

Bombay

The city we know as Mumbai today, was just a cluster of seven small islands. The Portuguese called them 'Bom Bahia' and gifted them to the English in 1661.

The territory was then rented to The East India Company who did little or nothing with the islands until circumstances changed and the Company itself changed hands.

Shipbuilding was the first industry. And business was spices, opium, textiles, and trade.

By the middle of the 19th century, city merchants were trading independently with countries all over the world. The natural harbour and the civil infrastructure made the city a port of opportunity. The population grew. It was a multi-cultural, multilingual, multinational melting-pot driven by dreams of success and money.

Then, in 1861, came the American Civil War: That faraway event brought about the great Bombay Bonanza. In just four years the city's profits from cotton exceeded 80 million pounds sterling. That wealth was the making of Bombay, *urbs primus in Indis*.

This exhibition tells of those times. There are prints, etchings, early photographs, published works and a multi-screen audio-visual to take you there and introduce you to our 'founding fathers' who built this city with their vision and wealth.

Bombay Diaries

- 1849 Great India Peninsula and East Indian Railway Companies incorporated, Nana Jagannath Shankar Seth played a leading role in it.
- 1851 Bombay Association Founded by Jagannath Shankar Seth for fighting for the rights of Indians.
- 1853 Inland Telegraphic Communications started, First train between Bombay-Thana, Mercantile Bank Started, Colaba Press Company started using steam engine.
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- 1854 First photographic society established in Bombay, Private Postal Service started by Meherwandave Naorozi, Textile Mills started, The Bombay Spinning and Weaving Company, Oriental Spinning and Weaving Company started.
- 1855 The Bombay Baroda and Central India Railway incorporated, Wilson College started, first private college to get affiliated to Mumbai University.
- 1857 University of Bombay founded, J.J. School of Art established.
- 1858 Telegraph stations established, Bhau Daji Lad Museum started Donation was given by Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy.
- 1860 Vihar Water Works completed.
- 1862 First B.A., Exam was held in Durbar Hall, Bombay Gas Company established.
- 1863 Bhorghat railway opened, Alexandra Girls School founded by Seth Maneckji Cursethejee Saraf with the help of donors
- 1864 First official census. By the efforts of Sir Bartley Frere, Native Opinion (Hindi Lokmat) Rao Saheb Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik, Bombay was linked overseas with Telegraphic Net Works.
- 1865 First Gas lamps were lit on Bombay streets, Hornby Road laid out, Frere and Kennedy Bridges completed.
- 1867 Elphinstone Bridge opened for traffic, Victoria Natak Mandali established, B. B. & C.I, Railway commenced service between Backbay and Virar.
- 1868 Crawford Market Established with the efforts of Mun. Com. Sir Arthur Crawford.

1850 – 1905

1869	J.N. Petit Baharket Improvement Library opened, St. Xavier's College started, Alexandra Mills started.
1870	David Sassoon Library donation by Sassoon family, Sir Dinshaw Petit Khand Mohalla Library opened.
1872	Bombay Municipal Corporation First Act was passed, Elphinstone circle garden completed for Dukes of Edinburgh's visit.
1873	Bombay Port Trust established.
1874	Tramways introduced, Telegraph Office, University Buildings, Convocation Hall and Secretariate completed, Javerilal Umiashankar Library opened.
1875	Sassoon Docks opened.
1878	High Court Building completed, Rajabai Tower and Library at University. donated by Premchand Roychand.
1879	Tulsi Lake Water Works completed.
1880	Princess Docks built.
1881	Royal Bombay Yatch Club building opened.
1885	Indian National Congress founded at Byculla, Byculla Bridge opened, Malabar Point became Govt. House, Bombay Presidency Association formed.
1886	Cama Hospital opened, Government Veterinary College opened, Anthropological Society established.
1887	First Tannery opened in Dharavi.
1888	Victoria Docks opened, V.T., station and Elphinstone College Building completed.
1893	BMC Building completed.
1903	Taj Mahal Hotel at Apollo Bunder, Foundation for Alexandra Docks laid.
1905	B.E.S.T. started Electric supply, Electric Cinematograph inaugurated.

Seth Premchand Roychand



A puja with Sir and Lady Kikabhai seated on left



Premchand Roychand, his wife and family members at the wedding celebrations of his eldest son, Fakirchand



The Banyan tree where Seth Premchand began business in 1858 in Bombay



Rajabai, mother of Premchand Roychand

Seth Premchand Roychand renowned as the 'Cotton King' of Bombay is remembered to-day for the magnificent Rajabai Tower and the University Library he gifted to this city. Premchand, the son of Rajabai and Roychand Deepchand, was born at Surat in March 1831. Roychand Deepchand migrated to Bombay with his family and settled at the Gujarati stronghold of Kalbadev-Bhuleshwar Premchand was educated at the Elphinstone Institution

Premchand registered himself as a stock-broker in 1849. He is believed to be the first Indian stock broker who was fluent in reading, speaking and writing the English language. Within a decade he almost monopolized the broking business with other Indian brokers serving as his juniors or associates.

The American Civil War in 1861, unexpectedly multiplied Premchand Roychand's fortunes. Britain had to turn to India for the supply of cotton during that period and the prices skyrocketed. Investors would go to his residence in hordes to consult him in order to make a quick fortune.

Soon investments in cotton and bullion were replaced by speculation in all sorts of Joint-Stock companies. The Back Bay Reclamation Company was one of the many companies established during this time. Seth Premchand Roychand was appointed a Director on the first Board of the Company. There was hardly a company in which his assistance to buy its securities in the market was not invoked by promoters. In March 1865, the markets crashed with the close of the American Civil War. Many reputed businessmen went bankrupt including Premchand Roychand.

However, his fearlessness and indomitable courage, led him to embark on new enterprises and achieve a brilliant success which was the admiration of all who witnessed it. Few are aware of his generosity, particularly for the cause of education.. And yet there is not a single institution or street in the city that bears his name. It was typical of this extraordinary man who sought neither fame nor recognition during his life.

Seth Premchand donated Rupees two lakhs towards the erection of a University Library in 1864. He further donated Rupees two lakhs of rupees for the erection of a Tower to contain a large clock as a tribute to his mother Rajabai. Designed by Sir Gilbert Scott, the construction of the library and Rajabai Tower was completed in 1878.

He was a champion of girls' education and supported several girl schools in the city. Among these was Miss Prescott's Fort Christian School, now known as the J.B.Petit High School. Seth Premchand Roychand gave a private donation of Rupees. Sixty Thousand for its building with a provision that Indian girls would be admitted without any restrictions regarding their numbers or the fees they paid.

In November 1864 he gifted five shares of the Mazgaon Reclamation Co. to Rev. William Fletcher for setting up the Cathedral Girls School. He bought a large building with an extensive piece of land at Mahim for Bombay Scottish Orphanage School. He also donated Rupees Five Thousand to the Alexandra Girls School. The Roychand Deepchand Girls School at Surat is also his gift to his native place in the memory of his father, besides a Dharamshala and a hospital. He bestowed Rupees. Three Lakhs to the Calcutta University in 1866 for an annual scholarship which was later named after him.

His other donations:

Rupees Ten Thousand for Oriental literature room in the Asiatic Society of Bombay.

Donated a handsome amount for a training school in Ahmedabad.

Established a boarding and lodging house and an endowment to feed the poor.

Donated many thousand rupees for animal hospitals or panjrapoles.

The Seven Islands

The seven islands were Colaba, Old Woman's Island, Bombay, Parel, Worli, Mazagon and Mahim.

The Portuguese who owned the islands from 1534 A.D. gifted these to King Charles II of England when he married the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza in 1661. Later in 1688 the British Crown handed over the islands to the East India Company for an annual rent of J10 (Rs.100/-)

Mahim was the main destination within the island group for local sea borne traffic until the Fort developed at the southern end of the Bombay island in the late 17th century.

The islands brought for the East India Company a magnificent harbour.



View of Bombay in 1773: Original drawing by James Forbes

The City grew with the Shipping Trade



Scene in Bombay, published 1826



Cotton Merchants of Bombay

Lowji Wadia, a shipbuilder of Surat was invited in 1735 to take charge of the dry docks at Bombay. The dockyard remained in the charge of the seven generations of the Wadia Master Builders.

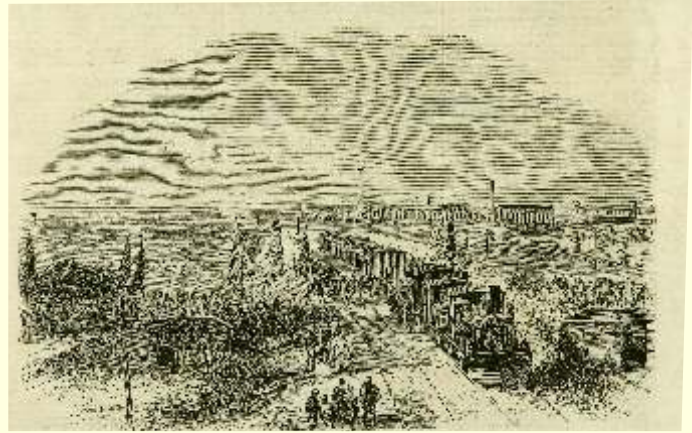
Between 1736 and 1800, they built and launched 114 vessels of different types in Bombay.

By the end of the 18th century, the islands were joined by the causeways and Bombay was already a thriving port city.

People of different communities arrived in Bombay and settled in pockets gradually establishing distinct communities at Fort, Dhobi Talao, Parel, Bhuleshwar, Thakurdwar, Kalbadevi and Girgaum, among others.



The New Post Office, published in Illustrated London News, 1877



Departure of the Duke of Edinburgh from Parel Station



Bana Women



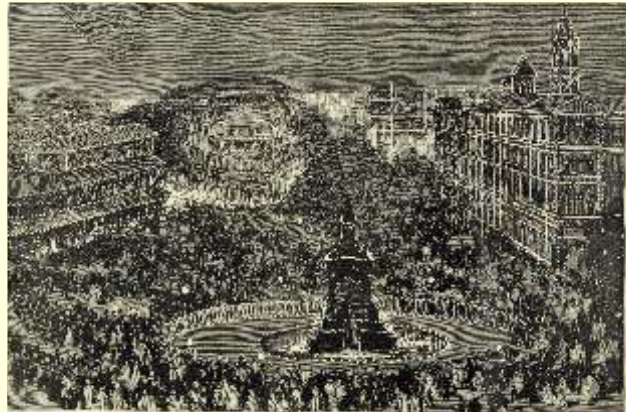
Gwdich Brahmins

Photographed by : William Johnson, 1863

Power and Prosperity

As mercantile activities multiplied, Bombay became a true "Gate of India". The city was geared to the industrial revolution and became a pioneering centre in India. Gas lights, railways, telegraphs were introduced. Spinning and weaving mills were founded, and banks and financial companies were established. Bombay was transformed.

The American Civil War (1861-1865) brought a boom in the cotton exports. Bombay merchants thrived bringing enormous wealth to the city.



Illuminations in Bombay- View looking down Rampart Row, March 1887



View of High Court Building from Rajabi Tower, late 19th century



View of the Espalade from the Rajabi Tower, late 19th century

Gifts of the Merchant Princes.

Merchants of Bombay wholeheartedly and selflessly donated moneys for the benefit of the city, its people and environs. Several institutions serving the cause of education, culture, science and humanity were founded, a magnificent heritage of which we are proud even today.

To the enterprise and generosity of these merchants, and to the capable control of Englishmen, we owe the magnificent capital of Western India as it exists today



Founding Fathers of the city

Sir Jagannath Shankershet, gave of his time and money for promoting education, political and social reforms and civic affairs.

Sir David Sassoon built a synagogue, and established schools for juvenile delinquents and for technical education. His son, Albert, built the large Sassoon dockyard and Colaba between 1872 and 1875. as also the famous Devid Sassoon Library near the Bombay University.



Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy's gifts to the city included a school of art and a hospital. In 1851 alone, he made contributions to causes as varied as the enlarging of a tank, the construction of the J. J. Obstetric Hospital, a school of Industry and two roads connecting Mount Mary Church at Bandra with Mahim Causeway.

Sir Cowasji Jehangir used his millions to gift the city a Convocation Hall, an Ophthalmic Hospital, an Art Gallery and 40 drinking water fountains. He offered his unstinted support towards education in the city and many educational institutions owe their existence to his munificence.



Sir Pherozeshah Mehta fathered Bombay's municipal charter by writing the Municipal Act of 1872, helped found the Central Bank and established the independent newspaper, the Bombay Chronicle.



Jamsetji Tata was the founder of the Tata Industries. He was the pioneer of Iron and Steel industry in India. He also built the famous Taj Mahal Hotel.



Sir Dinshaw M. Petit donated his plot and bungalow at Parell for the Bai Sakarbai Dinshaw Petit Hospital for Animals in 1884.



Dadabhai Nawroji was the first Asian member of the British Parliament. He lobbied for the political rights and representation in the British Administrative services in India. He was the founder of the Indian National Congress.



Panoramic View of Bombay from the clocktower by Raja Deen Dayal

Goculdas Tejpal donated a hospital,

Mulji Jetha built the largest textile market in the city

The names of many mercantile magnates and pioneers of industry became synonymous with the town's life. These included men such as Sir Dinshaw Petit, Nusserwanji Petit, Khatau Makanji, Dharamsey Punjabhai, Bomanji Wadia, James Greaves, George Cotton, Morarji Goculdas, Merwanji Panday, Sir Ibrahim Rahimtoola, Tapidas Varajdas, Thackersey Mulji, Mancherji Banaji, Currimbhoy Ibrahim, David Sassoon and many others. These captains of industry not only wielded considerable civic and political influence, but also donated generously towards innumerable charities and public institutions in Bombay.



Rajabai Tower, University of Bombay

Standing tall across from the Azad Maidan is the Rajabai tower, a landmark of Southern Bombay. The building got its name from Premchand Roychand's mother Rajabai. The tower was opened in 1880 and stood at an imposing height of 280 feet above the ground.

The tower offers panoramic views of not only Bombay but even Uran, Elephanta and other surrounding islands. The gallery of the tower has various statues in vernacular dress codes. They are modeled on the miniature sculptures by Government Engineer Mukund Ramchandra.

The clock has 16 bells in its tower with a cumulative weight of 10 tonnes. The clock was made by Lund and Blockley Co. London and has the ability to play sixteen different chimes at the stroke of the hour.