



HERITAGE

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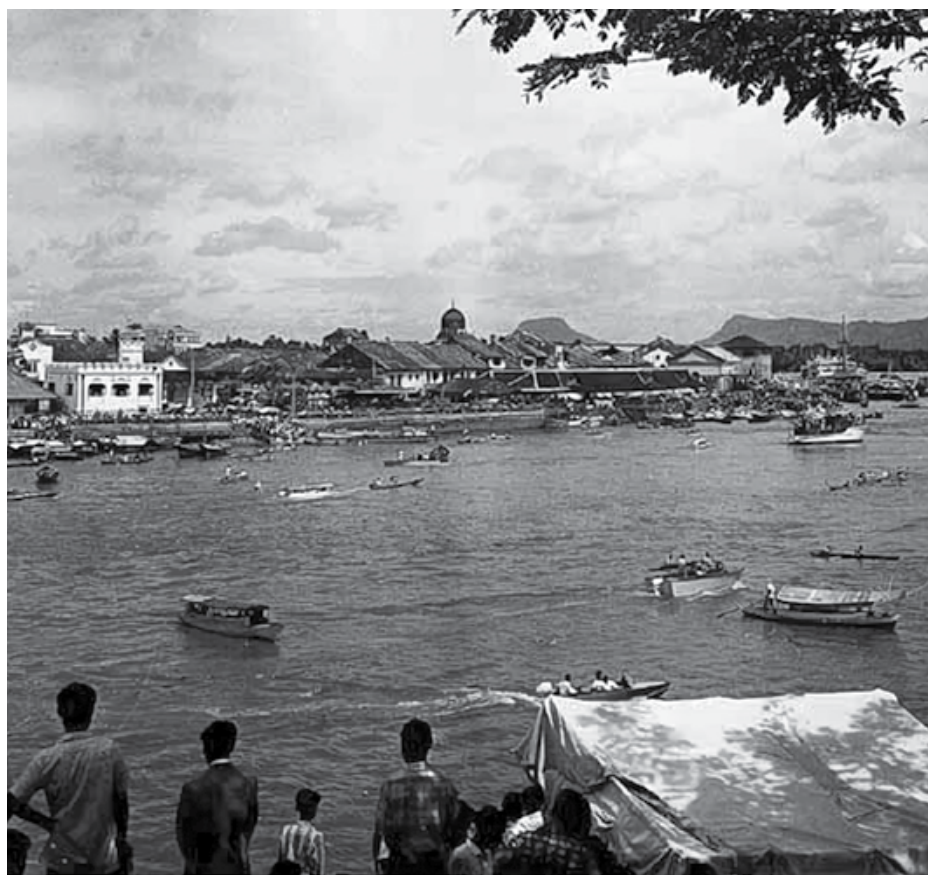


SARAWAK TOURISM BOARD



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REMINDERS OF KUCHING'S PAST





Kuching is a historic city and the State Capital of Sarawak, Land of the Hornbills. While it continues to grow and evolve in an ever-progressing world, Kuching stays true to its roots, preserving its past that shaped it into what the city is today.

The old part of the city, mostly stretching along the scenic Kuching Waterfront, has a concentration of old buildings that were constructed during the Brooke Era. These buildings mostly boast Colonial architectural features, with a bit of local design elements to help them withstand local weather conditions. Their functions varied, with the buildings serving as anything from fortresses and prisons to hospitals and centres of education.

Although some others have unfortunately been destroyed while some were demolished to make way for new development, the rest remain as reminders of Kuching's bygone days. Some of the most iconic of these old heritage buildings are Fort Margherita, Astana, the Old Courthouse, the Old Sarawak Museum and the General Post Office. The monuments of Kuching also encompass places of worship,

such as the grand Kuching Divisional Mosque, Masjid India, St. Thomas' Cathedral and the Tua Pek Kong temple.

Efforts have been made to preserve these monuments, including refurbishing and restoration works. Some, like the Hiang Tiang Siang Ti have even been rebuilt due to their historical significance to the local community. And while some of these buildings still serve the same purpose, like the Old Police Station, the General Post Office and the Old Sarawak Museum, the rest have been repurposed to house museums, galleries, restaurants and spaces where public activities are held.

Through the Old Kuching Smart Heritage initiative, Historical Monuments Heritage Trails have been created. The trails will take tourists on routes to discover these well-preserved monuments of the past. And in keeping with the times, the Old Kuching Smart Heritage is also making possible new ways to experience the historical monuments heritage, using modern advancements and the latest technologies such as Augmented Reality that will bring the Old Kuching Heritage into the digital era.

TRAILING THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF OLD KUCHING

Whether you're a history buff or not, taking a stroll through Old Kuching's Heritage Trails should definitely be in your bucket list of things to do on your visit to the Cat City. Follow the Historical Monuments Trails map attached to this magazine to discover these monuments, built as far back as the 1800s. To see all of these in just one day will not be enough, so it is highly recommended that you spend at least two days to explore all there is to see and experience along the trails.

Great icons of the city

The Historical Monuments Trails have an impressive line-up of historical buildings and monuments to admire and explore. Perhaps the most iconic is **Fort Margherita**, a monument of great significance to Sarawak with its history dating back to the Brooke Dynasty. It was built in 1879 on a hilltop on the north bank opposite Kuching town centre by Sir Charles Brooke, the second White Rajah of Sarawak and named after his wife, Margaret de Windt, Raneë of Sarawak. Designed in the style of an English castle, complete with a lookout tower, its original purpose was to protect Kuching from pirate attacks. In 1971, Fort Margherita was repurposed as a police museum before it was handed over to the Sarawak Government. In 2016, the building was reopened as the Brooke Gallery, a museum showcasing artefacts from the Brooke era as well as belongings from the Brooke Family.

Another renowned landmark is the **Old Courthouse** located between Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg and Jalan Barrack, facing the Square Tower at the Kuching Waterfront. It was built in 1868 and completed in 1874. The Old Courthouse's main architectural highlights are its long thin blocks and deep balconies, which are clever design adaptations to suit local conditions while still preserving traditional Colonial elements. Adding to the building's aesthetic appeal is a beautiful clock tower constructed at the main entrance and completed in 1883. The building was officiated in 1874 by William Henry Rodway, the first commandant of the Sarawak Rangers paramilitary force. Since then, it was used as the Government of Sarawak's administrative centre up until 1973. Conservation efforts in the early 2000s saw the building being repurposed to house the Sarawak Tourism Complex. Today, it houses the Raneë Museum as well as fine restaurants and cafés, and is one of city's chief tourist attractions.

Sir Charles Brooke passed away in England on May 17, 1917 and was laid to rest in Sheepstor, Devon but a monument

to his memory was erected right here in Kuching in 1924. Standing at six-metres tall, the **Brooke Memorial** is a prominent feature placed just in front of the Old Courthouse to honour Brooke for his services and dedication to Sarawak. Made of granite, it features an image of Sir Charles Brooke carved out of a white marble slab affixed to the obelisk. There is a bronze panel at each corner, with figures of the Chinese, Iban, Malay and Kayan communities, which symbolise the rich ethnic diversity and racial harmony that have long been part of Sarawak.

Here's a bit of fun fact: *The Brooke Memorial also marks 'kilometre zero' for the City of Kuching.*

Architecturally interesting is the **Round Tower**, located behind the Old Courthouse, facing the entrance of Carpenter Street. The round fort-like tower was built after the great fire of Jan 20, 1884, which destroyed 194 buildings between Carpenter Street, Main Bazaar and Bishopgate Street. The tower was declared open in 1886 and functioned as a dispensary until 1947 before it housed the office of the Labour Department and the Subordinate Courts Registry. The Round Tower is still pretty much intact today and looking just as beautiful as it was when it first opened.

Next to the Round Tower is the **Textile Museum**. Perhaps one of the most intricately ornamented buildings in Kuching, its design combines Renaissance and Colonial styles, complete with a beautiful wooden staircase featuring decorative handrails. The Pavilion Building, which was constructed in 1907 and completed in 1909, was the first building in Sarawak to be built with reinforced concrete and the first of its kind in Kuching to stand at more than two storeys high. It served as a medical headquarters and hospital until the mid-1920s. It also housed the Education Department and various Government departments afterwards. The building was even used as a centre for Japanese propaganda during World War II. The Pavilion Building underwent extensive restoration works and was open to the public in 2005 as the Textile Museum. Today, the building stands beautifully still, against a backdrop of the modern Plaza Merdeka and The Waterfront Hotel building adjacent to it. Inside, the museum showcases an impressive collection of textiles from Borneo such as the Pua Kumbu of the Iban and Kain Songket of the local Malays. Traditional costumes of the different ethnic communities of Sarawak can also be viewed at the Textile Museum.



Fort Margherita



Old Courthouse



Round Tower



Brooke Memorial



Pavilion (Textile Museum Sarawak)

The Historical Monuments Trails will also take you to the magnificent **General Post Office** building right opposite Plaza Merdeka shopping mall on Jalan Pearl. Its most prominent architectural feature is a set of Giant Corinthian pillars on the façade of the neo-classical style monument. It also features deep stockade walls, an ornate pitched roof and a long corridor running the entire length of the building. The General Post Office was designed by Denis Santry of Singapore's Messrs. Swan & McClaren Architects and built in 1931 under the third Rajah, Charles Vyner Brooke. The building has been serving as the General Post Office since its completion in 1932. It was also briefly used as a police station and the Rajah's stables where horses were kept.

Standing beautifully atop a green hill on the north bank of the Sarawak River, across the Kuching Waterfront is the official residence of the Governor of Sarawak, more famously known as **The Astana**. Built in the style of an English manor, the Astana is both romantic and exquisite in its architectural style. The Astana was built in 1870 by Rajah Charles Brooke as a gift to his beloved wife Margaret, the Rane of Sarawak, who arrived in Sarawak that year. Rajah Charles and his wife lived in The Astana as their main home. The reigning Rajah occupied the Astana until 1941 when the Japanese Occupation took place. In the past, the beautiful Astana has served as the venue for General Council meetings between 1873 and 1937. Today after extensive renovations, it serves as the official Governor's residence and is closed to the public, except for its lush landscaped gardens, which can be reached by boat from across the Kuching Waterfront.

At the eastern end of the Kuching Waterfront sits the **Square Tower**, one of the most photographed monuments in Kuching for its elegant Colonial style architecture typical of the Brooke era. Built in 1879, it was originally intended for use as a prison but served as a fortress when it was completed, what with its thick walls and oversized gun slots. Today, this iconic white tower houses an award-winning fine-dining restaurant, although in the past it was also used as a jailhouse, an administrative office and a dance hall. The arches on the windows and door bear the coat of arms from the Brooke era. Interesting to note is that the existing tower was built to replace a wooden one, which was razed by fire during the Gold Miners' Rebellion in 1857.

Simple though it looks, the old tower at the open-air food court between Jalan Power and Jalan Gartak, near Electra House has an interesting story behind it. It is what remains of the **Old Fire Station**, which was built on the Gartak River after it was reclaimed in 1907. The fire station began operating after it received the first coal-powered fire engine from the UK in 1917. With the completion of the new fire station at Jalan Padungan, the Old Fire Station was demolished, with only its lookout tower

left standing and unscathed. Eventually, an open-air food court was built around the tower. And although the food court now has a roof over it, the locals still call it 'open-air food court' where some of Kuching's most famous food like *Kolo Mee*, *Mee Sapi* and *Sio Bee* can be found.

The **Central Police Station** overlooking Padang Merdeka in the heart of Kuching is hard to miss, with its dark blue and white colour scheme and its unmistakable Brooke era design. It was built to replace the old police station once housed in the General Post Office building. Since it opened in 1931, the Central Police Station has retained its design and has been well preserved to this day. Its classic design helps it stand out amidst the more modern buildings that surround it, such as Plaza Merdeka, Yayasan Sarawak building and Merdeka Palace Hotel & Suites.

The **Sarawak Steamship** Building at Jalan Main Bazaar along the Kuching Waterfront was built in 1930 and served as the office and warehouse of the Sarawak Steamship Company, who has been developing the infrastructure in Sarawak and encourage trading activities here since 1875. Restored and in great condition, the building today houses a restaurant and display spaces, among other things.

Built in 1891, the Sarawak Ethnology Museum or better known as the **Sarawak Museum Old** Building, is one of the most easily recognisable buildings in Kuching. It was originally designed in Queen Anne style of the Victorian period. However, renovations and alterations done on the building up until 1911 gave it a more French provincial look. The museum, located at Jalan Tun Abang Haji Openg, was built by Rajah Charles Brooke for the purpose of showcasing precious artefacts such as craftworks of the different indigenous groups of Sarawak. It also housed a large collection of local wildlife documented by famous naturalist Alfred Wallace, thus making it one of the most important museums in the region. The museum building is currently closed for conservation works while its contents will be put on display at the new Sarawak Museum Campus just across, which is slated to open in 2020. The new Sarawak Museum Campus will be the second largest in South East Asia and the only world-class museum in Malaysia, and a high-tech one at that.





General Post Office



Square Tower



The Astana



Central Police Station



Sarawak Museum Old

One of many museums spread throughout Kuching, the **Islamic Heritage Museum** at Jalan P Ramlee was built by the Brooke administration as the James Brooke Malay College. It became the Madrasah Melayu Sarawak (Sarawak Malay Madrasah) in 1930 before closing in 1964 and taken over by the Education Department afterwards. Extensive renovation works were carried out on the building before it was opened to the public as the Islamic Heritage Museum in 1992. The museum was built out of timber and concrete, and features raised floors and two inner courtyards. It has seven galleries that showcase the History of Islam in Sarawak, Islamic Architecture and collections of Quran among other subjects.

Located at the junction of Khoo Hu Yeang Street and Barrack Road, the **Old Government Printing Office** is another historic building to be found along the Historical Monuments Trail. It was built in 1908 on the former site of the first Ladies' Club and served as a printing office for the Government until 1951. After some extensive renovations, the building was occupied by the Kuching Municipal Council, which was later renamed to Kuching City South Council (MBKS). When the city council moved to its new office at Jalan Padungan, the building became the office of the Kuching Resident up until 2014. It now houses the office of the Sarawak Museum Department.

The **Chinese History Museum** located along the Kuching Waterfront near Tua Pek Kong is a charming pink coloured building, which originally served as the Chinese Courthouse from 1912 until 1921. It was taken over by the Sarawak Chinese Chamber of Commerce in 1930 before the building was restored and converted into the Chinese History Museum in 1993. Enter the museum to discover the rich history of Sarawak's Chinese community, made up of different dialectic groups with different cultural variations, and how they became part of Sarawak's multi-ethnic society.

The Japanese occupation, which took place in Sarawak during World War II left behind it an important piece of history from that era – **The Japanese Building**. Located at the Courthouse Complex, next to the Old Courthouse at the Main Bazaar, it is the only administrative building that was constructed by the Japanese Occupational Force at the time, using labour force in the form of prisoners of war from Sarawak and Sabah, who were forced to march there from the Batu Lintang Camp where they were held.

Serving as a green lung in the heart of a bustling Kuching City, the **Reservoir Park** at Jalan Taman Budaya has been an attraction for Kuchingites to spend their time with friends or family doing some recreational activities, have evening walks or go for a jog since it opened to the public in the 1970s. The historical aspects of the park are its two small man-made



lakes that were dug in 1895 as reservoirs to supply piped water all over Kuching. The reservoirs fell into disuse in the 1930s but was landscaped, with footpaths, bridges and other conveniences built around it, turning it into a public park that remains popular to this day.

Mosques, temples and churches

The Historical Monuments Heritage Trails will also bring you to some of the city's oldest, most iconic places of worship. The **Kuching Divisional Mosque**, otherwise known as the Old Kuching State Mosque, is located on a hilltop at Jalan Masjid. Built in 1968, it replaces the original Masjid Besar, a wooden mosque built there in 1847 by Datuk Patinggi Ali. Its Mughal-inspired design, ornate chandelier hanging from the main dome and its gilded cupolas make it one of the city's most striking landmarks. The beauty of the mosque is intensified by its scenic surroundings of Kuching City in front of it and the Sarawak River behind it. It served as the Sarawak State Mosque up until 1990 when the new State Mosque or Masjid Jamek in Petra Jaya finally opened.

When Sir James Brooke fled to Singapore in 1857 during the Chinese uprising in Bau, he came back after that with 13 Sikh recruits for the Sarawak Police Force, and later on more Sikhs came into Sarawak, taking up jobs as prison wardens with the Sarawak Government and security personnel with the Sarawak Shell Company in Miri. This eventually resulted in the construction of a wooden Sikh temple in 1912 to cater to the Sikh families that live here. The original temple was replaced with a new one made out of bricks and featuring a golden dome. The temple, known as the **Gurdwara Sahib Kuching**, is located at Jalan Masjid and was opened in 1982 and became a prominent landmark and a monument for the Sikh community in Kuching.



Old Government Printing Office



Chinese History Museum



The Japanese Building



Reservoir Park



Gurdwara Sahib Kuching



Old State Mosque

Masjid Bandar Kuching or Masjid India

as it is commonly known, was built in 1876 to replace a wooden *surau* before it, and is the oldest mosque that remains intact in Sarawak. Inside, the mosque boasts a large *bedok*, a traditional drum used to announce the call to prayer. It is accessed through a narrow lane via India Street or its main entrance on Gambier Road. The shops around the mosque were built by the Indian Muslim community in the area and donated to the mosque as a source of income. The mosque is to be replaced by the newly built floating mosque on the Waterfront, just across Masjid India.

An iconic church building patronised to this day, the **St. Thomas' Cathedral** at Jalan McDougall is an Anglican cathedral completed in 1953, 100 years after the consecration of the first Bishop of Sarawak, Frank McDougall in 1856. The church building that we see today was built to replace the wooden one constructed by McDougall in 1857. It features a mid 20th Century British architectural style and a red barrel vaulted ceiling.

The **Hiang Tiang Siang Ti** (Deity of the North) temple in Kuching was built by Teochew immigrants from China more than one and a half centuries ago at Carpenter Street. It underwent rebuilds in 1863 and again in 1884 after a fire razed it to the ground. In 1968, major renovations were done on the temple and the statues of deities in the temple were covered in gold foil. The temple features a small turtle pool and a stage for opera performances as entertainment for the deities. A grand procession is held annually since, on the 4th day of the 12th month of the lunar calendar to commemorate this momentous occasion.

Another famous temple in Kuching is the Taoist **Hong San Si Temple**, which features an ornate rooftop embellished with ceramic artworks of fish and other



Masjid India



Reservoir Park



Hong San Si Temple



Tua Pek Kong



Hiang Tiang Siang Ti

animals. Located at Wayang Street, the temple is said to have existed since 1848 and is dedicated to the Hokkien child deity Kong Teck Choon Ong. It is believed that Kong Teck Choon Ong appeared on the rooftops of Ewe Hai Street during the Great Fire of Kuching in 1884. The deity was said to have warned the people there and summoned the rain to douse the raging fire.

A must visit is the **Tua Pek Kong** temple, otherwise known as Siew San temple. Located at Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman just in front of Harbour View Hotel. The temple has been in existence since 1770 and underwent extensive reconstruction works in 1856, 1965 and 2002. An interesting fact is that the site was carefully chosen according to the principles of feng shui, whereby the location of the temple and other aspects of it will bring about peace, harmony and prosperity to the Chinese community in Kuching.



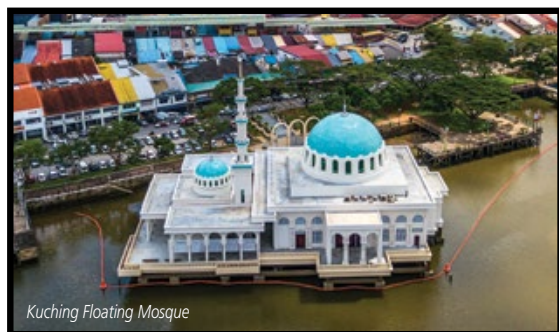
St. Thomas' Cathedral

Modern monuments

Not your average old heritage building, the **Sarawak State Legislative Assembly (DUN)** building stands proud on the north bank of the Sarawak River as an icon of modern-day Sarawak and a famous landmark in Kuching. The new DUN building has been described as one of the most beautiful buildings in Southeast Asia. The nine-storey building was declared open by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin on July 27, 2009. Its beauty is complemented with the stunning **Darul Hana Bridge** that connects both sides of the Sarawak River and continues to draw tourists and locals alike. Just recently completed is the new **Kuching Floating Mosque**, the city's latest landmark built to replace the original Masjid India located literally across the road from it.



Darul Hana Bridge with the new Sarawak State Legislative Assembly (DUN) Building in the distance



Kuching Floating Mosque

KUCHING OLD BAZAAR

Scan me to watch the video!



Kuching Main Bazaar in the 1950s.

Kuching Old Bazaar

The heartbeat of Kuching heritage

While the 'modern' bustles of Kuching today take place outside of the city centre in areas like BDC (Saradise), Jalan Wan Alwi (Vivacity Megamall, Milan Square & SoHo 188) or Jalan Tun Jugah (Song Plaza, CityOne Megamall, Emporium, Premier 101, Galacity), Kuching Old Bazaar continues to lure tourists and locals alike with its old world charms.

Situated opposite the Waterfront esplanade, Kuching Old Bazaar is a large area that includes

the Main Bazaar, Carpenter Street, Ewe Hai Street, Wayang Street, Jalan Tun Abg Hj Openg (Old Rock Road), China Street, Upper China Street, Bishopsgate Street, Temple Street and Green Hill.

It is the heartbeat of Kuching's proud two century-old heritage. It is where tourists go for bargains on souvenirs, where the good grubs are, and where hearts get filled with nostalgia as you observe local traders and artisans go about with their daily activities.

FROM KUCHING TOWN TO KUCHING CITY

Kuching Old Bazaar has a long history - one that can be traced back to the time when the Chinese first arrived in Kuching town some two centuries ago. This was during the migration of the Chinese in search of greener pastures to Nanyang (or South Sea) upon learning about the newly established White Rajah Kingdom in Sarawak.

Upon landing, they settled down at two major Chinese settlements. The downstream Chinese Bazaar in Kuching and upstream Bau Bazaar where the Hakka are mostly found. Ever since these early Chinese groups settled at Kuching Old Bazaar in the 1830s, the area has persevered, transformed with the wave of economy, social and cultural shift to what the Bazaar is known for today in Kuching city.



Kuching Main Bazaar in 2020



WHAT'S IN A STREET NAME?

Have you ever stopped to wonder how places and streets got their names?

There's a lot to a street name. It tells stories and provides on-the-ground insights on a particular place, alley or neighbourhood.

The streets and places of Old Bazaar do not have uniform names. They were developed out of the blue before the existence of proper town planning. Their names today serve as points of reference among local folks.

THE 'BAZAAR' IN KUCHING OLD BAZAAR

The word 'Bazaar' from Kuching Old Bazaar originated from the Malay word 'pasar' (market). Chinese migrants adopted this into the daily language (bas ha). The original bazaar is located along the river, and then spread to other streets and alley formations in the 1860s. The New Bazaar, on the other hand is located on the other side of the Old Court House where Javanese and Indian Muslims settled.

MAIN BAZAAR

Out of all the streets, Main Bazaar is the most famous counterpart of Kuching Old Bazaar. The name signifies its function as the primary trading centre at the Old Bazaar. People came here to trade and sell, with import and export from Singapore and beyond.

CARPENTER STREET

The second-most famous street in Kuching Old Bazaar was never known as Carpenter Street in the first place. Instead, it was known as Attap Street. Its name is believed to derive from the common Attap roofing (palm thatch) on most of the shops there.

How it became Carpenter Street is still a mystery. But according to the locals, the street is also commonly called Bak Kow Street or Bak Street, related to the Teochew Bak Kow Kongsi. Also, the Bak Kow Street strongly translates as Carpenter Street; and points out to the back lane alley as the main carpentry hub as well.

EWE HAI STREET

This street is a tribute to the Ong Ewe Hai, Sarawakian Hokkien pioneer who built shop houses along this street. Appointed as the first Chinese Kapitan (community leader) of Sarawak, Ong Ewe Hai was initially a boat trader of goods when he first came to Sarawak from Singapore. Among his descendants are Ong Tiang Swee, a prominent Kapitan Cina who was a member of the Rajah's government council; and Wee Kheng Chiang, who founded United Overseas Bank.

BISHOPGATE STREET

Located at the junction of Ewe Hai Street and Carpenter Street, Bishopgate Street is also known as Side Street. The street from Main Bazaar runs towards a small gate that once led to the garden of St. Thomas' Diocese of Kuching. The street was so named because of its function then as the pathway used by the Bishop and church mission to come to town for meetings and shopping at the Main Bazaar.

TRADE CENTRE

From Kuching's humble beginnings until today, the Old Bazaar's role as the centre of trading had not changed a great deal and it continues to flourish and prosper. Trade activities were a big thing here, setting a multi-ethnic scene where the Malay and Dayak traders co-existed with Chinese settlers, engaging in trade of all sorts within the Bazaar.

GROCERIES AND JUNGLE PRODUCTS

Supplying daily necessities, grocery shops naturally became one of the earliest and most common trades in the Old Bazaar. These shops also sold jungle produce and agricultural products like pepper, coconut, gula apong (palm sugar) and *nang ngin khak* (plant-based hair care). The Malay and Dayak communities mostly supplied these agricultural and jungle products; whereby they travelled from the coastal areas with their sampan all the way to the Old Bazaar.

The main cash crops used for trading in between mid-19th to early-20th century also differed. Among the cash crops valued by Chinese traders were gambier, sago, pepper and rubber.

Records show that in 1965, there were around 58 grocery shops across the Old Bazaar. In terms of ownership, the Teochew owned slightly more grocery shops as compared to the Hokkien. In total, both dialect groups owned more than 70% of the shops in the area.



Chinese traditional medicinal shop



Traditional tinsmith shop

CRAFTSMANSHIP TRADE

Traditional craftsmanship trade is often associated with the Old Bazaar. Trades like carpentry are significant in Carpenter Street, with handcrafted furniture shops. Back then, tinsmiths and frame shops spread across Bishopgate Street and China Street. Along these streets, you would also find watch shops, goldsmith shops. Over the years, these specialised artisan shops have lessened in number, with only a few left surviving today.

Prior to World War II, there were skill-based trade shops like wooden clog shops, weighing scale shops, sauce making shops and shoe shops. Many of them no longer exist today.

TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

A visit to traditional medicinal shops is like a visit back in time. Integral to the bazaar, traditional medicine shops at Carpenter and China Streets still retain that distinct ancient vibe of an apothecary hall. Just a whiff of the herbal aroma when you step inside and you'll get what this means - the sight of run-down brown drawers housing dried Chinese herbs; the concocting of medicine with pestle and mortar, and brass weighing scales; and patients consulting the in-house Chinese doctor.

OTHER TRADES

Other trades that can be found in the Old Bazaar include bookstores, which used to be the meet-up places for cultured youths in the past. The Heng Hua's bicycle at Ewe Hai Street, tailor shops, barber shops and old-school kopitians are other normal trades still found in the Old Bazaar today.

HERITAGE SURROUNDED BY MORE HERITAGE

Kuching Old Bazaar is not only an area that is interesting on its own. It is surrounded by remarkable heritage buildings, like those from the Rajah Brooke era, including temples and churches. These make the Old Bazaar a nostalgic and meaningful place among Kuching folks.

GENERAL POST OFFICE

Standing adjacent to the Harmony Arch, the neo-classical white General Post Office was built in 1931. The building has had a number of functions; as the telegram service centre, Chartered Bank office and one time as the Land and Survey Department office. There are 3,300 mailboxes at the post office, providing mail-receiving services for the public with no corresponding addresses. These boxes with their old locks and keys are still in use today.

SARAWAK STEAMSHIP BUILDING

Present day Sarawak Handicraft Centre, the Sarawak Steamship Building was originally constructed in 1930 as the office and warehouse of Sarawak Steamship Company.

The formation of the company goes back to 1870s, during a time when shipping between Kuching and Singapore had poor services and high charges. To address these concerns, the Rajah invited Borneo Company, Chinese pioneers like Ong Ewe Hai and Chinese traders interested in sago export. This led to the establishment of Sarawak Singapore Shipping Company in 1875, which later became the background of the Sarawak Steamship Company.

CHINESE HISTORY MUSEUM

Established in 1993 by Charles Brooke, the Chinese History Museum is one of the most important historical landmarks at the Kuching Old Bazaar. Prior to it being a museum iconic to the Chinese communities of Sarawak, it served as a Chinese Court from Jul 1, 1912 at its current foothold opposite Tua Pek Kong temple.

The court dissolved in 1921. From 1930 until 1990, the building served as the office of the Chinese Chamber of Commerce. In 1993, the building was converted into the Chinese History Museum.




Chinese History Museum




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