

BRITISH COLONIAL CONQUEST AND THE ORIGINS OF KADUNA AS NORTHERN NIGERIA'S CAPITAL CITY

Terhemba Wuam

Department of History,
Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Nigeria
Email: terhemba.wuam@kasu.edu.ng

&

Gaius Jatau

Department of History,
Kaduna State University, Kaduna, Nigeria
Email: gaiusjatau@gmail.com

Abstract

This work explores the ramifications of the British imperial incursion into Nigeria at the close of the nineteenth century and their declaration of a Protectorate over Northern Nigeria in 1900. The British in their quest for the effective administration of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, under the leadership of Sir Frederick Lugard as High Commissioner from the initial headquarters of Lokoja at the confluence of the Niger and Benue Rivers, explored for a more permanent site to serve as the capital of the protectorate. At first, Zungeru was chosen, however, when Lugard, found it to be unsuitable, he yet again initiated further explorations that led to the emergence of Kaduna as the colonial capital of the Protectorate and later Northern Region of Nigeria. This paper, using primary and secondary sources provides insight into the processes beginning from the work of British merchant traders and the era of the Royal Niger Company that finally evolved into the conquest and colonial administration of Northern Nigeria and hence the designation of Kaduna in 1913 as the capital city and the eventual realization of that goal in 1917.

Introduction

The city of Kaduna was designated to replace Zungeru as the capital of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria in 1913. However, following the British amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates of Nigeria in 1914, Kaduna took off as the headquarters of the Northern Region of Nigeria in 1917 with the removal of the regional colonial administration from Zungeru in that year. This paper sets out to address the colonial origins of Kaduna as capital city of the Northern Region of Nigeria. It will attempt to do this by considering the background to the colonization of Northern Nigeria. The paper will explore the activities of British merchants and traders, especially the Royal Niger Company in the nineteenth century, and how its activities and royal charter paved the way for the declaration of a British protectorate over Northern Nigeria. It will explore how in the aftermath of that declaration, Sir Frederick Lugard, the British leading colonial administrator in the territory initiated the search for a permanent and suitable capital, thus leading to the emergence of Kaduna.

British Incursion and Colonisation of Northern Nigeria

The prelude to the emergence of Kaduna is traceable to the outburst of the British Victorians during the long reign of Queen Victoria in Africa and Nigeria in the nineteenth century. The incursion into Africa was made on the back of Victorian thinking in which:

The Victorians regarded themselves as the leaders of civilisation, as pioneers of industry and progress. Industry in Britain was stimulating an ever-extending and intensifying development overseas, as her investors and manufacturers, merchants and colonists, railway-builders and officials opened up new continents... [] The actual powers of industry however were as nothing compared with the expansive spirit which their discovery inspired in the early and mid-Victorians. They were sure that their ability to improve the human

condition everywhere was as tremendous as their capacity to produce wealth.¹

Before the British declaration of a protectorate over Nigeria on 1 January 1900 and the eventual Lugardian amalgamation of 1914 of the two British protectorates in Nigeria, the bulk of the work for the Nigeria area becoming a British protectorate had largely been done by British private enterprises and individuals interested in profiting from trading with the people of the various Nigerian entities. The British merchants in the nineteenth century deduced that greater profit would be gained by consolidating the British trading and merchant companies, as the competition among them eroded their profits and gave the indigenous communities an advantage in the commercial transactions of the second half of the nineteenth century in the Nigeria area. Farsighted British merchants and traders were attuned to the general trend and history of British imperialism in America and Asia, especially India. George Goldie upon coming into the Nigerian trade realized that the process of gaining control of the Nigeria area for Britain could follow the Indian trajectory of the British East India Company (EIC) that had facilitated control of the vast Indian sub-continent for the Crown.²

Sir George Goldie, a former officer with the Royal Engineers would eventually be knighted for his services to the British Crown for consolidating the Nigerian territory for the British government. His survey of the River Niger areas prompted in him the desire to secure a charter for a company that would grant it administrative authority over the area. The authority could then be used to pacify the local entities and guarantee free passage of English trade and commerce with various local entities. Ironically, Sir George upon the conception of these twin ideas, first to amalgamate the various companies operating in the Nigeria area, and second to secure a charter on behalf of the amalgamated company had no shares in any of the commercial ventures operating in the area by the second half of the nineteenth century. But having decided on his course of action, Goldie, “approached the various firms which had established themselves on the River and, mainly owing to his efforts, these agreed to unite their interests.”³

The unification of these firms in 1879 led to the emergence of the United Africa Company (UAC), which in 1882 expanded and took on the new name of the National African Company (NAC) thus setting the stage for a revolution in the balance of power between the peoples of Nigeria and the British commercial interest in the area.⁴ This new balance of power which was initially commercial also gradually assumed strategic and political dimensions. The National African Company by its size was in a position of strength relative to the African entities and other European commercial interests operating in the Niger areas, a situation achieved by the unification of the various British commercial interests that had hitherto competed amongst themselves as well as against other European commercial interests in the local trade of the Nigerian area. By 1884 NAC was in a position to oust French companies operating in the area by offering them shares in the British company for them to withdraw from competing. Goldie’s NAC was therefore able to establish a clear territorial dominance relative to other European commercial interests in the Niger and Benue areas from the Atlantic coast and extending inland to the outer edges of the Sokoto Caliphate and Lake Chad regions.⁵

By the time, the Berlin West African Conference opened in 1884, the NAC’s presence in the territories traversed by the Benue and Niger Rivers was well-established. The conference was convened by Germany, a European power late to the imperial game in Africa, and which was therefore in a hurry to acquire territory on the continent. German claims to Cameroun lying parallel to the Benue and Chad

¹ Ronald Robinson, John Gallagher and Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism*, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., London, 1965, 1.

² See Stephen R. Brown, *Merchant Kings: When Companies Ruled the World, 1600-1900*, Douglas and McIntyre Publishers, Vancouver/Toronto, 2009. Also see Geoffrey Jones, *Merchants to Multinationals: British Trading Companies in the Nineteenth Centuries*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, 29-30.

³ C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, Macmillan and Co. Limited, London, 1911, 18.

⁴ C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 18-9.

⁵ C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 19.

basins of the Nigeria area heightened the desire of British interests in West Africa to formalize their claims. The interest of European powers in African territory contributed to tipping off a scramble among the European states jostling for possessions in Africa and it was to ensure that the scramble did not degenerate into conflict among the powers that the Berlin Conference convened in October of 1884. Fourteen European states attended to debate the question of how Africa was to be partitioned among the contending nations.⁶

In the course of the conference, the work that the Sir George Goldie had done in the Niger and Benue areas with his National African Company stood the British in good stead. Sir George who attended the conference as a representative of NAC made the case that the areas of the Middle and Lower Niger and the Benue Rivers were controlled by the British and under their flag. The conference assigned the areas claimed by the National African Company to Great Britain to regulate under a protectorate they were expected to declare. However, a common agreement and understanding arrived at by the conference was that the whole of Africa was to be open to trade for European nations.⁷ This position was articulated by the convener of the conference Prince Otto von Bismarck, the German Chancellor on 25 February 1885 at the termination of the conference thus:

The resolutions which we are now engaged in formally ratifying, secure for the trade of all nations free access into the interior of the African continent... The arrangements provided for in these resolutions for the navigation of the Niger are on the whole such as to present for the trade and industry of all the nations, the most favourable conditions for their development and security.⁸

The next fifteen years would encompass the era of company rule in Nigeria as the National African Company was granted a charter in July 1886 in the following year of the conclusion of the Berlin Conference. This was in recognition by Great Britain that the company was made up of “men who could be entrusted with the responsibilities of administration, and who possessed both the knowledge and machinery necessary for the purpose.”⁹ With the conferment of the royal charter that gave the NAC political and administrative responsibility for the Nigeria area with the duties of governing and protecting the areas under its control and acquiring new territory, it assumed the new name of the Royal Niger Company (RNC).¹⁰ The company through treaties and force of arms initiated the processes that led to the formal declaration of a protectorate over Northern Nigeria. By the time of the protectorate proclamation in 1900 the area had at that point the clearly determined outlines of the boundaries that the new Nigerian nation would subsequently possess made possible through the efforts of men like Sir George and Col. Frederick D. Lugard, an officer in the RNC armed constabulary, who would subsequently command the British government imperial army established in 1897 as the West African Frontier Force (WAFF); a force that was independent of the Royal Niger Company and more directly under the control of the English government.¹¹ Consequently, the Royal Niger Company charter was revoked on 31 December 1899, paving way for formal British colonialism in Northern Nigeria from 1 January 1900.¹²

⁶. M. Crowder, *West Africa Under Colonial Rule*, Hutchinson of London in Association with Ethiope Publishing Corporation, London and Benin City, 1968.

⁷. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 19-21.

⁸. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 21.

⁹. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 24.

¹⁰ C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 25.

¹¹. David Killingray, “The Mutiny of the West African Regiment in the Gold Coast, 1901,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 1983, 441-454.

¹². Anthony D. Ali, “Lokoja: From Prosperity to Doom, 1854-1960,” *Nigeria Police Academy Journal of Humanities*, Vol. 1 No. 1, June 2016, 126-139.

To administer the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria, Her Majesty Government appointed Colonel Lugard, holding command then as the commandant and commissioner of the territory since 1898 as the protectorate's first High Commissioner. He was to be assisted by Mr. (later Sir) William Wallace, the former agent-general of the Royal Niger Company as Deputy High Commissioner. Lugard then assumed duty in Lokoja, located at the confluence of the Rivers Niger and Benue as the Northern Protectorate first capital in December of 1899. This was preparatory to the coming into being of the protectorate on 1 January 1900 when the Union Jack was hoisted against the backdrop of the confluence of the two rivers serving as the principal arteries into the northern territories. In 1900 the areas of effective British authority were limited, control, even along the proximate emirates of Nupe and Ilorin and the Tiv areas within the vicinity of Lokoja were tenuous, and farther north, Sokoto Caliphate and its emirates still asserted their independence.¹³

The new administration under Lugard had the task of extending and consolidating the colonial administration of the Northern Protectorate. To do this, the political department, secretariat, treasury, communications, works department, and judiciary among others were formed or expanded upon the existing framework of the erstwhile RNC administration. The former RNC also contributed a substantial number of recruits for the new administration to work with Lugard. Principally, from 1900, the British colonial administration would also work assiduously to pacify the country, strip the local chiefs of their authority and bind the people of the areas under the colonial suzerainty of Great Britain. A task to which both the WAFF and political officers sent out into the country would exert themselves upon and directly lead to the British desire to later bring the two protectorates of North and South together as one. By a coordinated and consistent invasion of emirates and non-emirate states one after the other in the vast area of Northern Nigeria, the British "invaded, engaged, defeated and occupied," these entities.¹⁴

Thus through military conquest and the enforcement of treaties that the British through the Royal Niger Company had signed with potentates in Northern Nigeria, practical and effective colonial rule over the people of the area was effected. This brought about the need for an administrative centre that was at the heart of Northern Nigeria. It was through such a circumstance, that Kaduna would later emerge as the capital of the Northern Region of Nigeria.

The Emergence of Administrative Headquarters: From Lokoja to Kaduna

The first capital of the Northern Nigeria protectorate was Lokoja. However, the position of Lokoja as the headquarters of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria right from the onset was a tenuous one. It was even weaker than the initial division of the Nigeria area into two; the protectorates of North and South, which the British were committed to amalgamating at a date to be determined by them in the future. Lokoja's status as headquarters was threatened barely five months into its career as the protectorate's capital city. Two major factors affected the continued suitability of Lokoja. The first was the non-strategic location of Lokoja at the southern base of the protectorate and away from its far northern outer reaches.¹⁵ Sir Frederick Lugard desired a central location through which he could have more immediate control and better communication over the territory from military and administrative perspective. The second factor was that the Niger-Benue confluence valley was considered unhealthy for European habitation.¹⁶

The incipient colonial administration's need for a garrison city in a more central location and one with a healthier climate were the determining factors under which in May 1900, three patrols of the West

¹³. See Sule Mohammed S. Mohammed, "The Significance of the Emirate of Bida in the Sokoto Caliphate, 1833-1897", *Lapai Journal of Central Nigeria History*, Volume 1, Number 1, December 2007.

¹⁴. Ed Ferguson, "Review of: *The Conquest of Northern Nigeria*, by Richard H. Dugate. Totowa, N.J.: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1985," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Volume 19, Number 3, 1986, 524.

¹⁵. J.R. Basse, "European Activities and the Rise of Lokoja to Prominence, 1832-1914," in Abdulrahman Ochi Suberu and Bem Japhet Audu, *History, Economy and Society of Lokoja*, Nigerian Defence Academy Publishers, Kaduna, 2017, 206-207.

¹⁶. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 86-7.

African Frontier Force were commissioned to undertake surveys over the course of three rivers. The largest of the patrols moved along the course of the River Kaduna, a tributary of the River Niger. Their objective quest was finding a more suitable location than Lokoja for a new headquarter along the course of especially the Kaduna River. While the main and larger force moved along the River Kaduna, the two smaller forces were according to C.W.J. Orr, to follow two smaller rivers, the Gurara and the Okwa, and unite together at Ghirku on the upper Kaduna, which they did and returned in August of 1900 with reports of their findings.¹⁷

The recommendations made by these survey parties favoured locations based in the vicinity of the emirates of Bida and Kontagora and the new site chosen was Zungeru upon which work commenced energetically from mid-year in 1901.¹⁸ It was, however, the luck of Kaduna, that Zungeru would fall out of favour with Lugard, for had it not fallen out, Kaduna would definitely not have risen out from the grounds where it did eventually emerged as a result of deliberate colonial fiat by an ambitious High Commissioner who was on the lookout for a headquarter that would contribute to the greater realization of his imperial ambitions.

The transition to the establishment of Kaduna as the new capital, however, had to wait for the second coming of Lugard. For after seven years as the High Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate, and in which he had worked tirelessly his health needed a break to recuperate and in September 1906 he departed Nigeria for England.¹⁹ He would be subsequently posted to Hong Kong as governor-general, before his second return to Nigeria in 1912, after an absence of six years. His second coming would be even more momentous than his first coming had been. One of his achievements while in Hong Kong before returning to Nigeria was the establishment of the University of Hong Kong at a time at which there was no orthodox secondary education at all in Northern Nigeria and primary education was only beginning to take off.²⁰

The background to the establishment of Kaduna town is well discussed in originating documents and colonial records and by the works of scholars like Enoch Oyedele, C.N. Ubah and Shu'aibu Shehu.²¹ Oyedele who is an authority on the history of the establishment and development of Kaduna as a capital city outlines its geographical features and the rationale and logic behind the choice of Kaduna as colonial administrative headquarters. The town's origin's emerged when it was established as a garrison town in 1913. It performed this singular military function up to till four years into its establishment as a new town when in 1917 it also became the capital of Northern Nigeria when the town of Zungeru, but before it, Lokoja and Jebba were colonial capitals of Northern Nigeria. Kaduna will perform this role until the dissolution of the regions and the creation of states in 1967.²²

¹⁷. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 87. See too Enoch Oyewola Oyedele, "Colonial Urbanisation in Northern Nigeria: Kaduna 1913-1960," 117.

¹⁸. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 99.

¹⁹. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 179.

²⁰. See Bernard Mellor, *Lugard in Hong Kong: Empires, Education and a Governor at Work 1907-1912*, Hong Kong University Press, Hong Kong, 1992.

²¹. See Enoch Oyedele, "The British and the Making of a Capital City: The Example of Kaduna 1913-1960," in Abdullahi M. Ashafa, ed. *Urbanisation and Infrastructure in Nigeria since the 20th Century: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ezzeldin Mukhtar Abdurahman*, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, 2011; Chinedu N. Ubah, "Military Factor in Urbanisation in Nigeria: The Example of Kaduna," in Abdullahi M. Ashafa, ed. *Urbanisation and Infrastructure in Nigeria since the 20th Century: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ezzeldin Mukhtar Abdurahman*, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, 2011; and Shu'aibu Shehu, "The Growth and Development of Kaduna Metropolis, 1913-2000," in Abdullahi M. Ashafa, ed. *Urbanisation and Infrastructure in Nigeria since the 20th Century: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ezzeldin Mukhtar Abdurahman*, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, 2011.

²². Enoch Oyedele, "The British and the Making of a Capital City," 35-36.

Sir Frederick Lugard's intention was for Kaduna to be the capital of an amalgamated Nigeria, and even addressed Kaduna by 1913 as "the new capital of Nigeria."²³ This predisposition was, however, shut down by the colonial authorities in London as not being expedient and too expensive. Thus, Kaduna would take off only as the capital of Northern Nigeria.²⁴ Decades later, Sir Ahmadu Bello would ruefully reminisce about what would have been had Lugard's dream for Kaduna as Nigeria's capital been fully fulfilled. Sir Ahmadu Bello noted in 1961 that:

It was a great pity that this ruling was given by the Colonial Office; much future trouble would have been avoided. Kaduna, being in the middle of almost uninhabited bush, would have been ideal for this purpose: there is a fine water supply and vast areas for expansion, with ample room for as big an airfield as anyone would want; 2000 feet above the sea and a fine climate. In fact, it had all the things that Lagos conspicuously lacked, and it would have lacked the biggest menace in Lagos, the city riffraff who have made life there unbearable for respectable people.²⁵

Although, Sir Ahmadu Bello would have loved Lugard's goal of making Kaduna Nigeria's capital; the Colonial Office position that it was a rather expensive venture was clearly expressed by an Assistant Undersecretary for Colonies, Antrobus, who had noted of Lugard that "He has plenty of 'go', he is full of ideas and he is not afraid of taking responsibility. But he is not a prudent or far seeing administrator; his schemes are not well thought out and he has more than once involved us in heavier expenditure than was contemplated."²⁶

Despite such criticisms, in the overall scheme of affairs, Lugard was principally a man of action, a man who was able to get things done. Indeed, Sir Percy Girouard, Lugard's immediate successor on the latter's achievement noted that: "Very few countries have witnessed such great changes for the better in such a short space of time as has been the case in Northern Nigeria."²⁷ The origins of Northern Nigeria's capital in itself was a testament to the Lugardian quest for ceaseless action. Lugard would in the space of a decade, not counting the time he spent outside Nigeria, initiate and run through Lokoja and Zungeru and oversee the emergence of Kaduna as a capital city for the vast territory of Northern Nigeria.

Sir Frederick Lugard was a forthright and capable leader. A look at his achievement after seven years as the first High Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate attest to the change he was able to cause to happen within those seven years in the opening decade of the twentieth century before his departure for England and later Hong Kong. Orr noted of Lugard that:

Seven years previously he had taken over the administration of vast territories in which slave raiding and war were rife, where every man's hand was against his neighbor, and security of life and property hardly known. He left to his successor a country well organized, divided into Provinces, each with its separate staff, with garrisons occupying central positions, communication established, taxation placed on a sound basis, and the native rulers cordially co-operating with the

²³. See NAK, SNP 15/1, Acc. No. 191, Lugard to Harcourt, 29 May 1913.

²⁴. Enoch Oyedele, "The British and the Making of a Capital City," 36. See too Abdullahi M. Ashafa and Ashiru Sani, "Kaduna City: History, Culture, Challenges and Prospects," in Patrick I. Ukase, Emmanuel O. Akubor and Augustine I. Onoja, eds., *Urbanisation, Security and Development Issues in Nigeria, 1914-2014: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Enoch Oyedele*, Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd., Zaria, 2016, 237.

²⁵. Ahmadu Bello, *My Life: Sardauna of Sokoto*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1962, 156.

²⁶. See Enoch Oyewola Oyedele, "Colonial Urbanisation in Northern Nigeria: Kaduna 1913-1960," 130.

²⁷. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 180.

British Administration in the task of government. He left also the impress of his own personality – indomitable courage, unswerving devotion to duty, and untiring energy. Of him it might well be said that to have served under him was a liberal education.²⁸

From Railway Hub and Garrison Center to Capital City

In Kaduna, Lugard and the colonial authorities therefore found their ideal solution to the problem of a capital city for administering their vast Northern Nigerian possessions, and the challenges of starting and abandoning administrative headquarters as was common in the previous seventeen years were put behind. Kaduna according to Oyedele had shared similar traits with the abandoned capital cities, he notes that:

Whatever it was the earlier capitals i.e. Lokoja (1900-1902); Jebba (January 1902 – September, 1902) and Zungeru (September, 1902 – January 1917) though temporary, were selected based on similar factors that recommended the choice of Kaduna. These factors include: communication, water transportation; strategic mainly military, availability of water and climate.²⁹

However, in addition to these enumerated factors of communication, water transportation, military factors and the presence of water and a good climate, Oyedele concludes that possibly the most vital that weighed the choice in favour of Kaduna, ultimately was the political factor. This was necessitated by the need to have command of a location through which political administration and order could be enforced on an area as vast as the north was.³⁰ Lugard in gauging the military and strategic considerations had considered "... that every part of Hausaland was within a striking range of the Kaduna area. The place was identified as a possible military base as early as 1912, and the following year a detachment of troops of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) was sent there."³¹

The process by which Kaduna finally emerged as capital city was begun in 1912. However, before 1912, that is from 1902 to 1910, Kaduna was already in the sight of the British colonial administrators, whereby by virtue of the Cantonment Proclamation Act it was already being designated as a garrison center that would offer government and military services as well as becoming a railway hub, a process that started when the Lagos to Kano railway line reached Kaduna in 1911.³² The importance of the railway in the scheme of colonial development in Nigeria is clearly stated by Enoch O. Oyedele when he asserted that: "The railway system built between 1895 and 1912 and later from 1921 to 1926 to serve British imperialism in Nigeria radically transformed the socio-economic order of pre-colonial Nigeria."³³ Its impact was felt in the speed at which the nation's resources could be harnessed and all facets of colonial administration and control could be comprehensively asserted with a radical disruption of the hitherto existing structures, which existing apart from one another were unified in a centralized regional and national system in amalgamated Nigeria.³⁴ The railway effectiveness was also

²⁸. C.W.J. Orr, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, 179.

²⁹. Enoch Oyedele, "The British and the Making of a Capital City," 23.

³⁰. Enoch Oyedele, "The British and the Making of a Capital City," 23.

³¹. Chinedu N. Ubah, "Military Factor in Urbanisation in Nigeria: The Example of Kaduna," in Abdullahi M. Ashafa, ed. *Urbanisation and Infrastructure in Nigeria since the 20th Century: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ezzeldin Mukhtar Abdurahman*, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, 2011, 63.

³². Vivian Patrick Inyang, "Colonial Administration of Kaduna Urban Area, 1913-1960," M.A. Dissertation, Department of History, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, 2019, 41. See too Ademola Adunni Oluwaseyi, "Impact of Railway Station Market to the Development of Kaduna Metropolis, 1911-2006," B.A. History Project, Department of History, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, 2019, 1.

³³. Enoch Oyewola Oyedele, "Colonial Urbanisation in Northern Nigeria: Kaduna 1913-1960," PhD Thesis, Department of History, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 1987.

³⁴. Enoch Oyewola Oyedele, "Colonial Urbanisation in Northern Nigeria: Kaduna 1913-1960," 113-4.

allied to the entire modern transportation and communication system that the British introduced that depended on the technological advancement of the Industrial Revolution i.e. that facilitated motorized transportation on land and sea and a fast and reliable telegraphic and telecommunication infrastructure.

In 1912, two years before the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates, Sir Frederick Lugard, upon returning to Nigeria as High Commissioner of the Northern Protectorate and later Governor-General of a united Nigerian colony, had established a three-man committee under Sir H.R. Palmer, whose terms of reference outlined the criteria by which a new choice of capital could be made away from the existing Zungeru.³⁵ The terms of reference highlighted that the location to be so chosen must be at a site where the railway crossed the River Kaduna, and in an area where the water supply from the river was good for human consumption. Other desirable physical characteristics that were required were that the site should afford “ample room for future expansion, a sufficiently generous sort for sanitation, planting and gardening and absence of undue radiation [and] an area comparatively free from insect pests, particularly from mosquitoes, sand flies, tsetse flies and other actively biting insects.”³⁶

In the final analysis the British due to political, geographical and strategic reasons selected the present site of the Kaduna metropolis. A decision made in consideration of “the desire to avoid the emirates as well as the need for a site from which they could maximize their interests. The issues of centrality as well as transportation and communication network were mainly relevant in the context of military and strategic considerations. This factor was the dominant in the choice of colonial capitals since the powerbase of colonialism anywhere was force.”³⁷ The Palmer committee rooted for Kaduna by stating that “for military purposes and for a local capital of Northern Nigeria, this region presents commanding advantage.”³⁸ Lugard after adopting the committee’s report, communicated with the Colonial Secretary in May 1913 that he had recommended “that the capital should be moved to the point where the railway, crosses the Kaduna at mile 572 from Lagos.”³⁹

With the 1913 decision made by Lugard, Kaduna began its auspicious career as the headquarters of Northern Nigeria. And, once the decision was taken as to the location of the capital in Kaduna, Lugard pursued its actualization with vigour and zeal as “Lugard was restless in pursuit of his ideas until they were translated into some concrete realities.”⁴⁰ First the movement of a detachment of the West African Frontier Force (WAFF) into the area in 1913 was authorized and they were barracked around the present area of Queen Amina secondary school in order “to test its healthiness”, which highlighted its garrison nature. There were also further exploratory and meteorological work in the area by the British and subsequent surveying and planning of the proposed city by a team of experts.⁴¹ These included the development of a detailed plan for developing the city. And because the military were considered an important component of the colonial enterprise the plan incorporated having significant land acreage dedicated to them for their barracks and installations. Work subsequently began on the military installations in May 1914 and was concluded by the commencement of 1915.⁴² In the period since 1913, the military in as an institution in Kaduna in addition to the population that they contributed to the city

³⁵. Chinedu N. Ubah, “Military Factor in Urbanisation in Nigeria,” 63.

³⁶. F.D. Lugard, “Report on Amalgamation and Southern Nigeria,”/SNP 15/1919 Enclosure No. 2 Dispatched Nigeria No. 100 in NAK/SNP 15/189. The British across their colonies, especially in Africa often promoted similar conditions to those of Kaduna in the location of their capitals. See also R.B. Bening, “The Location of Administrative Capitals in Ashanti, Ghana, 1896-1911,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 1979.

³⁷. Enoch Oyedele, “The British and the Making of a Capital City,” 30.

³⁸. NAK, SNP 15/1, Acc No. 190, Report of the Committee dated 21 June 1913.

³⁹. See Kirk-Greene (ed). *Lugard and the Amalgamation*, p.93. See too Enoch Oyedele, “The British and the Making of a Capital City,” 31.

⁴⁰. Chinedu N. Ubah, “Military Factor in Urbanisation in Nigeria,” 65.

⁴¹. Enoch Oyedele, “The British and the Making of a Capital City,” 31, 34.

⁴². Chinedu N. Ubah, “Military Factor in Urbanisation in Nigeria,” 65.

had equally made other vital contributions to the development of Kaduna metropolis through its physical and architectural structures, the economic development of the city through their budgetary allocations, construction work, consumption and economic activities through its markets and both military and non-military related businesses and social services as numerous schools and hospitals, that equally provided services and employment to thousands of workers.⁴³

Kaduna at establishment was, thus, designated as a second class township. The town was “to provide wide range of services and opportunities within its borders for the smooth running of the colonial administration.”⁴⁴ Its designation as a second class town called for it to be provided with certain amenities like a hospital, pipe-borne water and electricity. These according to Oyedele were however, provided largely along racial lines, whereby:

The British were provided the amenities many years before the African section. For instance, as early as 1917 a hospital was built in the European reservation for the use of Europeans only. It was only in 1924 that a hospital for Africans was built... And it was only in 1929 that pipe-borne water was provided in the African reservation... And as far as facilities for recreation and leisure were concerned, Polo, Golf, Tennis and other facilities were provided in the European reservation while none was provided for the African population.⁴⁵

The British in deciding to erect a hospital which they referred to as a “permanent European Hospital, or a portion of it, at Kaduna,” deemed such an initiative “a matter of urgency.”⁴⁶ In a letter to the Secretary, Northern Provinces, the colonial medical officer had called for the erection of a proper hospital building to replace the make-shift arrangement as the temporal structure that was been utilized was not fit for purpose and was ill-suited for the treatment of patients with serious ailments whose chance of recovery was greatly reduced due to the unsuitability of the accommodation in its depressing condition. The need to relocate the hospital from the European quarters was also noted as the proximity to the lodgings acted against “the quiet and rest which are so essential for the sick.”⁴⁷ In addition to these limitations was also the fact that the temporal building designed to accommodate eight patients was already witnessing overcrowding with sometimes up to twelve patients being admitted for days. Equally the need to expand the European Hospital was supported on a further basis that the Kaduna hospital was been broadly utilized by several of the neighbouring provinces as noted thus:

Kaduna is a much more central place than Zungeru and receives patients from the South down to Jebba, including Zungeru, and even Ilorin, and from the North from Zaria with Sokoto and Birni-Kebbi, on the other one side and Naraguta and the Plateau, Bauchi, Nafada etc on the other it being the most convenient Hospital for all these places.⁴⁸

The context of the above provisions of infrastructure and amenities was clearly exemplified by Lugard’s 1917 Township Ordinance by which “Kaduna was not supposed to be a unified community but a collection of segments with divisions based on culture, race and functions.”⁴⁹ By this, planning for the

⁴³. Chinedu N. Ubah, “Military Factor in Urbanisation in Nigeria,” 70-71.

⁴⁴. Ahmed Bako, “Kaduna and Colonial Urban Policies in Northern Nigeria,” in Abdullahi M. Ashafa, ed. *Urbanisation and Infrastructure in Nigeria since the 20th Century: Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ezzeldin Mukhtar Abdurahman*, Kaduna State University, Kaduna, 2011, 84.

⁴⁵. Enoch Oyedele, “The British and the Making of a Capital City,” 55-56.

⁴⁶. P.M.O. to Secretary, Northern Provinces, Kaduna, “Letter” dated 4 August 1917, File No. SNP 9, 3580, 1914, National Archives, Kaduna, 1.

⁴⁷. P.M.O. to Secretary, Northern Provinces, Kaduna, “Letter,” 2.

⁴⁸. P.M.O. to Secretary, Northern Provinces, Kaduna, “Letter,” 3.

⁴⁹. Ahmed Bako, “Kaduna and Colonial Urban Policies in Northern Nigeria,” 90.

town was divided into segments for the European residential areas or Government Reservation Areas (GRA) and the African quarter which included Sabon Gari and Tudun Wada where Africans would reside. Both areas were separated by a “Building Free Zone of about 400 yards out of the consideration of the health of colonial officials.”⁵⁰

Conclusion

The origins of Kaduna as this paper have shown are traceable to the British colonial incursion in Northern Nigeria. The city emerged to be the centre of governance and political authority from which the British wielded their authority over the protectorate and later the Northern region. Thus, from the onset, Kaduna was conceived as a metropolitan centre that would embrace diverse peoples and be a centre for administration and the military control of Northern Nigeria. Designated in 1913, a year before the amalgamation of Nigeria as the capital of the Northern Protectorate its avowed purpose was to meet the “needs of colonial administrative exigencies” in the mould of the other colonial towns that were also established at the dawn of the colonial era in Nigeria by the British as Jos, Maiduguri, Enugu, Port Harcourt, as well as Minna and Makurdi among others.⁵¹ Kaduna’s formal takeoff as the Northern Protectorate capital will occur in 1917 when the administration in Zungeru was finally dismantled. The emergence of Kaduna as an urban colonial centre was therefore designed by the British to serve the military and colonial interests of the British.⁵² According to AbdouMaliq Simone, “African cities were largely constructed as points of contact – as places to organize the evacuation of resources and to construct mechanisms through which broader territories could be administered.”⁵³ The British colonial administration could be given credit for the inauguration of several new towns in Nigeria in the first half of the twentieth century as administrative centres which have continued to thrive well into the twenty-first century.

Acknowledgments

We wish to acknowledge the funding we received from the TETFund Institution Based Research (IBR) at Kaduna State University that made the research and publication of this paper possible.

⁵⁰. Ahmed Bako, “Kaduna and Colonial Urban Policies in Northern Nigeria,” 90.

⁵¹. Ibrahim Khaleel Abdulsalam, “Hausa and British Factors in the Establishment of Jos Town to 1915,” *KADA Journal of Liberal Arts*, Vol. 1 No. 2, September 2008, 102.

⁵². See Enoch Oyedele and C.N. Ubah and also A.M. Ashafa, “Introduction,” in A.M. Ashafa, ed., xvi.

⁵³. AbdouMaliq Simone, “On the Worlding of African Cities,” *African Studies Review*, Vol. 44, No. 2, September 2001, 26.