



Raffles and Hastings: Private Exchanges Behind the Founding of Singapore

John Bastin

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The founding of Singapore has typically been attributed to the strategic genius of one man, Stamford Raffles. Frequently overlooked is the part played by his superior in the East India Company, the Marquess of Hastings. It was Hastings who, as Governor-General of India, made the fateful decision to establish a British trading post at the southern entrance of the Malacca Straits, and once this was executed with great daring by Raffles in early 1819, it was Hastings again who supported the retention of Singapore against opposition from all quarters.

This book provides an intimate account of Singapore's founding by drawing on the personal correspondence between these two men, which they maintained separately from their official exchanges. Published here for the first time, these private letters reveal at first-hand the challenges that Raffles and Hastings faced in manoeuvring within the Dutch-dominated East Indies. Just as significantly, they reveal the complex relationship between the two men – evolving from mutual suspicion at the outset to cooperation and admiration, but nonetheless peppered throughout with backbiting, hidden agendas and the clash of personal ambitions.

Historian John Bastin brings rigorous scholarship to bear on this work, at the same time presenting it in a clear, readable style that will engage specialist and general readers alike

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