



# Smithsonian

*National Museum of Natural History*

## Guide to the Dorothy West Pelzer papers, 1961-1970

National Anthropological Archives  
Museum Support Center  
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## Collection Overview

<b>Repository:</b>	National Anthropological Archives
<b>Title:</b>	Dorothy West Pelzer papers
<b>Date:</b>	1961-1970
<b>Identifier:</b>	NAA.1989-07
<b>Creator:</b>	Pelzer, Dorothy West, -1972
<b>Extent:</b>	38.5 Linear feet
<b>Language:</b>	English .

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## Administrative Information

### Acquisition Information

Received from the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore in 1989 and 1993 and the estate of Dorothy West Pelzer in 1997.

### Preferred Citation

Dorothy West Pelzer papers, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution

### Restrictions

The Dorothy West Pelzer papers is open for research.

Access to the Dorothy West Pelzer papers requires an appointment.

### Conditions Governing Use

Contact the repository for terms of use.

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## Biographical Note

Dorothy Pelzer (1915-1972) was educated at Cornell University and Principia College in Elsah, Illinois. She also studied at the Institute of Design ("New Bauhaus") in Chicago under Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Walter Gropius and took a M.Arch. degree from the Massachusetts Institution of Technology in 1950. After this she was engaged in various activities, including teaching at Wellesley College. During the late 1950s, she toured rural Japan and visited several Asian countries. Between 1962 and 1970, she traveled in Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Laos, Malaya, Philippines, Sarawak, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam documenting through photographs and drawings traditional building forms, including houses, granaries, temples, boats, and graves. Most of her work was self-financed, but in 1968 and 1971 she received support for her work from the J.D. Rockefeller III Foundation.

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## Scope and Contents

The collection consists of notes and photographs, both black and white negatives with prints and color slides. The notes comprise both reading notes and those made in the field.

For many of the buildings, the photographs show facades, structural and decorative details, and, often, interior views. For some structures, the photographs also show surroundings. There are also a few aerial photographs of settlements, photographs of models of Southeast Asian houses, and illustrations from books on houses. A few photographs show the construction of buildings and the use of tools for preparing building materials.

In addition to photographs of buildings, there are also portraits, some of natives and some of friends, and views of village scenes, markets, street vendors, processions and ceremonies, carts, food processing and preparation, burden bearing, water wheels, oxen, musicians and musical instruments, and such crafts as bronze casting, spinning, weaving, and the preparation of lacquer.

Please note that the contents of the collection and the language and terminology used reflect the context and culture of the time of its creation. As an historical document, its contents may be at odds with contemporary views and terminology and considered offensive today. The information within this collection does not reflect the views of the Smithsonian Institution or National Anthropological Archives, but is available in its original form to facilitate research.

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## Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

### Subjects:

- Architecture
- Balinese (Indonesian people)
- Bontoks (Philippine people)
- Burmese
- Chin (Southeast Asian people)
- Dayak (Indonesian people)
- Dusun (Bornean people)
- Iban (Bornean people)
- Ifugao (Philippine people)
- Indonesians
- Javanese (Indonesian people)
- Kachin (Asian people)
- Kalinga (Philippine people)
- Khmer (Asian people)
- Meo (Indic people)
- Murut (Bornean people)
- Niasese (Indonesian people)
- Rungus (Malaysian people)
- Taungthu (Southeast Asian people)
- Thai Dam
- Yao (Southeast Asian people)

### Cultures:

- Balinese (Indonesian people)
- Bontoks (Philippine people)
- Burmese
- Chin (Southeast Asian people)
- Dusun (Bornean people)
- Iban (Bornean people)
- Ifugao (Philippine people)
- Indonesians

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Places:

Southeast Asia