

**Reference code:** GB165-0545

**Title:** Sir Wilfred Thesiger Collection

**Name of creator:** Thesiger, Sir Wilfred Patrick (1910-2003), Knight, Diplomat, Author and Traveller

**Dates of creation of material:** c1954

**Level of description:** Fonds

**Extent:** 27 magic lantern slides

**Biographical history:** Thesiger, Sir Wilfred Patrick (1910-2003), Knight, Diplomat, Author and Traveller.

Born 3 June 1910, son of Captain Wilfred Gilbert Thesiger and Kathleen Mary. Educated at Eton College and Magdalen College, Oxford University. Received a grant from the Royal Geographical Society in 1935 to explore the Aussa Sultanate and the country of Abyssinia between 1933-1934. Joined the Sudan Political Service and served in desert campaigns between 1935-1940. Joined the North and East African Campaign with rank of Major during World War II. Worked in Arabia with the Desert Locusts Research Organization between 1945-1949. Explored the Empty Quarter (desert of southern Arabia) between 1946-1950. From 1950 onwards, explored French West Africa, Iraq, Kurdistan, Pakistan, Persia and Kenya. Lived with Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq over seven years from 1950 to the Iraqi Revolution. Returned to England in 1994. Died 24 August 2003.

**Scope and content:** 27 magic lantern slides of the Marsh Arabs in southern Iraq, c1954. The slides depict ethnological scenes of the Marsh Arabs' communal life such as fishing, hunting, communal gatherings, landscape panoramic views and portraits. All of the slides are labelled 'Royal Central Asian Society' and the original packaging was labelled '?1954. Marsh Arabs W. Thesiger'.

**Access conditions:** Open

**Language of material:** English

**Conditions governing reproduction:** There are no special restrictions on copying other than statutory regulations (UK Copyright law). The literary executor of Sir Wilfred Thesiger is Alexander Maitland and the Pitt Rivers Museum holds the main Wilfred Thesiger Photographic Collection. Any enquiries with regard to copying or publishing

Wilfred Thesiger photographs should be directed to the Curator of Photograph and Manuscript Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum.

**Immediate source of acquisition:** Transferred to Middle East Centre Archive from St. Antony's College Library in February 1982

**Related Units of Description:**

In MEC Archive

- GB165-0229 St John Philby Collection: Correspondence relating Wilfred Thesiger including letters from Philby to Mrs Astley (Thesiger's mother) reassuring her as to Thesiger's safety.

In Other Repositories

- In Pitt Rivers Museum (Archon Code: GB485) Collection of 38,000 negatives and 71 personal albums. Over 1300 images are accessible online via the Pitt Rivers Museum web page

**Finding aids:** Handlist

**Publication note:**

- Thesiger, Wilfred *Arabian Sands* (Longmans, Green, 1959) ISBN 0002170051 (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *The Marsh Arabs* (Longmans, 1964) ISBN 0141442085 (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *Desert, marsh and mountain* (London: Collins, 1979) ISBN 000211643X (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *The life of my choice* (London: Collins, 1979) ISBN 000216194X (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *Visions of a Nomad* (London: Collins, 1987) ISBN 0002177293 (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *My Kenya Days* (London: HarperCollins, 1994) ISBN 000255268X (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *The Danakil Diary* (London: HarperCollins, 1996) ISBN 000255710X (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *Among the Mountains* (London: HarperCollins, 1996) ISBN 000255898X (pbk.)

- Thesiger, Wilfred *Crossing the Sands* (Dubai; London: Motivate, 1999) ISBN 1860630286 (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *A vanished world* (London: HarperCollins, 2001) ISBN 0007108370 (pbk.)
- Thesiger, Wilfred *My life and travels* (London: HarperCollins, 2002) ISBN 000257151X (pbk.)

**Archivist's note:** Item level description created by Núria Puertas, July 2011. Biographical History based on the entry for Thesiger, Wilfred in *Who's Who & Who Was Who* online edition and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

**ITEM LEVEL DESCRIPTION OF THE WILFRED THESIGER COLLECTION**

- A Map of Iraq showing Muntafiq, Amara, Nasariya and Basra showing areas with permanent water, seasonal floods, permanent marsh and seasonal marsh
- 1 Reed house and boat in marshlands
- 2 Portrait of a man
- 3 Portrait of an elderly man
- 4 Portrait of a man
- 5 Portrait of a young boy
- 6 Family with cattle near a river and reed houses
- 7 Cattle in marshlands and reed houses
- 8 Small boats in marshlands
- 9 Reed houses in marshlands
- 10 Family inside reed house with cattle in marshlands
- 11 Reed houses in marshlands
- 12 Reed house structure
- 13 Gathering of men inside reed house
- 14 Men outside reed building
- 15 Small boats in marshlands
- 16 Group of men in a boat
- 17 A man standing up rowing in a small boat
- 18 Two men rowing in a boat
- 19 Elderly man and young boy fishing
- 20 Group of men fishing
- 21 Some boats of fishermen in marshlands
- 22 Naked man rowing
- 23 Portrait of an old woman
- 24 Portrait of an armed young man
- 25 Two men rowing in a boat
- 26 Hunter with a dead wild boar