

Photographs from the archives of the Institution of Singapore Civil Engineers

The lost hills of Singapore

Presented by The Land Archive and Zhao Renhui

Land reclamation in Singapore started in the 19th century. Initially, soil excavated from inland hills and sand dredged from surrounding seabeds were used to reclaim the sea. Singapore gorged its hills and ridges to reclaim land. Fill material was evacuated from Bedok, Siglap, Tampines and Jurong. Most hills were flattened during the Telok Ayer Reclamation from 1879 to 1887, and the East Coast Reclamation of 1418 hectares from 1961 to 1985. By the mid-1980s, the hill-cut soil and local-dredged sand suitable for reclamation became almost exhausted and reclamation contractors started to import sand from neighboring countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia.



Tanjong Pagar
General view of Bukit Pearl, before 1945
Photographer unknown,
TLA archive



Tanjong Pagar
General view of Bukit Bedok, Temporary staging looking south, before 1945
Photographer unknown
TLA archive



Singapore Empire Dock
General view of Bukit Tampines, View of bottom showing west wall, before 1945
Photographer unknown
TLA archive



Tampines
General view of Bukit Tampines
Photographer unknown
TLA archive



Bukit Timah
General view of Rifle Range Hill
Photographer unknown
TLA archive



Unnamed Hill
Group Portrait, National Day
Photographer unknown
TLA archive



Unnamed Hill
Possibly Tampines
Photographer unknown
TLA archive



Unnamed Hill
Possibly Tampines
Photographer unknown
TLA archive