



## Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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### Singapore from the Harbour

**Stock#:** 60827  
**Map Maker:** Hullmandel / Smith  
**Date:** 1837 circa  
**Place:** London  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** Good  
**Size:** 21.5 x 12 inches  
**Price:** SOLD



#### Description:

#### ***Exceedingly Rare, Remarkable Lithographic Print of Singapore's Harbor in the Early Years of British Rule***

Strikingly detailed print of Singapore's harbor by the premier English lithographic printer, C. J. Hullmandel, and the skilled painter, William Collingwood Smith. This is the only known example of this print.

This view offers an exceptional and detailed view of Singapore's harbor in the early days of British rule and is apparently the only currently known surviving example.

Small craft fill the foreground of this view, while larger European and Chinese vessels dominate the middle ground. The many ships suggest a bustling port, but there is also a calm serenity to the scene that portrays it as an ideal, civilized, and prosperous settlement. In the background are the hills of Singapore, with Government Hill in the middle.

This is a view of Singapore rising from the Old Harbor. By the early 1840s, just after this print was made, the harbor would change. It was too congested and too shallow for new steam-powered ships. Notice that all the ships in this idyllic scene are sail or man-powered. From the mid-1840s, New Harbor allowed for more and larger ships to come in, a process compounded by increased traffic after the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869.

The view pre-dates Robert Wilson Wiber's *Panoramic View of Singapore from the Harbour*, which was completed in 1849, which resides in the National Gallery of Singapore and shows a nearly identically oriented view, with Government Hill in the middle.



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This lithographic print has been executed with considerable skill, particularly evident in the ripples and waves of the water. It is a good example of what lithographic technology could achieve—in this case, it brought a new British settlement to audiences who would never otherwise witness such a distant locale.

#### Singapore in the Mid-19th 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 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; early images of the settlement, like this one, are vital to understanding how the city expanded. 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.

Usefully, many views, maps, and paintings survive. However, there is no record of this print beyond the present example. It shows a unique image of the burgeoning city in its first decades. The first print of Singapore was only published in circa 1821, placing this print only about 16 years after the first images of Singapore available to a wider public.

#### Dating The View

Hullmandel went into business with Joseph Fowell Walton in 1843. As this print does not bear the name Hullmandel & Walton, it suggests that the print was made before that year. The British Library's example of the Smith and Hullmandel view from Government Hill is dated circa 1830.

The date 1837 is used in many historical books on prints of Singapore which include the Government Hill print, including those published by the National Library and Museum of Singapore. Thus, we believe the



## **Singapore from the Harbour**

date of this print is circa 1837.

### **Charles Joseph Hullmandel and the Print Market**

This print, like others, was most likely made and sold to members of the middle class eager to possess images of the empire. Travelers to Singapore prepared their diaries and drawings for a public market eager to see what life was like in the island port. Views of Singapore typically showed the city from Government Hill. They also focused on the Singapore River and the busy Harbour, as this print does.

In the nineteenth century, a new technology radically changed the quality of prints. Previously, printed images were prepared for the press using two methods: relief or intaglio. With the relief method, portions of a block, usually wood, are cut away leaving a raised image that can be inked and printed. Intaglio, by contrast, is the cutting, by hand (engraving) or with acid (etching), of the lines of an image into a surface, often a copper plate (and, from the 1820s, steel). Ink is then pressed into the grooves and transferred to paper when in the press.

A third method is the one that became popular in the nineteenth century, the planographic method, which includes lithography. Lithography stems from the fact that oil and water do not mix. In lithography, an image is drawn on a semi-porous surface—in the nineteenth century, usually limestone—in grease crayon. The surface is then wiped with water and inked. The greasy ink adheres to the image, but not to the rest of the stone.

Each method has its advantages and disadvantages for artists and publishers. Engraving is generally more precise than woodcut relief printing. Engraving is beautiful, but the plates usually wear down after a few hundred pulls of the press. Tonal complexity can best be achieved with aquatints, an intaglio method involving powder, heat, and acid. Lithography allowed printers to make many copies of a print and grants a degree of versatility that is very difficult to achieve with intaglio. Any artist can produce a lithograph; they can simply work with the familiar pen, as opposed to the specialized burin used in engraving. Lithographs also require less strength and money than intaglio methods.

Lithography was invented by Alois Senefelder, a German actor and playwright, in the 1790s. The technology was brought to England by Charles Joseph Hullmandel, who is responsible for this print. He had a monopoly on the practice for twenty years from 1818. He perfected the topographic lithograph, the genre most commonly and expertly produced in England.

Charles Joseph Hullmandel (1789-1850) was an engraver, but he is better known for his lithography work. In 1817, he met Senefelder in Munich; a year later his own lithographic press was up and running at his home in Great Marlborough Street. He not only introduced the technology to England, but he also



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continually improved it. For example, he patented a method for printing tonal effects on stone and published *The Art of Drawing on Stone* (1824). He also studied chemistry with Michael Faraday in order to improve his understanding of the science behind print technologies.

Some lithographic printers were artists themselves while others worked closely with artists while creating their prints. Hullmandel was certainly skilled in drawing, but he also frequently partnered with painters and artists, including the W. C. Smith credited on this view. The W. C. Smith most likely stands for William Collingwood Smith (1815-1887), a marine and landscape painter. It is known that Smith travelled extensively in Europe and across Britain—and, as suggested by this print, possibly to Singapore. It is also possible that Smith and Hullmandel received the image upon which this print is based from another traveler.

#### **Rarity**

The view is apparently unrecorded in the primary reference works on Singapore.

We note a listing which seems to be the same view in a set of three views offered by Frederik Muller in 1877.

We note a catalog entry suggesting that a copy exists at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, but have been by the Museum that it cannot currently be located.

The other Smith and Hullmandel print of Singapore, "Singapore from Government Hill," exists in several examples, including at the British Library and the National Museum of Singapore, but we have found no trace of the present print in any institutional collection. It is extremely rare.

#### **Detailed Condition:**

Repaired tear at center. Facsimile work at lower left corner in the margin, extending into the printed image.