

**EAST INDIA COMPANY FACTORY RECORDS**  
**Sources from the British Library, London**

**Part 4:** Fort St George (Madras), 1669-1758

**Part 5:** Calcutta, 1690-1708

***Contents listing***

[PUBLISHER'S NOTE - Part 4](#)

[CONTENTS OF REELS - Part 4](#)

[PUBLISHER'S NOTE - Part 5](#)

[CONTENTS OF REELS - Part 5](#)

## *Publisher's Note - Part 4*

### History of Fort St George (Madras)

The East India Company arrived first at Surat, India in 1608 in the ship "Hector" commanded by William Hawkins and within a few years had established a permanent factory there. Surat was the port used by the textile manufacturers of Gujerat and was the most important centre for the overseas trade of the Mughal Empire. However the Portuguese already had trading arrangements with the Mughal authorities and supremacy on the seas and it would take several years for the English to gain control. A factory was eventually established at Surat in 1612 when the Portuguese fleet was defeated by the English.

On the other side of India the East India Company had since 1611 been based at Masulipatam on the Coromandel coast of India. By 1626 it had extended its activities further south and established a settlement at Armagon taking advantage of the cheapness of cloth there. However the new site had disadvantages and the Company accepted an invitation from the ruler of the district around Madraspatam to establish a factory there in 1640. The factory was called Fort St George and rapidly grew in importance as a centre for the Company's trading activity in the east, replacing Bantam in 1682 as the headquarters of the eastern trade.

The textile industry in the main production areas of Coromandel, Gujarat and Bengal employed hundreds of thousands of skilled weavers, dyers and washers producing enormous quantities of muslins, chintzes, cotton and quilts which found a ready market in England. As early as 1620 50,000 pieces of chintz were imported and even as late as the 1750s Indian textiles accounted for sixty per cent of the total value of the Company's sales in London.

In 1746 Madras was captured by the French and East India Company operations were transferred to Fort St David. Madras was eventually restored to the British in 1748.

The foundations for the success of the Fort St George (Madras) factory were laid by Thomas Pitt, President at Madras from 1698 to 1709. The letters and records offered here provide an excellent resource for the study of the eastern trade and the development of this important colonial city and port. The range of documents includes:

### Correspondence with the Nabob of Golconda and copies of letters received mostly from Golconda and St Thomé, 1669-1677

- Letters from the Nabob of Golconda, Chenapelle Mirzah to the Governor of Fort St George and from the Governor to the Nabob Yecknam Caune
- Correspondence with the King of Zeilon
- Letters to the English captives in Golconda
- Letters from the Nabob of Golconda, Babah Ibrahim
- Letters in French from the Governor of St Thomé, Msr de la Hay to the Governor of Fort St George

### Copies of letters received at Fort St George (Madras), 1676-1704

These were received from other factories such as Fort St David and Vizagapatam giving a mass of detail on the finances and running of these factories, experiences of those working there and negotiations with Nabobs. Also received were letters from ships' captains. Included are:

- Letters from ships'captains c1695 to the Governor, Nathan Higginson giving details of voyages undertaken, sickness on board, attacks by enemy ships, goods carried on board, the arrival and departure of ships, bills of lading and invoices
- Letters from the factors at Fort St David, W Hatsell, Ralph Ingram and Thomas Constable reporting on attacks by the Nabob who stole cattle and children and negotiations with him, the strengthening of fortifications at the factory to prevent plundering and burning of villages by the Nabob, details of cloth sent to Fort St George, notes on customs fees paid
- Letters from the factors at Vizagapatam regarding the washing of cloth, "Europe goods", trade carried out at Pullicherry, news on local dignitaries and negotiations with them, reports on the activities of the Dutch, reports of meetings and decisions of the factory members
- Detailed accounts of Fort St David, 1700
- Account by John Haynes, Governor of Fort St David of his experiences while taken prisoner by the Moors, 1700
- Details on the fighting around Vizagapatam with the local Nabob in 1700, including a report that the Dutch merchants had been robbed
- Translations of "perwannas" from Nabobs such as Ascar Cawn regarding negotiations with the English
- Translation of a "coute" granted by Raina Raja to Laurencia Pitt, Dutch Governor of the coast of Chormondell

### Other letters received are:

- Letters from other factories in India, including Ingeram, Ganjam, Vizagapatam, Fort St David, Maddapollam, Fort William, Tillichery, Anjengo, 1746 giving details of visits by local Nabobs, accounts of the factories, stores needed, dispatch of cloth to England and strengthening of fortifications. Annual letters from the factors at Fort St David report on the transactions for the year, including the number of bales of cloth sent to Fort St George and the increase and decrease of customs charges and expenses.
- Letters from Fort St David, 1750 mostly concerning goods sent to Fort St George including silver, " fanams" (gold coins) and "candies of doodoes". Also included are details of medicine they have received, the arrival of ships, disposal of rice, goods sent to Fort St George and slaves arrived at the port.

# EAST INDIA COMPANY FACTORY RECORDS Parts 4 and 5

- Letters from the factories Fort Marlbro', Fort St David, and Vizagapatam and from St Helena, 1753 giving dates of arrival and departure of ships, details of goods carried on the ships and of stocks of cloth held at the factories

## Letters from the Governor at Fort St George (Madras) to other places in India, 1703-1705, 1752-1758

The letters were transcribed and typed for the court records. They were written to a variety of people:

- To the factors at Fort St David, Fort St William, Vizagapatam, Ingeram and Madapollam concerning goods sent, negotiations with local Nabobs, fighting with the French
- To the captains of ships giving instructions for their journeys and what cargoes they should carry
- To Supra Cargoes on board ships giving advice on which ports should be visited
- To the assay masters regarding the amount of copper used in the coinage
- To the military storekeepers asking for details of arms and ammunition held in the armoury

## Correspondence with Native Princes and their officials, 1703-1705

- Letters from Native Princes to the Governor requesting favours for themselves and their friends
- Letters describing attacks on Princes by neighbouring Nabobs and requests for ammunition in order to retaliate
- Letters expressing thanks for gifts sent to the Native Princes including oranges and wooden spoons
- Lists of goods the Princes wished to purchase from the EIC including coffee, tobacco, almonds, raisins, vinegar, dates, saffron, walnuts
- Details of runaway slaves owned by the Princes
- Requests by Native Princes for elephants and silk worms in exchange for rice and "rock mummy"

## Letters to the Court of Directors of the EIC, London, 1745-1746

These long and detailed letters from the Governor of Fort St George were transcribed and typed for the Court's records. The information is divided into sub headings and contains a wealth of interesting details regarding the work of the factory of Fort St George and other factories in its vicinity.

- Details of sailings of ships from Fort St George
- Reports on ships sailing from Malacca to China being intercepted by Spanish ships
- Lists of goods from Europe
- Lists of goods being sent from one part of India to another including rice from Bengal, silver and broadcloth
- Details on goods sent by London such as guns, Madeira wine, copper and velvet
- Reports on goods bought by the factory to be sent to England such as salem cloth and "chang" or coloured cloth, giving the number of bales and reports on the weavers
- Expansion of trade to Persia
- Difficulties of trade in India owing to fighting among factions
- Proposals by Native Princes to settle other places in the name of the EIC
- Work on fortifications
- Reports on the factors, writers and officers with details of their allowances
- Factory accounts
- Reports on the west coast of India
- Reports on the activities of the French and other European countries in India
- Latest news on the war with the French

## Other interesting items included are:

- Diary and Letter Book of Richard Mohun, 1676-1677 and an account of gold coined at Fort St George by Richard Mohun and Vincent Sayon, 1679
- Letter Book of Thomas Lucas while on a mission to Conjevaram, 1683 which includes instructions by the factors on preventing other countries trading or settling anywhere in the Sangania's jurisdiction and letters from Lucas to the factors describing his journey to Conjevaram, his negotiations and travels in the area. In addition are some letters to the factors from the Portuguese.
- Proceedings in the Court of Judicature, 1678, 1693-1694 giving details of cases brought before the court, mostly consisting of complaints against merchants with relevant correspondence

The following extracts from the Factory Records will give just a feel for the range of topics covered:

### **G/19/40 Letter from the Governor of Fort St George to the Court of Directors, London, 15 February 1754/45 regarding investments:**

*"The new Nabob of Rajahmundrum has again this year as last attempted to force Timbers on the two Factories of Ingeram & Madapollam and for that purpose sent for their vackeels whom he imprisoned & abused till he had exorted a sum of money: no business could go forward at either of those places for some time the Merchants being obliged to abscond..."*

**G/19/41 Letter from the Governor at Fort St George to Mr Foss Wescott, Resident at Ingeram, 27 July 1752:**

*".... Though the Nabob has permitted you to reside at the old Factory as formerly yet as you carry on your Business conveniently and are more secure at Nilla Pilla, we think it best you continue there till we see how Affairs are above. Chunda Saib and his Army have been defeated by Aneverdee Cawn who is now near Gingee, this Victory gave us reason to expect that the Province would be settled...."*

**G/19/43 Letter from the factors at Fort St David to the Governor at Fort St George, 1 February 1746:**

*".... Your Honours will be pleased to observe, we have put on board Three Hundred and Ten Bales of Brown cloth, which we were Directed to do, from Fort St George, in case we had not white sufficient to compleat her Tonnage.... We have from the first of February last, sent to Madras Three Hundred & Seventeen Bales of last year's Investment.... Captain Cooke petitioned for four hundred & Fifty Pagodas for his ships use which we have advanced him, and in the Packet comes his obligation for the same...."*

The Factory Records of the East India Company for Fort St George (Madras) are an indispensable tool for researchers interested in the early trading networks in South East Asia. Parts 5 and 6 of this series will cover the records for Calcutta and Bombay.

[<back](#)

*Contents of Reels - Part 4*

**REEL 1**

IOR/G/19/26  
Correspondence with the Nabob of Golconda and copies of letters received mostly from Golconda and St Thomé 1669-1674

**REEL 2**

IOR/G/19/27  
Copies of letters received mostly from Golconda and St Thomé 1674-1677

**REEL 3**

IOR/G/19/28  
Copies of letters received 1676-1677, 1680

**REEL 4**

IOR/G/19/29  
Copies of letters received 1681

**REEL 5**

IOR/G/19/30  
Copies of letters received 1687-1688

**REEL 6**

IOR/G/19/31  
Copies of letters received 1692-1694

**REEL 7**

IOR/G/19/32  
Copies of letters received 1694, 1696-1697

**REEL 8**

IOR/G/19/33  
Copies of letters received 1697

**REEL 9**

IOR/G/19/34  
Copies of letters received 1700

**REEL 10**

IOR/G/19/35  
Copies of letters received 1703-1704

**REEL 11**

IOR/G/19/36  
Diary and Letter Book of Richard Mohun, 1676-1677 and an account of gold coined at Fort St George by Richard Mohun and Vincent Sayon, 1679 1676-1677, 1679

**REEL 12**

IOR/G/19/37  
Letter Book of Thomas Lucas while on a mission to Conjevaram 1683

**REEL 13**

IOR/G/19/38  
Proceedings in the Court of Judicature 1678, 1693-1694

**REEL 14**

IOR/G/19/39  
Correspondence with Native Princes and their officials 1703-1705

**REEL 15**

IOR/G/19/39A  
Letters to various places in India 1703-1705

**REEL 16**

IOR/G/19/39B  
Letters to and from India 1703-1705

**REEL 17**

IOR/G/19/40  
Letters to the Court of Directors 1745-1746

**REEL 18**

IOR/G/19/41  
Letters to various places in India 1752

**REEL 19**

IOR/G/19/42  
Letters to various places in India 1754

**REEL 20**

IOR/G/19/43  
Letters from various places in India and from St Helena 1746

**REEL 21**

IOR/G/19/44  
Letters received from Fort St David 1750

**REEL 22**

IOR/G/19/45  
Letters received from various places 1752

**REEL 23**

IOR/G/19/46  
Letters received 1753

**REEL 24**

IOR/G/19/47  
Letters despatched 1753

**REEL 25**

IOR/G/19/48  
Letters despatched 1754-1758

[<back](#)

## *Publisher's Note - Part 5*

### History of Calcutta

Calcutta (renamed Kolkata in 2001) is the capital of West Bengal in eastern India. It is the fourth largest city in India with an overall population of around 14 million.

Calcutta was founded in 1690 when the Mogul Aurangzeb agreed to let the East India Company establish a settlement on the banks of the Hooghly River in Bengal near a village called Kalikata. The name was anglicized into Calcutta and the settlement grew rapidly with a reputation as a place of disrepute. In 1702 it was declared a Presidency City with EIC troops stationed at Fort William.

In 1756 as war with France approached the fortifications at Calcutta were strengthened significantly. The young Nawab Siraj-ud-daula who had recently come to the throne of Bengal saw this as a threat and in June 1756 marched on Calcutta, defeated the garrison and imprisoned a group of British in a small airless room. They died of suffocation and the so called "Black Hole" of Calcutta was to be imprinted on British minds as proof of Indian barbarism.

Colonel Robert Clive (1725-74) mounted an expedition from Madras and retook Calcutta in February 1757. He formed an alliance with one of Siraj's generals Mir Jafar and defeated Siraj at the battle of Plassey in June 1757. Mir Jafar was made Nawab but in reality was a puppet in British hands and the Indians were forced to hand over millions of rupees in cash payments to the British who also took over the trade in valuable goods such as salt, betel nut, tobacco and saltpeter.

In 1772 Calcutta became the capital of British India and Warren Hastings as the first governor-general set about creating an ordered system of government for the country.

By the 1780s Calcutta had a population of around 200,000 including over 3,000 European residents and the living areas had begun to be sharply divided into the large European mansions and the crowded Indian sectors.

It was Richard Wellesley, Governor-General between 1797 and 1805 who was responsible for the growth of the city and its imposing public buildings. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the city was the centre of the East India Company's opium trade and locally produced opium was sold at auction in Calcutta to be shipped to China.

By the early nineteenth century Calcutta was divided into two areas, the British area known as White Town and the other Indian area known as Black Town which consisted of poverty ridden shanty towns. Industrial growth took place in the 1850's especially in textile and jute manufacture with a resultant investment in railroads and telegraph connections. A new class of Indians emerged known as "Babus" who were professional business people belonging to upper-caste Hindu communities.

In 1883 a national conference was organized in Calcutta by Surendranath Banerjee and gradually the city became a focal point for revolutionary organizations of the Indian independence movement. The 1905 partition of Bengal led to public agitation and the boycott of British goods.

### Factory Records for Calcutta, 1690-1708

The factory records for Calcutta held at the British Library cover the early period of the factory's history, 1690-1708. After the outbreak of hostilities in the 1680's between the East India Company in Bengal and the Mogul emperor, Aurangzeb, all the Company's factories in his dominions were confiscated. As a result the Company moved their factory about 20 miles down the Hooghly river to Sutanati, a settlement which gradually extended to Kalikata as it was originally known and Govindpur. Kalikata was renamed Calcutta by the British and became the headquarters of the Company's Bengal factories. In 1696 the Company was given permission to fortify the settlement and in 1698 actually purchased the towns of Sutanati, Govindpur and Calcutta. Fort William was completed in 1702, the Calcutta settlement grew rapidly and in 1707 it was raised to the status of presidency.

The factory records for Calcutta, 1690-1708 are divided into the following types of document:

#### **Diaries and Consultations, 1690-1691, 1694-1708**

These records give day to day details of the discussions and subsequent actions taken by the factors concerning a wide variety of topics. They also include the reports of the Warehousekeeper and the Charges Generalkeeper. The names of those present at the consultations are listed. The information provided consists of:

- Lists of goods to be sent to London with information on bills of lading and bills of exchange
- Lists of goods received at the factory from Madras, for example chests of copper
- Notes on the foreign ships passing by Hooghly such as the Dutch, French, Moors and Portuguese
- Reports on competition by the Dutch and French
- Departure of factors to Fort St George on business
- Details of orders given to Captains of EIC ships
- Notes on letters written to York Fort
- Detailed monthly accounts of money paid to Indian merchants for the Company's purchase of goods such as silk and cloth. Lists of names are provided
- Details of the expenses of the factory such as repairs to buildings and ships, the purchase of cattle, the payment of wages to workers in the weaving shop and to servants, the purchase of food and military costs
- Details of money requested by captains for the refitting of EIC ships
- Notes on money paid to the Charges Generalkeeper at the factory in order for him to pay the wages of EIC ships' crew
- Information on the amount of money left in the mint after expenses had been paid

- Reports on negotiations with the local Moguls
- Notes on money paid to the factors by Indians for marriage fees, rent of land and as fines and by miscellaneous persons such as 100 rupees from an Englishman for a licence to sell liquor
- A separate short but very interesting diary of George Petty and Trevor James, 9 August-28 December 1705, covering subjects such as: black merchants demanding their bills be paid; news that the Dutch were to go to Batavia; list of papers received from Fort St George; reports in October that all persons were dangerously ill and on November 1st George Petty reports the death of Trevor James

**Copies of letters despatched** to subordinate factories from Calcutta, including St Helena, Fort William, Cassim Bazaar and Viziagar, 1690-1705. The names of the factors are given such as Charles Eyre and John Beard. It should be noted that the early letters are sent from Chuttanutte (the early name for the factory at Calcutta). They contain details such as:

- Instructions to Captains of EIC ships, ketches and smacks
- Instructions to factors regarding silk and cloth to be sent to Calcutta
- Details of invoices to be paid and bills of exchange
- Acknowledgement of goods received at Calcutta from the factories
- Details of negotiations with local Moguls
- List of papers including bills sent by ship to London
- Worries about piracy and the protection of the ships
- Losses incurred to ships and goods due to storms at sea
- A separate batch of letters consist of letters sent from 12 December 1699-28 November 1700 to Fort St George only, covering the same range of topics
- Also included are letters sent to EIC headquarters in London regarding goods despatched there by Company ships

#### **G/7/7 Letter despatched from Chuttanutte, 20 May 1698 to Nathaniel Walsh**

*"We wrote to you about 4 or 5 days agoe to know your reason why we have not heard from you upwards of 90 days and we are still dissatisfied for want of advice from you. The affair you have in hand being of such vast import to us, the chief Interlop in Ballasor being not able to doe his business there hath sent his Purser to Hugley...."*

**Copies of letters received** at Calcutta, 1690, 1694-1704 from subordinate factories including Pattana, Ballasore, Rajamaule and Cassim Bazaar. They cover subjects such as:

- Notification of the safe arrival of the Company's ships
- Translations of letters from Dutch merchants
- Letters from Captains regarding voyages and difficulties with pirates
- Negotiations with the Moguls regarding permission to trade
- Goods stolen by factors and discussions regarding the appropriate punishment
- Local disturbances and worries about possible trouble with the local duans
- Wages of workers in the factories
- Allowances and expenses

#### **G/7/10 Letter received at Calcutta from Nathaniel Halsey, Edward Hern, Edward Cattle and Richard Draper:**

*"By these Eight Peons on Eight Boates be pleased to receive 196 Bales of Raw Silk and 54 chests of piece goods. Invoice whereof shall follow overland tomorrow. Dundee Peon has 5 Rupees given him for charges on your way in case he should have occasion for the same...."*

The Factory Records of the East India Company for Calcutta are an indispensable tool for researchers interested in the early trading networks in South East Asia. Part 6 will cover the records for Bombay.

[<back](#)

*Contents of Reels - Part 5*

**REEL 1**

IOR/G/7/1  
Diary and Consultations  
16 July-30 Nov 1690, 1 Dec 1690-30 Nov 1691

**REEL 2**

IOR/G/7/2  
Diary and Consultations  
1 Dec 1694-30 Nov 1695, 1 Dec 1696-30 Nov 1697

**REEL 3**

IOR/G/7/3  
Diary and Consultations  
1 Dec 1697-30 Nov 1698, 1 Dec 1698-30 Nov 1699

IOR/G/7/4  
Diary and Consultations  
2 Dec 1702-29 Nov 1703, 5 Dec 1704-9 Nov 1705, 1 Dec 1705-16 Dec 1706, 15 Jan-22 Dec 1708

Diary of George Petty and Trevor James  
9 Aug-28 Dec 1705

**REEL 4**

IOR/G/7/5  
Copies of letters despatched  
17 July-30 Nov 1690, Dec 1690-25 Nov 1691, 1-30 Dec 1692, 18 April-22 June 1693, 22-28 Nov 1693

**REEL 5**

IOR/G/7/6  
Copies of letters despatched to Fort St George  
21 Dec 1695-25 Nov 1696, 1 Dec 1696-25 Nov 1697

Copies of letters despatched to subordinate factories  
1 Dec 1696-30 Nov 1697

IOR/G/7/7  
Copies of letters despatched from Chuttanutte to subordinate factories  
3 Dec 1697-30 Nov 1698, 6 Dec 1699-30 Nov 1700

Copies of letters despatched from Chuttanutte to Fort St George  
12 Dec 1699-28 Nov 1700

**REEL 6**

IOR/G/7/8  
Copies of letters despatched to subordinate factories  
2 Dec 1700-28 Nov 1701, 1 Dec 1701-28 Nov 1702, 8 Dec 1704-21 Aug 1705

**REEL 7**

IOR/G/7/9  
Copies of letters received from subordinate factories  
June-Nov 1690, Dec 1694-Nov 1695

**REEL 8**

IOR/G/7/10  
Copies of letters received from subordinate factories  
Dec 1695-Nov 1696, Dec 1699-Nov 1700, Dec 1700-Nov 1701

**REEL 9**

IOR/G/7/11  
Copies of letters received from subordinate factories  
Dec 1702-Nov 1703, Jan-Nov 1704

[<back](#)