

Chinatown

牛車水



an album of a Singapore community

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Times Books International • Archives and Oral History Department

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Foreword

Chinatown is a subject dear to the hearts of many for a variety of reasons.

There are many among Singaporeans today who remember, fondly, the heart of entertainment and the thriving centre of activity that was Chinatown. To others Chinatown is invested with a historical significance; they recall the pioneers, those early Chinese immigrants who came to Singapore shortly after it was founded in 1819, whose labour and toil contributed to the success story of Singapore. Sentiment and history aside, Chinatown is full of things to buy, see and do. During any one of the Chinese festivals like Chinese New Year, Mooncake Festival and the Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, it comes wondrously alive.

From the visitor's point of view, Chinatown is a unique place, and arouses particular interest in perhaps the same way as the Chinatown in San Francisco, Soho in London and the French Quarter in New Orleans. In Chinatown one sees an aspect of Singaporean culture typically Chinese, yet different from and constituting another image to the one projected by Shenton Way, Changi Airport, our new towns, and the hotels and coffee houses in the Orchard Road area.

What, which to preserve? This has become a matter of constant debate. Our present concern, however, is to provide a pictorial account of its beginnings. In the first section *In Perspective: Growth and Development*, we show the Chinese settlements along Telok Ayer before Chinatown proper developed. With urban renewal recreating the Chinatown we knew and loved, there arose an urgency to document old Singapore. Thus many

photographs of street scenes are accompanied by those dating back to the turn of the century. We also tried to capture the characteristics of each main street in Chinatown, and to do so we have arbitrarily divided it into eight main areas. Wherever possible we have explained the origin of certain street names as many of these vary from the official ones. Popularly known street names endow a special character to the place and certainly relate to the previous type of land use.

Without its people, Chinatown would not be the organic community which it was and still is. The final section on people and festivals highlight some of the activities common to Chinatown, occupational and festive.

We hope that this exhibition on Chinatown will generate greater interest in the history of Singapore, especially among the younger generation, and perhaps stimulate research in this area. At the same time we encourage persons with pictures and documents concerning Chinatown to come forward and donate or deposit them with the Archives & Oral History Department.

This is the first of the series of exhibitions the Archives & Oral History Department will be holding on interesting areas of old Singapore. We eventually wish to cover places like Serangoon Road: 'Little India', Kampong Glam, Geylang, Haig Road and others.

Mrs Lily Tan
Acting Director
Archives & Oral History Department

序

尽管原因各有不同，许多新加坡人与外国人、旅居人士或是过境观光的旅客，对牛车水同样会产生亲切感。

对于老一辈的新加坡人，尤其是那些还记得牛车水曾经是华人区活动中心的人来说，牛车水更能勾起他们对往日多姿多彩生活的回忆。尽管受到现代化与西方的影响，这里原有的一些生活方式和民族文化传统，至今仍旧保留着。牛车水对于其他的人，那些对历史有所认识的，可说是象征着早期华人移民，那些在1819年莱佛士开发新加坡后不久，移居新加坡的华人移民，披荆斩棘、刻苦耐劳的苦干精神。我们应该记得新加坡的成功，应该归功于在牛车水定居的早期移民。再者，对于那些讲求实际的新加坡人来说，牛车水确实是一个购物天堂。不论是商品或服务都应有尽有，任由选择。每逢华人节日期间，如农历新年、中秋节、中元节等，牛车水更是生气勃勃。我们常听人说，如果有买货真价实的东西，到牛车水去买好了。

对于外国人来说，尤其是旅客，牛车水可能象三藩市的唐人街，伦敦的Soho，新奥尔良的French Quarter，同样值得一看。对他们来说，新加坡的牛车水象征着丰富的华族文化，代表新加坡过去那种独特与有趣的生活面貌，这和今日新加坡，清洁翠绿，象珊瑚大道、乌节路、樟宜机场、新镇与矗立云霄的现代化大旅店和咖啡屋，形成了鲜明的对照。

不论是在严肃的会议室里或者是茶余饭后，牛车水也是各阶层人士喜欢讨论的一个课题。专业人士象建筑师、城市规划师、保存主义者和历史学者常喜欢讨论牛车水的保存问题，诸如那一些要保存，要保存多少的问题。保存牛车水是个有趣的课题，虽然富有争论性，有时候也造成在情绪上的愤怒与失望，使那些对风俗传统反感，只管卫生安全和其他建筑条件的人备受攻击。多姿多彩的牛车水，

可以拍成引人入胜的电视记录片。凡是关于新加坡的故事，都可以用牛车水作为背景。

这次展览会的目的是要通过这些照片，显示牛车水是怎样发展起来的。在“历史背景：发展到成长”这一组，我们展示牛车水在还没有发展之前直落亚逸一带的华人区。随着快速的市区重建，新加坡的面貌有了很大的改观，因此，我们认为有迫切的需要，把早期新加坡的面貌记录下来。为了表达这个题材，我们不但展示了新加坡早期的街景，同时也把牛车水各主要街道的特色，加以特写。为了方便展示，我们把牛车水分成八大区，并且也指出这些街名的命名来由。这些街道的俗名和官方的名称可能不同，但是多姿多彩，生动有趣。它们显示了早期这个地方的特色。为了展示牛车水新与旧的对照，我们也给每一组加入最新的照片。当然，牛车水总不能缺少“人”。因此，在最后的“人”与“节日”这一组里，我们展示牛车水的典型居民，有些目前还在等待徙置。最有趣的可说是那些已经消逝的东西。


我们希望通过这一次的展览来劝导更多的人把有关牛车水的照片或文献，捐给或存放在档案及口述历史馆。就象我们其他的展览一样，我们也希望这一次的展览，能够唤起一般人民，尤其是年轻的一辈，对新加坡历史的兴趣，同时对牛车水作更广泛、更深入的研究。

档案及口述历史馆正在筹划早期新加坡某些地区的图片展览，如实龙岗区；即“小印度”，甘榜格南，芽笼，海格路等等。这次牛车水的历史图片展览是这项计划的第一部份。

陈罗伶俐女士
档案及口述历史馆
代馆长

In Perspective: Growth and Development

历史背景：从发展到成长



There is
a place known as
Kereta Ayer (牛车水)
in

“Greater Town”

where restaurants, theatres, and brothels are concentrated.

It is the most populated area
where filth and dirt are hidden.

No place in Singapore can compare with it.

1822年11月4日 莱佛士致城市委员会训令摘录。该委员会成立于1822年初，负责从事新

加坡市区建设。莱佛士的训令，大体上奠定了此后市区，尤其是华人区的发展面貌。

as blacksmiths, carpenters &c. in part attended to.

It will further of uniformity of or tiled houses to be constructed, each house to have a verandah open at all times as a continued and covered passage on each side of the street.

In fixing a proposition also be made and that a copy of the details of policy of police to the town proposed.

The danger of the most respect merchants, seem with tiled roofs for this in the larger com-

The concentration of the

of the population in their separate quarters of the advantage which may arise in special cases where the commerce is concerned. Few places offer more facilities than Singapore and it is to be availed themselves of them in the proportion and claims to consideration.

It being intended to place it measure under the immediate control of these authorities and appropriate ground, as may tend to render the and at the same time raise the classes.

You will also line out the division should as far as practicable be less than—feet in breadth. Hereafter, you will be placed their relative advantages of 3rd class, determining shall be occupied by an exact number of houses proposed to fix a small house, of one, two and according to the above of January and you will January next arrange and granting them receive some appropriate police to see them should also have a

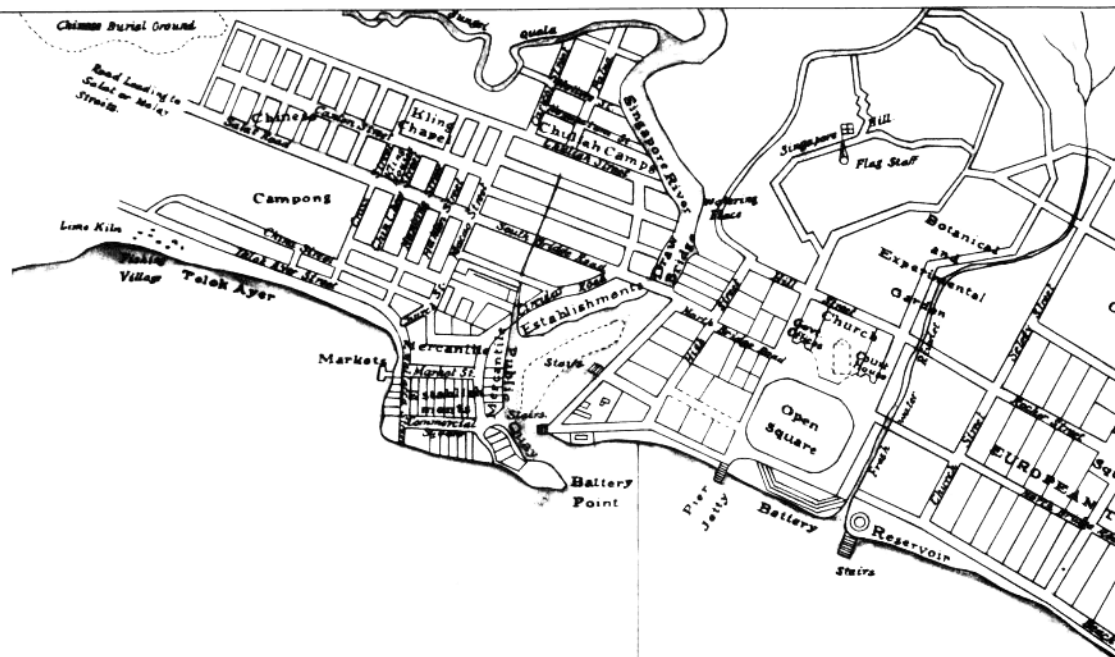
The danger of the most respect merchants, seem with tiled roofs for this in the larger com-

Chinese Camping.

From the number of Chinese already settled, and the peculiar attractions of the place for that industrious race, it may be presumed that they will always form by far the largest portion of the Singapore river (not excepted as above) is intended to be appropriated for their accommodation. They will be permitted to occupy the south west bank of the river above the present Chinese camp, and the highroad leading from the inlet to the southward of it, will offer many advantageous situations as yet unoccupied. These will be particularly pointed out to you by the executive officer and you will proceed to mark out this division of the town generally inland as far as practicable up the slopes of the hills, as may appear to be likely to be required, reserving an appropriate place above the bridge for the accommodation of the lower classes of Chaliats and others employed in boats, cooly work &c.

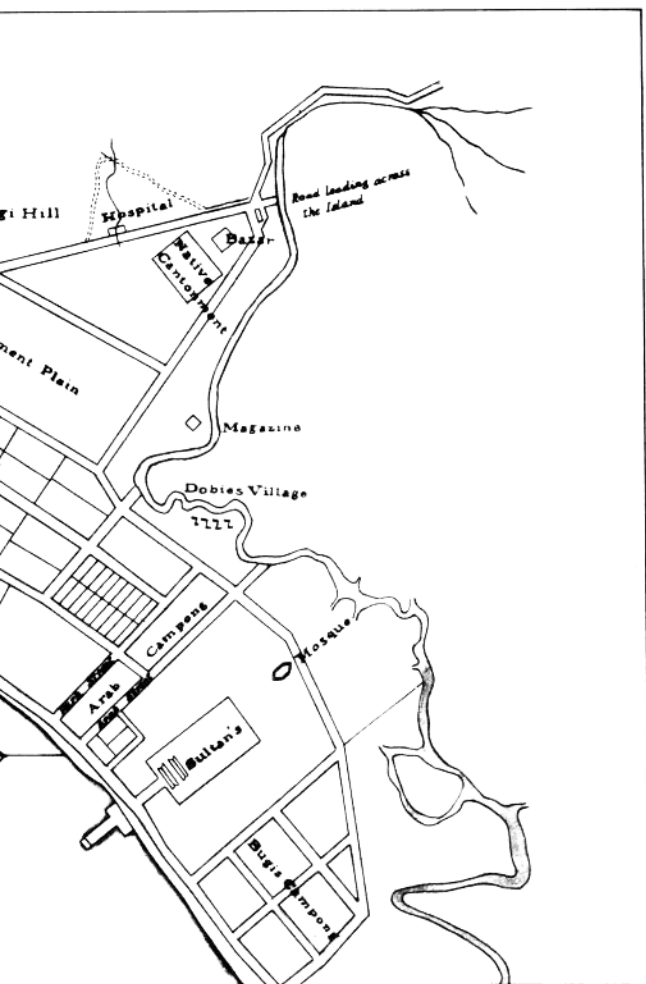
In establishing the Chinese camping on a proper footing, it will be necessary to advert to the provincial and other distinctions among this peculiar people. It is well known that the people of one province are more quarrelsome than another, and that continued disputes and disturbances take place between people of different provinces; it will also be necessary to distinguish between the fixed residents and itinerant, -between the resident merchants and the traders who only resort to the port for a time. Of the latter those from Amoi claim particular attention, and it may perhaps deserve consideration whether on account of their importance it may not be advisable to allot a separate division for their accommodation even to the westward of the Cantonments, beyond the European town and the Sultan. The object of Government being to afford the utmost accommodation to every description of traders, but more particularly to the respectable classes, you will always keep this in view, and while you generally direct your attention to the importance of concentrating the different classes

Dated 4th November 1822, this is Raffles' letter to the Town Committee, directing attention to the 'proper allotment of the Native divisions of the town, and the first in importance of these is beyond doubt the Chinese.'



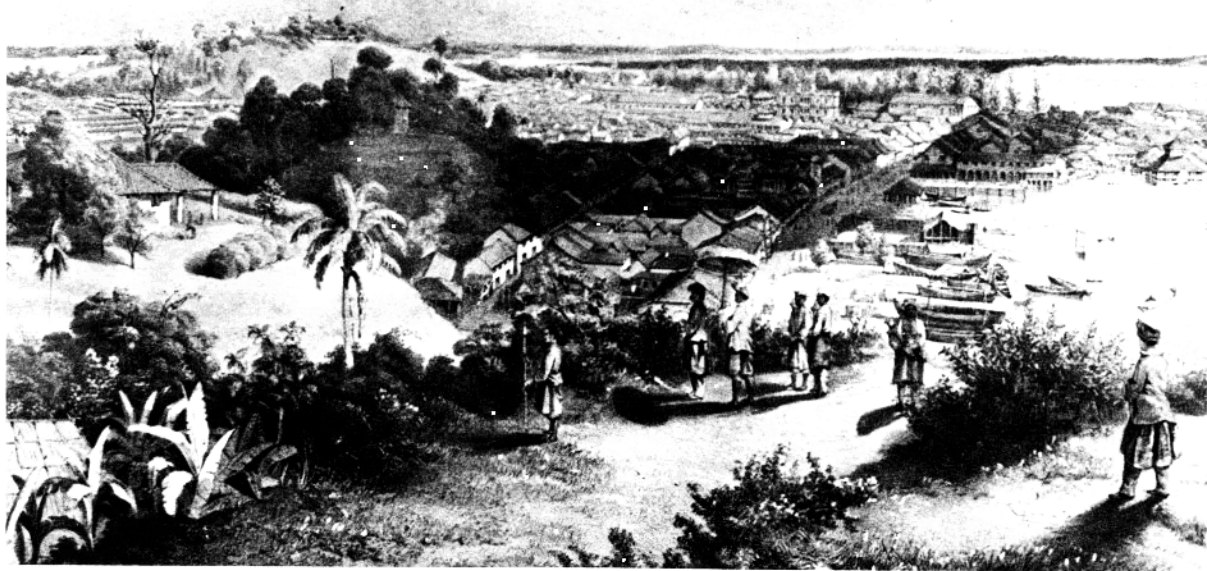
Plan
of the
Town
of
SINGAPORE
Lieut^y Jackson.

Reeds



Raffles' recommendations to the Town Committee were incorporated in this master plan drawn up by Lt. Jackson in 1828. Areas were specifically allocated to the various racial groups, e.g. Chinese, Europeans, Chuliahs, Bugis, etc. Chinatown spread its roots on the south-west side of the Singapore River, where it has remained to this day. The plan also shows a Chinese burial ground near Scott's Hill (known as Ching San Ting by the Chinese, and exhumed in 1906) where the Metropole Theatre is presently located.

莱佛士对城市委员会所提出的建议经被并入在1828年杰克逊中尉所拟订的市区建设图。他建议把地区个别地分配给各民族如华人、欧洲人、印度人、武吉人等等。新加坡河的西南边经已落地生根地成为今日的牛车水。这份蓝图还显示靠近史各士山一座华人义山（华人称为青山亭，于1906年已被政府迁坟）就是今日金华戏院的所在地。



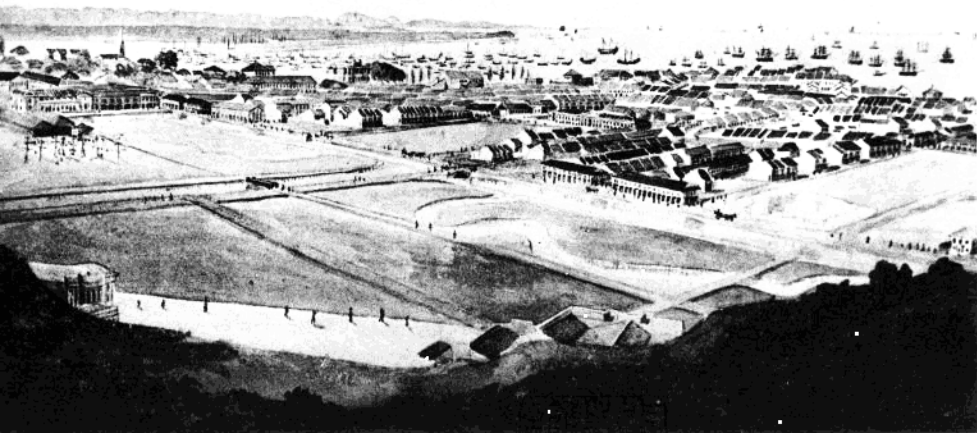
A view in oils by Percy Carpenter showing the Chinese settlement around Telok Ayer in 1856. Major reclamation took place after 1879 and the sea no longer came right up to Telok Ayer Street. The Thian Hock Keng Temple, which can be seen at the centre of the painting, was frequented by worshipping seafarers who relied on the protection of Ma Cho-po, Mother of Heavenly Sages. At that time Telok Ayer Street was the main Chinese commercial district and between the 1850s and the 1870s it was notorious for Chinese slave trade.

这是柏斯·嘉宾达油画中的1856年直落亚逸一带的华人区。在1879年经过大规模填海工程后，海水不再淹至直落亚逸街。油画中间是天福宫，海员常到此庙来朝拜与祈求“天后圣母”（俗称妈祖婆）的庇护。在那个时候，直落亚逸街是华人主要的商业地区，同时在1850年代与1870年代之间，它是声名狼藉的华人奴隶买卖场所。



Another two scenes of the Chinese settlement around Telok Ayer, circa 1870.

1870年直落亚逸一带华人区二景。



A look at Chinatown in 1847 by J.T. Thomson, this time from Pearl's Hill. The open space in the foreground is the heart of the present Chinatown which was then partially developed.

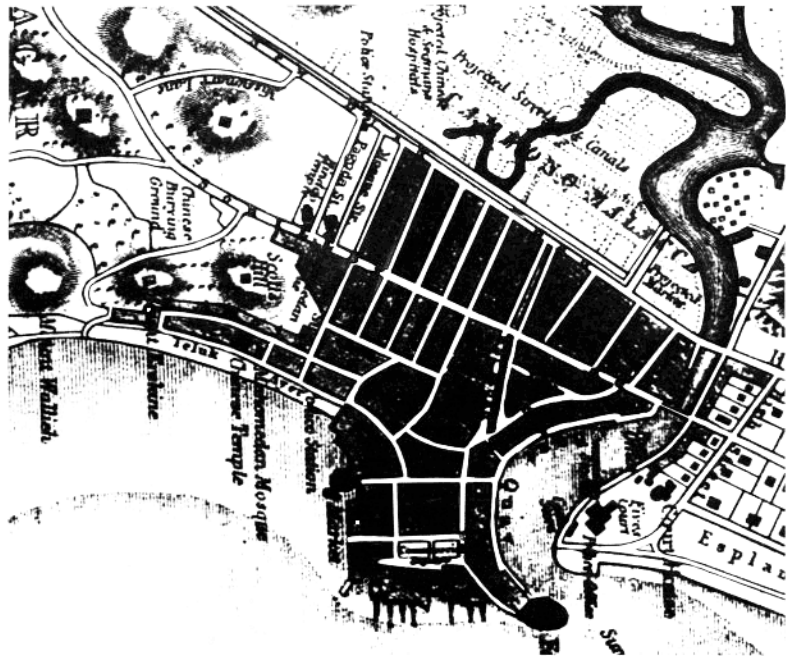
从珍珠山眺望牛车水，这是汤申在1847年所画的。

Chinatown as depicted by J.T. Thomson, looking south from Government Hill in 1846. Two very prominent features can be recognised, namely the Jamae Mosque and Sri Mariamman Temple. At that time Chinatown was already fairly developed, as can be seen from the rows of single- and two-storey houses.

从皇家山向南眺望的牛车水是J. T. 汤申所描绘的（1846年）。画中有两座突出的建筑物，即詹美回教堂与希里·马里安曼兴都庙。从那一排排的单层和双层房屋就可见那时期的牛车水已经达到相当程度的发展。



Detail from J.T. Thomson's map of Singapore. By 1846, Chinatown had expanded to the area demarcated by Telok Ayer Street, Singapore River, New Bridge Road and Pagoda Street. Darkened areas on the map indicate the developed areas which include Upper Macao Street, Upper Hokien Street, Upper Chin Chew Street, Upper Cross Street and Mosque Street. Away from the densely built-up areas were jungle clearings at the foot of Bukit Padre (formerly Dickenson Hill, now Banda Street). The Portuguese Missionary School or Church which once stood on the hilltop was surrounded by nutmeg trees.



DIRECTIONS



Contiguous houses



Detached houses



Wooden and thatched houses



Public buildings



Nutmeg trees



Coconut trees



Fruit trees



Forest trees



Mangrove swamp



Coral reefs