**ABSTRACT**

In the late 1850s and early 1860s, the pioneering British photographer Walter Woodbury captured images of Java, and especially its capital city Batavia (modern day Jakarta). Working in partnership with James Page, the two established a photographic firm that continued to produce and sell images long after Woodbury’s return to England in 1863.

Consisting of 42 albumen prints, the Woodbury Collection includes numerous images of the landscape and colonial buildings in Batavia, Buitenzorg (Bogor), and Surabaya. A few photographs capture images of the European community in Java, and local Javanese residents.

**BACKGROUND NOTE**

Walter Bentley Woodbury was born in Manchester, England, in 1834 and was raised by his maternal grandfather. In 1857, still in his early twenties, Woodbury traveled to Java where he founded a busy photographic firm with James Page, and between them, they took the majority of the known photographs of Batavia (present day Jakarta) from the latter part of the 19th century. The two men, accompanied by Walter’s brother, Henry James Woodbury, traveled extensively through Central and Eastern Java in 1860, relatively soon after which the photographers went their separate ways. Woodbury remained in Batavia.

In 1863, Woodbury and Page offered a list of sixteen topographical photographs of the city for sale in albumen format. These images are considered the first of their sort from Batavia, which was originally established in 1619 as a colonial supply station for the VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie), or the Dutch East Indies Trading Company. Prospering during the 17th and 18th centuries as part of the spice trade, Batavia was a regional center for commerce and colonial administration, but particularly after a wall was erected around the city for security, it gained a reputation as "the Graveyard of Europeans," due to the poor sanitation and the stagnation of the canal system.

Although Woodbury worked initially with the wet-plate collodion negatives and albumen positive prints, he was an avid experimenter in photography, trying his hand at photoceramics, stereoscopic photography, stereoscopic projection, balloon photography, and electromagnetic shutters. He is perhaps most widely known for the photomechanical process he developed in 1866, the Woodburytype. Woodbury died in England in 1885.

**CONTENTS OF COLLECTION**

The Woodbury Collection consists of 42 medium-format albumen topographical photographs of
Java produced by the firm of Woodbury and Page during the 1860s. The majority of photographs were taken in Batavia (modern day Jakarta), with a few from Surabaya and Buitenzorg (modern day Bogor). While Woodbury focused primarily on landscape, several photographs -- particularly those from Batavia -- depict members of the European community, their homes, clubs, and meeting places. Among the sites represented in the collection are the Harmonie Club House, Monlenvliet canal, Michiels Monument, Welsevreden Palace, Willems Church, the residence of Martinus Petrus Pels, and the Governor’s palace at Buitzenborg. Photographs of the Tanah Abang house are annotated as “our” house by a person with the initials S.H.W., and who also locates the house in relation to other landmarks and homes in the area.

The photographs are arranged in alphabetical order by title, as supplied by S.H.W. or (perhaps) the photographer.

### Collection inventory

- **Back View of Gov. Gen'l's. Palace at Buitenzorg, Java**
  - ca. 1865
  - 21 x 27.5 cm.
  - Box 1: 1

- **Batavia Cemetery, Java**
  - ca. 1865
  - 30 x 39 cm.
  - Box 1: 1

- **Catholic School, Singapore**
  - ca. 1865
  - 31 x 36 cm.
  - Box 2: 4

View of European cemetery located in Tanah Abang from inside cemetery fence. Fresh graves in fore. The cemetery was established in 1795 to provide a burial ground for Christians.
Chinaman’s House at Batavia, Java [on Molenvliet]  ca. 1865  30 x 39 cm.  Box 2: 5

Tile roof house with adornment along roof peaks. Exterior of front porch adorned with hanging prints, statues, and sculptural elements. Four people sitting on porch. Believed to have belonged to the Khouw family who were local Chinese landowners. Possibly home of Khouw Kim An chairman of Batavian Chinese Council.

Entrance to town of Batavia  ca. 1865  30 x 39 cm.  Box 1: 3

View of arched gate down road lined with trees. Structure originally marked the south entrance to Batavia’s old castle built in the 17th century.

Front View of House at Tanah Abang. Breakfast Table of the Period!  1866  31 x 41 cm.  Box 1: 3
Garden Scene at Kedring Badak
c.1865  30 x 39 cm.  Box 1: 4

Hamlet’s Ghost, Sourabaya [Surabaya], Java [Boat with Passengers and Crew]
c.1865  30 x 39 cm.  Box 1: 4

Harmonie Club House, Batavia
c.1865  30 x 39 cm.  Box 1: 5

View of corner of clubhouse. Social club for European community. This structure was built in 1815.

Horse R.R. Station, Batavia, Java
c.1865  32 x 40 cm.  Box 1: 5

Hotel Sumatra
c.1865  24 x 32 cm.  Box 1: 6
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Image</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><strong>House of a Batavia Merchant</strong></td>
<td>ca.1865</td>
<td>32 x 41.5 cm.</td>
<td>1:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><strong>House of Batavia Merchant</strong></td>
<td>ca.1865</td>
<td>32 x 41.5 cm.</td>
<td>1:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><strong>House of M. P. Pels, Esq., Kings Plain, Batavia, 1866</strong></td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>35 x 40.5 cm.</td>
<td>1:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.jpg" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><strong>House of Prince Radheu Saleh, Batavia</strong></td>
<td>ca.1865</td>
<td>24 x 32 cm.</td>
<td>1:8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
View of residence from front. House is heavily adorned with statues, urns, and stained glass windows. Manicured lawn and developing gardens visible in foreground. This structure was originally built in 1852.

House of the Pels Family Next to Ours at Tanahabay  
ca. 1865  
32 x 41 cm.  
Box 1: 8

View of house from across the road. Four figures stand looking at camera in front of gate. Martinus Petrus Pels served as the honorary vice-counsel for the United States in Batavia. He likely made his living working for a trading firm and in 1866 served as a member of the Batavian Chamber of Commerce.

Kedirie [Kediri] River, Java  
ca. 1865  
30 x 39 cm.  
Box 1: 9

Michiels Monument, Waterloo Plain, Erected in Memory of Genl. Michiels & the Troops Killed During the Three Expeditions to Bali in 1848  
ca. 1865  
30 x 39 cm.  
Box 1: 9
View of Monument with Roman Catholic Church in right of image. Monument was erected to honor the memory of Major General Andreas Michiel.

- Mr. and Mrs. Volz, Kings Plain, Batavia
  - ca. 1865
  - 24 x 32 cm.
  - Box 1: 9

- Natives Making Sarongs and Saraps
  - ca. 1865
  - 24 x 32 cm.
  - Box 1: 10

- Padang [Port from water]
  - ca. 1865
  - 22 x 28 cm.
  - Box 1: 10

- Palace at Buitenzorg, Java
  - ca. 1865
  - 30 x 39 cm.
  - Box 1: 11

- Palace at Weltevreden, Batavia, Java
  - ca. 1865
  - 30 x 39 cm.
  - Box 1: 11
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Pasangrahan Resting Place for Travelers at Nangteng, Java</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>30 x 39 cm.</td>
<td>Box 2: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Private House at Sourabaya [Surabaya], Java</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>30 x 39 cm.</td>
<td>Box 2: 1</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>River at Tanah Abang from Bridge in Front of Our House</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>22 x 28 cm.</td>
<td>Box 2: 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>River scene at Buitenzorg, Java</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>30 x 39 cm.</td>
<td>Box 2: 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- River Scene in Sourabaya [Surabaya], Java ca.1865 23.5 x 31 cm. Box 2: 3
- Road to Town, Batavia (Jangkeh) ca.1865 30 x 39 cm. Box 2: 3
- Ryswyk Portion Harmonie, Batavia, Java ca.1865 30 x 39 cm. Box 2: 4
- Salak Mountain River, Buitenzorg, Java ca.1865 32 x 41.5 cm. Box 2: 4
<table>
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<td><img src="image1" alt="Stadhuis (Town Hall) Batavia, Java" /></td>
<td>Stadhuis (Town Hall) Batavia, Java</td>
<td>ca.1865</td>
<td>30 x 39 cm.</td>
<td>Box 2: 5</td>
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<td><img src="image2" alt="Stream with Bamboo Banks at Sourabaya (Surabaya), Java" /></td>
<td>Stream with Bamboo Banks at Sourabaya (Surabaya), Java</td>
<td>ca.1865</td>
<td>30 x 39 cm.</td>
<td>Box 2: 5</td>
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<td><img src="image3" alt="Tanabang Road, Batavia" /></td>
<td>Tanabang Road, Batavia</td>
<td>ca.1865</td>
<td>32 x 37 cm.</td>
<td>Box 2: 6</td>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Temple of Tego Wangie at Kedirie (Kediri)</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>30 x 39 cm.</td>
<td>2: 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>Turn Verein, Batavia</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>35 x 41 cm.</td>
<td>2: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>View at Buitenzorg, near Batavia</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>32 x 41.5 cm.</td>
<td>2: 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>View at Tanah Abang, Batavia</td>
<td>ca. 1865</td>
<td>32.5 x 41.5 cm.</td>
<td>2: 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>View at Tanah Abang, Batavia, Looking Down the River</td>
<td>1866</td>
<td>31 x 41 cm.</td>
<td>2: 8</td>
</tr>
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Annotation on image: "The two white pillars at the left represent entrance to house where Mr. Fay [Jay] lived in Batavia, S.H.W." on verso "View at Tanah Abang, Batavia N.B. Our House is just at the right after bridge in the background."
View of the military square at sunrise. The Waterloo monument is visible in front of Daendal's palace. The monument was originally erected in 1828 to commemorate the defeat of Napoleon at the battle of Waterloo.
CUSTODIAL HISTORY

The Du Bois Library holds a copy of John Thomson’s *The Straits of Malacca, Indo-China, and China* (Call no. DS507 .T49 1875a) inscribed to a Frank L. Wilson “with love from S.H.C.” The handwriting in this volume seems to match that on the images, although the initials change to S.H.W., perhaps as the result of a marriage.

This collection was originally housed with the John Thomson Photograph Collection (PH 2) and the Felice Beato Photograph Collection (PH 4), which may indicate that the prints were all acquired together by S.H.W. and family while living in Indonesia.

PROCESSING INFORMATION

Collection was processed by Meghan Fahey, May 2007.

RELATED MATERIAL

- John Thomson Photograph Collection (PH 2)
- Felice Beato Photograph Collection (PH 4)

DIGITIZED CONTENT

Digitized versions of the images in this collection have been added to SCUA’s online repository, Credo.

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Please use the following format when citing materials from this collection:

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Search terms

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