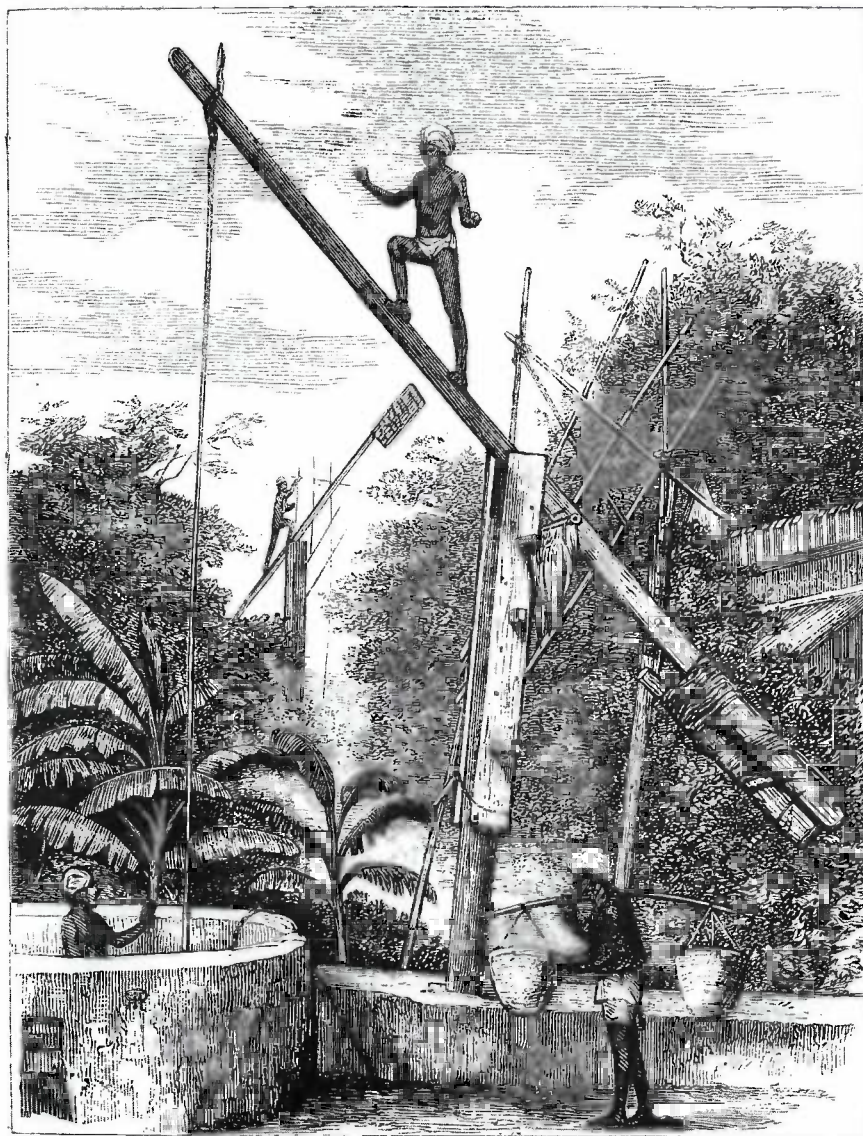


# The Gazetteers of British India, 1833-1962



DRAWERS OF WATER, MADRAS.

**Gazetteers are:**

- treasure houses of historical, archaeological, political, economic, sociological, commercial and statistical data
- among the prime reference resources of scholars of the Indian sub-continent
- descriptions of a district, state or province of (British) India, published in series, either privately or under the auspices of a government body

Editor: Henry Scholberg, Curator Emeritus, Ames Library of South Asia, University of Minnesota

# The Gazetteers of British India, 1833-1962

*‘The gazetteers of British India are among the prime reference resources of scholars whose interest is the Indian sub-continent.’*

Burton Stein, Ph. D., Prof. of Indian History, University of Minnesota

In 1815 The East India Company began publishing a series of gazetteers designed to further the knowledge of its territories. This practice continued after 1858 and lasted until 1947. Some of the gazetteers continued to appear after Indian independence. This series of gazetteers which have been valuable for officials of the East India Company and subsequently the Crown Colony of India, have also proven of immense value to scholars to this day. The typical gazetteer is a treasure house of data. IDC Publishers offers three main series on microfiche: *The Imperial Gazetteers*, *the Provincial Series* and *The District Gazetteers*. The bibliography (1970) lists 1,344 district gazetteers, published in the twenty provinces of British India. Over 1,200 of these are available on microfiche.

## Historical background

Fifty years after the Battle of Plassey the East India Company saw the need to learn about the land it had acquired in the subcontinent of Asia. In a Despatch of 1807 are these words: “We are of opinion that a Statistical Survey of the country would be attended with much utility; we therefore recommend proper steps to be taken for the execution of the same.” This was the beginning of a series of gazetteers, which, valuable they may have been for officials of the East India Company and subsequently the Crown Colony of India, have also proven of immense value to scholars to this day. Some gazetteers were commercially published while others were governmental or quasi-governmental documents.

## The Imperial Gazetteers

Sir William Wilson Hunter (1840-1900), Father of the Gazetteers of India, brought out his *Imperial Gazetteer of India* in 1881 in nine volumes. Four years later a fourteen-volume work was produced, the fourteenth volume of which was an index. In his preface the author wrote: “Every article in the original edition has been submitted to the Provincial Government of India, and through them to the District Officers for criticism and suggestions.” Sir Herbert Risley, W.S. Meyer, Richard Burn and J.S. Cotton compiled the monumental twenty-six volumes *Imperial Gazetteer of India* after Hunter’s death. The first four volumes are devoted to descriptive, historical, economical and

administrative aspects of the Colony. Volumes five to twenty-four go from A to Z, describing district by district and town by town. The twenty-fifth volume is an Atlas and the twenty-sixth an Index.

## The Provincial Series

Published simultaneously with *The Imperial Gazetteer* was *The Imperial Gazetteer of India: Provincial Series*. Unlike any of the gazetteers mentioned above which were published in London either by Trübner or Wm. H. Allen, the *Provincial Series* was published in Calcutta by the Superintendent of Government Printing. There are nineteen volumes in this series, published in 1908-09. Each volume is devoted to at least one country, province or Indian state, and some include two. Afghanistan and Nepal make one volume as do Andaman and Nicobar Islands, East Bengal, Assam, Mysore and Coorg.

## The District Gazetteers

It is the part of irony that district gazetteers, which were manuals for use by Collectors and Officials, were designated as manuals in only one of the provinces: Madras. Beginning in 1853, district manuals were published there. Then in the late nineteenth century Madras followed the lead of the rest of the Colony and brought out district gazetteers. From 1894 to 1919 Madras published district gazetteers, followed in the 1900s by a series of four “Statistical Appendices,” each a decade apart making use of the

decennial census. The Buchanan-Hamilton Series of Bengal, which begun in 1833 were not called district gazetteers but *Accounts of the District*. Between 1822 and 1904 there were the *Bengal Statistical & Geographical Reports*. Hunter edited a twenty-volume set of *Statistical Accounts* in 1875-77. Then in 1906-23 there is the O’Malley Series, authored mostly by L.S.S. O’Malley. Whatever titles they went by, they qualified as district gazetteers of the highest order. The United Provinces provided the best-organized series in India. There were forty-eight districts in the province. Forty-eight district gazetteers were brought out between 1905 and 1911. Then, ten years after the district gazetteers, came four sets of B series, each a decade apart. Like those of Madras, they are supplements bringing statistics up to date.

## A Treasure House

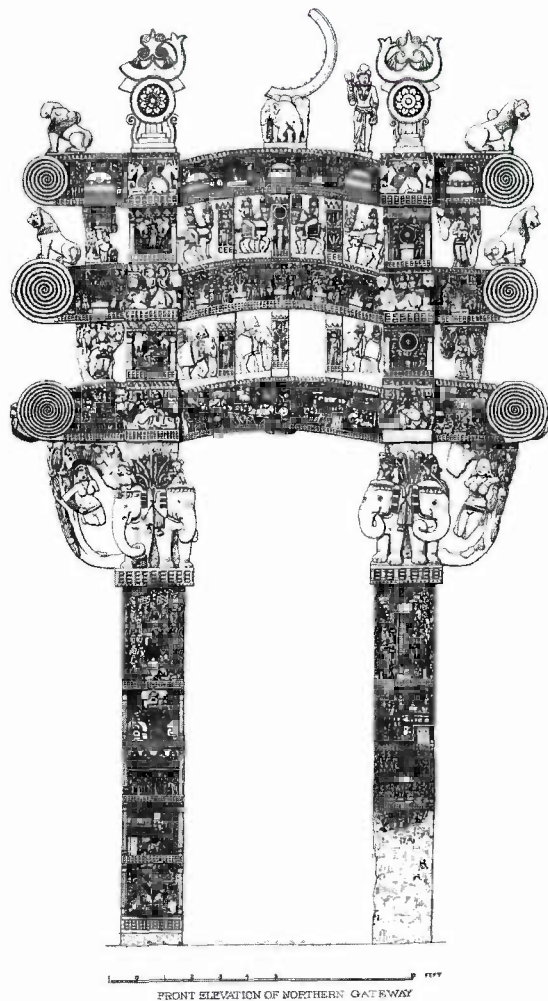
The typical gazetteer is a treasure house of data. The author and his contributors are likely to be members of the Indian Civil Service (I.C.S.). Typically, a gazetteer contains a table of contents telling the scholar that he/she will find information on history, topography, cultivation, livestock, manufactures, trade, population, migration, religion, language, education, crime, etc., preceded by a list of sources and followed by an index.

*Henry Scholberg*

Curator Emeritus. Ames Library of South Asia,  
University of Minnesota

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Main Series and subseries	Order nr.	Nr. of fiche
<b>I. Imperial Gazetteer (3 editions) (€1,495)</b>		
1. Hunter, 1881 (9 v.)	I-1060	58
2. Ed. 2, Hunter, 1885-87 (14 v.)	I-1061	95
3. New ed., Risley, <i>et al</i> , 1907-09 (26 v.)	1608	218
<b>II. Imperial Gazetteer. Provincial Series 1908-09 (19 v.) (€975)</b>	608	
Afghanistan and Nepal		3
Andaman and Nicobar Isl.		2
Baluchistan		3
Baroda		3
Bengal		19
Berar		5
Bombay Presidency		22
Burma		17
Central India		9
Central Provinces		10
East Bengal & Assam		13
Hyderabad State		6
Kashmir and Jammu		3
Madras		21
Mysore and Coorg		7
N.W. Frontier Province		6
Punjab		18
Rajputana		10
United Provinces		21
<b>III. Imperial Gazetteer. District Series 1833-1962 (1,221 v.) (€20,695)</b>	1601	
Assam		114
Baluchistan		91
Bengal		630
Berar (Central Provinces & Bihar)		8
Bihar		169
Bombay (Presidency)		506
Burma		285
Central India		11
Central Provinces		430
Central States		95
East Bengal & Assam		22
Hyderabad State		6
Kashmir		13
Ladak		8
Madras ( <i>for add'l District titles, see below, *</i> )		507
Maharashtra		83
Mathura		12
Mysore and Coorg		115
N.W. (Frontier) Provinces		273
Punjab		752
Punjab States		128
Rajputana		109
Sind		46
Sikhim		11
United Provinces		688
* Madras, additional:		
1. Twenty District Gazetteers, known as 'Madras manuals', 1853-1898	I-150	150
2. One on Madura, 1868	I-744	17
3. One on South Arcott, 1906	I-743	9
4. One on Malabar & Anjengo, 1908	I-745	10
<b>IV. Imperial Gazetteer. Checklist and Index of Imperial Series, Provincial Series and District Series</b>	I-1200	1



**Illustration from:** MARSHALL, J. and A. FOUCHER . The monuments of Sanchi. Delhi, 1944.

**Cover illustration from:** Letters from India and Kashmir. London, 1874.

## General information

Scope	3 editions of Imperial Gazetteers; 19 volumes of Provincial Series; 1,221 volumes of District Gazetteers
Number of fiches	5,868
Size of fiche	105 x 148 mm. / 90 x 120 mm.
Film type	Positive silver halide
Reduction ratio	Varies depending on the size of the original
Internal finding aids	Eye-legible headers on every fiche
External finding aids	Guide to all Gazetteers on microfiche: "Gazetteers of India in the British period", the Netherlands, Leiden, 1991  Bibliography of District Gazetteers: "The District Gazetteers of British India, A Bibliography", by Henry Scholberg, Zug, Switzerland, 1970 [xerox copy]

**IDC Publishers also accepts orders for parts of the *Selections* (main series). You can make a selection on the order form.**