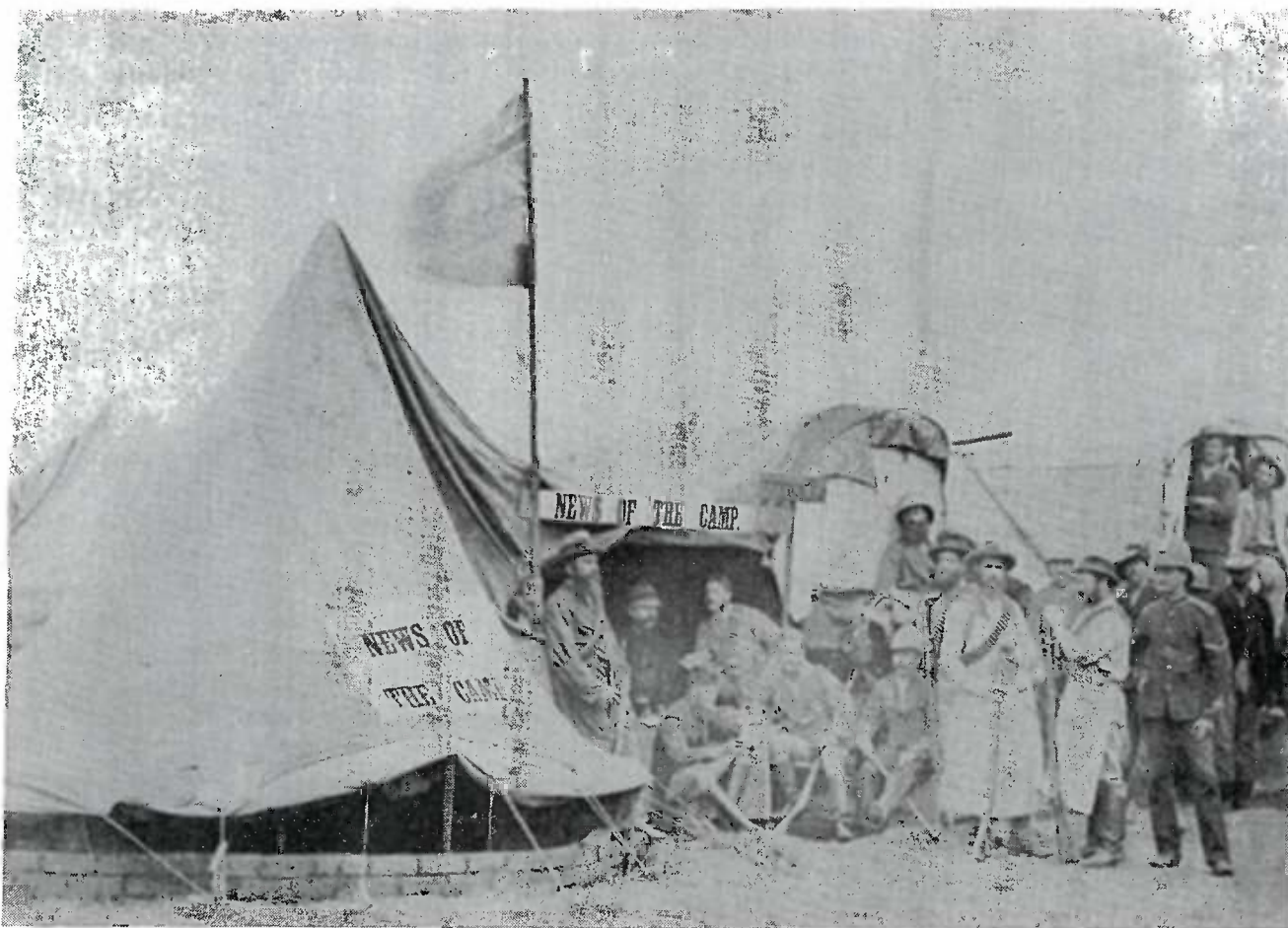


Royal Commonwealth Society, London

Photograph Collection

A unique source of visual documents
on Colonial and Commonwealth history (mid 1850s - mid 1980s)
on microfiche

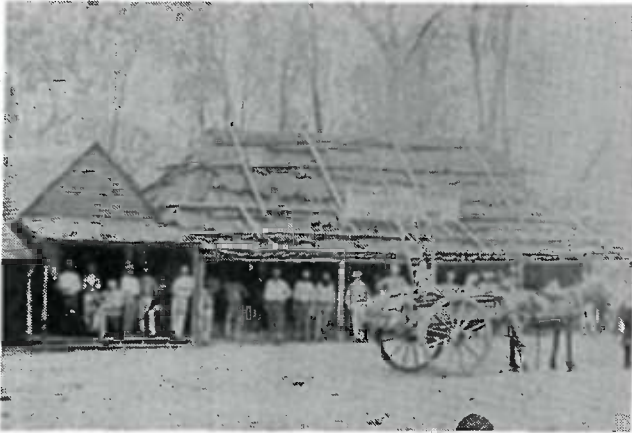


Editor: John Falconer

 IDC

Royal Commonwealth Society - Photograph Collection

A unique source of visual documents on Colonial and Commonwealth history
(mid 1850s - mid 1980s)



The Mount Perry Hotel,
Heusmann Street. Mount Perry, Queensland, c. 1872

Introduction

The invention of photography in 1839 co-incided to a remarkable degree with an era of unparalleled British imperial expansion and consolidation.

Early photographers were thus able to document this phenomenon, and through the lenses of commercial operators, explorers, administrators, and soldiers, the British Empire in the latter half of the nineteenth century was photographed in all its stages and for a variety of purposes, from the recording of early explorations and contacts with aboriginal inhabitants to the settlements of pioneers and farmers, the building of railways, roads, and bridges, and the growth of cities.

As contributions to knowledge, visual propaganda, souvenirs for tourists, or simply reflecting pride in the architectural and engineering achievements of the British in newly opened territories, this body of work stands as an important source for the study of both historical events and photographic history.

This microfiche edition of the photograph collection of the Royal Commonwealth Society comprising some 45,000 pictures makes available for study and use what is perhaps the most extensive existing body of photographs related to imperial and Commonwealth history.

The collection

Founded in 1868 as the Colonial Society, the Royal Commonwealth Society built up a collection of historical photographs that was soon seen as an integral part of a comprehensive survey of the Empire, and from 1896 onward the Society solicited pictorial contributions from its members overseas.

The collection now comprises a wide assortment of material documenting the topography, architecture, and life of Britain's colonial dependencies as well as a visual record of specific historical events in the development of British territories. It also reflects the work of those engaged in more technical tasks, for example in the fields of public works, medicine, surveying, and education.

In several cases this historical record extends up to very recent times, with collections illustrating such themes as trade, industry, and education; in the last of these categories, the collection of material from the Inter-University Council on the development of post-war university education in the Commonwealth is noteworthy. For a number of countries, such as Kenya and Malaysia, the collection includes photographs of the independence ceremonies marking the end of British authority.

Early documents on historical events

Some examples from the earlier parts of the collection give an idea of its scope:

Early contacts and the opening up of territories to British influence are seen in the photographs of the proclamation of a British protectorate in S.E. New Guinea in 1884, and William Ellerton Fry's photographs of the march of the Pioneer Column into Mashonaland in 1890 form a graphic record of the founding of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe).

Military campaigns to extend or bolster British control are seen in the albums pertaining to the Zulu War of 1879, the First Boer War of 1880-81, the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882, and the 1885 and 1898 campaigns in the Sudan.



Youthful Sea Dyaks (Ibans) in gala dress. Sarawak, 1890s

Cover:
Editorial offices of *News of the Camp*. Pretoria, 1880-1881



The Maharajah of Bhurtpore in Durbar. 1862

The economic progress and growth of the colonies can be followed in photographs of the expanding cities of Sydney and Melbourne from the 1860s to the early 1900s, the building of the Uganda Railway at the turn of the century, and the detailed coverage of the tea and spice industries of Ceylon by W.L.H. Skeen & Co. in the 1880s.

Photographers

The photographers represented include a number of men with an international reputation - such as Felix Beato, Charles Robertson, Samuel Bourne (a particularly fine collection), and John Thomson - but the collection as a whole offers an important cross-section of those who contributed to the growth of photography in particular regions: in this latter category mention may be made of G.R. Lambert (Singapore), William Young (East Africa), Duperley & Co. (Jamaica), and the Lisk-Carew Brothers (Sierra Leone).

Special collections

Queen Mary Collection

Some 3,000 prints, documenting the royal tours of the Indian sub-continent made in 1905-06 and 1911-12, in a series of sumptuous albums.

A.H. Fisher Collection

Some 4,000 prints, taken for the Colonial Office Visual Instruction Committee between 1907 and 1911, illustrate many aspects of life in the empire that are not easily found in other sources.

R.C.I. Portrait Collection

Some 3,500 members' portraits taken between the 1880s and the 1920s, constituting a valuable archive of photographs of colonial governors, civil servants, engineers, soldiers, and others with imperial connections.

British Association of Malaysia Collection

Some 1,500 photographs of Singapore and Malaya taken between the 1870s and the 1960s, covering almost the entire period of British dominance in the area.

General information

The complete collection is available on 774 high quality positive silver halide microfiches.
Order number: KH-3200/1 - KH-3211/1

Because the collection is arranged by geographical area, separate sections covering individual areas can be supplied. The Table of Contents indicates the area, the number of collections, the number of photographs, and the price of the microfiches for each area.

Finding aids

Record cards (on microfiche)

Record cards reproduced at the beginning of each collection provide the basic information about the collection: code, number of prints, photographer's name (where identified), and some guidance as to the type of material.

Guide (in printed form)

In this guide the 659 collections are arranged in geographical order and each item is accompanied by the principal information as shown on the record cards and a reference to the microfiche numbers.

Catalogue (on microfiche)

For the majority of the more important collections detailed information is given about each photograph including its size and condition as well as a description, identifications, and historical background material. Some more recently acquired material carries shorter descriptions. (KHI-3200-3211/1).

Indexes (on microfiche)

Portrait index (RCI members/General), which also supplies basic biographical data where known. (KHIA-3200/1).

Photographer index, which also supplies histories of firms. (KHIB-3200/1).

How to order

Please send your order to the following address:

IDC Publishers
P.O. Box 11205
2301 EE Leiden
The Netherlands
Fax +31 (0)71-5-13 17 21
Phone +31 (0)71 5 14 27 00
E-mail info@idc.nl
IDC VAT no.: NL001540610B01

Prices are given in Euro and are subject to change without notice. (For the European Community only: domestic VAT taxes are not included.)

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