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Strait of Singapore Sheet 3 Surveyed by J.T. Thomson Esq. Government Survr. 1846-54.

Stock#: 56507
Map Maker: British Admiralty
Date: 1855 (1857)
Place: London
Color: Uncolored
Condition: Good
Size: 24.7 x 19 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

The First Admiralty Charting of the Singapore Strait

Important early chart of the Eastern portion of the Strait of Singapore, published by the British Admiralty, based upon the surveys of John Turnbull Thomson.

The chart extends from the mouth of the Johore River and the eastern tip of Singapore Island and Tekong Island to the northern parts of Battam and Bintang Islands.

Thomson arrived in the Malay Straits in 1838 and was employed by the East India Survey. In 1841 he was appointed Government Surveyor at Singapore and in 1844 became Superintendent of Roads and Public Works. He was responsible for the design and construction of a number of notable engineering works including bridges, roads, and hospitals. He conducted the allotment survey of Singapore, the topographical survey of the island of Singapore and its dependencies, and the marine survey of the Strait of Singapore and the east coasts of Johore and Penang. His outstanding achievement was the erection of the Horsburgh Lighthouse on Pedra Branca.

In 1853 his health failed and he returned to England where he studied modern engineering techniques, and travelled widely through Britain and the Continent inspecting engineering works. Early in 1856 he emigrated to New Zealand, where he worked as Chief Surveyor of the Otago Province until 1873. From 1876 until 1879 he was Surveyor-General of New Zealand.

John Turnbull Thomson's hydrographic survey was the first detailed hydrographic survey to be conducted



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by a locally based surveyor and is the most important and detailed early hydrographic map of the Singapore Strait. The first chart created by this survey was compiled by Captain Samuel Congalton and John Turnbull Thomson during Turnbull's 12 years as government surveyor in the Straits Settlement and delivered to the merchant trade the first accurate and reliable charting of what would become one of the most trafficked waterways in the world. This first chart was a privately printed 2 sheet chart of the Strait, first published in London by Richardson Brothers on August 17, 1846, with a later edition updated to 1855.

The present chart (one of a set of three charts) was the first Admiralty Chart of the region, issued in November 1855, incorporating the information from the revised edition of the Congalton.

Rarity

The chart is very rare. We note only an earlier example in the British Library (1856) and a later example (1866) in the collection of the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich.

Detailed Condition:

A number of repaired tears toward the center of the map and at the top right corner. Lower left neatline restored, with some facsimile image at the neatline.