

KARACHI

EARLY HISTORY

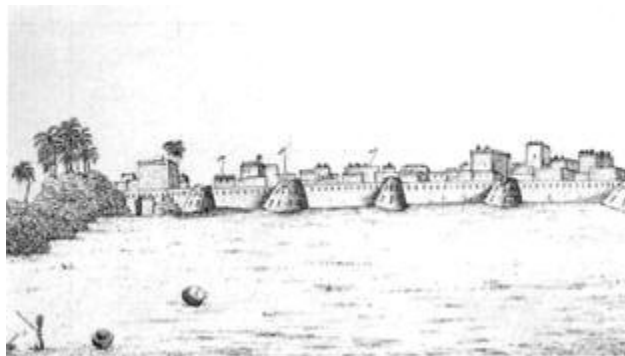
The earliest account of the area where Karachi is located can be found in the record books of one of Alexander-the-Great's admirals, who sailed back home from the Greek expedition to India, from a harbor by the Indus delta, known as Krokola. According to widely held belief though, the city of Karachi started its life as a small fishing settlement by the Indus Delta known as Kolachi-jo-Kun (the ditch of Kolachi), named after an old fisherwoman, Mai Kolachee who took up settlement here.

In time, the settlement grew into a small fishing village and came to be known as Kolachi-jo-Goth or, the village of Kolachee. This small fishing village gradually started trading activities by sea with Muscat and Bahrain.

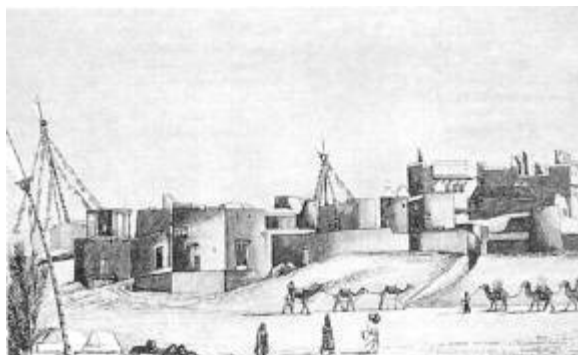


A portrait of the natives of Sindh and the Mir Yar Muhammad Khan and Mir Muhammad Khan (c. 1842)

Originally under the rule of the Kalhora rulers of Sindh, it was taken under the control of the Khan of Kalat as compensation for a family death, and was transformed into a small trading post. In 1795 however, the Talpur rulers of Sindh overthrew the Kalhoras and took back the control of the village. The Talpura Amirs erected a small fort at Manora near the village, which had some cannons brought in from Muscat. The fort had two doorways: one facing the sea known as Khaara Darwaaza (Brackish gate) and the other facing the Lyari river known as Meetha Darwaaza (Sweet gate).



The old fort at the Karachi harbor, the Karachi Fort (Charles Masson, 1830)



Views of the old village of Karachi (c. 1850)



Maggar Talao (Alligator Tank): a swampy oasis filled with alligators attributed to a miracle performed by Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, a sufi saint in Sindh



An early map of the Karachi harbor (Carless, 1838)

THE BRITISH ERA

On February 1st, 1839, a British ship, the Wellesley, anchored off the island of Manora. By 3rd February, the fort at Kolachi had surrendered without firing a single shot and this small fishing village crossed a turning point in its life. Three years later in 1843, upon the annexation of Sindh into the British empire, the regional capital was transferred from Hyderabad to Karachi by Charles Napier, the first governor of Sindh. The British made the town an Army Headquarters and military cantonments were established outside the town limits. A municipal committee was formed to provide basic facilities and municipal limits were expanded to 74 square miles to allow for expansion, even though the town occupied only 4 square miles. Napier also started a water supply to the town from Malir and established a basic police and judicial system.



Charles Napier, conquerer of Sindh



An early picture of rifle practice near Karachi



Napier Barracks - constructed in 1847



Barracks at Manora

KARACHI'S EARLY DEVELOPMENT

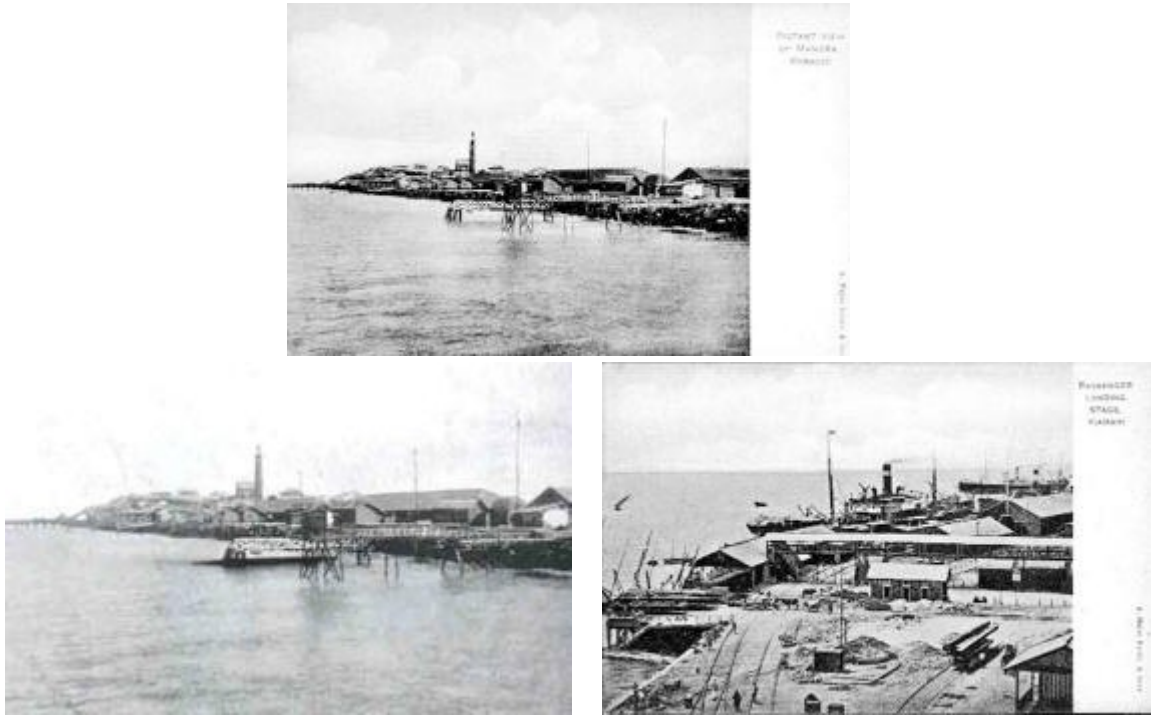
The British recognized the importance of this natural harbor by the Indus and started developing the fishing village as a principal port for the Indus River basin. In 1843, a river steamer service was introduced linking Karachi with the city of Multan, 500 miles upstream on the Indus. The population of the city started rising rapidly and by the 1850's, Karachi had become an established city with a population of about 14,000 and prosperous overseas trade.

Karachi was endowed with a natural harbour, fair weather and plenty of space. It had the potential to become a great metropolis and held lots of prospects for those who could take their chances. Soon, moneyed people from Bombay, Goa, Kuchh and other parts of the subcontinent started migrating to the city to undertake various occupations. The town's population started rising rapidly which is evidenced by the fact that the municipality's income rose from Rs. 6,000 in 1848, to Rs. 27,000 by 1850 in just two years. In 1854, substantial development of the Karachi Port was undertaken with the dredging of the main channel, and the construction of a mole (or causeway) which joined the main harbor with the rest of the city.



The Trinity Church - consecrated in 1855, its exceptionally tall tower was used as

a beacon for ships approaching the Karachi Harbour (last picture dates from 1890)



Early postcard views of the Karachi Port at Manora and Keamari

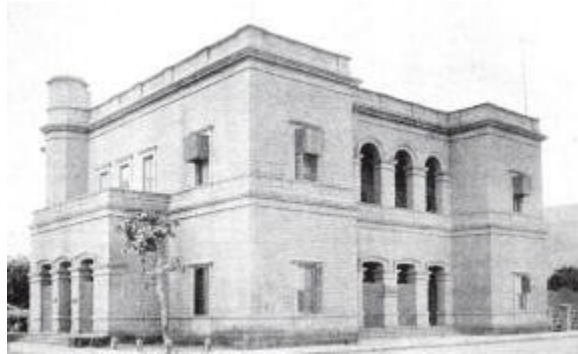


An old map of Karachi dating from 1852-3

Local Businesses Spotlight

The first few businesses that set up in Karachi were done by risk takers as in the early days, Karachi was still an outpost in the middle of the desert and away

from the big urban centers like Bombay. It lacked many support facilities and an established clientele as was available in other big cities. A post in Karachi was not something that was looked upon as exciting. It was still very much a frontier town. Nevertheless, the first few businessmen who did take the risk of setting up shop in this new city were not disappointed with their decision further ahead in time, as they were able to secure a good place in the city that was yet to be.



The Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, Karachi Branch (c. 1853)



Hajee Dossul and Sons Co. (c. 1840): General merchandizing, fancy goods and ammunition. Located on Elphinstone St.



Mahomed Ali Alibhoy & Sons (c. 1843): contractors for the military

THE 1860's

In 1861, Karachi got its first railway line: a hundred mile stretch from Karachi to Kotri, a town near Hyderabad on the right bank of the Indus. In the same year, due to the ongoing American Civil War 10,000 miles away, an enormous demand for Indian cotton was created which gave birth to a brief period of unprecedented prosperity. In this time, the total trade value of the Karachi Port rose up to Rs. 6.6 corore of which, the value of exported cotton touched 80 lacs of rupees. This short period of prosperity provided for a business boom in Karachi.

In 1864, a direct telegraph connection was inaugurated which connected Karachi with London and with the interior. It was from Karachi that the first telegraph message from India was sent to England. Modernizing of the harbor commenced in 1860, and closing of the Chinna Creek and opening of the Mole were completed by 1864. By 1866-7, the government had spent about 250,000 pounds sterling on the Karachi Port. With the opening of the Suez canal in 1869, the importance of Karachi grew and it quickly became a full-fledged seaport.



Bartle Frere, appointed Chief Commissioner in Sindh, 1850

Karachi was a town of considerable size now, and public buildings such as the Frere Hall were built to provide the citizenry with a place to accommodate socio-cultural activities and to act as a town hall.



The Frere Hall (c. 1865) designed in memory of the Commissioner of Sindh from 1851-59, Sir Bartle Frere
(First picture is circa 1890)



Government House, Karachi

Local Businesses Spotlight



Mohamedali Allibhoy Karimji & sons (c. 1861): Supply and transport works, hardware



T. Cosser & Co. Engineering Works and Godowns, Wood St. (c. 1866)

THE 1870's

By 1873, Karachi possessed an efficient and well managed harbour. The city was expanding at a fast pace and business was booming. In 1878, the railway line from Karachi to Kotri was extended to join the Delhi-Punjab railway system at Multan, connecting Karachi with the rest of British India by rail. In 1871, the Sindh Club was established as an exclusive club for European gentlemen where natives were allowed only through the tradesmen's entrance.



The Sindh Club inaugurated in 1871



Picture showing the Sindh Club and the Frere Hall (c. 1890)

Local Businesses Spotlight



Nusserwanjee & Co. (c. 1879) head office on Elphinstone St.



Nusserwanjee City stores on Dundas St. and the bonded warehouse near Customs house



Karachi Steam Roller Flour Mills (Messrs. Nusserwanjee & Co.)

THE 1880's

In 1882, the Merewether Pier was completed at the Karachi Port, which provided a great convenience to pilgrims for Mecca who no longer had to embark at Manora. The Karachi Port Trust was established in 1886 as a port authority to manage the affairs of the port and work on the construction of the East wharf was started in 1888. A lack of recreational facilities in the city led to the creation of the Karachi Gymkhana at the site of a former ladies club. The Sindh Arts College was established in the city in 1887 providing a world class education to the citizens of the city. It was inaugurated by the Governor of Bombay, Lord Reay on 17th January, 1887. The Duke of Connaught laid the foundation for the first public museum in the current Pakistani territory, built to honor the reign of Queen Victoria.



The St. Patrick's Cathedral - built in 1881. The first picture (dating from 1892) is a British Library image, also showing the St. Joseph's Convent School in the background (established in 1868)



Merewether Memorial Tower (1884): built in memory of Sir William L. Merewether, commissioner of Sindh (1868-77)



The Karachi Gymkhana founded in 1886



Sindh Arts College (now D. J. Science College) (1887)
(First picture: c. 1928)



Victoria Museum (1887)



View of the Karachi City in 1889



A map of Karachi from 1889

THE 1890's

The 1890's saw the emergence of the Punjab as the granary of India and Karachi was the region's principal outlet. This brought many business opportunities to Karachi and the population of the city expanded. Consequently, revenues of the city also increased and public works projects were undertaken on a grand scale. Boulton Market was built in 1883, and in 1890, the grand Empress Market was constructed to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign. This monumental structure with a clock tower was designed to compete with the Crawford Market of Bombay and was designed to be 12 feet higher. The market quickly gained a position in the city's center. Hospitals such as the Civil Hospital and the Lady Dufferin Hospital were also inaugurated.



The Empress Market (1890)

OLD CITY VIEWS



First picture: Looking towards the St. Patrick's Cathedral over the Staff Lines
Second picture: Looking towards the St. Andrew's Church in Saddar.



Looking towards the Civil Lines, the Sindh Club is in the foreground, and the Frere Hall can be seen at the back

These pictures were most likely taken from the bell tower of the Trinity Church



Lady Dufferin took an avid interest in the healthcare for women, and was the main benefactor for the Lady Dufferin Hospital



Lady Dufferin Hospital - founded in 1894



Original building of Civil Hospital Karachi, inaugurated in 1898.



Building in Nursing Mess area part of the original Civil Hospital Karachi since its inception.

Civil Hospital Karachi and its Nurses Block inaugurated in 1898

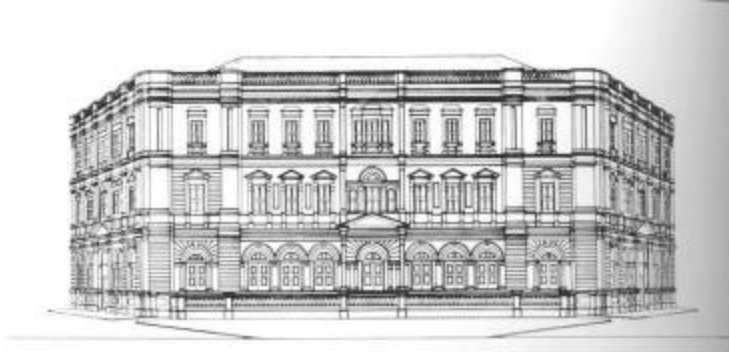


A map of Karachi from 1893

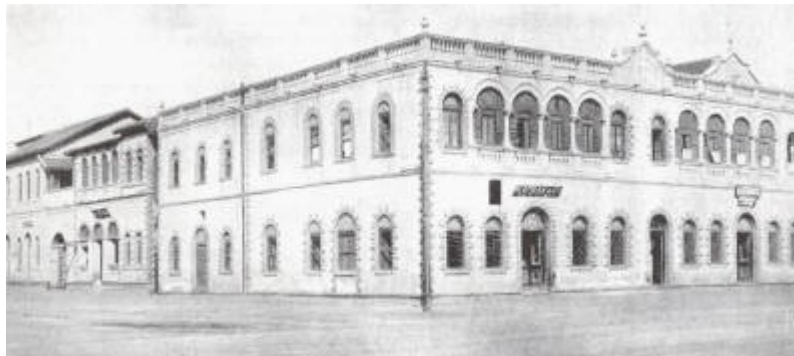


Views of the dense old native town by the end of the 19th century (First view is from Bundar Road)

Local Businesses Spotlight



The Rustomjee Building (1891), The Merewether Tower with the Rustomjee Building in the background



Messrs. Katrak & Co. (c. 1891): General stores, importers of wine and spirits



The Indian Life Assurance Co. (c. 1892)



Premesis of Bliss & Co. (c. 1896) (Second picture c. 1928)



The Sindh Flour Mills and Warehouse (c. 1896)

THE 1900's

In 1838, Karachi had had about 14,000 inhabitants. This number had risen to 56,000 by 1872, and kept on growing. By 1891, statistics showed a population of about 105,000 and by the time the 19th century drew to a close, Karachi had 117,000 inhabitants as of 1901. Karachi had become one of the biggest and best outfitted ports of the world. The population of the city had crossed over a hundred thousand of which, 55 percent were Muslims and 41 percent were Hindus. Karachi was now a city with a metropolitan character attracting sizable populations of European traders, Iranians, Lebanese, Goan, Parsi and Hindu merchants. Among these, the Parsi merchants quickly made a good reputation for themselves and rose to a prominent position in the city. They made significant contributions to the growth of the city through their generous philanthropy.

The bustling city also had a traffic problem. Because of the number of carts and carriages on the streets, the roads had to be paved with gravel chippings (which was a refinement ahead of its time even before London). Municipal bullock carts used to water the city streets daily to keep the dust from flying around. Carriage horses wore straw hats to avoid sunstroke and were provided drinking water from troughs placed at various locations in the city by the philanthropic "Drinking Trough Society of Karachi". In 1900, a public tram service was introduced which commenced from Sadder cantonment and went up to the harbour at Kiamari.



Karachi's Tramway system (started 1900's)



A view of Preedy Street, Saddar
the Eduljee Dinshaw Dispensary (opened 1882) is visible in the background



Some views of the Bunder Road (now M. A. Jinnah Rd.)
The Max Denso Hall (completed 1886) can be seen in these pictures



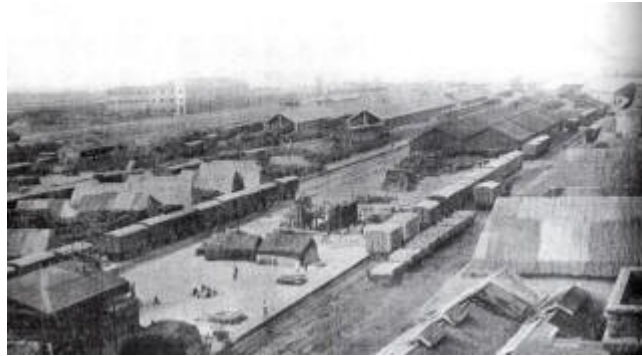
A view of Karachi in the 1900's



The Karachi Cantonment Railway Station



Farewell arch erected by the Karachi Port for the Royal visit of King George V in 1906



The yards at the harbour entrance and at the South of the harbour in the 1900s

The Parsi Contribution



Bai Virbaiji Anglo Vernacular High School - Building commissioned in 1906



Goolbai Maternity Home, Karachi (date?)



Katrak Parsi Swimming Bath - 1906

Local Businesses Spotlight



Cowasjee & Sons (1887) Mules Mansions building (c. early 1900's)
Located at Willingdon Place Kiamari
Coal merchants and contractors for bunkering



The Lloyd's Bank (c. 1900's)



The Haydn Company (c. 1905): The only piano manufacturers in India at the time
located on Elphinstone St.



The Bristol Hotel (c. 1907) built by Dossabhoy Byramji Minwalla



Louis Dreyfus & Co. (c. 1907): Grain Merchants



A view of the Northwestern Hotel, established 1908, offered some of the finest dining in Karachi

THE 1910's

By 1914, Karachi had become the largest grain exporting port of the British Empire. A new building for the Karachi Port Trust was constructed in 1915 which was converted into a 500 bed military hospital just a month after its opening due to the outbreak of the first World War (1914-1918). Karachi nevertheless benefited even during the war-time period, and after the end of the Great War, a number of manufacturing and service industries were installed at Karachi.



The Karachi Port Trust Building (1915)



A picture of Frere Hall with the Band Stand in front dated 1918



Landing of French aviator Etienne Poulet on course from France to Australia on a Caudron G-4 (1919)

The Parsi Contribution



Bai Virbaiji Katrak Maternity Wing (Lady Dufferin Hospital) - Inaugurated 1916 (approx. date)



The Mama Parsi Girls High School - established in 1918 from the donation of Jamshed Nusserwanjee Mehta



A postcard view of the Parsi Gymkhana

Local Businesses Spotlight



The Mama Mansions and picture of its inauguration ceremony
Built by Ardeshir Hormusjee Mama in 1914



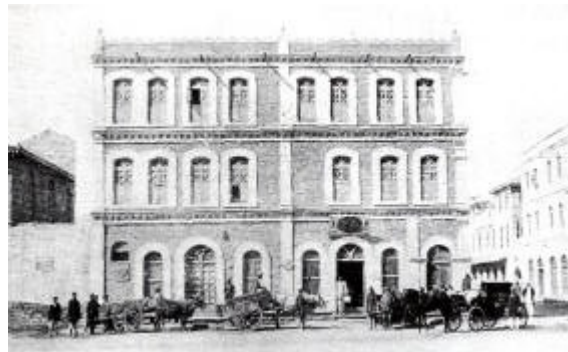
Frere & Co. (c. 1916): Genral merchandizing



A view of the Elphinstone Street in 1917



Views of Saddar: Bohree Bazaar in 1917



The Alliance Agency Building (c. 1919), Cinnatus town



The Star Cinema - built in 1918

Personal Photos



Picture of a british family's first car in Karachi on Elphinstone St. in 1914

Fig 1) and Fig 2) Captions on back of picture written by my mother (Fig 1) says: "The car 1914 - The Little today in Elphinstone St Karachi"

THE 1920's

In 1924, an aerodrome was built and Karachi became the main airport of entry to India. The British Government also developed an Imperial Airship Communications Scheme in the 1920's, which was a plan to have a fleet of large

dirigibles providing mail and passenger service to far-flung portions of the Empire. To this effect, mooring masts were constructed at Cardington in England, St. Hubert in Canada, Ismailia in Egypt, and Karachi, which was chosen to be the main terminal for India. A site was located outside Karachi and construction of an airship mast, hangar and a hydrogen plant was begun in 1927. Although, this program was cancelled after the destruction of the Airship R 101 in 1930 with great loss of life, the shed and the mast remained as impressive relics of the plan till well after Pakistan's independence. They were later dismantled and the steel was used for buildings and bridges along the Pakistan Railways. The site later became the international airport at Karachi.



A view of the Civil and Staff lines c. 1928, the Sindh Club can be seen in the foreground



Airship mooring mast and hangar at Karachi, built in 1927



A view of the intersection of the Bunder and Mc Leod Roads from 1928
The Rustomjee Building can be seen behind the Merewether Tower



A view of Elphinstone Street about this time



Jehangir Kothari Parade and the Lady Lloyd Pier (1920)



Early postcard view of the Jehangir Kothari Parade: old style cars can be seen parked behind the wall which is lined with benches. The sea can be glimpsed at the back

Local Businesses Spotlight



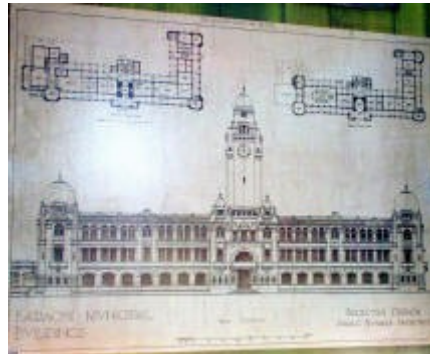
Cumper's Cafe Grand, operated by Herbert "Bertie" Cumper, one of the best bakers and confectioners in town. Located in Edward House.



A picture of the Lloyds Bank Building from 1928

THE 1930's

With the opening of the Sukker Barrage in Northern Sindh in 1932, the city saw another boom. After the separation of the province of Sindh from the Bombay presidency in 1936, Karachi was made the capital of the province. Foundation was laid for the construction of the Karachi Municipal Corporation building to house the municipal workings and offices of the new provincial capital.



Blueprint for the design of the KMC building (1931)



A view of the Passenger terminal of the Karachi Port at Kiamari in 1930



A view of Elphinstone Street in 1930



The monument to Christ, the King - dedicated in 1931 in front of the St. Patrick's Cathedral

THE 1940's and ONWARDS

The two major events of the 1940's were the second World War and the freedom struggle for Indian Independence. In 1947, independence was finally granted to the subcontinent and Pakistan came into being as a new country made by the partition of British India. Karachi became the capital city and premier port of the newly formed state. It was the most built up city in Pakistan at the time and accommodated a huge influx of migrants to the newly formed state, which made it expand at a rapid rate. Pakistan's first civil and military bureaucracy was housed in the city and Karachi served as the capital city of Pakistan until 1958 when a new capital was made at Islamabad.

Afterwards, the city went through a period of governmental neglect and ethnic strife that greatly marred its character. Also, rampant commercialization, rejection of the past, lack of knowledge and disregard of its heritage largely resulted in the loss of its past in the mists of time. The city took on a very different character but the spirit of Karachi always lived on. Currently, Karachi is Pakistan's largest city and its financial and economic center. It still retains a diverse mix of people, its inhabitants hailing from all corners of Pakistan, India and other countries. The Karachi port continues to handle a major volume of Pakistani and Central Asian trade and the city that was once a village still keeps on growing at a phenomenal rate accommodating people well past the capacity of its creaking infrastructure. Currently it is counted as one of the world's biggest cities. Fortunately, after a long period of neglect, the City District Government of Karachi under the direction of President Musharraf has finally embarked on an ambitious plan to revitalize Karachi, and it holds big promise for the 'City by the Sea' in the future.



Karachi Airport in 1943 during World War II



ICC - Karachi Road Karachi (Pak.)



Testament to Karachi's growth: Views of Bundar Road (now M. A. Jinnah Rd.)
second picture is from 1953



Independence Day celebrations in 1947



These are two images of Mac Leod road (I.I Chundriger road) the first one is from 1930s and the later one is from 90s.

