French explorers engaged photography in the mid-1840s was quite missing in England. With such a massive British government expedition which made no admittance for the use of the new choice instrument of record, it can only mean that a place of pride for photography among the

British would only come later well behind the French and German. Photography therefore could not have entered into Nigeria in 1841 with the Niger expedition under the circumstance. Evidential materials available so far suggests that the possible earliest time for photography into Nigeria would be between 1858 to early 1860s.

While such debate and uncertainty may abound on the likelihood of photography in old Lagos or ‘Nigeria’ as a whole in the early 1860s, there is to be no doubt whatsoever about the presence of the craft in Lagos colony by the 1880s and its preponderance by the turn of the century. A large part of the photographs created in the 1880s were for and by the colonial government and mission staff of the Church Mission Society. The former’s contents will usually include Government house buildings, colonial staff, native monarch portraits, transport infrastructure and emerging structural development in the colony. The latter will usually include mission houses, staff, landscape of surroundings from mission house and local material culture items. Some input to the 1880/90s photographic corpus of Lagos colony and its hinterlands is also to be seen from itinerant adventurers and explorers or freelance studio photographers who transit through Lagos - being a major seaport - to onward journeys into the hinterlands or other destinations. Plate 1 and 2 are photographs by the French explorer Edouard Foà who visited Lagos around 1886. Some of his works which are now in the Getty Research Institute’s special collections carry evidence of the presence of photography in Lagos colony in the late 1860s. Plate 1 is the portrait of a Lagos merchant’s family while plate 2 features a line up of members of the Lagos based Houssa (Hausa) Militia created and used by Lieutenant Glover in the late 19th century as his personal

bodyguards. These militia were mostly comprised of runaway slaves from northern extraction who quickly became a regular source of irritation to Lagosian but a cheap and loyal force for Hawley Glover (Elebute, 2013).



Plate 1: Family of a Merchant. ca.1886
Edouard Foà.
Plate 2: (Houssas)
Militia of Lagos.
ca.1886, Edouard Foà.
Source: Both
photographs are from



<http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/photographs-of-africa-from-the-late-1800s/>
As presented by Suzanne Blier and Frances Terpak. Accessed: August 11, 2016.

Further prove of photographic activity in Lagos in the 1880s can be seen in the Lagos Observer's 6th of February 1886 advertisement. Posted by Frederick R. C. and Erick Lutterodt who often toured as "The Lutterodt Brothers" travelling along the West African coast in search of commercial activity - it reads: "Lutterodt Brothers, Photographers, (Established, 1876). Beg to inform the public of their recent arrival here on Photographic Tour, and that they are quite prepared to receive sitters at their studio, erected in the premises of the late Hotonu's house, Balogun Street. From their acquired experience and many years' practice of the Art, they earnestly hope to be able to afford the utmost satisfaction to all who may favour them with a sitting. Samples of photographs, Landscape views, &c, &c, are always on hand, and can be seen at our studios. Terms Very Moderate." (Gbadegesin, 2011).

Significant evidence also abound that ace colonial photographer Walwin Holm travelled to Lagos in the mid-1880s on extended photographic tours. Like the Lutterodt Brothers, he had posted an advertisement in the *The Mirror* (Lagos) on the 17 December 1887 issue to promote his photographic service. It read:

PHOTOGRAPH! PHOTOGRAPH!!
PHOTOGRAPH!!! N. Walwin Holm begs
to notify the Public that he has commenced
his Photographic business, in his residence
at Tinubu Street, Lagos, next door to
Messrs: Witt and Busch where he has
always on hand for sale, Views and Types
of this West Coast of Africa. Business hours
from 7 to 11 and from 1 to 4p Sundays
exclusive. Terms and rates will be made
known upon application (*ibid*, 158).

Holm who would sign his photos as *Photoholm* was certainly a renowned photographer in Lagos in the 1880s as Killingray and Roberts (1989) noted that he was commissioned to record the raising of the British flag in parts of southwestern Nigeria in 1891. This will suggests that he was a frequent visiting photographer to Lagos as he was actually based in Accra.

Early attempts at Architecture Photography in Lagos

The visual recording of buildings (and structures) as an expression of society in its cultural context has a long history that predates the invention of photography. Photographic documentation of buildings which began in France in the 1800s only sort to maintain the tradition already established by graphic artists and painters of representing the stature of the country through its buildings (Lambert, 1977). The early masters of photography, Hippolyte Bayard, Charles Negre, Henri le Secq, Edouard Baldus and the Bissons, made exhaustive records of buildings and great engineering works for various government departments under the Empire. Many of these photographs were known to the European public from international exhibitions, salons and showings by photographic societies in London, Paris, Vienna, Brussels and New York, and from portfolios sold by influential publishers such as Blanquard-Evrard and Goupil fils (*ibid.* 61). Conversely, the case isn't so in early Lagos. While traditionally, the Yoruba saw architecture as a valid expression of art and an embodiment of culture - however basic, the idea of representing or recording it in forms other than itself did not quite exist. The traditional disposition allowed for art and form to be

created for the purpose of appreciation, utility and worship (in fact this was central to the Yoruba essence) but it does not present a need to further document already made art as the existence of the work in itself is sufficient for the glorification of cultural ideals. With this foundation, while early Lagos – and indeed Yoruba people generally – immensely embraced photography and engaged it copiously in their daily life, they seldom turned their lenses to objects of art and other man made material culture for the purpose of documenting or re-presenting it. What this meant for the practise of architectural photography in Lagos was that it had a lethargic growth in comparison to human portraiture. The returnee *saros* and *agudas* who became the native elite of Lagos were at the forefront of photography of the city at that time. Being still guided by traditional ideas of aesthetics, they naturally gravitated towards portraiture and studio photography, it will take the prompting of the colonial authorities through patronage to kick start that concept of architectural photography in early Lagos. Since the function of most early architectural photographs was simply to document buildings, photography prevailed over the engraving because it could be produced and distributed more rapidly, and hence in greater quantity, more cheaply, and by practitioners less ardously trained (Ackerman, 2001). This position fitted perfectly into the colonial authority's agenda to feed the ever growing yearns from people back in England for information on the people and cultures of the colonies. What better way to present the 'reality' of a thing than through Photography. Ryan (1997) presents a thought that the "enthusiasm for the applications of photography (by the colonial authorities) stemmed in part from the increasingly prominent place of warfare in the Victorian imagination, particularly where Empire was concerned. Indeed, one may agree with this idea to a large extent, though what is more is that the colonial power needed a

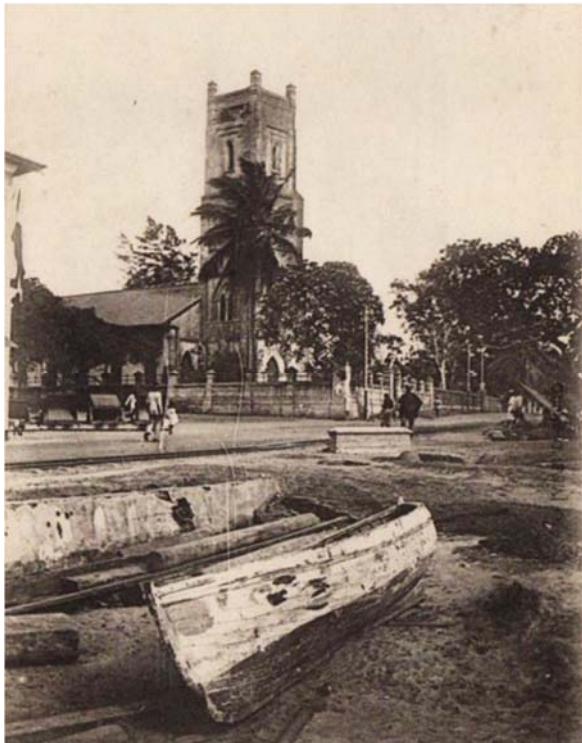
pragmatic and efficient way to document the domination and articulation of colonial ways and photography thus became the answer when one required a medium that was to leave no doubt. The missionary bodies did much by way of graphic sketches but nothing was to beat the authenticity of photography.

Based on these thoughts, the early attempts at architectural photography was as a direct result of the patronage of the colonial authorities. The patron – (native) artist relationship however did not quite take off until early 20th century. The very best of architectural and cityscape photography of Lagos of that era was to be seen in the works of government photographer H. Sanya Freeman who served the colonial government as chief photographer in the early 20th century. He contributed an immense amount of architectural and cityscape photographs spanning well over a decade on the patronage of the colonial government. It must be clear that probably the only condition that would make the native photographer/artist create photographs of objects that already exists as ‘art’ in itself is when a reasonable payment is to be made for the effort. Under this condition, the colonial government would have made a reliable patron in those times as it alone may have the resources and the need for photographs of buildings to be taken. Many of the works were however not properly catalogued and some are still obscured and unlabelled resting in a private collection. Gladly the concept of printing architectural photographs on Postcards became an important commercial venture in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. Through these postcard prints several photographs that would have been lost to lack of proper archiving culture is still seen today. While some of the cards showcased landscape or cultural subjects like textile weaving, architecture became one of the most popular

subjects feature on the postcards. The postcard era which flourished mainly during the colonial period helped in no small way to preserve the very early attempts at architectural photography. Plates 3,4,5,6 shows examples of early attempts of architectural photography in Lagos.

It would appear that the early approach to photographing buildings is such that little attempt is made at isolating the structure for simplification or for the purpose of detailing. What obtains is a deliberate framing in a manner that it presents the building almost always in context of the socio-cultural landscape of its location. When most of the early architectural photographs are studied, one will see a deliberate aim by the photographer at a framing style where the primary object, being the building, is in proper visual dialogue with the items, people and infrastructure around it which are the secondary subjects. This is well articulated in Plate 3. The photographer takes a slightly low angle to accentuate the majesty of Christ Church tower while making certain that the wooden canoe is prominently presented in the foreground to give a sense of place and a coastal identity to the building even without showing the water front. The photographer could have stepped a little to the left of the frame and be upright to give more prominence to the building but even when a good part of the building is obscured by a palm tree no attempts are made to avoid isolating the primary subject. The ideology behind the early photography of buildings were simply documentation and not necessarily exploratory as we would have a photographic study of a structure where clarity and details are paramount. Perhaps this is what Higgott and Wray (2012) argued in the introductory part of their work where the notion was floated that it can be claimed that the narrowness of the photographic vision has had a powerfully negative impact upon the

way architecture is understood and developed – that only some of the qualities of architecture can be communicated in the photograph: the properties of space, materiality and the day-to-day inhabitation are notoriously difficult to represent photographically. The duo wonders if the medium favours and promotes an abstracted vision of architecture that assumes far more significance in the photographic representation than in built reality.



(?)
Date: ca. 1924
Source: <https://images.nationalarchives.gov.uk>

Plate 3. Christ Church (Completed in 1924) on the Marina.
Photographer: H.S. Freeman



Plate 4. Early Brazilian Style Building. Breadfruit Street. Lagos
Photographer: Alfred L. Carew
Date: 1914
Source: <https://images.nationalarchives.gov.uk>



Plate 5: Old Supreme Court, Tinubu Square, Lagos.
Photographer: H.S. Freeman
Postcard, collotype
9 x 14 cm (3 1/2 x 5 1/2 in.)
Date: ca. 1906
Source: www.delcampe.net

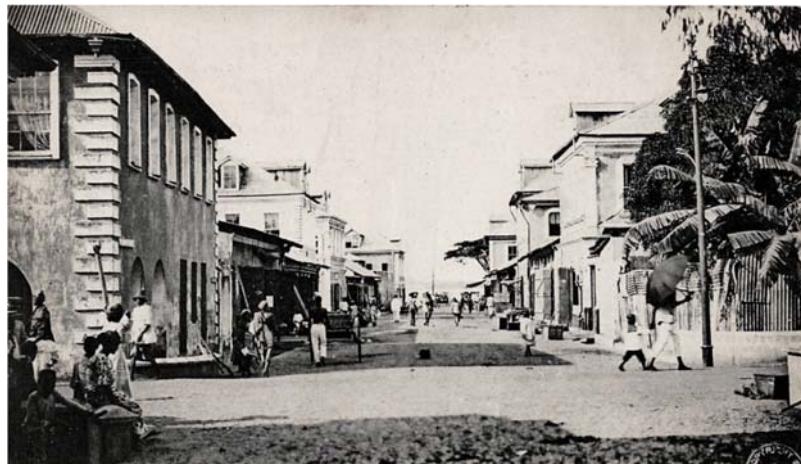


Plate 6: Port Novo Market Street in Lagos Colony.

Photographer: Henry Dupuy

Postcard, collotype

9 x 14 cm (3 1/2 x 5 1/2 in.)

Date: ca. 1906

Source: www.delcampe.net

Some Early Pioneers

There is a contention which borders on the notion that Lagos, indeed Nigeria, has never truly had a real architectural photographer - all we have had are just photographers who occasionally shot architecture. Theoretically this idea may find some worth when we consider the ideological approach towards the early works of visually documented architecture. The approach has done little by way a visual study of architectural style which one would imagine in the core purpose of architectural photography (should we call it a discipline). Be that as it may, and while this author is mildly in agreement with the expressed contention, it does not negate the fact that in its most 'primal' state,

the craft of architecture photography or photographing architecture has been decently explored in early Lagos. Both the colonial pioneers and their indigenous counterparts recognised the value of visual documentation and their most basic works serve as a reference point to the discuss and evaluation of architecture in Lagos. The discuss and critique of cultural intermingling in early Lagos may have been incomprehensible or all together impossible without the efforts of these camera men in creating vital visual data that now serve as key index for several historical enquiry.

Speaking of pioneers, it will be worthwhile to briefly mention some notable names here and to highlight some of their contribution. Again, while these men are seen in a broad sense of the profession and are mostly referenced as general photographers, their contribution to the area of architectural documentation is not in the ranking that one can overlook. As mentioned earlier, probably the most noteworthy of the early camera men who rigorously contributed to the visual documentary of early architecture of Lagos is H. Sanya Freeman. He was actively engaged by the colonial government of Nigeria in the early part of the 20th century, particularly active within the year 1900 - 1920. Freeman produced more works of than any other camera man of the early 1900s when it comes to architecture. Several of his outstanding works on the architecture of Lagos are currently held in the National Archives of the UK under a portfolio called 'Nigeria Snaps'. Some of his most famous works include; The Government House, Lagos, Central Law Court, Tinubu Square, St George Hall, Broad street Lagos, Campbell Street View, Views of the Bank of British West Africa and the Elder Dempster and Co. Limited on Marina to mention a view. Besides his contribution to the documentation of early architecture of Lagos, he also made

notable photographs in other areas such as 'native lives', 'The Gardens at Sokoto', 'The Nigeria Regiment of the West African Frontier Force', 'The Colony Police Force' and shots of the Government Printing Office in Lagos.

Other fine Camera men who played pivotal roles in the creation of visual data for early Lagos include George S. A. da Costa, J. W. Rowland – A Scottish Surgeon and amateur photographer, Alfred Lisk-Carew, Henry Dupuy, W.S. Turton, Obafemi Luther, and Walwin Holm. George da Costa essentially started professional photography around 1895 after he resigned from the C.M.S Bookshop as the first African Manager. He owned a studio at Oke Popo on Lagos Island where he created several outstanding portrait photographs. His most prominent work however is to be his documentation of the construction of the Railway from Lagos to Kaduna through Jebba on the commission of the colonial government. Henry Dupuy is another individual who immensely contributed to how we see early 20th century Lagos. Stationed in Lagos as an agent of the French trading company *Compagnie Francais de l'Afrique Occidentale* (CFAO), he was particularly passionate about architecture and urban life. Many of his photographs are a clinical record of Lagos' urban and street life. His subject and framing technique are decisive and vivid and he delivers his record of architecture with such clarity. The Saro W.S. Turton and the Scottish Surgeon J.W Rowland were both photographers stationed in Lagos in the late 1880s. Both men accompanied Sir Gilbert Carter on the Lagos Interior Expedition in 1893 ('Who was who', 1992). Rowland who was transferred to Lagos in October 1880 as Colonial Surgeon in Lagos travelled alongside Turton who was originally a messenger with the Public Works Department of Lagos Colony. Turton served as the

expedition photographer, while the surgeon went on the trip as a botanist but also took photographs. Rowland had earlier made a photographic compendium of Lagos views in 1885.

Other notable names who took the mantle from the already mentioned pioneers and worked tirelessly well into the Post-independence Period to record the structural and cultural metamorphosis of Lagos include J.D. 'Okhai Ojeikere with his picturesque style of recording architecture, Matthew Faji, Sunmi Smart-Cole and Don Barber – all worked as regular photographers but contributed immensely to architectural records through their photography. One of J.D Ojeikere's most impressive architectural works is his 1967 shot of Niger House, Marina – the beauty in delivery is unparalleled. On the patronage of the Mandilas Group, Ojeikere was commissioned to carry out a photographic documentation and study of Afro Brazilian buildings in Lagos. Works from that corpus were featured in a compilation titled Eko Landmarks published by Mandilas Group in 1999.

A key insight comes to light here and it is that of patronage. Patronage is in the very heart of the sustenance of any art based discipline or practise. It is clear that without it no art form, however noble, will survive. To borrow the words of British property investor Chris Brown - It was patronage through the Florentine banking market that unlocked the Renaissance, a soap business near busy Erie Canal that changed the game for Frank L. Wright, and a thriving Parisian insurance company that permitted Le Corbusier to create for Modernism what the Parthenon created for Antiquity (Gendall, 2010). The author John Gendall quotes Chris Brown in his attempt to re-evaluate the importance of patronage in the process of architectural achievement. Against this

backdrop, the discipline of architecture must review its role, not as artist (architects) in this instance, but as patrons of architectural photography. It becomes important to be conscious of the fact that the visual data generated today becomes the invaluable historical material of tomorrow therefore the discipline of architecture must take the challenge and responsibility of generating the drive required for the continuous visual documentation of buildings and the urban environment. One of the ways to fan the reawakening of the practise of architecture photography is to create a medium through which the presentation of architectural photography is regularly done for the purpose disciplinary discuss. The Nigeria Magazine published by the Federal Ministry of Information at one time was a major channel through which many of the early architectural photography works were presented to scholars, enthusiast and the general public alike. Moving forward, we must seek an equally pragmatic model of generated and disseminating architectural visual records both for disciplinary and general consumption. The building and urban discipline must re-inculcate the practise of visually recording architectural for only through this can the future generation truly understand how we engaged our urban space. Peripheral as this may seem, we owe this to the next generation. This next generation already lack identity in the face of globalisation and are gravely malnourished culturally. If architecture of a time is indeed a true canvass for the articulation of culture and identity, then every effort must be made to visually document it for future instruction and for posterity.

Conclusion

This paper has briefly explored the historical basis for the introduction of photography into Lagos, Nigeria. It further discussed the early approaches to documenting architectural works in the colony pointing also to the centrality of patronage through the colonial government as the energy behind the development and sustenance of this aspect of photography. The conclusion here draws one to the fact that while the primary responsibility of the architect is to conceptualise and create architecture, a need now arises to push the boundaries of that to accommodate the job of documenting finished pieces for posterity. Architecture as a discipline must no longer sit back to contemplate if there is a need for the visual documentation of architectural works. We have long moved on from the cultural ideology of lethargy in visually documenting any form already seen as art. Architecture as a discipline and practise needs to engage the power of non-verbal communication more now than ever. A greater number of people today, due to the developments in technology ‘speak and understand’ photography more than ever. The time is now for visually inclined discipline to own the use of such medium so that the full essence of their works is better presented. About 70% of the buildings one will ever talk about, study, appreciate or critique we may only meet them through a photographic print. This fact presents a serious concern if our knowledge and involvement in the craft is limited.

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