



Smithsonian

National Museum of African Art

Leibig trade cards, EEPA 2008-005, circa 1899-1955

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2011

Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Biographical/Historical note.....	1
General note.....	2
Arrangement note.....	2
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	

Collection Overview

Repository:	Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art
Title:	Leibig trade cards
Date:	circa 1899-1955
Identifier:	EEPA.2008-005
Extent:	126 Chromolithographs (126 trade cards (13 sets))
Language:	Multiple languages .
Summary:	This collection consists of 126 chromolithographic trade cards (13 sets) published by the Leibig Company between 1899 and 1955. These trade cards were included with products sold in Europe, such as chicken soup and chocolate. The cards focus on African art and material culture and showcase distinctive ethnic types, artistic and craft traditions, cultural performance, dress/costume and leadership. Sets include In Transvaal, In Abyssinia, Scenes of Africa, In East Africa I, Madagascar, In East Africa II, Life Among the Congolese People, Wild Animals of the Congo, The Italian Empire, Congolese Craftsmanship, Hunting and Fishing in the Belgian Congo, Peoples of the Belgian Congo, and History of the Belgian Congo I-III. Captions on the cards appear in French, Italian and German.
Container:	Item EEPA.2008-005

Administrative Information

Provenance

Purchased from Alvin Pettit Productions (Kevin Jackson), 2008.

Preferred Citation

Leibig Trade Cards, 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 Note

Liebig's Extract of Meat Co. Ltd. was founded in London in 1856, with a share capital of £480,000. During the next century there were several changes of name, and in 1971 the Company was acquired by Brooke Bond's, and is now known as Brooke Bond (Liebig) Ltd. Baron Justus von Liebig, a chemist, produced a

meat extract which was energetically marketed in jars, tubes and packets under a variety of names, such as Liebig, Sapis and Oxo. The extract was so popular that many rivals attempted to pass off their products as those of Liebig; several legal cases followed, and after this time the celebrated signature in blue of the founder appeared on packets and cards. The company prospered to the extent that it had branches and subsidiaries in many countries, such as Italy, Germany, France, South Africa and the United States; at one stage they claimed to own supply branches in Africa and South America totalling nearly 10,000 square miles, and containing 500,000 cattle.

At a very early stage the company discovered the value of advertising and began to issue series of cards in 1872; these continued, with two short breaks during the World Wars, until 1974. The first series were probably handed out to customers by retailers, and were confined to France; this followed the pattern of most early French 'trade cards', which were produced en masse by printers, and then sold to shops and manufacturers who then had their own names and advertising printed on the backs and fronts --hence many of the early Liebig series of cards, which may well have assisted in the continued expansion of the company. The method of distribution also changed, and customers were able to obtain complete sets of cards in exchange for coupons which appeared in, or on, the packets. Sets were soon prepared for distribution in several countries, and many occur in six or more different languages, including English, Russian and Swedish. In addition, the Liebig Company was responsible for a wide variety of other card types. Of these, the best known are the menu cards, table cards and calendars, but they also issued such varied items as playing cards, postcards, cookery books and wallets.

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by series.

General

Title provided by EEPA staff.

Names and Subject Terms

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

Subjects:

- Animals -- Africa
- Art, African
- Clothing and dress
- Decorative arts
- Fishing
- Folk art
- Hunting -- Africa
- Rites and ceremonies -- Africa
- handicrafts

Types of Materials:

- Chromolithography
- Collecting cards
- Trade cards

Places:

Africa
Africa, East
Belgian Congo
Congo (Democratic Republic)
Ethiopia
Madagascar
Transvaal (South Africa)