









# Jubilee Photo Studio: Photographic highlights from The National Archives of Singapore



Singapore, 29 March 2019

## Annex C

### NINE PHOTO COLLECTIONS AVAILABLE AT THE MULTIMEDIA STATIONS AT JUBILEE PHOTO STUDIO, NATIONAL LIBRARY BUILDING

No.	Collection	Selected photo highlight
1	<p><b>F W York Collection</b></p> <p>The F. W. York Collection is a unique collection that richly chronicles Singapore's trolleybus, tramway and motorbus networks, spanning from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the 1980s. It consists of over 1,300 black and white photographs, among other private records compiled by F. W. York himself, such as advertisements, ticket stubs, and timetables.</p> <p>York was a Royal Air Force (RAF) officer stationed in Singapore from 1952 to 1957 and spent much time riding and photographing the transport networks of Singapore and Malaysia, especially buses. The photographs were well-documented with information about the model, operating company and route of individual buses during this period and would be of great interest to anyone interested in the history of the bus transport system in Singapore. York was a well-known authority on Singapore's land transport history in Singapore, having written several books on this subject.</p>	 <p>A Vulcan bus operated by Keppel Bus Company in Stamford Road, 1956</p>
2	<p><b>K. F. Wong Collection</b></p> <p>Sarawak-born Wong Ken Foo (1916-1998), or K. F. Wong, was one of Southeast Asia's foremost photographers and won numerous awards for his works. He was also known as a pioneer in art photography in Southeast Asia. Wong's main interest was outdoor photography. He spent years capturing scenes of the Sarawak jungle and its peoples, which he became well-known for. The National Archives of Singapore has over 2,000 of his photographs, which documented Singapore from 1946 to the 1970s. The photographs were captured with artistic clarity and elegance, with details of street scenes, old buildings, trades and the daily activities of people. The images provide a rich visual reference of what Singapore was like then.</p> <p>Wong came to Singapore in 1936, hoping to become an apprentice in one of the photo studios here. When he failed to find employment, he returned to China and learned the art of photography from Anna Photo Studio in Amoy (now known as Xiamen). After the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1937, he left for Kuching where he set up the Anna Photo Studio, which was in operation for over 50 years. In 1945, he set up the Straits Photo Studio in Amber Mansion in Orchard Road. He managed the studio until 1955, when he transferred it to friends and returned to Kuching.</p>	 <p>Children at a kampong in Geylang Serai, 1960s</p>  <p>Hairdressing salon, 1960</p>
3	<p><b>British Royal Air Force Collection</b></p> <p>The British Royal Air Force (RAF) Collection consists of over 56,000 aerial photographs taken by the RAF between 1940 and the 1970s for military reconnaissance purposes. These photographs were once a vital source of geographic data for the British military and were used to produce accurate topographical maps of Singapore. They were transferred to the National Archives of Singapore after time had rendered them obsolete.</p> <p>In addition to the unique perspective of the photographs – taken from altitudes of 2,500 to 23,000 feet – they also show a landscape almost unrecognisable today. In the 1950s, before Singapore became largely urbanised, most of the outlying areas beyond the city centre were predominantly agricultural. Post-independence reclamation projects have also drastically altered Singapore's coastline. This rare and extensive collection of aerial photographs covering the entire island allows for a greater appreciation of the transformation of the landscape of Singapore.</p>	 <p>Kallang Airport, 22 Sep 1958 The foreground shows Nicoll Highway, while the airport control tower can be seen beside the highway on the right.</p>

4	<p><b>George W. Porter Collection</b></p> <p>George W. Porter was an American diplomat stationed in Singapore from 1965 to 1970, after stints in the Philippines and Malaysia. Fascinated by the sights of Southeast Asia, the photography enthusiast who was a newspaper reporter and editor before joining the United States Information Agency (USIA) in 1960, took photographs everywhere he went. He was particularly captivated by the newly independent Singapore and captured thousands of images during his time here.</p> <p>In 2014, Porter's family generously donated over 70 photographs to the National Archives of Singapore. The collection of photographs was carefully selected by Porter and his daughter, and was published in the book <i>Singapore 60s: An Age of Discovery</i> in 2015. The collection covers the years 1965 to 1970, a critical period in Singapore's history with the country undergoing dramatic change and included scenes of ordinary people going about their daily lives and the Singapore River bustling with activity.</p>	 <p>River coolie, 1969 Cargo-handling required sheer muscle power as most cargoes were carried by coolies or labourers from bumboats to godowns and lorries.</p>
5	<p><b>Lee Brothers Studio Collection</b></p> <p>Lee Brothers Studio was set up at 58-4 Hill Street in 1910 by brothers Lee King Yan (1877–1957) and Lee Poh Yan (1884–1960), who came from Guangdong Province, China. The well-equipped studio was known for the brothers' ability to skillfully compose and capture portraits that were at once natural and captivating. Families and individuals from different ethnic groups patronised the studio, leaving a precious and exquisite collection reflecting the multicultural society of Singapore and its visitors in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its clientele also included luminaries such as Sun Yat Sen, Lim Boon Keng, and Sophia Blackmore, among others. With the impending outbreak of World War II, Poh Yan permanently closed the studio.</p> <p>Lee Hin Ming, the son of Lee Poh Yan, donated this impressive collection to the National Archives of Singapore in 1994. It consisted of over 2,000 original studio portrait prints and several hundred glass-plate negatives. The prints were either extras or never collected, while the negatives appeared to have been set aside for their perceived historical importance.</p>	 <p>Chinese woman in fashionable dress, c. 1930</p>
6	<p><b>Ministry of Culture Collection</b></p> <p>The majority of the photographs in the National Archives of Singapore were transfers from government agencies, the bulk of which were from the Ministry of Culture (MOC) and its successor ministries, the Ministry of Information and the Arts (MITA), the Ministry of Information, Communications and the Arts (MICA), and the Ministry of Communications and Information (MCI). MOC was formed in 1959 when Singapore attained full internal self-governance. The photographs inherited and created by these ministries documented Singapore's nation-building events such as official openings of public buildings and spaces, or government officials speaking at public events. They also covered a wide range of subjects, from key landmarks to scenes of daily life and activities of people, capturing the different facets of a newly independent Singapore. The collection provides valuable documentation of Singapore's political, social and economic landscapes.</p>	 <p>Minister Of Finance Dr Goh Keng Swee tours Daiwa Japanese Steel Factory during its opening, 27 April 1963</p>
7	<p><b>Historical Postcards (NAS Collection)</b></p> <p>The collection of historical postcards preserved at the National Archives of Singapore showed some of the earliest photographic views of Singapore. Of particular historical significance were those from the late 1890s to the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as photographic documentation of Singapore of that period is relatively rare. NAS started acquiring these postcards of early Singapore four decades ago through purchase and generous donations.</p> <p>The Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca under British colonial government) Postal Department issued its first postcard in 1879. These postcards were blank with an affixed stamp. By the late 1890s, privately printed postcards with pictures began to appear in the Straits Settlements. Depicting a wide range of subjects including special events, peoples, places of interest, street scenes, modes of transportation, fashion, and cultural activities, these postcards shed much light on and provided a peek into the vanished world of old Singapore.</p>	 <p>Collyer Quay, 1900s</p>

8	<p><b><u>Ronni Pinsler Collection</u></b></p> <p><u>Ronni Pinsler</u> is an independent photographer with a keen interest in documenting the cultural, physical and religious landscape of Singapore. Covering the period from 1970s to the 1990s, this valuable collection of more than 16,000 photographs taken by him features street scenes, trades, cultural performances and practices, much of which has since disappeared. <u>Pinsler's</u> interest in Singapore culture was borne out of befriending Singaporeans from all walks of life, including shopkeepers, hawkers, Chinese opera actors, secret society members and Taoist temple priests to learn more about their lives. Through these interactions, <u>Pinsler</u> developed a special interest in the Taoist practices of Singapore and Malaysia, carefully documenting Taoist customs, rituals, and its pantheon of deities. <u>Pinsler</u> was eventually invited to sit on the committees of several local Taoist temples such as the former <u>Leng Hiang Twa Temple</u> at Clarke Quay. Today, he is regarded as an authority on Taoist beliefs and practices, having studied them for more than 40 years. In April 2010, he received the prestigious Supporter of Heritage award in honour of the permanent loan of his comprehensive collection to the National Archives of Singapore.</p>	 <p>Wayang stage and altar tents in front of Liang Hiang Twa Temple at Clarke Quay, 1985</p>
9	<p><b><u>Singapore Press Holdings Collection</u></b></p> <p>In 2000, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) was signed for the Singapore Press Holdings (SPH) to transfer newspaper photo negatives and digitised images to the National Archives of Singapore (NAS) for preservation and public access, while retaining its copyrights.</p> <p>The SPH collection preserved at the NAS mainly date from the 1950s to the 1990s. They came from the English and Malay Newspapers Division Resource Library and more than 46,000 images are available for viewing on Archives Online. Often capturing significant events or vivid scenes of daily life, the collection is an important account of Singapore's social, economic and political history.</p>	 <p>Children at five-foot way library on Boon Tat Street, 12 October 1958</p>