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Vaughan house on Lagos Island. Circa: 1987
The Vaughan's are one of the prominent Families of Lagos. In 1805, their Patriarch Scipio Vaughan (1784- 1840) an Egba indigene, along with other captives was shipped from Velekete Slave market in Badagry to the Americas.



He was bought by Wiley Vaughan, a white Slave owner in Camden, South Carolina. As per the prevailing tradition, he took on the surname of his master in addition to his given name; Scipio, as Scipio Vaughan. Scipio was an intelligent and skilled craftsman who eventually

became a free man. It was Scipio's dying wish that his sons Burrell and James leave America and return to live in Africa. In keeping with his wishes, his sons enrolled with the American Colonization Society as emigrants to Liberia.

They left Camden in 1852 and sailed to Liberia in 1853 to start a new life. They lived there for two years before accepting an offer of employment to go with Thomas Jefferson Bowen, a Missionary with the Southern Baptist Convention to Yoruba land to spread the Baptist religion.

They came to Nigeria in 1854 and went on to Ijaye to work as builders in 1855. During the brutal Ibadan-Ijaye War, James was taken captive. He escaped, took refuge in Abeokuta and served as a military sharpshooter.

After the missionaries were driven out of Abeokuta in 1867, James Churchwill Vaughan and other Christian refugees resettled in Lagos, where he built a successful hardware business and raised his family. He became part of the Lagos elite, and was a wealthy and prosperous merchant

. When his relatives were struggling in South Carolina in the late 1860s, he sent them canvas bags filled with gold. He also led a revolt against white missionaries, in the 1880s. He helped to establish the Ebenezer Baptist Church, the first indigenous and independent church

in West Africa in 1888. When Churchwill Vaughan died in 1893, he left his widow and three children land, businesses, and multiple houses in central Lagos, and he was buried in Ikoyi Cemetery.
Image Source: Trager, Lillian, 1947-2006/University of Wisconsin Libraries

Text Source: Bimbola Babarinde/Nigeria Nostalgia Project
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