

# Bernhard Arp Sindberg:

## An Inventory of His Papers and Photography Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

---

### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Sindberg, Bernhard Arp, 1911-1983
<b>Title:</b>	Bernhard Arp Sindberg Papers and Photography Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1937-1985
<b>Extent:</b>	394 items
<b>Abstract:</b>	The collections consists of 394 photographs, most of which were taken during the Nanjing Massacre, or "Rape of Nanking," in 1937 and 1938. Many of the photographs are in an album compiled by Sindberg, and some have typed or handwritten annotations. The collection is supplemented by a small amount of manuscript material that includes correspondence, employment and military service records, an autobiographical account in typescript, and a collection of newspaper articles.
<b>Call Number:</b>	PH-02638
<b>Language:</b>	English and Dutch
<b>Access:</b>	Open for research. Researchers must create an online Research Account and agree to the Materials Use Policy before using archival materials.
<b>Use Policies:</b>	Ransom Center collections may contain material with sensitive or confidential information that is protected under federal or state right to privacy laws and regulations. Researchers are advised that the disclosure of certain information pertaining to identifiable living individuals represented in the collections without the consent of those individuals may have legal ramifications (e.g., a cause of action under common law for invasion of privacy may arise if facts concerning an individual's private life are published that would be deemed highly offensive to a reasonable person) for which the Ransom Center and The University of Texas at Austin assume no responsibility.
<b>Restrictions on Use:</b>	Authorization for publication is given on behalf of the University of Texas as the owner of the collection and is not intended to include or imply permission of the copyright holder which must be obtained by the researcher. For more information please see the Ransom Centers' Open Access and Use Policies.

---

## Administrative Information

**Preferred Citation**      Bernhard Arp Sindberg Papers and Photography Collection (PH-02638). Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

**Acquisition:**          Gift, 2006 (R 12520)

**Processed by:**        Elizabeth E. Preston, 2019

**Repository:**         [Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin](#)

---

## Biographical Sketch

Bernard Arp "Barney" Sindberg (19 February 1911-1983) was a Danish national employed in China in 1937 by the Kiang Nan Cement Factory. He first served in the Second Sino-Japanese War as a volunteer with Chinese forces during the Siege of Shanghai (September-November 1937) by the superior Japanese forces. Assigned to take over a cement factory in Nanjing, China, he arrived in that city shortly before the infamous Japanese invasion at the end of that same year. When the Japanese army routed the Chinese defenders and entered the walled city on December 13, Sindberg, working both alone and with other foreign nationals, sought to find ways to protect portions of the civilian population from what would eventually become known as the "Rape of Nanking," or the Nanjing Massacre. During the course of the atrocities that went on until March 1938 and resulted in upwards of 300,000 civilian deaths, Sindberg provided a safe haven and improvised hospital within his cement works for approximately 10,000 Chinese civilians. Like his more famous counterpart, John Rabe ("the Wallenberg of Nanking"), Sindberg used his foreign status and resourcefulness to save the lives of countless civilians from the marauding Japanese army.

An amateur photographer and friend of a number of foreign newsmen, Sindberg carried his camera everywhere during this period, snapping often graphic scenes of civilian massacres and public destruction. In Shanghai, Sindberg served as a driver for Philip Pembroke Stephens (1903–1937), a journalist for the *Daily Telegraph*. Stephens was killed in November 1937 by stray sniper fire from the Japanese. Sindberg was present when Stephens was shot and documented his death in several photographs. In order to protect himself from the Japanese, Sindberg smuggled the undeveloped film out in company shipments, where it was developed by others in his company. Following the end of the war, he reclaimed his previously unseen prints and realized that he had produced one of the few photographic records of Nanjing's destruction. Over the subsequent decades, during which he served as a merchant seaman on a variety of ships, he retained a significant portion of the photographs. It is this extant visual record -- supplemented by his notes and captions -- which makes up this important, amateur photojournalistic collection.

---

## Scope and Contents

The collections consists of 394 photographs, most of which were taken during the Nanjing Massacre, or "Rape of Nanking," in 1937 and 1938. Many of the photographs are in an album compiled by Sindberg, and some have typed or handwritten annotations. Many of the images are extremely graphic, and capture the dead and dismembered bodies of men, women, and children, including infants. Of note are several photographs capturing the death of journalist Philip Pembroke Stephens. The photographs are gelatin silver prints and, with the except of one panoramic photograph, range in size from 2.8 x 4 cm (1.1 x 1.6 inches) to 12.3 x 17.4 cm (5 x 7 inches). The collection is supplemented

by a small amount of manuscript material That includes correspondence, employment and military service records, an autobiographical account in typescript, and a collection of newspaper articles.

---

## **Index Terms**

### **People**

Sindberg , Bernhard Arp, 1911- .

### **Subjects**

Atrocities.

Documentary photography.

Merchant marine.

Nanking Massacre, Nanjing, Jiangsu Sheng, China, 1937.

Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945.

War photography.

### **Places**

Nanjing (Jiangsu Sheng, China).

Shanghai (China).

### **Document Types**

Clippings.

Gelatin silver prints.

Panoramic photographs.

Photograph albums.

---

**Series I. Photographs, circa 1937**

<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0001-0072</b> Miniature prints, circa 1937. Gelatin silver prints, 2.8 x 4 cm (1.1 x 1.6 inches).	<b>Location</b> Box 1.1
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0073-0096</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.2
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0097-0111</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.3
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0112-0127</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.4
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0128-0143</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.5
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0144-0159</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.6
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0160-0175</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.7
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0176-0191</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.8
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0192-0207</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.9
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0208-0216</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.10
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0217-0224</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.11
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0225-0231</b> Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.12
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0391-0393</b> Materials removed from scrapbook, Nanjing, 1937. Gelatin silver prints.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.13
<b>Accession Number: 2006:0026:0394</b> Panoramic photograph, circa 1937 Gelatin silver print.	<b>Location</b> Flat File

**Accession Number: 2006:0026:00232-0390** Scrapbook containing photographs by Sindberg documenting the Nanjing Massacre. Many of the photographs are duplicates of images found elsewhere in the collection. Some of the photographs in the first section of the scrapbook have handwritten captions by Sindberg. The second section of the scrapbook contains photographs that are stills from an amateur motion picture shot on 16 mm film. A typescript introduction explains that the photographs were "taken by a neutral foreigner" and were "taken ma[n]y days after the actual fall of the city." The photographs have typescript captions, 1937-1938.

**Location**  
Box 2

**Series II. Papers, 1937-1985**

Certificates of Discharge to Merchant Marines, 1943-1973.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.14
Correspondence, 1941-1985.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.15
Employment and Military Service, 1937-1963.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.16-17
"Enroute [sic] To The Battle-zones," typescript autobiographical account of Sindberg's travel to Shanghai in 1937, circa 1940.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.18
Legal documents (divorce decree, cancelled will, and coroner's release), 1942, 1983.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.19
Newspaper clippings in English and Dutch, 1937-circa 1980.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.20
Photocopies of news articles, photographs, and identification papers.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.21
Empty mailing envelope.	<b>Location</b> Box 1.22