



Highlights of
the National Library

Activity Booklet

A Snapshot of **COLONIAL SINGAPORE**



National Library Singapore
www.nlb.gov.sg

National Library Board

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INTRODUCTION

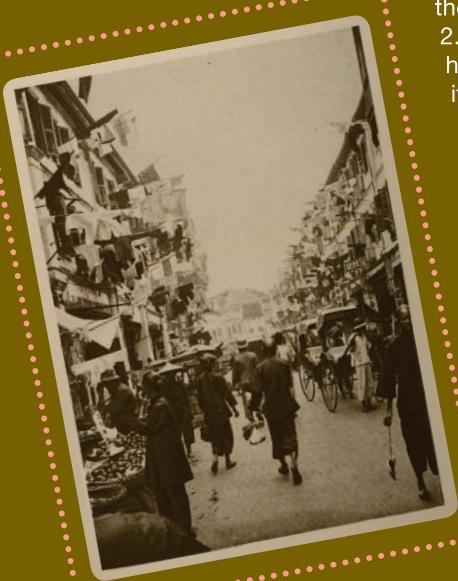
Far from being dry and boring, history can come to life through letters, photographs, artefacts, interviews, newspapers, journals and books, allowing you a glimpse into Singapore's rich past.

From the Stacks: Highlights of the National Library is a marquee exhibition that showcases the library's rich collection of rare publications, manuscripts, photographs and other resources. Through these, you will discover the story of Singapore's past.

Find out more about the flourishing economy that enticed many to Singapore. Reimagine the joy of learning through cross-cultural exchanges among local and foreign communities. We hope that through the activities in this booklet, you will be able to gain more insights into the history of Singapore.

Embark on your journey of inquiry by using the 5W1H approach: 1. **What** happened? 2. **When** did it happen? 3. **Where** did it happen? 4. **Who** were involved? 5. **Why** did it happen? 6. **How** did it happen?

What are you waiting for? Immerse yourself in the displays, artefacts and interactive multimedia and discover the story of Singapore's history. Enjoy the journey back in time!



Photos from *The Lights of Singapore* by Braddell, R. St. J. (1934).



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Illustration from *Haji's Book of Malayan Nursery Rhymes* by Hamilton, A. W. (1939).

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT?

"What" questions help us to determine the subject of an inquiry.

WHAT AM I?



Read the questions/descriptions carefully and identify the subjects. For clues, refer to the scrambled words and unscramble them, then write your correct answers.

QUESTION/ DESCRIPTION	SCRAMBLED WORD	ANSWER
Three years after Sir Stamford Raffles established Singapore as a trading post, Claudius Henry Thomsen brought this equipment to the island which started the publishing industry here. Name this equipment.	 TRIPNGIN SPRSE	— N — G — R — S —
Singapore served as an important centre of trade between China, India and Europe during the 19 th century. Among other goods, British manufactured wares and this substance from India were traded, in exchange for Southeast Asian produce, as well as tea and silk from China. Name this substance brought in from India.	 PUMOI	— P — M

QUESTION/ DESCRIPTION	SCRAMBLED WORD	ANSWER
During the Japanese Occupation of Singapore, the Japanese used these two media types as propaganda channels to highlight the Japanese war victories and Allied losses. One is the radio. Name the other.	 SEWPAERPN	— E — P — R
It was a common sight in the 19 th century to see Chinese men wearing their hair long and braided into a pig-tail. In one issue of "The Straits Chinese Magazine: A Quarterly Journal of Oriental and Occidental Culture", editors Lim Boon Keng and Song Ong Siang urged these men to cut off their long hair. What is the name of this hairstyle in Chinese?	 HTOGWANC	T _ W C H _ _ G

SOME TRANSPORT MODES USED IN THE PAST



Carriage
(Horse or Bullock)

Carriage
(Man-Powered)

Electric Tram

Sampan, Tongkang
and Ship

Photos from *Fotoalbum Singapore* by G.R. Lambert & Co. (1890) and Courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

ACTIVITY 2: WHEN?

“When” questions help us identify the time when something happened. Asking “when” questions will help us find out details pertaining to the day, date, month, or year and in some cases, the time.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF SINGAPORE (1819 to 1942)

Singapore was an important trading post for the British due to its prosperous commercial activities. Singapore also became an important command centre for the Japanese during World War II.

1819

- Sir Stamford Raffles founded Singapore.
- Colonel William Farquhar was the first British Resident and Commandant in Singapore until 1823.
- John Crawfurd was the second British Resident from 1823 to 1826.

1824

- The Anglo-Dutch treaty was signed between Great Britain and the Netherlands in London on 17 March 1824.
- The aim was to settle disputes and redefine the spheres of influence between these rival colonial powers in this region at that time.

1832

- The Straits Settlements was formed in 1826, comprising Penang, Singapore and Malacca, and administered by the East India Company. Penang was appointed the seat of government.
- Singapore replaced Penang as the seat of government of the Straits Settlements in 1832.

1858

- The East India Company was abolished and the Straits Settlements was officially transferred to the Colonial Office in India. A governor was based in Singapore, while Malacca and Penang came under the supervision of lieutenant governors.

1867

- The Straits Settlements became a crown colony under the Colonial Office in London.
- Singapore was occupied by Japan on 15 February 1942, marking the start of the Japanese Occupation (lasting 44 months).
- “Syonan”, meaning “The Brilliant South”, was the name given to Singapore by Japan during World War II.
- The Japanese surrendered on 12 September 1945 in a ceremony held at the Municipal Building of Singapore.

1942

SINGAPORE'S FIRSTS

Match the events below with the correct year.



1824

1819

1867

1837



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Sir Stamford Raffles' vision to establish an education institution was discussed in this year. However, it was not until 1823 that Singapore Institution was established.



The *Singapore Chronicle* was the first newspaper published in Singapore. It was published in this year by publisher and editor, Francis James Bernard.



The Singapore International Chamber of Commerce was formed in this year and the purpose was to advance the interests of the mercantile community.



Photo from *One hundred years' history of the Chinese in Singapore* by Song Ong Siang (1923).

In 1857, Tan Kim Seng donated money to improve water supply to Singapore town. One of the works to improve water supply was the construction of the Impounding Reservoir (MacRitchie Reservoir) in this year. It was Singapore's first water supply system.

ACTIVITY 3: WHERE?

"Where" questions help us locate places, positions, or directions.

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 shortened the route for ships to travel between Europe and Asia; thereby making Singapore more accessible to tourists from Europe. Author George M. Reith published the *Handbook of Singapore* in 1892 as he hoped to provide as much accurate, practical and useful information as possible to the visitors to Singapore.

Some excerpts adapted from the *Handbook of Singapore* are presented below. Read them to identify the landmarks mentioned and locate them in the map (refer to the map on the next page). 

"Known pre-1850 as Commercial Square, and today as **Raffles Place**, Raffles Square was and continues to be the main commercial hub of Singapore".

"The only suspension bridge in Singapore, and one of the oldest, the **Cavenagh Bridge** has linked the civic and commercial districts since its construction in 1869".

Fort Canning was originally known as Bukit Larangan (Forbidden Hill), as it was the living and burial place of Majapahit Kings as early as the 14th century. In 1822, it became the location of Raffles' mansion, which gave the hill its new name, Government Hill. By 1859, the mansion was demolished and replaced with Fort Canning, consisting of a fort and series of military buildings and bunkers most famously used in World War II".

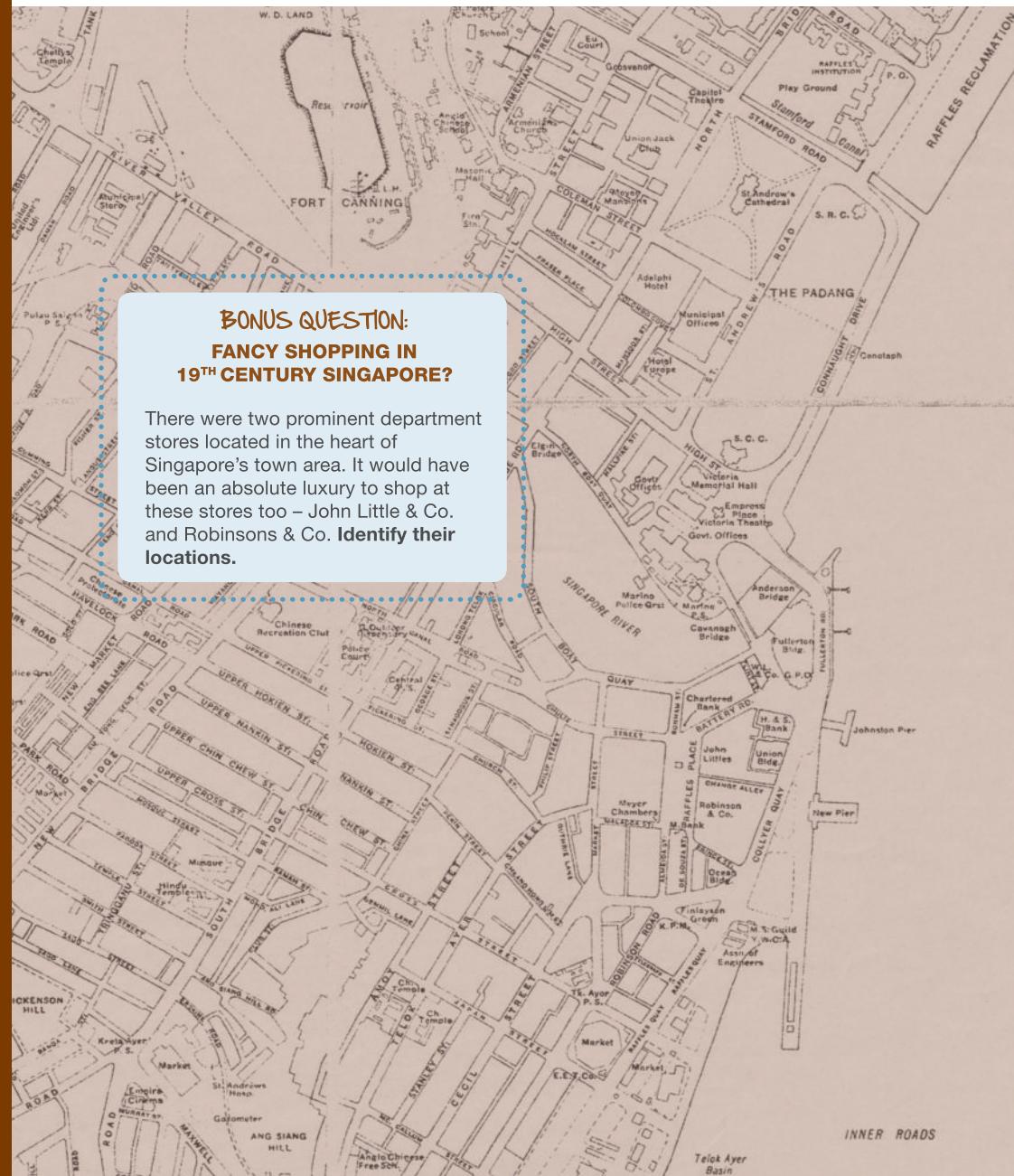
"In the middle of the **Esplanade (Padang)** there is a fine statue, erected in 1887, of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, the founder of the Settlement".

Did you know?

"Visitors to Singapore in the 19th and early 20th centuries would arrive either at the Telok Blangah Wharf or the **Tanjong Pagar Wharf**. Close to the town area and directly connected to the Singapore River, it was an ideal spot for ships to dock, and tourists to alight".

"Known then for providing a spectacular view of the coast and town area, **Fort Palmer**, located on Mount Palmer, was a recommended spot for tourists who had little time to spare while stopping over".

MAP OF BUSINESS AREA IN SINGAPORE



Map of Business Area Singapore (1932), courtesy of National Archives of Singapore.

ACTIVITY 4: WHO?

“Who” questions help us identify or establish the person(s) involved.

WHO'S WHO?

This word search puzzle consists of names of personalities. Challenge yourself and find all 6 names.

Hint: Words may be horizontal, vertical, diagonal or spelt backwards.



Hidden names: Stamford Raffles, John Crawfurd, Munshi Abdullah, Lim Boon Keng, Song Ong Siang, Sun Yat Sen



These personalities contributed significantly towards the development of Singapore. List three interesting facts about them.



ABDULLAH BIN ABDUL KADIR

(a.k.a Munshi Abdullah; Munsyi Abdullah)

-
-
-

Illustration by Harun Lat. All rights reserved, Hadijah Rahmat (1999). *Antara Dua Kota*. Singapore: Regional Training and Publishing Centre.



SONG ONG SIANG

-
-
-

Photo from *One hundred year's history of the Chinese in Singapore* by Song Ong Siang (1923).



JOHN CRAWFURD

-
-
-

An albumen print portrait, unknown photographer, circa late 1850s. National Portrait Gallery London. Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

ACTIVITY 5: Why?

“Why” questions help us establish the reason(s) for something being or occurring.

BOOMING TRADE AND COMMERCE



The British established Singapore as a trading post in 1819. Rapid commercial expansion soon followed within two decades. Why was this so? Why did people from Europe, India, China and the rest of Southeast Asia come to Singapore to trade? Give two reasons.

REASONS:

► Hint: Do refer to pages 2-6. You may also wish to visit the “Maps at Work” section of the exhibition.

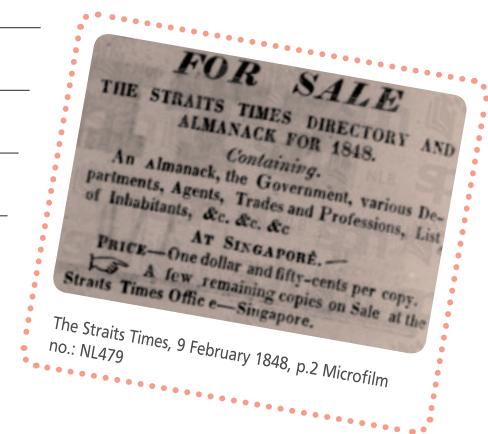
BUSINESSMEN AND MERCHANTS

Woods, R. C. (Ed.) (1846). *The Straits Times Almanack, Calendar and Directory*. Singapore: The Straits Times Press.

Excerpt from the exhibition:

“Besides a comprehensive listing of the government departments, institutions, merchants and agents, trades, professions and European residents, it also provides other information useful to the mercantile community. This page shows shipping signals used in Singapore, on top are flags used to signal the arrival of vessels. At the bottom are flag signals for mail arrivals, a red flag at the masthead denotes mail from Britain and a yellow flag, mail from China”.

Imagine you are a new trader from India. You have just arrived in Singapore. The year is 1848. You would like to set up a business. How would you go about getting and compiling your business contacts?



The Straits Times, 9 February 1848, p.2 Microfilm
no.: NL479

ACTIVITY 6: HOW?

"How" questions are usually used to ask about the method used for doing something or about the way in which something can be achieved.

CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGES

Early literary works, religious tracts, dictionaries, journalistic updates and scholarly reports point to a thriving publishing industry in Singapore, with printing presses run by Western Missionaries, Chinese literati and Muslim publishers.

Malay was the *lingua franca* in this region. The English, Tamil and Chinese-speaking communities found it necessary to learn the Malay language. Read the excerpt below and infer how publications facilitated communication and sharing of cultures amongst the communities living in colonial Singapore.

1

CHINESE-MALAY DICTIONARY

Lim Kong Chuan. (1883). Hua Yi Tong Yu. Singapore: Koh Yew Hean Press.

Excerpt from the exhibition:

"This early dictionary teaches Malay by using Chinese characters to approximate the pronunciation of the Malay words... In his preface, Lim Kong Chuan mentioned that the new edition published in 1883 was an improved version and stressed the importance of learning Malay for trade and commerce in the region. To make the pronunciation more accurate, some characters have extra indication by way of a symbol to show whether they should be pronounced in the Quanzhou or Zhangzhou dialect. The latter dialect was closer to Teochew".

How did Lim Kong Chuan simplify the process of learning Malay for the Chinese community?



All rights reserved, Lim Kong Chuan. (1883). Hua Yi Tong Yu. Singapore: Koh Yew Hean Press.

Initiatives by individuals such as Arthur Wedderburn Hamilton and Elice Handy fostered the spirit of learning and sharing of cultures.

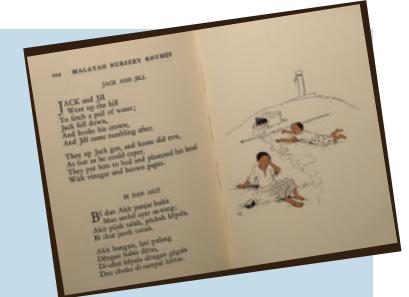
2

ENGLISH RHYMES WITH A MALAY SPIN

Hamilton, Arthur Wedderburn. (1939). Haji's Book of Malayan. Singapore: Printers Ltd.

Do you recognise this rhyme "Jack and Jill"? Now, try reading it in Malay. Some 100 other popular English nursery rhymes are included in this book and you can read the Malay translations too. What is more interesting are the drawings that feature multiracial settings and characters such as a Chinese amah, an Indian seller and a Malay boy.

All rights reserved, Hamilton, A. W. (1939). Haji's Book of Malayan Nursery Rhymes. Singapore: Printers Ltd.



How did this book facilitate the learning of spoken English and Malay?

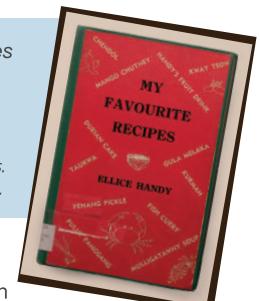
3

GASTRONOMIC ADVENTURES: WHIPPING UP DELECTABLE DELIGHTS

Handy, Elice. (1960). My Favourite Recipes. Singapore: Malaya Publishing House.

This became a handy cookbook when published because "recipes were generally passed down orally from mother to daughter and most took the form of hastily scribbled notes that only its owner could make out". Lim, I. (2016). 'A Handy Cookbook'. BiblioAsia (11:04), p.72-74.

All rights reserved, Handy, E. (1960). My Favourite Recipes. Singapore: Malaya Publishing House.



Prior to the publication of this book, people learnt to cook through demonstration and observation. How did this book promote interest in cooking, especially among home cooks?

REFLECTION

As you embark on the process of discovering new knowledge, do ask questions to enhance your overall understanding of the topic you are exploring. The ability to gain a good understanding of any research topic depends on several factors. The two key factors are having access to credible information sources and the ability to read critically the contents that are presented in the sources. Below are the recommended steps to help you in this process.



Identify a source



What details do I get from this source?



What factual information do I find and why is this source important?



What inference can I now come up with?



USE THE 4 WAYS OF S.U.R.E. TO FURTHER IMPROVE YOUR RESEARCH



Source

Look at its origins. Is it trustworthy?

Make sure that the source of information is credible and reliable.



Understand
Know what you are reading.
Search for clarity.

Look for facts rather than opinions.



Research
Dig deeper.
Go beyond the initial source.

Investigate thoroughly before making a conclusion, check and compare with multiple sources.



Evaluate
Find the balance.
Exercise fair judgement.

Look from different angles – there are at least two sides to a story.

SOURCE INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY

RESEARCH TOPIC:

SOURCES	FACT OR OPINION?
SOURCE 1:	
SOURCE 2:	
SOURCE 3:	
SOURCE 4:	



MY OVERALL UNDERSTANDING:

NOTES

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

Books

- Chan, K. B. & Tong, C. K. (Ed.). (c2003). *Past Times: A social history of Singapore*. Singapore: Times Editions. Call no.: 959.57 PAS

Cheah, J. S. (2006). *Singapore. 500 early postcards*. Singapore: Editions Didier Millet. Call no.: 769.566095957 CHE

Goh, C. B. (c2003). *Serving Singapore: a hundred years of Cold Storage, 1903-2003*. Singapore: Cold Storage. Call no.: 381.148095957 GOH

Lim, S. B. (Ed.). (2004). *Images of Singapore from the Japanese perspective (1868 – 1941)*. Singapore: The Japanese Cultural Society. Call no.: 959.57 IMA

Liu, G. (c1999). *Singapore: a pictorial history 1819-2000*. Singapore: Archipelago Press in association with the National Heritage Board. Call no.: 959.57 LIU

Jayapal, M. (1992). *Old Singapore*. Singapore: Oxford University Press. Call no.: 959.57 JAY

Makepeace, W., Brooke, G.E. & Braddel, R. J. (Ed.). (1991). *One hundred years of Singapore*. (Vols. 1-2). Singapore: Oxford University Press. Call no.: 959.57 ONE

National Archives of Singapore & Arkib Negara Malaysia. (2005). *Reminiscences of the Straits Settlements through postcards*. Singapore: Author. Call no.: 959.503 REM

National Archives of Singapore. (1986). *Singapore historical postcards from the National Archives Collection*. Singapore: Times Eds.. Call no.: 769.495957 SIN

Pugalenthi, S. (1999). *Singapore landmarks: monuments, memorials, statues and historic sites*. Singapore: VJ Times International. Call no.: 959.57 PUR

Reena, S. (c1995). *A journey through Singapore: travellers' impression of a by-gone time selected and arranged in a complete narrative*. Singapore: Landmark Books. Call no.: 959.57 REE

Reith, G. M. (1985). *Handbook to Singapore*. Singapore; New York: Oxford University Press. Call no.: RCLOS 959.57022 REI

Teo, M. (1987). *Nineteenth century prints of Singapore*. Singapore: National Museum. Call no.: 769.4995957 TEO

Tyers, R. K. (1976). *Singapore then and now*. (Vols. 1-2). Singapore: University Education Press. Call no.: 959.57 TYE

Online Resources

Archives Online database. Accessible via National Archives website.
URL: <http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/search>

BiblioAsia. National Library Board. Singapore: Publishing and Research, National Library Board. (2005).
URL: <https://www.nlb.gov.sg/Browse/BiblioAsia.aspx>

NewspaperSG database. Accessible via NLB's eResources website.
The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser (1835 -1869) (1884 -1942).
URL: <http://ereresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/default.aspx>