

When I first started my family research, I was clueless about my family origins and Eurasian identity. Thirteen years later, besides a fascinating family history, I have discovered that the Shepherdson family has had links to more than 100 different surnames across ten different nationalities over the last 400 years. About 63 are Eurasian surnames and 25, Chinese. It shows that we Eurasians, primarily of British, Dutch, and Portuguese descent, are a fusion of myriad cultural and ethnic strands, rich in heritage. But the term 'Eurasian' is not restricted to race alone. It does not take a lot of research effort to conclude from a lifestyle perspective that there is already a certain amount of 'Eurasian-ness' in Singaporeans and Malaysians alike.

I would like to dedicate this book to the extended Shepherdson family in the region and anyone interested in genealogy.



#### About the Author

Kevin Linus Shepherdson has been tracing his family roots for 13 years. He holds a Masters Degree in Applied Science (Nanyang Technological University) and a Bachelor of Arts and Social Sciences degree (National University of Singapore). Kevin has written for several publications including The Straits Times, Computer Times, PC Magazine and Computer World Asia. His Arts background combined with his IT work-related experiences have motivated him to use the Internet and technology tools to supplement the traditional approach to exploring and documenting his family history. Kevin currently works at Sun Microsystems.

#### About the Co-Researcher

Percival Joseph Shepherdson's interest in the Shepherdson genealogy started 30 years ago. In addition to researching Eurasian heritage pertaining to the East Indies and Singapore, he loves to read and collect books on culture and history. Percival is currently retired and does voluntary work as a counsellor with the Singapore Prison. Recently he received an award from the National Council Against Drug Abuse for this exemplary service.

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"Journey to the Straits: The Shepherdson Story" is in truth two stirring tales bound in one cover. Firstly it is the fascinating odyssey of the clan Shepherdson, starting with sea-captain brothers of northern stock, sailing, in the final decade of the eighteenth century from Southern England, to trade round the Cape to the farthest Indies, making fortunes and founding families there. Then there is the chronicle of these families, a female line back to England, but the main lineage is based firmly in the Straits Settlements and then launching out through the Peninsula states, reflecting the political fortunes of their times.

With time and spread and differences of fortune, came a thinning of ties and losses of contact. Until "the moving finger wrote" – the year 2002: two christenings, same church, same Sunday – same surname. And the rest is history, the micro history of another odyssey, which is an inspiration and a joy to read, both because of the tenacity of the researchers and the eureka experiences that were their reward.

*Ann Wee, Anthropologist & Associate Professor, Social Work & Psychology Department, National University of Singapore*

Journey to the Straits: The Shepherdson Story Kevin Linus Shepherdson

# Journey to the Straits

## The Shepherdson Story



Kevin Linus Shepherdson

"This, to my knowledge, is perhaps the first most complete collection of records for one Eurasian family surname. Hopefully, the book will encourage others to want to research their ancestry too. That would certainly strengthen the community spirit within each family, as it has for the Shepherdsons. At best it will raise the awareness of this small yet dynamic group, known simply as Eurasians, not clearly defined as a racial or an ethnic group, but a community of families with a history in this region."  
*Barry Pereira, Researcher of Eurasian Family Names & Heritage, Singapore*

"Tracing a genealogy is hard enough; to render it a story for the generations is a mountain to climb! But the Shepherdsons have done it and are richer for the experience. The tracks made are journeys of seeking identity. The perennial question of 'who am I the Singaporean' is given varied answers from West to East, European to Asian. This work shows the Singaporean has to be the multicultural citizen, a product of the fusion of historical currents of enterprise, determination, honour and a sense of home."  
*Alan Chong, Asst. Professor, Department of Political Science, National University of Singapore*

"There is a general conception about family histories that they are too limited to be of general interest to a broader readership. However, the Shepherdson family history transcends these limitations. We see the family history effectively woven into broader strands of the social and political history of Britain, India and Southeast Asia. The book provides a model for family historians to come!"  
*Dr. Geoff Wade, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore*

"We admire the way you've put together your family history, travelling to the ends of the earth and leaving no (tomb)stone unturned. Wish we had done it your way, chronicling the detective story, the process of investigation as it unfolded, the people you met along the way who held pieces of the jigsaw."  
*Khoo Salma Nasution, Author of the best-selling book "Streets of George Town" and her husband, researcher Abur-Razzaq Lubis*

"When I was asked to assist Kevin, his uncle and his wife Lily with our heritage collection, little did I know about the magnitude of their research which spanned several centuries. Helping them actually helped me learn more about our own heritage collections!"  
*Makeswary Periasamy, Rare Books Collection, National Library of Singapore.*