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Singapore Road Surveyed by J.W. Reed, Master Commanding . . . H.M.S. Rifleman 8164.

Stock#: 37660
Map Maker: British Admiralty
Date: 1864 (1892)
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 26 x 39 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Improved edition of the first British Admiralty chart of Singapore Harbor, being a significantly updated example of the first advanced scientific survey of the harbor, featuring an exceptionally detailed view of the city during the 1890s.

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 Keppel Harbour appears to the south, and beyond are various small islands lying in the Singapore Straits. Copious hydrographic information adorns the seas throughout. The entire island then had only about 185,000 inhabitants,



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Singapore already possessed outside importance as the primary base of the Royal Navy in East Asia and the capital of the Straits Settlements, Britain's colonial holdings on the Malay Peninsula. It was also a major commerical port, handling upwards of 2 million tons of goods annually.

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.

This updated edition of the chart features evidence of the beginnings of major infrastructure programs that would foster a dramatic expansion in Singapore's economy and population in the 20th Century. Shown leading into the city from the north is the Singapore Government Railway, which connected the city to the Malay Peninsula (via ferry to Johor). As indicated on the chart, the line would shortly be extended to reach Tanjong Pagar and the docklands at Keppel. Also evident are the first of many land reclamation projects which would greatly expand the acreage of both downtown and the harbour district. The Telok Ayer Reclamation is shown to add land to the downtown area, while Tanjong Pagar Land Company (TPL Co.) has already commenced what would be a massive extension of the docklands.

The chart is a corrected 1892 edition of a survey conducted by the crew of the *HMS Rifleman*, commanded by J.W. Reed, first published in 1864. This chart would have been quite important during its time as the definitive pilot chart for guiding ships into Singapore Harbor. This example is exceptional, in that it survives in very fine condition, as most charts of this kind suffered due to heavy use at sea. It is also a fascinating record of the city's development during the late Victorian era.

Detailed Condition: