

# **EARLY BRITISH RELATION WITH ASSAM**

**BY**  
**SURYAKUMAR BHUYAN M.A, B.L**  
**RETIRED D.P.I. ASSAM**

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**THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL AND**  
**ANTIQUARIAN STUDIES, ASSAM**



**EARLY BRITISH RELATIONS WITH  
ASSAM**

**A STUDY OF THE ORIGINAL SOURCES AND RECORDS ELUCIDATING THE HISTORY  
OF ASSAM FOR THE PERIOD FROM ITS FIRST CONTACT WITH THE HONOURABLE  
EAST INDIA COMPANY TO THE TRANSFER OF THE COMPANY'S  
TERRITORIES TO THE CROWN IN 1858**

**WITH  
NOTES AND BIRLIOGRAPHY**

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## PREFACE

Historical investigations in Assam are fraught with serious handicaps, and subjects on which volumes would have been written elsewhere are wrapped up here in a mass of chaotic confusion; and one is almost tempted to repeat the words of the medieval scholar, – "If you want to read any book you will have to write it." The following pages will convince the reader of the existence of a large mass of materials illuminating a very interesting chapter of the history of Assam, and of the meagre use that has hitherto been made of them. The political wisdom and administrative genius of men like Colonel Thomas Welsh, David, Scott and Major-General Francis Jenkins– the triumvirate of the period under review– who consolidated British power in the strategic North-Eastern Frontier of India, would have been immortalised in the pages of some hero-worshipping Boswell had their field of activity been anywhere else except in this benighted quarter of the globe.

Here I embrace the opportunity of acknowledging my indebtedness to those but for whose help the following pages could not have been compiled; to Mr. C.S. Mullan, I.C.S., for the two monumental works on the North-East Frontier by Pemberton and Mackenzi : to Mr. J. R. Cunningham, C.I.E., for the original India Office manuscripts of Dr. Wadse' History and Geography of Assam, and several volumes of rare historical books and Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, from the Shillong Public Library : to Mr. G. S. Guha, M.A., B.L., F.R.E.S., for being instrumental in sending me Dr. Wades Geography : to Dr. J.H. Htuton, C.I.E., C.I.S., for permitting me to consult the records of the Ethnography Office at the Assam Secretariat : to Srijut Hemchandra Goswami for a volume of articles on Assam published in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal : to Rev. A. J. Tuttle for the biographies of Brown and Bronson : to Srijut Jnananath Bara, B.L., for Mils' Report : to Srijut Jagannath Kakati and Srijut Anritkanta Bara for typing out the manuscript : to Srijut Nilanath Sarma for several volumes not ordinarily available : to Mr. A.F.M. Abdul Ali, M.A., Keeper of the Imperial Records at Calcutta, for securing the permission of the Government of India to supply me a copy of the East India Company's Agreement with Gaurinath Singha requiring the latter to defray the expenses of the Company's troops serving in Assam : to Lieutenant-Colonel P. R. T. Gurdon, C. S. I., I. A., retired, for

bringing my labours to light through the pages of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland. I need not add that the bulk of the materials discussed are derived from publications deposited in the libraries of the Cotton College, and the Kamarupa Anusandhan Samiti or the Assam Research Society, Gauhati. References to the books and records drawn upon for information will be found in the foot-notes, in the body of the volume and in the bibliographical appendix.

I cannot adequately express my profound gratitude to Mr. J. R. Cunningham whose kindly interest in the present work was chiefly instrumental in obtaining the sanction of the Government of Assam for its printing and publication, as a fitting sequel to the long chain of measures taken by it, in spite of its limited resources, for the advancement of historical and anthropological investigations in the province.

COTTON COLLEGE, }  
 GAUHATI, ASSAM; }  
*February 29, 1928*

S. K. BHUYAN.