

Francis Stafford and the March 1, 2011 Opening of the Hong Kong Special Exhibition to Commemorate the Centenary of China's 1911 Revolution

Ron Anderson – 3/3/11

This is the third exhibition where the photographs of Francis Stafford were a main feature of the exhibit. The first was in 2001 at the Shanghai History Museum at which the Museum published a 500-photo book of Stafford's photos. The second took place in 2008 at the Dr. Sun Yet-Sen Museum in Hong Kong. Again, the exhibit was almost exclusively limited to Stafford's photos.

The latest and third exhibition opened March 1, 2011 and will end May 16, 2011 and is titled the "[Centenary of China's 1911 Revolution](#)" as the first uprising, which was photographed by Francis Stafford, took place 100 years ago. The exhibition was designed and is hosted by the Hong Kong Museum of History. The Museum is a huge and popular facility residing in Kowloon area of the city next to the Museum of Science.

In the course of research for the exhibition, the museum curators found relevant collections of photographs that we had not previously known about, which helped to validate the research we had done on the Stafford photos. Because of these new photo findings and because the Museum sought to emphasize the role of Hong Kong in the 1911 Revolution, the Stafford collection did not dominate the new exhibition.

The new exhibition features about 300 photographs, 75 of which are from the Stafford collection. Many of the Stafford photos were enlarged to 10-feet in height or 25 feet in length, as you can see in the attached photographs. To create these huge photos, I had to re-scan the original photos at extremely high resolution, producing 100 to 400 megabyte size files.

One interesting shift in language that is worthy of note is that in this exhibition, the revolution was called the "1911 Revolution" whereas previously it has been called the "1911 Nationalist Revolution." This transition in language coincides with a shift in political ideology in China, giving more importance to the transition from a dynasty to a republic rather than from a capitalist state to a communist state.

The Stafford photographs were also given prominence in the background reports they prepared for the press. Here is a quote from one of their reports:

Witness to History: Francis Eugene Stafford, Commercial Press Photographer:

The American photographer Francis Eugene Stafford (1884-1938) arrived in Shanghai with his wife and children in 1909 to work for the Commercial Press, which was headquartered in the city at the time. He stayed until 1915, when he returned to the US for health reasons.

The success of the Wuchang Uprising in 1911 placed China firmly at the center of the world's attention. Journalists raced against time to capture these historical moments, and Stafford, a photographer of exceptional insight, was no exception. It is not known whether he was in Wuhan on 10 October when the uprising broke

out, but his photographs show he was in Wuchang on the day after the initial shots were fired. Travelling between Wuhan and Shanghai, he recorded on film the founding of the Hubei Military Government, fierce fighting between the Revolutionary Army and the Qing forces, the torching of Hankou, the north-south peace negotiations and Dr. Sun's journey to Nanjing to take office as provisional president. These invaluable historical images provide indispensable resources for research into the 1911 Revolution.

In addition to shipping dozens of electronic photo files to the Museum over the past year, Nancy and I carried the four Stafford albums on the plane to the exhibition, so that they could be used in a display case within the exhibition. A special display case had been built for them and the appended photos show the photo albums within the case. The museum agreed to insure the albums and to return them as soon as the exhibition is over in May.

The opening event on March 1st began with two hours for the press. About 200 reporters, photographers, and camera crews showed up. During the time allotted for the press to tour the large exhibit, one of the chief curators led a large group of journalists and photographers, explaining exhibits and photographs as they walked along. Twice he gave me the microphone and asked me to explain the special contribution of the Stafford pictures and to tell the story of discovering the historical value of the photos after they were stored away in trunks three-quarters of a century. Several reporters came up after that and asked me questions about the photos and about Francis Stafford. The photos appended below show some of this interaction.

After the press time was over, the press and about 300 additional invitees for the opening ceremony waited for the speakers to appear. The key speaker scheduled was the Chief Executive (equivalent of a governor) of the Special Administrative Region (SAR) of Hong Kong, Donald Tsang, who undoubtedly helped to attract a large audience. He was over a half hour late and we were told it was because of a bunch of protesters that were blocking his entrance.

Finally, he appeared, and as he was about to start speaking two young men were dragged shouting and screaming from the stage and out the door. Security officers were rushing around trying to get the protesters out and to keep more from coming in. It was a good lesson in politics although it did cause us to worry about more serious conflict erupting. As one of the hecklers was a member of the Hong Kong legislature and opposed to the government cost cutting measures against the poor, it reminded us of the situation in Wisconsin this very week. Hong Kong has had steady economic growth the past 10 years, but like the United States, the poorer people are disproportionately harmed by budget control measures.

The Chinese newspapers the next day all carried front page headlines and pictures of the heckling and gave us the full story. As the Chief Executive got out of his car, he was rushed by about 10 shouting protesters and one of them pushed him in the chest. The protesters were pushed away and the Chief Executive asked to have 15 minutes to rest up from the excitement. Later that evening, his wife told him to go to the hospital for a

check up to make sure he was OK. They did all kinds of tests and determined he was fine, but the leader of the protests was arrested for assault. Perhaps it will go to court and he will get all the publicity he was seeking. On the other hand, it may get a lot worse for him because the Chinese leaders in Beijing grumbled about the protester. Since Beijing appoints the Chief Executive of Hong Kong, the protester might well go to prison.

Reading the Chinese newspapers gave us a rather different perspective on world priorities and Chinese policies than American media. For instance, articles described how Beijing and certain city governments were adopting policies to promote “xingfu,” which was translated as happiness and well-being among the people. Critics of the government said it was just masking over other issues such as dignity, justice and equality. Again, it sounds like American politics except that nobody here is brave enough to promote happiness or even well-being as a basis for political decision making.

The day before we left, a reporter from [Next Magazine](#), one of the most popular weekly magazines in Hong Kong called and asked for an interview. He took us back to the Museum with a photographer to take some more photos of the photos. When we returned to the exhibit, it was crowded with visitors. The Museum Curator told us that they expect about 2,000 people a day visiting the exhibit. The Next Mag. reporter asked all kinds of questions about the photographs and about Francis Stafford, his children, his hobbies, what motivated him, how the pictures survived so long, and so forth. Many questions I couldn't answer. I wish I knew so much more about Francis Stafford and what he was like.

We really missed not getting to share the respect and interest that the Francis Stafford photographs generate. At one time, Rosalie, the Robert Staffords, and Barbara and Chuck Landers were all planning to fly over to join us in the ceremonies. I truly wish that they could have helped fill in the details about the remarkable life of Francis Stafford.

When both curators and reporters talk about his pictures as precious, it makes our grandfather Stafford seem like the gifted hero he really was.



Figure 1. 12-Foot Entrance Mural by Japanese Artist



Figure 2. Speech by HKG CEO



Figure 3. Press Capturing Demonstrators During Speech



Figure 4. Photo at Exhibit Entrance - 25-foot Stafford Photo



Figure 5. Stafford Collage Enlarged 10-Fold



Figure 6. Nancy with Yellow Crane Photo



Figure 7. One of about 20 Stafford Photos in Electronic Picture Frame Show



Figure 8. 10-Foot Stafford Photo with Map Superimposed



Figure 9. 10-Foot Stafford Photo



Figure 10. Photographers Posed Ron with Stafford Soldiers



Figure 11. Ron Gets Close to Stafford Soldiers



Figure 12. Photographers Capturing Ron with Soldiers

Francis Stafford Photo Exhibited at Hong Kong Museum, March 2011



Figure 13. Viewing both the Album Display Case and Stafford Photo Panel



Figure 14. Ron Telling Story of Stafford Photo Albums



Figure 15. Ron Lecturing Impromptu about Stafford Photos



Figure 16. Photographers Capturing Lecture



Figure 17. Press Interview



Figure 18. More Press Interviews

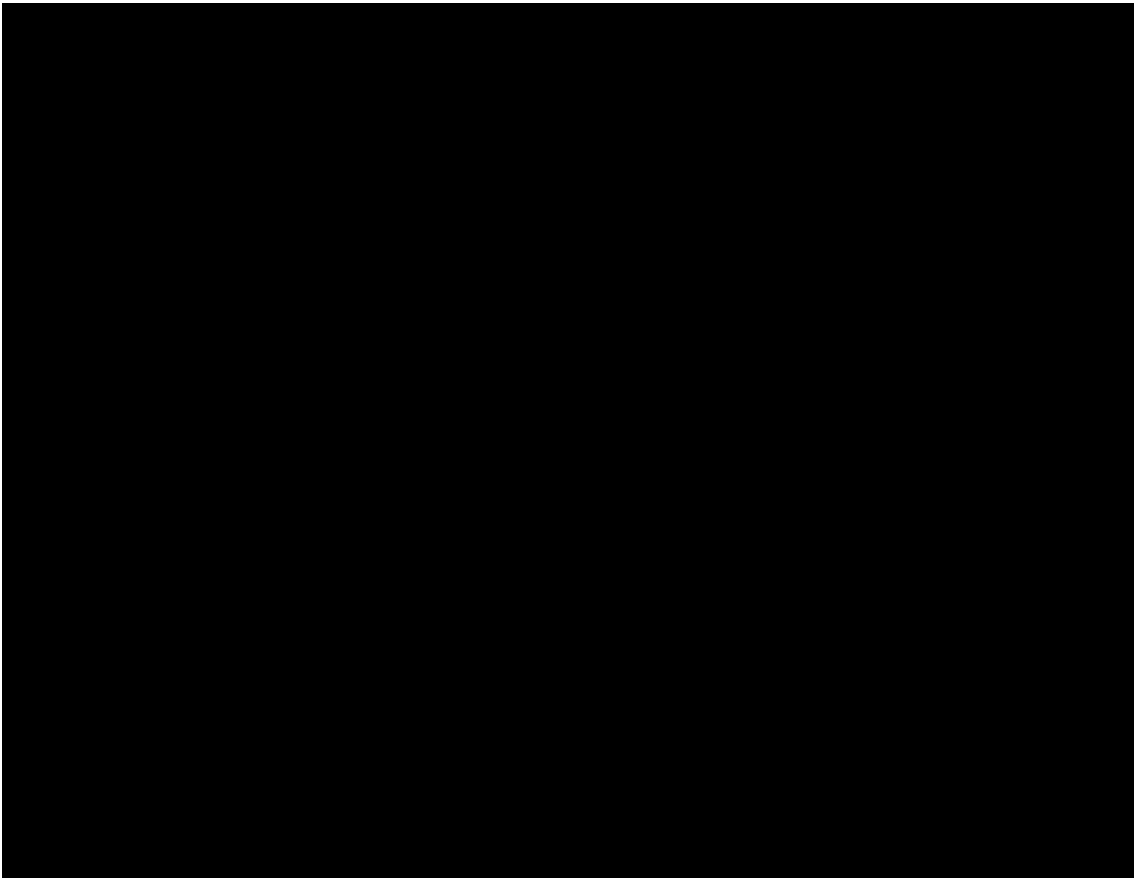


Figure 19. Popular Stafford Photo



Figure 20. Typical photo display

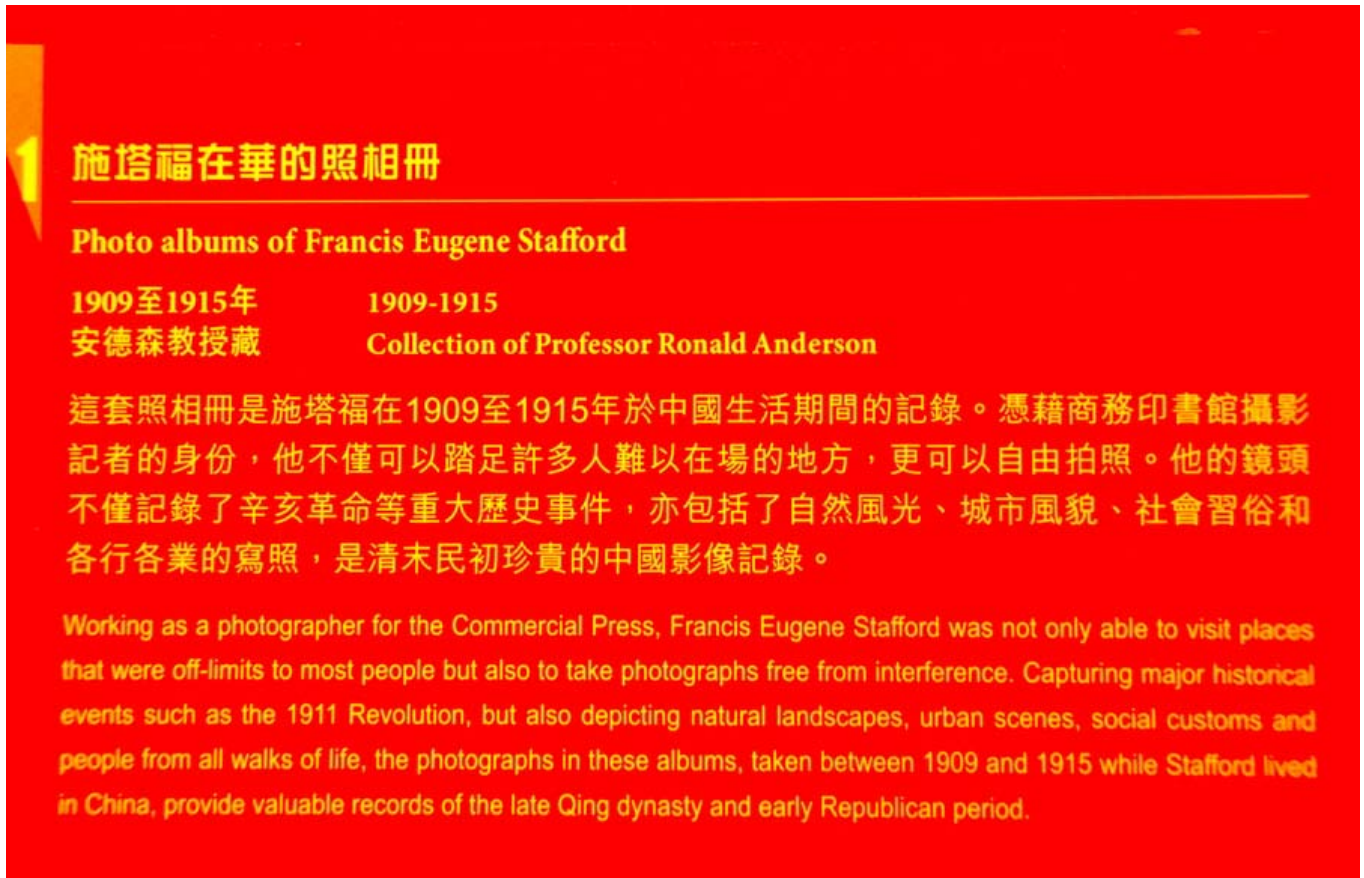


Figure 21. Album Display Caption



Figure 22. Album in Case with Color Photos



Figure 23. Two more Stafford Albums in Case



Figure 24. Photographer Nancy with Stafford Color Book Cover

證人
塔福
印書館攝影師

Witness to History
Francis Eugene Stafford,
Commercial Press Photographer

施塔福(1884-1938)是美國人，1909年攜同妻兒遠渡重洋到上海，並在當時總部設於上海的商務印書館出任攝影師，至1915年因健康理由返回美國。

1911年武昌首義，舉世注目，傳媒爭分奪秒記錄驚鴻一瞥的歷史時刻，具有攝影師敏銳觸角的施塔福當然亦不例外。10月10日起義爆發時，施塔福是否已身在武漢，現已不得而知，但從他鏡頭下的照片所見，他在首義的翌日已開始在武昌拍攝照片。從武漢到上海，包括湖北軍政府成立、革命軍與清軍激戰、漢口大火、南北和談，以至孫中山赴寧就任臨時大總統等歷史瞬間，都一一被施塔福攝入鏡頭，是研究辛亥革命不可多得的寶貴影像資料。



施塔福在武昌城留影，背景可見警鐘樓。武昌起義後革命軍曾在此豎起「漢漢滅滿」大旗。

Francis Stafford in Wuchang. In the background is the clock tower where the Revolutionary Army put up a banner with the words xing han rise man ('The Han rise as the Manchu are annihilated') after the Wuchang Uprising.

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施塔福在陽夏之戰的戰場上與清軍合照
The photographer Francis Stafford with Qing troops at the Battle of Yangxia.

© Professor Ronald Anderson

The American photographer Francis Eugene Stafford (1884-1938) arrived in Shanghai with his wife and children in 1909 to work for the Commercial Press, which was headquartered in the city at the time. He stayed until 1915, when he returned to the US for health reasons.

The success of the Wuchang Uprising in 1911 placed China firmly at the centre of the world's attention. Journalists raced against time to capture these historical moments, and Stafford, a photographer of exceptional insight, was no exception. It is not known whether he was in Wuhan on 10 October when the uprising broke out, but his photographs show he was in Wuchang on the day after the initial shots were fired. Travelling between Wuhan and Shanghai, he recorded on film the founding of the Hubei Military Government, fierce fighting between the Revolutionary Army and the Qing forces, the torching of Hankou, the north-south peace negotiations and Dr Sun's journey to Nanjing to take office as Provisional President. These invaluable historical images provide indispensable resources for research into the 1911 Revolution.



施塔福在南京明孝陵的神道邊
Francis Stafford on the Shen Dao (Spiritual Path) of the Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum in Nanjing.

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清末商務印書館照相製版部的員工合照，中坐者為施塔福。背後可見清朝的黃龍旗。

Staff of the Photographic Section of the Commercial Press in the late Qing dynasty, with Francis Stafford seated in the centre and the yellow dragon flag of the Qing dynasty in the background.

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施塔福為中國人剪辮。在清末民初時，剪辮是擁護革命政府的標誌。

Stafford cuts off a Chinese man's queue. In the late Qing and early Republican period, queue cutting was considered an expression of support for the revolutionary government.

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上海商務印書館的職員大會照，約攝於1914年。
Group photograph of staff of the Commercial Press, Shanghai, taken around 1914.

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Figure 25. Display of Stafford, the Man