

KUALA LUMPUR CITY HALL

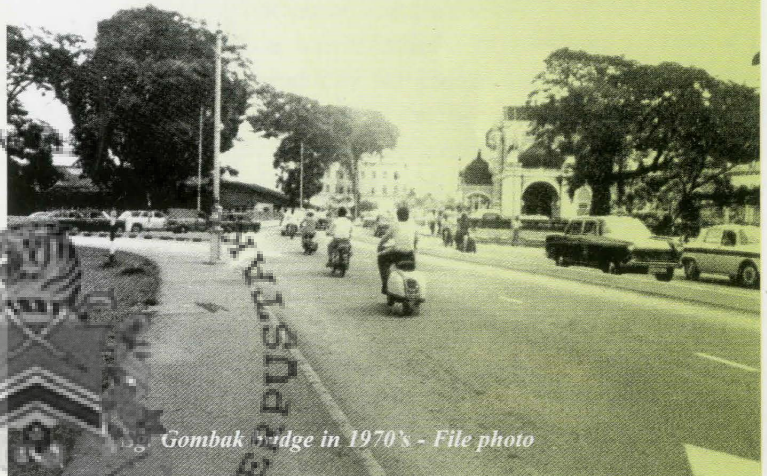
KUALA LUMPUR from trading depot to modern metropolis

by
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Early History

It is not known when Kuala Lumpur first became a settlement. Even its name continues to give rise to speculation for *Kuala Lumpur* means 'the mouth of the *Lumpur* (lit. Muddy) River'. But no modern map shows the *Lumpur River* (*Sungai Lumpur*). Historical documents, however, have indicated otherwise. A published report (1824) on the tin-producing territories on the west coast of the Malay Peninsula mentioned a *Lumpur River*, and a sketch map which accompanied a confidential report (1872) on political affairs in Selangor showed that the river which formed a confluence with the *Klang River* was known as the *Lumpur River*. That river is today known as the *Gombak River*. When the change of name occurred is not clear.

Kuala Lumpur's early history can be traced back more precisely to about 1850 when it became a trading depot for the tin mines at Ampang. It was Raja Abdullah bin Raja Jaafar (of Riau), newly-appointed administrator of the Klang Valley, who encouraged mining at Ampang by the Chinese from Melaka as well as the older mining settlement of Lukut (now part of Negeri Sembilan).



British administration, established in Selangor in 1874, was soon to have a major impact on the development of the state. Traditionally, the nerve-centres of the Malay kingdoms were located at the estuaries of the major rivers. British policy which increasingly placed greater emphasis on agricultural development shifted the centres of administration to the interior. In 1880, the capital of Selangor was moved from Klang to Kuala Lumpur.

But in 1880, Kuala Lumpur was still no more than a disorderly village, overcrowded with attap huts. The busy High Street (now Jalan Tun H.S. Lee) was just a narrow, unpaved track, broad enough to drive a bullock-cart along and no more. A large fire broke out in early 1881 followed by another several months later, which together destroyed many wooden and attap houses. It was then that some attempts were made at town planning. By 1882, efforts were made to clean up the town and property owners were compelled to rebuild by using bricks and tiles. The first breakthrough in local administration occurred when the Sanitary Board was formed in 1890. It was the first in the Malay Peninsula.

British administration also led to the growth of commercial agriculture pioneered by European planters mainly from Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Coffee was

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Sg. Gombak bridge after 30 years - Photo KL City News



From the Mayor's Desk

I have often been asked since December 2003, what my New Year wish list would be, which seems to be the norm these days.

As for me, I do not want to talk about New Year resolutions simply as a fashion or a fad. The most important thing is to continuously be conscious of what you want to do or accomplish. And for that, Kuala Lumpur City Hall has already predetermined what it wants to accomplish in 2004 at the end of last year.

My utmost wish is that every officer and staff in Kuala Lumpur City Hall knows what he or she is supposed to do and to do it well with commitment and determination for the benefit and well-being of the people whom we serve.

However, I like to share with everyone namely of the one thing my teacher taught me when I was a student in primary school during my early formative years.

He said, "The most honourable thing to do in one's life is to serve and be kind to people". That piece of advice has left an indelible mark in my mind and has been the guiding beacon in my life and career.

Here, I would like to quote from Johnson Oatman's famous poem, *'Only Once You Pass This Way'*

"Do your best while life's pilgrim way you tread,

Scatt'ring sunshine while you may;

Bear in mind, while the precious seed you spread,

Only once you pass this way.

Refrain

Only once you pass this way,

Only once you pass this way;

Be a blessing while you may,

Only once you pass this way.

Ev'ry day poor and needy you will find,

Filled with sorrow and dismay;

Do your best some poor, broken hearts to bind,

Only once you pass this way.

Be a brave, earnest soldier in the strife,

Then when comes the close of day,

May the world be the better for your life,

Only once you pass this way."

Wishing all our Chinese readers **"Gong Xi Fa Chai"**.

GOOD HEALTH VITAL TO CITY RESIDENTS

'A healthy mind resides in a healthy body. Without good health, one cannot enjoy all the wealth one has earned in his life time and the way to good health and a healthy body is through exercise,' said Datuk Mohamad Shaid bin Mohd Taufek, Mayor City Hall Kuala Lumpur, at a Press Conference in launching the *Aerobic Exercise* or *KL Aerobics* at City Hall Kuala Lumpur on 10 December 2003.



Datuk Mohamad Shaid with the participants at the launching of KL Aerobics. Photo KL City News

The *KL Aerobics* presented by the Mayor incorporates movements and steps from the Malay martial arts 'silat' and boxing and is conducted with rhythmic movements accompanied by fast lively music. The 'silat' and boxing movements were the brainchild of the Mayor, who wanted to introduce new innovative concepts into aerobic exercise and make it more acceptable by the public.

Datuk Mohamad Shaid told *City News* that *KL Aerobics* if conducted regularly will not only help develop a healthy body but also reduce diseases like high blood pressure, asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular problems, help mood upliftment, enhance muscle tone, relieve stress, help in having a sound sleep and overcome many other disorders. It will also help enhance multiracial relationships by exercising together.

City Hall has identified permanent locations for carrying out *KL Aerobics* in Taman Tasik Titawangsa, Taman Tasik Perdana, Taman Tasik Permaisuri and Taman Lembah Kiara. Other sites will be identified stage by stage.

Aerobic exercise activities the conventional way, started in 1997 initiated by City Hall Kuala Lumpur with the support of the *Persatuan Kecergasan dan Sukan Aerobik* Kuala Lumpur in Taman Tasik Titawangsa, Taman Tasik Perdana and Taman Tasik Permaisuri every Sunday from 8.00 a.m-9.00a.m.

City Hall with the assistance of the Aerobic Association will train teachers to form Aerobic Clubs in schools and train students in the new version *KL Aerobics*.

The first phase of the training programme for schools will start with Sekolah Kebangsaan Puteri Pandan (1) (60 pupils), Sekolah Kebangsaan Batu 4, Jalan Ipoh (20 pupils) and Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Convent Bukit Nenas (40 pupils).

City Hall has produced about 1000 VCD's to be distributed to individuals and organizations to help them in conducting the *KL Aerobics*.

KL Aerobics was launched simultaneously on 14 December 2003 at four venues and transmitted 'live' on the *Selamat Pagi Malaysia* programme, Radio Televisyen Malaysia.

Datuk Mohamad Shaid bin Mohd Taufek thanks all those involved in ensuring the success of *KL Aerobics*. The agencies involved are :

- *Polis Diraja Malaysia
- *Radio Televisyen Malaysia
- *Federal Territory Education Department
- *Department of Youth and Sports Kuala Lumpur
- *Persatuan Silat, Federal Territory Kuala Lumpur
- *Amateur Boxing Association Kuala Lumpur
- *Resident's Associations
- *Rescue and Fire Services Department
- *IBM
- *City Hall Culture, Tourism and Sports Department
- and others who have assisted in one way or another.

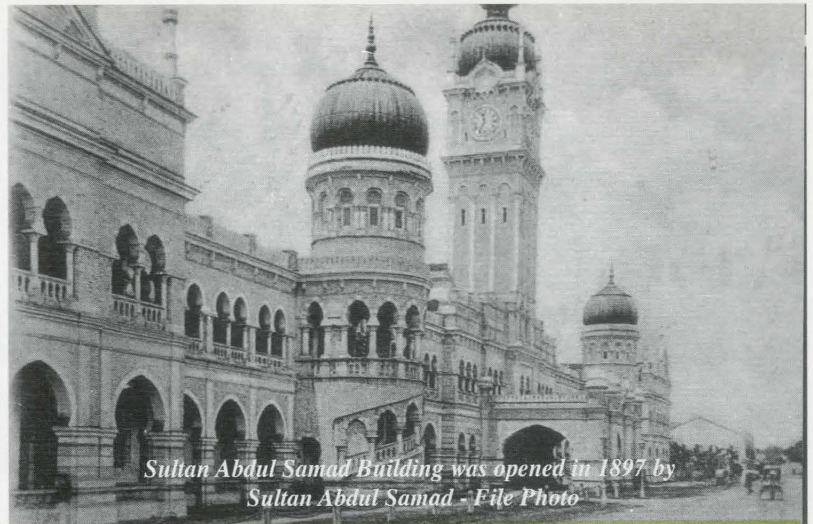
Thank you

the craze then. It was not replaced by rubber until the early 20th century. The 1880s also witnessed the beginnings of railway construction. The first (1885) was between Port Weld and Taiping, in Perak. The second joined Kuala Lumpur to Bukit Kuda in Klang.

Federal Capital (1896)

Kuala Lumpur's subsequent development owed much to its status as the capital of the Federated Malay States, beginning from 1896. In the early 1890s, it was still hardly a modern town. There was no improvement in the general style of the buildings. On all sides were to be seen "mean squat structures going up". The new houses along Batu Road (now Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman) looked more like "a collection of dirty little boutiques" and Java Street (now Jalan Tun Perak) was said to be "the meanest street in Kuala Lumpur" – the houses were cramped, squalid and badly built. Melaka Street too was considered "an uninviting quarter of the town".

By early 1897, however, Kuala Lumpur already possessed water supply, a Band, magnificent government offices (now known as the Sultan Abdul Samad Building), two daily newspapers (one of which was *The Malay Mail*, still extant), three lawyers, a church (St. Mary's), three clubs, a museum, and a hotel, but it did not have a dentist. By the turn of the century, motor cars began to make their appearance. Among the first were a Rootes & Venable and a De Deon Bouton. The supply of electricity to private houses commenced in September 1904.



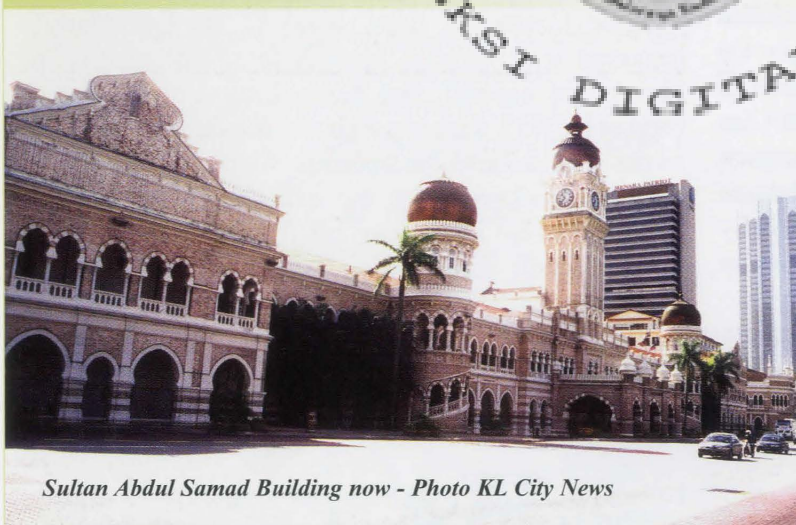
Survey Office next to Java Street began in the middle of the year. Next was the erection of a Cold Storage chamber in the vicinity of the present Central Market by which time the construction of the new railway station had been in progress. A major building completed at the end of 1909 was the Masjid Jame'. In late December 1909, the new premises of the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China opened for business. These buildings have survived.

One of the major events of the 1920s was the visit of the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) at the end of March 1922. Never had Kuala Lumpur been so gaily decorated. The Perak arch in Jalan Raja was an elaborate affair. It had a black and gold roof and was decorated with scarlet and gold lacquer work. A striking feature was the four dragons decorating the corners. The Selangor welcome took the form of six white pylons, four in Jalan Raja and two on the Padang. The Pahang arch was pure white and of Gothic style whereas Negeri Sembilan's was a wonderful affair of rainbow colouring and bristling spearheads. The whole of the arches in Jalan Raja were set against the fine buildings of the Government offices draped in flags and bunting.

Kuala Lumpur had grown immensely, from a population of about 18,000 in 1890 to 95,000 in 1926. It was suffering from overcrowding. In 1921, Kuala Lumpur employed a town planner from New Zealand in an attempt to streamline urban development. Prof. J.W. Jenks of New York University and President of the Alexander Hamilton Institute, was in Kuala Lumpur in 1928. He had been a visitor in 1903. He was impressed by the growth of modern buildings,

the remarkable change in street traffic conditions, and the rapid way in which the town was spreading over areas that, when he first saw them, were either jungle or plantations or mining fields. Commenting further, he said:

"Very few people in America have the faintest realisation of the fact that the growth and development of this country has gone so far that you can motor for miles over asphalt-surfaced roads that would be a credit to any country, and that there is such a place as Kuala Lumpur which appeals to me as the Washington of Malaya."



Indeed by 1902, Kuala Lumpur was already said to be growing too rapidly. From the outset, "the arteries of her traffic are incapable of adequately performing the functions for which, in the beginning, they were deemed sufficient." There was no urban planning – "the town grows anyhow - here, there and everywhere in dribblets". It appeared to be nobody's business to formulate a comprehensive scheme for its future development. Surprisingly, even as late as 1905, there were plantations located practically within town limits.

The erection of new imposing buildings began in 1909. Work in connection with the building of the Federal