

EMIL BURMESTER

Born 22nd September 1832, Brunswick, Lower Saxony - Died Thun, Switzerland, 29th October 1919
A naturalised British subject and "consummate entrepreneur".

**JEWELLER, WATCHMAKER, OPTICIAN,
SUPPLIER OF SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT, LAMPS & PHOTOGRAPHIC GOODS**

Est. 1864. Premises at 23 (1866), 58 (1880) 86-92 (1900) Adderley Street, Cape Town

Photography was still in its infancy when Emil Burmester purchased part of the insolvent estate of photographer Arthur Green in Cape Town in 1862. Burmester would become a leading Cape supplier of photographic materials. When Green became insolvent again, Burmester acquired his photograph's of the visit of the Confederate raider, CSS Alabama, to Cape Town in 1863,

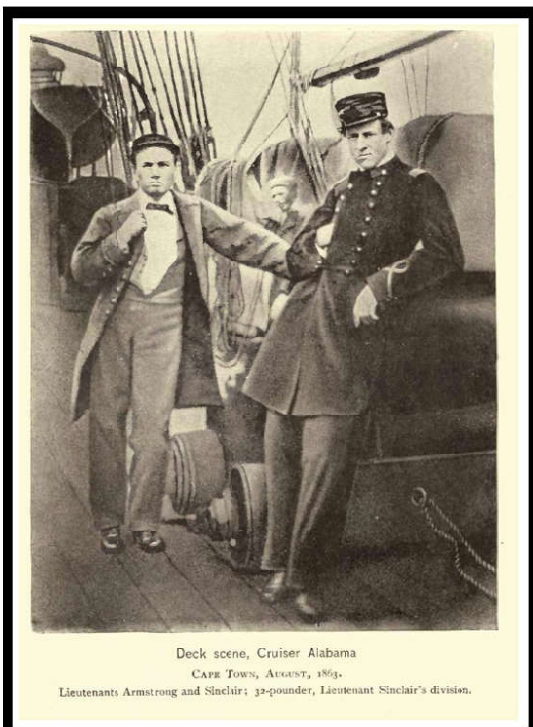


Commerce raiding in the seas around the Cape. August 1863.

The *CSS Alabama* (above) steams in to attack and sink *The Sea Bride*, a Union merchant ship, one of its 65 victims, within sight and sound of Cape Town harbour.



Arthur Green took these two photographs aboard the CSS Alabama in Cape Town. This unique record of the CSS Alabama's stay in Cape Town was acquired by Burmester who sold the images alongside tribal studies and Cape scenes as monogrammed souvenirs from his shop at 23 Adderley Street. Photos found in US naval archives bear the Burmester hallmark.



Deck scene, Cruiser Alabama

CAPE TOWN, AUGUST, 1863.

Lieutenants Armstrong and Sinclair; 32-pounder, Lieutenant Sinclair's division.



This 1853 triangle - SG 2a. 4d deep blue, with fine light Small Triangular Obliterator - is a contemporary of US slavery.

Cape 'Coloured' people descended from emancipated slaves saw the Alabama as an ugly reminder of their own recent oppression and struggle for human rights

"Daar kom die Alabama"*

Most COGH collectors will own a cover or two from Burmester. His was arguably the best and most important trove of philatelic treasure left to posterity by a South African company. The USA and its Navy also has a reason to be grateful to Burmester. By buying the photographs of the insolvent photographer Arthur Green, Burmester preserved for posterity the only known images of the CSS Alabama. These were made by Arthur Green when the Alabama visited Cape Town in 1863 during the US Civil War. According to the U.S. Naval Historical Center, the photos above and left are "by an unknown photographer". We now know that the photographer was Arthur Green. Had Burmester not acquired the insolvent Green's Alabama images, no photos of this famously notorious and successful commerce raider, its captain and officers, would exist.