

Fragile Memories from Abroad

Our new permanent exhibition, currently under planning, will keep abreast of the times, making use of new technologies to narrate the changes in people's livelihood using a "people oriented" approach. But no matter how the advanced technology or how ingenious the methods of display, artefacts remain the core of the curation process and are crucial to the success of any exhibition. In this light, Museum staff have been out and about acquiring invaluable artefacts, many of which have not been seen by the public for more than 70 years, some from the eldest grandson of former Hong Kong governor Sir Mark Aitchison Young and others from the son of renowned Hong Kong photographer Francis Wu. The two sets of exhibits came from different parts of the world, one from Farnham in Surrey, United Kingdom, and the other from Florida, United States. But they have one thing in common: both are hugely beneficial to the research and display of artefacts related to Hong Kong's transition from a military government to a civilian administration after the Second World War, allowing us another look at Hong Kong's rebirth from darkness.

Mark Young arrived in Hong Kong to take office as governor in September 1941. Not long after that, Hong Kong underwent a drastic change, and Young became a prisoner of war during the three years and eight months of Japanese occupation. He returned to Hong Kong after the war in May 1946 and took over the city's administration from Rear Admiral Cecil Halliday Jepson Harcourt of the military government. He resumed office as governor, reestablished the city's civilian government, and served until May 1947.

Francis Wu was a renowned photographer. Born in Guangdong province in 1911, he moved to Honolulu in 1916 and then to Hong Kong in 1931, where he lived in the city until his departure for the United States in 1979. Wu had already made a reputation in Hong Kong as a photographer before the war broke out. As he had stayed in Hong Kong during the Japanese occupation, he was appointed an official photographer of the Hong Kong government immediately after the war ended. He captured rare and precious images for future generations. Governor Young can be seen in some of his photographs taken in the post-war period.

With these two sets of exhibits complementing each other, we hope to show you Hong Kong's recovery process after the Second World War. Together they bear testimony to the difficult times endured by the past generation of Hong Kong people.



Sir Mark Aitchison Young lands at Hong Kong's Queen's Pier on 10 September 1941.



Sir Mark Aitchison Young takes the oath of office as the Governor of Hong Kong at King's Theatre in Central on 10 September 1941.

C.S.O.
Stanley Camp.
30/8/45 SA

ENQUIRY				
Date	No.	Index No., Rec.	Particulars	Queue No.
			The Bearer of this slit is Mr FRANCIS WU, who has been appointed official Camp Photographer. He is to be given all facilities for taking photographs in the Camp.	
			R. R. Todd Colonel Secretary.	

Temporary press permit to Stanley Internment Camp issued to Francis Wu by R. R. Todd, the former Financial Secretary, on behalf of the Hong Kong government on 30 August 1945.



Remembrance Day observance ceremony held in front of the Cenotaph, in Central on 11 November 1945, with Rear Admiral Cecil Harcourt in the front and Sir Shouson Chow at the far left in the back row.



Invitation card to the ceremony marking the resumption of the civil government, held at Hong Kong Government House on 1 May 1946.



Rear Admiral Cecil Harcourt (front) and Sir Mark Aitchison Young (middle, second row) at the ceremony marking the resumption of the civil government in Hong Kong, witnessed by the renowned Hong Kong gentry-merchant Sir Robert Hotung (right, second row).

