



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
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**Straits of Singapore, Durian & Rhio, The former is given from the several surveys of Cn.
Daniel Ross -- 1827. Durian Strait a& Phillips Channel by Lieutenant Collinson &
Moresby -- 1822. Pisang & Cocob Ids. by Lit. Cudlip -- 1831. and Tatoo hadji Striat by
Bailey - master 1837 for Rhio Strait there is no good authority**

Stock#: 59938

Map Maker: Anonymous

Date: 1841 circa

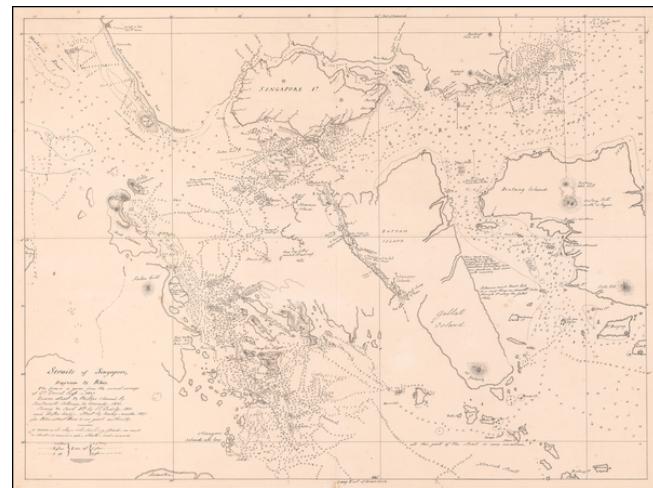
Place: n.p.

Color: Pen & Ink

Condition: VG

Size: 24 x 18 inches

Price: SOLD



Description:

"The limits of the chart comprehend a vast deal of internal and important navigation, being the high road from India to the China Sea" - Intricately Drawn Manuscript Chart of the Straits of Singapore

Exacting and fine manuscript chart of the Straits of Singapore, Durian, and Rhio in maritime Southeast Asia. This chart closely mirrors a printed Admiralty chart of 1840 and was likely drawn from the printed edition or a common manuscript source, perhaps a preparatory sketch for the printed edition. The printed counterpart is found in only two known institutional examples and this manuscript example is even rarer; it's would appear to be a unique survival.

The Admiralty was particularly interested in Asian waters at this time as hostilities had recently ramped up with China over access to their ports and the illegal opium trade fed by the East India Company. In 1839, Britain and China entered the First Opium War, which resulted in China having to open more of its ports to European trade. Singapore was a crucial staging point for British troops during the war. This manuscript, [one of pair](#) focused on the port, was likely drawn by someone interested in or connected with the war.

The chart shows Singapore and the surrounding islands, including Batam to the south. A bewildering number of sounding depths pepper the chart, revealing just how much knowledge was necessary to



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navigate the tricky seas of the area. Also included are several hills that would be visible from a passing ship, useful information for a navigator or an official planning a voyage. Sand bars and obstructions are also marked, as are the ghosts of coasts still unknown to the British in the mid-nineteenth century.

In the lower left corner is a simple title cartouche and legend. The title reads:

Straits of Singapore, Durian & Rhio. The former is given from the several surveys of Cn. Daniel Ross, 1827. Durian Strait & Philipps Channel by Lieutenants Collinson & Moresby 1822. Pisang & Cocob. I[slan]ds by Lt. Cudlip 1831. And Batoo hadji Strait by Bailey master. For Rhio Strait there is no good authority.

While again underlining that there was still a lot to learn about the waters of the region, not least in the Rhio Strait, this cartouche also outlines the major sources used for this map and reveals that they were gathered over time. For example, "Bailey master" refers to L. C. Bailey. Bailey served on Royal Navy ships in the East Indies; he was an acting master in the *Algerine* in 1834, a rank made official in 1838. His contribution to this chart, the Batoo Hadji Strait, or the Strait of Pilgrim's Rock, had only just been surveyed, according to *The Nautical Magazine*. F. A. Cudlip had spent much of the 1830s surveying in New Zealand but seems to have started farther north with his surveys of Pisang and Cocob in 1831.

The other two contributors had surveyed the area long before Bailey and Cudlip. Captain Daniel Ross was a famous surveyor for the East India Company. Born in Jamaica, Ross joined the Bombay Marine and eventually was appointed Marine Surveyor General. He made many surveys of Southeast Asia and the coasts of China throughout the 1810s and 1820s, a service for which he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society (learn more about Ross in the biography below).

The third of the sources cited is the voyage of Lieutenants Collinson and Moresby in 1822. Along with a Lieutenant Hawkins, Collinson and Moresby led a surveying mission to the Straits of Durian in 1822. The chart of their work was published by James Horsbrugh, the hydrographer of the East India Company, in 1823. Horsbrugh also published many of Ross' charts, spreading his fame as a skilled maritime surveyor.

This Collinson was not the famous explorer Sir Richard Collinson (1811-1883), nor was Moresby either Fairfax Moresby (1786-1877) or John Moresby (1830-1922), who both became admirals. However, it is likely they were related to the better-known sailors, as relatives often served at the same time.

The printed example of this chart, along with [another Singapore chart](#) also based on Daniel Ross' surveys,



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was advertised in *The Nautical Magazine* of 1840:

NEW CHARTS.

(Published by the Admiralty, and sold by R. B. Bate, 21, Poultry.)

The Straits Of Singapore, Durian and Rhio

We perceive by the title that the former Strait is from the several surveys of Capt. Daniel Ross, in 1827; that Durian Strait and Philipps Channel is by Lieutenants Collinson and Moresby in 1822; Pisang and Cocob Islands, by Lieut. F. A. Cudlip in 1821; and Batoo Hadji Strait, or the Strait of the Pilgrims Rock, an entirely new feature, by Mr. L. C. Bailey, master, H.M.S. For Rhio Strait there is no good authority. The limits of the chart comprehend a vast deal of internal and important navigation, being the high road from India to the China Sea.

Singapore Harbours And Roads, with the adjacent Channels.

The surveys of Capt. Daniel Ross, of the Bombay marine, have formed the data for these harbours, and their approaches are laid down as far as known. It will prove a most useful chart to vessels visiting that important station Singapore.

As the advertisement explains, both charts were central to the successful navigation of these all-important waters. The area was of especial importance in the 1840s as the British were consolidating their hold over the crucial harbor of Singapore.

Singapore in the mid-nineteenth century

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Singapore was controlled, at least nominally, by the Sultanate of Johor. The Sultan, in turn, answered to Dutch trading interests and the Bugis. The British, determined to challenge the primacy of the Dutch in the islands of southeast Asia, were looking to establish a port in the area of the Straits of Malacca, the pipeline between China and British India.

Sir Stamford Raffles, Lieutenant Governor of the British colony at Bencoolen and employee of the British East India Company, recognized the strategic value of the island of Singapore, as well as its potential as a port. Supported by Lord Hastings, Governor-General of India, approved of an expedition and Raffles landed in Singapore in late January 1819. Raffles manipulated local politics and struck a deal to financially



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back his preferred leader in return for a trading post on the island. He signed a treaty on February 6, 1819 approving the British free port and marking the beginning of an official British presence in Singapore. In 1824, the Sultan ceded the island to the East India Company in perpetuity.

When Raffles landed, there were roughly 1,000 people living on the island. By 1871, there were 100,000. Thanks to its status as a free port, Singapore quickly became a prime stopping point for explorers, traders, and officials. These included now famous explorers, like Hyacinthe de Bougainville, Auguste Nicholas Vaillant, and Dumont D'Urville. By the 1840s, when the two Admiralty charts were printed, a new harbour became necessary to handle the volume of shipping that was crowding the island.

Ross and his fellow East India Company surveyors conducted the initial surveys of Singapore just as it was coming under British rule, in the 1820s. With a strategic toe-hold in the marine road from India to China, more hydrographic information was needed to be able to exploit the opportunity granted by Singapore. Ross and his associates surveyed the entirety of this route between China and India by 1826, laying down the dense strata of sounding depths, measurements, and views that were the building blocks for these charts.

The charts were initially published by the James Horsbrugh and, eventually, corrected and reprinted by the Admiralty, who admired Ross' precise work. The Admiralty's Hydrographic Office had been publishing their own charts since 1800, when they acquired a printing press, but for certain areas of the world they were still dependent on other sources, such as the East India Company. They started selling charts to the public in 1822 and the two Singapore charts advertised above would have been available via registered agents.

Singapore and the First Opium War

Precisely when the Admiralty chart was printed and this manuscript example was drawn, Singapore was the primary staging area for the British during the First Opium War, a conflict which originated three centuries earlier. The Portuguese made their way to China in the early sixteenth century. Previously, Europeans had traded with China via middlemen and over the Silk Road, although a few, like Marco Polo, supposedly visited China in the late medieval period. After a half century of tension and conflict, the Portuguese were eventually allowed to trade with select Chinese ports, but with severe restrictions. From the late seventeenth century, the Qing Dynasty loosened their restrictions on foreign trade somewhat, allowing a few ships each year from several Western Empires. However, Westerners were still not allowed



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within the walls of port cities and were restricted to factories near the waterline.

From 1757, the Chinese employed what became known as the Canton System, which made Canton the sole port of entry for Western goods into China. A cohort of Chinese merchants, the *Cohong*, mediated between the Chinese government and Western traders. Though the Western empires tolerated the Canton System, they did not like it and wanted more open access to Chinese goods, especially tea, and markets. By the late-eighteenth century, the British had accumulated a massive trade deficit as China had no interest in Western goods; they only accepted silver as payment. The East India Company began to bring opium from its Indian plantations to China instead of silver, causing a massive increase in the number of Chinese addicted to the substance.

Although the Chinese banned the import of opium, the trade continued. When China attempted to halt the trade in 1839, the British responded with force. During this conflict, the First Opium War, the British captured the factories in Canton in March 1841. The war ended with the Treaty of Nanking (1842), which forced the Chinese to allow British, and eventually other, traders to live in several Chinese ports unmolested. It also granted them the liberty to trade with whomever they chose. Additionally, Britain was granted a colony at Hong Kong.

Rarity and purpose

The Admiralty's system of selling charts might suggest why this manuscript example exists. Perhaps there were not enough charts printed in the initial run, necessitating hand-drawn alternatives. Perhaps the author needed an example quickly and could not wait for more to be printed. Alternatively, this example might be a training exercise for an aspiring draughtsman.

Whatever the reason for its creation, this manuscript chart, like its other [Singapore counterpart](#), is a unique survival. The printed chart upon which it is based survives in only two recorded examples, at the National Library of Singapore and the British Library. There is also a later edition (1846) updated by John Turnbull Thomson and an edition corrected to 1851, both held by the British Library.

OCLC also locates a copy of the map in a composite atlas of 53 nautical charts of China and Southeast Asia published by the Hydrographic Office in 1841; its maps are dated between 1770 and 1841. The bibliographic note indicates that it was possibly created for the British Navy during the first Opium War (1839-42) and is held at Yale University Library.



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Provenance

A blindstamp in the upper right corner suggests a royal maritime collection, with an octagon surrounding an anchor which is topped by a crown and flanked by the initials "M R".

The chart is drawn on wove paper and watermarked "J Whatman | Turkey Mill | 1841". James Whatman the Elder invented wove paper in 1756. "Wove" refers to the lack of chain lines that characterized paper before this time, called laid paper. Wove paper is made with a uniform wire mesh mould, creating unblemished and more uniform sheets of paper. In 1807, the invention of a paper machine allowed for the mass production of wove paper. Whatman moved his paper mill, founded in 1733, to Turkey Hill in 1736. The business was carried on by his son of the same name, as well as new business partners, the Balstons.

This manuscript chart is even rarer than its printed counterpart and depicts one of the most strategic and lucrative sea lanes in the world, then or now. It is an astonishing survival and carries the weight of imperial, paper, and maritime history with it. It would greatly augment any collection of Southeast Asia, Singapore, or East India Company charts.

Detailed Condition: