



Left: The family outside Hochstadt House, which has been demolished, in Parkstone Road. Above: Mr John Hochstadt, who founded the Singapore Casket Company, with his wife, Ms Rosa Delphina d'Almeida, in the late 1800s. PHOTOS: HOCHSTADT FAMILY

Slice of Eurasian family life over generations

Proceeds from the sale of *The Clan... At Large* will benefit needy students enrolled at NUS

Ng Wei Kai

A book on the history of a prominent Eurasian Singaporean family, the Hochstadts, is now on sale at bookstores here – for a good cause. Proceeds from the sale of *The Clan... At Large* will go to the Hochstadt Bursary Endowment Fund, which benefits needy students enrolled in any course of study at the National University of Singapore (NUS).

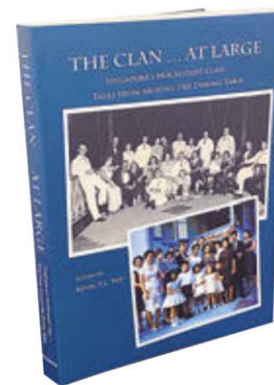
The book is available for \$48. The fund was set up by Mr Herman Hochstadt, an NUS alumnus who was permanent secretary in

several ministries, including education and law, in the 1970s and 1980s. He is 88 this year.

Another prominent member of the family was the late Mr John Hochstadt, who founded the Singapore Casket Company in 1920.

But the book's writers say they tried to focus on the ordinary and very Singaporean lives of an often overlooked ethnic minority here.

Dr Kevin Tan, a law professor who edited the book, said: "People in Singapore tend to forget how integrated Eurasians are into Singaporean life. This book gives a slice of Eurasian family life which is often invisible."



The book chronicles the lives of the first four generations of the Hochstadt family, as well as their relations, in Singapore. It contains about 30 life stories, told in vignettes, researched by family members and Dr Tan.

It also contains many photographs and documents capturing

the family's life in Singapore from colonial times to the present.

Also included is an illustrated section containing many Eurasian home recipes for dishes like curry debal and achar.

Mr Herman Hochstadt's daughter, former literature teacher Karen Hochstadt, said some Eurasians may find it hard to share these outside the family.

"The book was a labour of love, inspired by my father's own memoir which my Auntie Joan, Herman's sister, said did not have enough family in it," she said.

Mr Herman Hochstadt had released a book last year titled *Lives & Times Of Hrh*, detailing his life and work in the Singapore civil service.

Ms Hochstadt is the great-great-granddaughter of Mr Phillip Peter Hochstadt, who came to Singapore

from Bavaria, Germany, around 1881.

Dr Tan, who has also written biographies of public figures such as Singapore's first chief minister David Marshall, said family histories have an important place in the country's history.

"Stories about Singapore are not just about notables and big characters. Behind them, there are many others who have contributed in some way," he said. "It's very important to understand that history is not just about the big names – smaller stories like this help us understand how Singapore has transformed."

Ms Hochstadt said she hopes the book will inspire other families to dig into their own histories, no matter what they find.

"We want to encourage fellow Singaporeans to record because I

think that if we don't, we lose a lot when the older generation goes. We lose not just family history but also a lot of connection to the past, much wisdom and a deeper understanding of what makes us the people we are today," she said.

She added that it is important not to whitewash history, and that the book does not gloss over the more difficult parts of their family history, such as erratic and even violent behaviour from a great-uncle of hers, which led to his own mother taking him to court.

"As you dig and dig and dig, you find skeletons, but you also find gems," she said. "It also helps with healing. With every family there are things that need to be healed and doing this book helped me and others in our family with that."

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