

The Cameroon Press Photo Archive (CPPA) Buea in Crisis 1955-2016: A Historical Investigation

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Abstract

Since its invention photography in all its ramifications has affected and continues to affect the everyday life of people. It has become a powerful means of communication and mode of visual expression that touches human life in many ways. For example, photography is valued as a means of crystallising memories. One archive which illustrates it is the Cameroon Press Photo Archives - Buea (CPPA-B). The CPPA-Buea was established to use photography as a means of immortalising, conserving and granting access to historical events and personalities in British Southern Cameroons. More than fifty-five years later the institution has not only been in crisis but has been basically abandoned by the authorities in charge. Through qualitative analysis, this paper traces the origin and evolution of the CPPA, its challenges, prospects and ongoing reforms between 1955 and 2016.

Keywords: Photo Archives, Photography, Cameroon Press

Introduction

The Cameroon Press Photo Archives is located in Buea one of the major towns and regional capital of the South West Region of Cameroon. Buea is situated on the slopes of Mount Fako otherwise called Mount Cameroon, an active volcano, at an altitude of approximately 1,000 metres.¹ The climate is moderate with regards to temperatures (max. between 27 and 29°C) but extremely humid. Some old buildings still date from the time when Buea was the capital of German Kamerun in the early 20th century before Germany lost its colonies after its defeat in the First World War. Prominent among such buildings is the *Schloss* constructed by Governor Jesko von Puttkamer between April 1901 and June 1902 commonly known in Cameroon as the Prime Minister's Lodge (Austine 2016: 38). Buea is located in West Cameroon. This was called Southern Cameroon when it was created as a Trusteeship of the

¹ Mount Fako is the tallest peak in Cameroon and West Africa with temperatures varying from 25°C at the base to 0°C at the summit. Its peak is 13,350ft or 4095m above sea level. It is an active volcano and seven eruptions have occurred in living memory (in 1909, 1922, 1954, 1959, 1982, 1999 and 2000 respectively).

United Nations under British tutelage until it gained independence in 1961 and reunited with French Cameroon to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

Methodology and Sources

This article reports on a qualitative method of research which sought out to trace narrate and describe the origin and evolution of the Cameroon Press Photo Agency - Buea (henceforth CPPA-B), its challenges and prospects between 1955 and 2014. Photographs have been used to illustrate some of the issues raised.

Material for this work was drawn from oral and written sources. Oral sources were mostly interviews (structured and semi-structured) conducted with administrators working at the CPPA-B or at supervening institutions. Interviewees included the Regional Delegate for Communication for the South West Region and the Regional Chief of Service for Communication Engineering, South West Region. Other interviews were conducted with historians and experts in the domain of photographic archives.

Origin and Evolution of the Cameroon Press Photo Agency - Buea

The CPPA-B was founded in January 1955 by the British colonial administration.² The person responsible for the setting up of the archives was Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye who had been trained as a photographer by F.H Knight of the Colonial Film Unit while working with the Cameroon Development Cooperation (C.D.C). (This had been formed in 1947 with the objective of developing and running plantations of tropical crops in the Cameroon.) The mandate of the photographers of the Press Photo Agency was to follow any governmental or otherwise socially relevant events throughout its territory (today's Northwest and Southwest Regions).

The activities of the Photographic Division in West Cameroon (part of the Federal Republic) continued after 1961 and thereafter, under the United Republic of Cameroon (formed after a referendum in 1972.) Initially, the photographers working for the Southern Cameroons Information Service (later the Federal Information Service) produced movies, which were

² Endangered Archives Programme (Project 542), “Cameroon Photo Archives, Protection, Conservation and Access”, 2013, p.2. This information was also confirmed during our interview with Ngwang Michael, V.G. Fanso, V.J Ngoh, Jürg Schneider and the former colleagues of the late Mr. Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye. who included Nokuba Thaddeus and Ngwa Suh Benedict.

subsequently shown by mobile cinemas units in rural and urban areas all over the territory.³ Those movies certainly entertained their audience but their purpose was primarily the information and education of the population about matters such as health, hygiene or the importance of schooling.⁴ These photographers were also responsible for covering the Presidents' and Prime Minister's activities as well as any official events of public interest. Thus, the photographic material held by the CPPA-B grants a unique view of Cameroon's history for a time which was, and still is, crucial for its political and social formation. The archive and the Endangered Archives Programme (EAP) project (described below) not only secured the material for future research but also raised awareness of the government and the Cameroonian public for this invaluable visual heritage.

The first photographer of the Information Service, Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye, retired in 1987 after being transferred to the Cinematography Division in 1983. Until his retirement, the Photographic Division was well-staffed overall: one librarian, several photographers and two persons in the darkroom worked there full-time (Schneider 2016: 1).

Unfortunately, none of them were replaced after retirement. As a result, the photographic archives have been progressively left with less staff and remained practically abandoned at the beginning 2001, when the last photographer retired. From its inception and through the 1980s the Photographic Division was active and able to preside directly over all the phases of photo production, from shooting to development and print. Some of the staff that worked in the CPPA-B included Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye, Ngwa Suh Benedict, Ngwa Isaac Chungong and Nokuba Thaddeus (major photographers), Mbah Godlove Werewium (Chief of photography and documentation bureau), Tamokem Sylvester Azemchop (editing and preparing news items for the South West Information Service), Wose Martin Yangange (charged with the coordination of year books), Elive Peterkins Tengileli (preparing feature articles for the South West Information Service and year books), Epie Alice Tabe (general reports and assistant) and Sally Njuma Limunga (in charge of the photo library).⁵

³ Interview with Ngwa Suh Benedict, aged 64, and Nokuba Thaddeus, aged 60, Retired Photographers from the Communication Service of the former Delegation of Information and Culture for the South West Province and former colleague of Mr. Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye, Buea, 28/08/2016.

⁴ Njom Kamdem Kevin, aged 63, Retired Journalist, (CRTV) and International Consultant, Buea, 12/08/2016.

⁵ This information was extracted from the job description chart on the wall of the CPPA-B Secretariat.



Plate I: Photograph of Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye with his personal 16mm Camera

This enlarged photograph of Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye, is in the National Archives Buea. It shows him holding his personal 16mm camera which was used in covering the maiden visit of the Cameroon Head of State Ahmadu Ahidjo from Fako to Nkambe in 1960. The original film was sent to Yaoundé for processing but was never returned. This camera was handed to the National Archives Buea on the 9th of November 2012 in the remembrance of the tour of the President to Southern Cameroon.

Source: Photograph by Author at the National Archives Buea.

It should be emphasised here that Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye, who was the first photographer of the CPPA-B, worked alone from the early years. This meant that he was frequently sent out of office to cover events. Scheduling clashes meant he was unable to effectively do the work alone and this necessitated the contracting of studio photographers such as Batanwi Photos (South West in Victoria now Limbe) and CC Sports (North West in Bamenda).⁶ As the amount of work increased, the need to recruit permanent photographers was recognised and staff listed above were recruited for the Photo Division. Before his retirement in 1987, Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye, had trained most of the staff that came after him. Despite his retirement, his love and intimate knowledge of the CPPA-B always saw him coming back to render free assistance, information and training whenever need arose until the cold hands of death took him away in the month of May 2016.

⁶ Interview with Njomo Kamdem Kevin

The Premises and Contents of the CPPA-B

The premises of the CPPA-B is part of the old administrative centre of Buea Town and located in an old wooden colonial building. The administrative organ responsible for the management of the CPPA-B is the Ministry of Communication whose Regional Delegation's office is nearby. The building next to the CPPA-B hosts the National Archives Buea, which is under the authority of the Ministry of Arts and Culture. With the abolition of the Federal system in 1975, the archives were centralised in Yaoundé, the capital of the United Republic of Cameroon and the archives in Buea subsequently lost their currency but remain important nonetheless. The photographs (negatives, contact prints and proof sheets) which are kept in the CPPA-B cover the years from 1955 to 2001.⁷ With the retirement of the last photographer that worked in that service in 2001 (Thaddeus Nokuba), the CPPA-B was locked down and abandoned. Some renovation works were carried out on the building just a few days before the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Anglophone and Francophone Cameroon in February 2014. The result, although nice in colour, had something potemkinian about it, since the roof was only painted on the side facing the street where the president passed and inside the building nothing was done. At the present (2016) if urgent measures are not taken, Cameroon stands to lose more than 200,000 archival photographs in the CPPA-B.⁸

⁷ Endangered Archives Programme (Project 542), “Cameroon Photo Archives, Protection, Conservation and Access”, 2013, p.2. This information was also confirmed during our interview with Ngwang Michael, V.G. Fango, V.J Ngoh, Jürg Schneider and the former colleagues of the late Mr. Emmanuel Moanga Mbwaye who included Nokuba Thaddeus and Ngwa Suh Benedict.

⁸ Interview with Elime Fedilis Ebong, aged 30, Regional Chief of Service for Communication Engineering, MINCOM Buea, Buea, 08/08/2016.



Plate II: Photograph of the Cameroon Press Photo Archives in Buea

The CPPA-B building. Although given a fresh coat of paint in 2014 due to the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Independence and Reunification of Cameroon, its structure and contents have not been attended to.

Source: Fieldwork Photograph by Author, August, 2016.

Due to the rigorous system of archiving put in place by the British administration in the mid-50s, which was maintained by the archivists after independence, the contents of the CPPA-B are in relatively good shape. The Archives contain approximately 100,000 negatives, 14,000 proof sheets (templates on which up to 16 contact prints were mounted for the purpose of reference) and 12 register books.⁹ Generally, between 2 and 500 negatives are packed in paper envelopes and stored in wooden boxes. Some of the negatives in the CPPA-B present visual evidence of events such as among many others the Governor General's tour of the Southern Cameroons in December 1957, the Premier's arrival from the UNO Conference in New York on 16th March 1959, the arrival of the United Nations Secretary General Mr. Dag Hammarskjold's arrival at Tiko airport from Yaoundé, views of Victoria's Barclays Bank building, and the Commonwealth Youth Sunday Celebrations in Buea and Victoria.¹⁰

⁹ Jürg Schneider, Rosario Mazuela, and Paul Weinberg, "Working in and with African Photo Archives", International Federation on Library and Archives, 2015, available at <http://www.african-photography-initiatives.org/index.php/archives/camerun>, retrieved on 25/03/2016.

¹⁰ For more about the contents of the CPPA-B see the Catalogue containing the listings and arrangement by boxes in the Photo Library.

Plate III: Photographs Showing Preventive Conservation Techniques in the CPPA-B

I. Preventive Conservation of Negatives in Envelopes and wooden boxes



A: Wooden cupboards in which negatives are kept.



B: Negatives in ordinary envelopes



C: Negatives in Airmail Envelopes

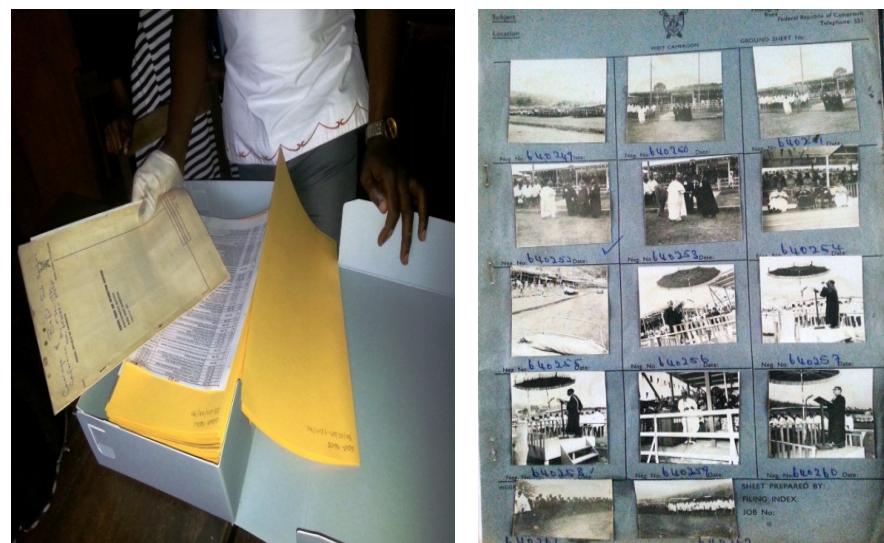


D: Negatives stored in special plastic sleeves

Source: Fieldwork Photographs by Author, August, 2016.



A. Proof sheets are stored in boxes of varying qualities. Some are more solid than others. The grey ones (upper left) are more solid than the yellow ones (upper right).



B. Sample proof sheets are carefully conserved in special acid free paper and further protected in office folders and stored in boxes.

Source: Fieldwork Photographs by Author, August 2016.

II. Preventive Conservation of Proof sheets

Challenges of the CPPA-B

In a survey of the literature on archives in Africa, Olatokun (2008) revealed that the prominent inhibitors to effective and efficient management of information materials in African archives and record centres included the following: inadequate finance, inadequacy of equipment/materials, unfavourable government economic policies, tropical climate, manpower and other infrastructure, lack of conservation policy among many others. The CPPA-B exemplifies all these problems.

The Present State of the CPPA-B

The present state of the CPPA-B represents a major challenge. Since the retirement of Nokuba Thaddeus in 2001 and the failure to replace him, the CPPA-B has been permanently closed. Under such conditions, photographic archives are at constant risk as they are exposed to factors of deterioration such as humidity, termite infestation and air pollution just to name a few. As it stands, the CPPA-B has been under lock and key for almost 15 years (2001-2016). The Ministry of Communication which is in charge of photographic archives in Cameroon has paid little or no attention to the current state of the CPPA-B. When I posed the question to the Regional Delegate of Communications to the South West Region she said;

I have written severally to the Minister with no reply. You know he is my boss and I cannot do otherwise. I know there are so many photographs in that archive but if the person who is at the top does not react then we at the regional level cannot react also. You know that is how our administration works in Cameroon...It is disheartening but I will keep on writing with the hope that one day something good will come out from it.¹¹

Though the negatives and proof sheets are in a relatively good shape, under the present climatic conditions their holdings are jeopardised by high humidity and temperatures. To prevent further decay, and assure the preservation of the CPPA-B, conservation measures need to be in place by the authorities concerned, including the appointment of staff to undertake the work.

Infrastructural Handicap

Even though the CPPA-B is home to one of the largest photographic archives in Cameroon, its infrastructure has been far from ideal. It is housed in old and badly maintained colonial building. The CPPA-B is a wood house built on brick stilts by the German colonial government. The wooden structure is therefore very old and falling apart. This was visible from the pieces of wood falling from the ceiling thereby allowing birds to nest in the spaces and for their dropping to fall on the archival holdings. Technically, the building does not meet the basic standards for an archive. The holdings of the CPPA-B are therefore at great risk if they continue under such conditions for long.

¹¹ Interview with Rosetta Muma, aged 48, Regional Delegate for Communication, MINCOM, Buea, 11/08/2016.

According to Jürg Schneider, an archival structure should be made from material that is not flammable, airy, dust-free, protected from direct sunlight and free from insects and rodents. Such a building should provide protection against natural hazards and have a degree of thermal inertia to ensure that the interior temperature and relative humidity remain reasonably stable and unaffected by exterior conditions.¹² The construction of an ideal and spacious archival building was not the only possible solution. The second-best solution would be to adapt the buildings presently housing the CPPA-B. This may be more realistic because of the high cost of constructing ideal and spacious buildings (Thomas 1987).

Security Imperatives

Without qualified and assured security, archival conservation will almost certainly be a waste of time. The CPPA-B was also lagging when it came to security of any kind. The building was constructed with wood which over the years had dried up and was vulnerable to any spark or incident that might lead to fire. There was not a single fire extinguisher present in the CPPA-B. In addition, archives are exposed to atmospheric pollution as there neither exist an instrument to detect harmful air molecules nor any equipment to prevent it from destroying the documents. When archivists and other records professionals considered the matter of security, they generally thought of protection of their holdings, measures to thwart insider theft, and other approaches to ensure that the records they have can be used and maintained in ways that guarantee careful control and conservation. Such issues suggest security cameras, locks and other protection devices, special staff training, carefully prepared policies and procedures, and security consultants. However, archival security is not just about guarding against theft and vandalism; it is about accountability, ethics and the potential conservation challenges to archives and archivists. The problem of security in archives may be greater than is generally realised. Natural and man-made threats of the last decade have focused attention on protection of occupants and assets (Acker and O'Connell 2016). None of these security measures had been put in place in the CPPA-B at the time of our research.

¹² Interview with Jürg Schneider

House-keeping

House-keeping was another challenge in the CPPA-B – (using in the term in the sense of the care and management of property and the provision of equipment and services for an organisation.) Insects (silverfish, cockroaches, beetles) and rodents (rats, mice, and squirrels) are all attracted to photographic materials. In addition to eating materials, insects and rodents also foul the storage area and materials with their droppings.

Plate IV: Photographs Showing Poor House-keeping in the CPPA-B



I. Photos show accumulated layers of dust on the cupboards, tables and chairs of the CPPA.



II. Photos shows pile of used gloves and heaps of rubbish on the floor of the CPPA.

Source: Fieldwork Photographs by Author, August, 2016.

They make nests that can be difficult to locate and remove. At the entrance of the CPPA-B, just after ascending the staircase one is welcomed by droppings from bird nests hanging on the walls and ceiling of the corridor to the main entrance of the archives. Inside the archives the stench of an old, locked and abandoned building is what one finds. We had to let some fresh air circulate for some minutes before we could proceed into the room where the photographic treasures of Cameroon lay abandoned. This was because the building has been locked up for a very long time (see above) without sufficient ventilation and air-cycling which is imperative for the conservation of the archival photographs especially the hundreds of negatives and proof sheets which are found in the archives. Floors, shelves, boxes, and cabinets were covered with thick layers of dust. A thick pile of rubbish was also visible on the floor of the room that once served as the secretariat for the archives.

The Problem of Access to the CPPA-B

Access to the CPPA-B was not straightforward. There were administrative bottlenecks, the absence of staff and the corresponding closure and neglect of the archives. As already noted, the CPPA-B and other photographic archives fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Communication while archives of paper and artefacts belong to the Ministry of Arts and Culture. To gain access to the Press Photo Archives in Buea one is required to write an application to the corresponding authorities. Even when access was granted, there were no hard copies of photographic prints as the archives contains only negatives and some proof sheets. This was made worse by the fact that there was no equipment to print the negatives as the machines were either broken or the required material absent. It was also difficult to access the digitised material that was carried out by the African Photography Initiatives with support from British Library's Endangered Archives Program (EAP: 542) and the Swiss Federal Office of Culture. With the support of a team six Cameroonians and in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication between 2013 and 2015 over 25,000 negatives and 14,000 proof sheets were digitised, a database established and conservation measures carried out.¹³ There is a pending offer of the British Library to make the digitised material available on their website but permission by the Ministry of Communication had not been granted by early 2017. Bamenda and Buea Universities have requested copies but no permission for this was yet forthcoming. At the Regional Delegation, there was no trace and the same situation prevailed at the Ministry of Communication in Yaoundé.¹⁴ The ultimate question now comes up; what was the purpose of digitisation if the information will not be made available and accessible to the users? The issue of accessibility to the CPPA-B could be fixed by handing copies of the digitised archives to university institutions with internet facilities capable of managing online material so that they can be made available online to students, researchers and the general public.

This impasse resulted in the Yaoundé Declaration of November 9, 2016 through which African Photography Initiatives and other subscribers intended to generate a greater understanding of the value of photographs and films and analogue as well as digital archives for the future of studies in historic, human and social sciences. The declaration calls on the

¹³ Jürg Schneider, "The Use and Abuse", p. 1.

¹⁴ Interview with Rosario Mazuela, aged 50, project supervisor, African Photography Initiatives, Yaoundé, 07/02/2016.

government and other stakeholders in Cameroon to make every effort in order to protect and make accessible for public use the country's photographic and cinematographic heritage.¹⁵ Endorsed by the vice-chancellor of the University of Yaoundé I, the organisers of the conference and over 50 first signatories from Cameroon, the Yaoundé Declaration will be included as first recommendation in the proceedings of the conference. As a first step the Yaoundé Declaration recommends the recognition of the CPPA-B and the National Photo Library Yaoundé as cultural property as intended in the law (L2013/003) on Cultural Heritage in Cameroon from 18 April 2013.¹⁶ The Yaoundé Declaration with the list of the signatories will be handed over to the Ministries of Communication and Art and Culture in due course.

The Neglect of the CPPA-B

The neglect of the CPPA-B has led to its current state of crisis. As already noted, for over fifteen years (2001-2016) the archives have remained like an orphan without any staff posted to its service. This is too much time for a photographic archive of such magnitude and importance to be under lock and key. Rosetta Muma, the Regional Delegate for Communication to the South West Region, said that the state of the CPPA-B was because of the "lack of interest by the present administration. I cannot count how many times I have written to my Minister without any reply."¹⁷ She added that the government only comes knocking when the need arose like was the case in 2014 when they were scouting for photographs to exhibit during the celebration of the 50th Anniversary of Cameroon's Independence and reunification. She further stated that; "I thought that it was an opportunity for the government to realise the importance of the CPPA-B, but from every indication I was wrong."¹⁸

The Absence of Electricity

Another visible aspect of neglect was the fact that there was no electricity in the CPPA-B. Electricity is needed to power the micro heaters found in the cupboards where thousands of

¹⁵ African Photography Initiatives, available at <http://african-photography-initiatives.org/index.php/research/Yaoundé-declaration>, retrieved on 01/02/2017.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Interview with Rosetta Muma

¹⁸ Ibid.

negatives were stored. Information reaching us at the time of writing indicated that this had been the situation for over 10 months.¹⁹ This was disheartening because the CPPA-B was surrounded by many public buildings such as the National Archives Buea, the military command post, and the Regional Delegation for Communication which had electric supply.

The effects of the absence of electricity in the CPPA-B was already visible as one could see mould already developing on the wooden boxes and cupboards in which the photographic negatives were stored as shown on the plate below. The CPPA-B is therefore in grave danger if emergency measures are not taken to restore electricity for the micro heaters to resume functioning and to maintain a favourable temperature level for the conservation of the collections. It seems paradoxical that there were some occupants of a basement of the building who had electricity while the rest of the building remained damp and in the dark. Elime Fidelis Ebong reported that the budget in question here was not more than 150,000frs CFA (c. €250).²⁰ The ultimate question now comes up what is 150,000frs CFA compared to the huge bank of archival photographs found in the CPPA?

¹⁹ Interview with Elime Fedilis Ebong

²⁰ Ibid.

Plate V: Photographs Showing the Absence of Electricity and the Effects of Humidity in the CPPA-B



A. The Absence of electricity has even led to the development of mould and rust on some of the micro heaters



B. The Absence of electricity has led to the development of mould on boxes of negatives and on cupboards.

Source: Fieldwork Photographs by Author, August, 2016.

Recommendations

It seems clear that the state of affairs in the CPPA-B, means that these archives can be classified as endangered. Put in very simple words: historians cannot work with photographs that are decaying and eventually disappear, and they cannot work with material that is not accessible. This situation can be arrested or reversed if the authorities responsible would embark on serious and urgent measures to redress the situation. Some of these urgent measures might include the following; appointing staff and photo archivists to work

permanently at the CPPA-B, re-establish electricity supply to the building to enable the micro heaters to function, carry out basic repair works to the building while taking necessary steps to construct a new building where the archives would be conserved to standard, work in partnership with the Ministry of Arts and Culture which has much better edifice where the photographic archives could be housed temporarily and possibly permanently. Finally, the government through the Ministry of Communication could embark on the digitisation of the entire photographic archives.

Conclusion

The CPPA-B is a treasure house of the Cameroonian past. The photographic material held by the CPPA-B grants a unique view of Cameroon's history for a time period (1955 to 2000) which was, and still is, crucial for Cameroon's political and social formation. A retrospective analysis of the history and evolution of the archives revealed various problems plaguing it, ranging from the state of the archives, infrastructural problems, security imperatives, absence of electricity, neglect, to the difficulty in accessing the archives. The state of the CPPA-B is a worrisome as it remains highly endangered and if no action regarding its sustainable conservation is taken, they may disappear irretrievably. Material decay, however, is only one side of the coin. Considering the obsolescence and instability of the digital format a sustainable conservation of digital data poses many challenges as well, hence both, the conservation and protection of the CPPA-B and all other photographic archives in Cameroon whether in analogue and digital forms must be addressed as well as access to the archives and the material they host guaranteed. However, this can only be achieved if urgent measures are taken by the ministries of Communication, Culture and the Presidency. It is not yet too late to save the country's photographic heritage but time is short.

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The Cameroon Press Photo Archive (CPPA) Buea in Crisis 1955-2016: A Historical Investigation

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Abstract

Since its invention photography in all its ramifications has affected and continues to affect the everyday life of people. It has become a powerful means of communication and mode of visual expression that touches human life in many ways. For example, photography is valued as a means of crystallising memories. One archive which illustrates it is the Cameroon Press Photo Archives - Buea (CPPA-B). The CPPA-Buea was established to use photography as a means of immortalising, conserving and granting access to historical events and personalities in British Southern Cameroons. More than fifty-five years later the institution has not only been in crisis but has been basically abandoned by the authorities in charge. Through qualitative analysis, this paper traces the origin and evolution of the CPPA, its challenges, prospects and ongoing reforms between 1955 and 2016.

Keywords: Photo Archives, Photography, Cameroon Press

RESUME

Depuis son invention, la photographie a touché des vies dans toutes ses ramifications et elle continuera de le faire quotidiennement. Elle a été un grand moyen de communication et une mode de l'expression visuelle qui touche la vie humaine dans plusieurs domaines. Par exemple, la photographie est estimée comme un moyen de la cristallisation des mémoires. Son arrivée dans l'Afrique de l'ouest et au Cameroun avait le même résultat. L'un des archives qui l'illustre c'est « The Cameroon Press Photo Archives – Buea (CPPA-B) ». La CPPA-Buea a été créée pour employer la photographie comme un moyen d'éterniser, de conserver et de donner accès aux événements historiques et aux personnalités du British Cameroons. Plus de cinquante-cinq ans plus tard, cette institution n'était pas seulement en crise, mais évidemment abandonnée par les dirigeants qui s'en chargent. Cet étude retrace l'origine et l'évolution de la CPPA, ses défis, ses perspectives et ses réformes en cours entre 1955 et 2016 à travers des analyses qualitatives.