



Smithsonian

National Museum of African Art

Keystone-Underwood stereographs, EEPA 1986-022

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Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
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Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	Keystone-Underwood Stereographs
Date:	1882-1930
Identifier:	EEPA.1986-022
Source:	National Museum of African Art (U.S.) (Collector)
Creator:	Keystone View Company Underwood & Underwood
Extent:	240 Stereographs (black and white; 9 x 22 cm.)
Language:	English .
Summary:	The photographs document African businesses, cities, industry, landscapes, peoples and resources. The collection documents various locations within Kenya, Tanzania, Congo (Democratic Republic of), Zimbabwe, Uganda and South Africa. Peoples represented include Kikuyu, Maasai, Bangi, Chagga, Ndombe, Poto, Bangala, Zulu, and Kongo peoples. There are many images of agriculture, hunting, making pottery, mining diamonds and gold, church services at a Catholic mission, a gathering of chiefs at a court, a lion-killing ceremony, and war dances. Businesses and industries shown include coffee plantations; the DeBeers Diamond Mine; a diamond mine compound and crushing mill; fishing boats; a hemp plantation; ivory trade; a market; and the stock market.
Container:	Box 1
Container:	Box 2

Administrative Information

Provenance

Stereographs assembled by the staff of the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives of the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, from various donors. The stereographs were produced commercially by the Keystone View Company and the Underwood and Underwood Company, mass publishers and distributors of stereographic views.

Restrictions

Use of original records requires an appointment. Contact Archives staff for more details.

Conditions Governing Use

Permission to reproduce images from the Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives must be obtained in advance. The collection is subject to all copyright laws.

Biographical / Historical

In 1882 the Underwood and Underwood Company began operations in Kansas. Founded by brothers Bert Elias (1862-1943) and Elmer (1860-1947) Underwood, the company pioneered the technique of selling stereographs door-to-door. By 1884, Underwood and Underwood's operations had expanded to the West Coast, and the company soon opened offices throughout the world. In the 1890s, the firm began selling images to publications such as Illustrated London News and Harper's Weekly. At its peak in the early 19th century, the company produced 25,000 images per day.

In the late 1910s, Underwood and Underwood was purchased by a competing stereograph company, the Keystone View Company.

Scope and Contents

The photographs document African businesses, cities, industry, landscapes, peoples and resources. Place documented include Moshi Province, Mount Kilimanjaro, Mount Meru, the Serengeti Plain (Kenya), and Zanzibar in German East Africa (now Tanzania); Victoria Falls and the Zambezi River in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe); Cape Town, Devil's Peak, Johannesburg, Kimberly, Natal Province, and Port Elizabeth in South Africa; the waterfront of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; and Soko, Boma, Leopoldville (now Kinshasa), and Stanley Falls (now Boyoma Falls). There are also photographs of the Nile during a flood.

People portrayed include a Kikuyu man paying brideprice for a wife; Kikuyu women carrying water vessels and planting beans; Maasai women building houses; Swahili people dancing; Swahili women using a power figure to ward off evil; and Zulu men training for war. Other peoples portrayed include Bangala, Bangi, Chagga, Kongo, Ndombe and Poto.

Activities documented include buying ivory, carrying rubber, clearing the ground for a coffee plantation, fishing, gambling, grinding corn, hunting zebra, making pottery, mining diamonds and gold, peeling bark for bark cloth, picking coffee, preparing food, smoking meat, threshing beans, and tying house poles. There are also images of church services at a Catholic mission, a gathering of chiefs at a court, a lion-killing ceremony, and war dances.

Businesses and industries shown include coffee plantations in Rhodesia; the DeBeers Diamond Mine in South Africa; a diamond mine compound and crushing mill; fishing boats off Cape Town; a hemp plantation in Uganda; ivory trade in Mombasa, Kenya; a market; and the stock market in Johannesburg.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Agriculture
- Bangi
- Cultural landscapes
- Industry
- Kikuyu (African people)
- Kongo (African people)
- Maasai (African people)
- Marketplaces
- Ngala (African people)
- Swahili-speaking peoples
- Zulu (African people)

Cultures:

Bangi
Kikuyu (African people)
Kongo (African people)
Maasai (African people)
Swahili-speaking peoples
Zulu (African people)

Types of Materials:

Stereographs

Names:

National Museum of African Art (U.S.)

Places:

Africa
Congo (Democratic Republic)
Kenya
South Africa
Tanzania
Zimbabwe