



Smithsonian

National Museum of African Art

Pères Blancs (White Fathers) photographic albums, EEPA 1987-010

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Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	Pères Blancs (White Fathers) Photographic Albums
Date:	circa 1903-1925
Identifier:	EEPA.1987-010
Creator:	White Fathers
Source:	White Fathers Mission (Collector)
Extent:	217 Photographic prints (black and white) 217 Copy prints (black and white) 217 Copy negatives (black and white; 4 x 5 in.)
Language:	Undetermined .
Summary:	The Pères Blancs (White Fathers) Society Photographic Album documents the group's missions and the Africans living near them in the East African kingdoms of Rwanda and Burundi (now the state of Rwanda-Burundi). Subjects include individual and group portraits of Africans, including members of the Tutsi royal family and the Tutsi elite, Christian families of Hutu origin, missionaries and Western visitors, and Twa people on an elephant hunt. There are also photos of landscapes, African villages and mission buildings, activities, including dancing and farming.
Container:	Box 1
Container:	Box 2
Container:	Box 3

Administrative Information

Provenance

Purchased, 1988. Conserved through a preservation grant funded by the Smithsonian Institution Women's Committee, 2006.

Preferred Citation

Pères Blancs (White Fathers) photographic albums, EEPA 1987-010, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution.

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

Cardinal Charles M. Lavigerie, the Catholic Archbishop of Algiers, founded the Society of Missionaries of Africa which became known as Pères Blancs in 1869. Beginning a plan of expansion in 1878, Lavigerie sent a group of missionaries across the Sahara to establish a mission in Timbuktu, but the efforts failed when the accompanying Africans revolted. Over 23 missionaries died before the mission was completed in the 1890s.

The Pères Blancs also established themselves in Uganda, Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and the Upper Congo by the 1880s. Despite resistance from local chiefs and governments, the society continued to expand in the first part of the 20th century, setting up hospitals; elementary, normal and technical schools; and seminaries in Africa, as well as training schools in several European countries. After World War II the society's influence declined, although it still operates today.

Scope and Contents

The photographs document the Africans living near the Pères Blancs (White Fathers) Mission stations at Rwanda and Burundi. Most of the photographs are individual and group portraits of Africans, especially members of the Tutsi royal family and Tutsi elite of Rwanda and Burundi. Other portraits include Christian families of Hutu origin, the missionaries and Western visitors, and Twa people on an elephant hunt. Activities documented include attending a mission class, building grass and brick structures, carrying royalty on palanquins, carrying visitors, dancing, farming, drawing water, and weaving baskets. Objects depicted include baskets, combs, garments, jewelry, lances and shields. There are images of African villages and mission buildings, as well as landscapes of mountains and volcanoes.

Arrangement

Maintained original order (in order of original albums).

Photos published in:

EEPA 1987-010-0042: Exhibited in "Marking Places: Spatial Effects of African Art," Fogg Art Museum, 2001-2002.

EEPA 1987-010-0042: Published in "Changing Place: Spatial Effects of African Art," (Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, 2001).

EEPA 1987-010-0049: Published in "At First Sight: Photography and the Smithsonian" (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003).

EEPA 1987-010-0060: Published in "At First Sight: Photography and the Smithsonian" (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2003).

EEPA 1987-010-0079: Produced in "The Jesus Experience," video recording, (Studio City, CA: Paulist Productions, Spring 2002).

EEPA 1987-010-0089: Produced in "The Jesus Experience," video recording, (Studio City, CA: Paulist Productions, Spring 2002).

EEPA 1987-010-0095: Produced in "The Jesus Experience," video recording, (Studio City, CA: Paulist Productions, Spring 2002).

EEPA 1987-010-0102: Produced in "The Jesus Experience," video recording, (Studio City, CA: Paulist Productions, Spring 2002).

EEPA 1987-010-0104: Produced in "The Jesus Experience," video recording, (Studio City, CA: Paulist Productions, Spring 2002).

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Hutu (African people)
- Tura (African people)
- Tutsi (African people)

Cultures:

- Hutu (African people)
- Tura (African people)
- Tutsi (African people)

Types of Materials:

- Photographic prints

Names:

- Lavigerie, Charles Martial Allemand, Cardinal, 1825-1892
- White Fathers Mission
- White Fathers Mission -- Missionaries

Places:

- Africa
- Burundi
- Rwanda
- Uganda

Container Listing

Series 1: Album 1: Rwanda, circa 1903-circa 1921

78 Gelatin silver prints

Box 1

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents: Series 1 is comprised of one album containing 78 silver gelatin prints. Many of the photographs depict Pères Blancs (White Fathers) missionaries, particularly Roger and Paul Van Hende, Africans enlisted in the European military, and Chief Musinga and his family. Peoples depicted include Rwandan and Swahili peoples. There are also a few photographs of Lake Tanganyika, Sultan Kisabuka, and Royal Commissioner Marzonal. Rwandans are depicted preparing grains and hides, dancing, vaulting, rowing, and digging irrigation canals, among other activities.

Place: Rwanda
Tanganyika, Lake

Topic: Missionaries -- Africa

Culture: Swahili (African people)
Rwandans

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Series 2: Album 2: Rwanda, circa 1903-circa 1924

59 Gelatin silver prints

Box 2

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and
Contents:

Series 2 is comprised of 1 album consisting of 59 silver gelatin prints. Many of the photographs depict Peres Blancs (White Fathers) missionaries and Rwandan peoples involved in agricultural, blacksmithing, cattle herding, and hunting activities. Individuals photographed in this series include Chief Musinga and his family and Mrs. Van Hende. Locations of these photographs in Rwanda include Bugoye, Ruasa, Nyundo, Rulinda, Batussi, and Nyansa. Specific sites include the Ruisi Plains, Niragongo volcano and crater, and mount Kulinda. Lakes Kivu, Mohasi, Rukondo and Mulera are also documented in this series along with both the Luvyrionza and Ruvuvu rivers. The three missions documented in this series include the Kabgaye mission, the Tsavi mission, and the Boinga mission.

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Series 3: Album 3: Burundi, circa 1924-1925

Box 3

[Image\(s\)](#)

Scope and Contents:

Series 3 is comprised of 1 album containing 80 silver gelatin prints, taken in Burundi. Many of these photographs consist of individual and group portraits of the family of Mwezi Gisabo and Ririkumutima, including his brothers and their wives, his sons, and his grandsons. Also included are portraits of servants, young children, dancers, and several Tutsi and Batwa women. Many of these individuals have shaved hairstyles and are wearing clothes constructed of ficus tree fiber, necklaces made of bone, pearls, or beads, and rosaries. Many individuals are also depicted holding bows and lances. There are also images of woven baskets, combs, spears, and shields. Specific sites include the Mugeru cathedral, built by the White Fathers in 1922 near the Ruvyironza river, a sawmill in the Kibira forest, and a festival in Gitega.

Topic: Tutsi (African people)

Place: Burundi

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