



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

**Singapore Roads Surveyed by J.W. Reed, Master Commanding . . . H.M.S. Rifleman
1864.**

Stock#: 37652
Map Maker: British Admiralty
Date: 1864 (1868)
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 26 x 39 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A rare British Admiralty chart of Singapore Harbour, being the first advanced scientific survey of the harbor, featuring an exceptionally detailed view of the city during the 1860s.

This fine chart focuses closely in on what was the urbanized area of Singapore, and features a fascinating perspective on the city seldom captured by sea charts, which usually feature the city from a much smaller scale. What is now downtown Singapore can be seen in the upper right, while "New Harbour" (Keppel Harbour) appears to the south, and beyond are various small islands lying in the Singapore Straits. Copious hydrographic information adorns the seas throughout.



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Singapore Roads Surveyed by J.W. Reed, Master Commanding . . . H.M.S. Rifleman 1864.

At the time that this chart was made, Singapore was less than 50 years old, having been founded in 1819 by Sir Stamford Raffles. It had overtaken Georgetown (Penang, Malaysia) to become the most important British center in Southeast Asia, and was a rapidly growing commercial and naval port. In 1867, the year before this chart was printed, Singapore became the capital of the newly formed Crown colony of the Straits Settlements (consisting of large coastal portions of the Malay Peninsula). In spite of its importance, the entire island of Singapore had a population of only around 85,000.

As shown on the present chart, the urban area consisted only of what is now downtown Singapore, extending from Pearl's and Erskine Hill in the southwest, up to the mouth of the Rochor River in the northeast. What is now Raffles Place, was then located near the shore of the harbor, long before land reclamation schemes extended the littoral outwards. All of the major streets are labeled, as are the outlines of every built-up block, many of which consisted of shop houses of both a Victorian and Peranakan style. Highlights of major structures include the Fish Market, the Port Office, the Town Hall, the Clock Tower and the Police Station. Fort Canning guards the city from a hill on the inland edge of town, and various country estates are labeled beyond. Curiously, Emerald Hill, today at the heart of the busy shopping district along Orchard Road, is shown to be well out into the countryside.

Turning to the harbor itself, one can see the numerous lines of 'Fishing Stakes', as in the 1860s, Malay fisherman were still using traditional methods to corral fish. At New Harbor (Keppel Harbour), can be seen numerous warehouses, although the port facilities were still modest compared to the massive redevelopment of the port which was to occur later in the 19th Century. Overall, the chart offer a rare view of Old Singapore, when it was a small colonial town, before it was transformed during a period of explosive growth.

The chart is a "corrected" 1868 edition of a survey conducted by the crew of the *HMS Rifleman*, commanded by J.W. Reed. Significantly, it represents the first detailed survey of Singapore Harbour done to advanced scientific standards of triangulation and bathymetry. It became the basis for all of the charts of the inner harbor produced for the rest of the 19th Century. All editions of the chart are rare, with this early edition being especially so. The survival rate of such large-format sea charts is very low, as they were often heavily used aboard ship.

Detailed Condition:

Minor repairs at left margin, just affecting printed image.