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## History.

## Dust-storms.

Situated as the district is in what may be termed a backwater of both monsoon currents it is never visited by really disastrous cyclones or hurricanes. The worst that even a bad dust-storm does is to blow down a few trees and to lift off the roofs from insecurely thatched huts. There is no record of any serious damage having been done by any of these storms.

## Earthquakes.

The district is also fortunate in being placed on a peculiarly stable position of the earth's crust, for earthquakes are of the rarest occurrence; though the great earthquake of April 4, 1905, was of course felt. It did, however, little damage.

## C.—History.

## Hariana.

A large portion of the tract now included in the district, together with parts of the district of Rohtak, is better known to history under the name of Hariana. The origin of the name is attributed by the people to a Raja, named Hari Chand, who is said at some undefined period to have come from Oudh and peopled this part of the country. Others derive the name from the word *hari* (slain), in allusion to a tradition of great slaughter of Khatrias by Paras Ram, on 21 different occasions, at a village a few miles to the west of Jind. The Settlement Officer of 1863, Munshi Amin Chand, derived the name from *hariaban*, the name of a wild plant, with which the country was formerly said to be overgrown. A more probable derivation is from *hara* (green) in allusion to the expanse of brushwood which once covered the greater part of the district, and even now covers large portions of it, giving at certain seasons of the year an aspect of greenness to the whole country. If *hara* (green) is the correct derivation of the name, it is now scarcely applicable, but probably carries us back to a past in which the Saraswati was a large river scattering verdure and fertility round it, and the rainfall greater than it is now. Of the period antecedent to the Muhammadan invasions there is practically nothing of the nature of history except vague local traditions and such inferences as can be gathered from the numerous architectural remains scattered about the district.

## Antiquity of Hansi.

If the results of archæological investigation can be trusted, Hansi with its fort is one of the most ancient towns in India, and carries us back to a time long prior to the Musalman conquest when the tract was the scene of a vigorous



Hindu civilization, the results perhaps of the settlement of the Aryan invaders in the not distant Brahmarshides, a tract between the Saraswati and the Ghaggar in the Karnal District. The numerous architectural remains of undoubted Hindu origin, which are found built into the walls of Musalman tombs and mosques in many parts of the district point to the conclusion indicated above.

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Antiquity of Hansi.

The earliest fact of an historical nature with which local tradition deals is an invasion of the Tunwar Rajput clan after it had established itself at Delhi under Anangpal I according to Sir H. Elliot in A.D. 736, and according to Tod in A. D. 792.

Invasion of Tunwar Rajputs.

The leader of the invasion is said to have been Bijepal, a brother of Anangpal, who founded the present village of Bahuna and others in its neighbourhood. The tract was at that time probably divided into petty chieftainships which were merely nominally subject to the Delhi Raja.

Meanwhile the Chauhan Rajputs of Ajmere and Sambhar were rising to importance. At some time in the 1st or 2nd century of the Christian era Ajepal, the progenitor of the Chauhans, is said to have founded Ajmere and his descendants gradually extended their power in that region, till in A.D. 685 Manik Rai, the great Chauhan Raja, was lord of Ajmere and Sambhar. In that year he was driven from the former place by one of the first Musalman invasions, but he soon returned and recovered Ajmere, and the Chauhan dominion continued to extend.

Rise of the Chauhan Rajputs.

Doojgandoo, his grandson, about the year A.D. 800, successfully opposed the Musalman invader, Subaktagin, and extended the Chauhan rule to Bhatner. Bisaldeo, a Chauhan King, about the year A. D. 1000, had extended his authority over the Tunwar Rajas of Delhi, and they appear to have acknowledged him as their suzerain. The Chauhans in short at this period appear to have been paramount among the Rajput tribes, as is shown by the fact that Bisaldeo headed a confederacy of them against the invading Musalmans.

The tract included in the present Hissar District appears to have been on the frontiers of the Chauhan dominions, for local tradition tells, and is confirmed by the authorities quoted by Tod, that the frontier fortress of Asi or Hansi was assigned probably as a fief to Anuraj, the son of Bisaldeo,



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about the year A.D. 1000. With the growing tide of Musalman invasion, we come to the first authentic history of the district.

According to one of Sir H. Elliot's historians, Masud, the son of Mahmud of Ghazni, made an unsuccessful attempt on the fort at Hansi. In A. D. 1037 or, as would appear from Tod, in A.D. 1025, he laid siege to it for the second time, and after a desperate resistance succeeded in taking the place, which up to that time had been known as the virgin fort. The Chauhans under Teshtpal, the son of Anuraj, were driven forth and founded the Hara dynasty of Boondi.

It is not impossible that Hara, which appears to have been a Chauhan name, may supply a derivation for the name Hariana, which thus preserves the memory of Chauhan rule in this part. In A.D. 1043, Ferishtah tells us, the Delhi Raja, probably a Tunwar vassal of the Chauhans, recovered Hansi, and it remained in their hands for over a century.

In A.D. 1173 the Tunwar dynasty of Delhi came to an end in the person of Anangpal II, and the great Chauhan Rai Pathaura or Pirthi Raj ascended the throne of Delhi, and the tract comprised in the district appears to have been brought more directly under the Delhi Raja than before. Pirthi Raj made considerable additions to the fort at Hansi, converting it into an important military stronghold, and a small building at Tosham, known as his *kacheri*, perhaps testifies to the reality of his rule. At this period Muhammad Ghori was beginning his invasions which were to finally subvert the ancient thrones of Hindustan.

In the year 1191 Muhammad Ghori (*bin Sam*) was routed by Pirthi Raj at Naraini on the banks of the Sarsuti, probably, in the Karnal District. He returned the next year. Pirthi Raj was utterly overthrown on the banks of the Sarsuti, and being captured in his flight near Sirsa was put to death. Hamir, the immediate Chauhan ruler of Hansi and the adjacent territory, was slain at the same time. As the fruits of his victory, Delhi, Ajmere, Hansi and Sarsuti (Sirsa) fell into the hands of the conqueror, but he appears to have established no settled rule over the tract or country now included in the Hissar District. In the anarchy which prevailed, the Jatu clan of Rajputs, as offshoot of the Tunwars, who appear to have entered the district from Rajputana some time previously, spread in a southerly direction, rendering probably no more than a

Rise of the Chauhan Rajputs.  
The Musalman invasion.

Reign of Pirthi Raj, Chauhan.

Invasion of Muhammad Ghori.



nominal submission to the Musalman Kings of Delhi. The Musalman power seems to have been gradually consolidated in this part, for we find that in 1254 or 1255, in the reign of Muazzam, a slave King, the district including Hansi, Sirsa, Barwala and Jind were in the fief or government of Ulagh Khan, a high official of the Delhi Court ; and these places appear to have been garrisoned with Musalman troops.

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On the fall of the Khilji dynasty after the murder of Mubarak Khilji by Khasru Khan, Sarsuti or Sirsa, which at that time, according to Wassaf, was one of the chief towns in the Upper India, was among the first places to come into the hands of Ghias-ud-din Tughlak, on his march from Dipalpur to Delhi to seize the throne, and it was during the ascendancy of the dynasty founded by him that the tract now included in the district came into prominence.

On the death of Muhammad Tughlak, his son, Feroz, marched from Multan to Delhi *via* Sirsa to secure the succession to the throne. On the way he founded the present town of Fatehabad in this district, naming it after his son. In order to supply the new town with water he dug a channel from the Ghaggar at Phulad, now in Patiala, to Fatehabad ; it is still in existence under the name of the Joiya, and it has already been referred to in the account of the Ghaggar. The founding of the town of Hissar or Hissar Feroza, as it was then called, by Feroz Shah, is described in detail by Shams-i-Afuf, one of Sir H. Elliot's historians. The reason assigned for the building of the place was the deserted and arid character of the spot, which was on the direct road from Khurasan, Multan and the Western Punjab across the wastes of Montgomery, Sirsa and Hissar to the capital of the empire at Delhi. It also afforded a good starting place for hunting expeditions. The new town included a fort and a palace for the Sultan. The materials of old Hindu temples were used in the construction, and a large quantity in all probability were brought from the site of the town of Agroha which had probably lost much of its former importance. There appears to have been a fairly large Hindu town or village, or rather group of villages, in existence on or near the site of the new town which were called the great and little Laras. When the city was completed, surrounded with a wall and a ditch and adorned with a palace which had no ' equal,' it was found that there was no water-supply. The Sultan, therefore, " resolved in his munificence to bring a supply of water there," a resolve

Reign of Feroz Shah and founding of Fatehabad and Hissar.



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which resulted in the construction of the canal now known as that of the Western Jumna. Before the founding of Hissar the tract now in this district had been included in the *shikk* or division of Hansi. Hissar was now, however, made the head-quarters of a division which included the districts (*ikhtat*) of Hansi, Agroha, Fatehabad, Sarsuti (Sirsa) and others. Feroz also built what is now the village of Firozabad Harni Khera, 12 miles from Sirsa, and is said to have supplied it with water by means of a canal which he conducted to the town from the Ghaggar or Kagar, and which passed close to the town of Sarsuti. There is no such canal in existence now.

The administration of Feroz Shah seems to have been very efficient.

Invasion of Taimur  
marlane.

The year 1398 witnessed the invasion of Taimur, more commonly known as Tamarlane. Having successfully accomplished the passage of the Sutlej he marched across the desert to Bhatner—now in Bikaner territory, at that time one of the strongest places in Hindustan. The place fell into his hands after desperate fighting. Thence he marched eastward along the valley of the Ghaggar and encamped at a place called Kinara-i-hauz, "bank of the tank of lake." This probably refers to one of the numerous lakes in the course of the Ghaggar. He thence proceeded *via* Firozabad to Sarsuti or Sirsa, the inhabitants of which fled on his approach: they were pursued, and many of them slain as being hog-eaters.

Thence Taimur continued his march to Fatehabad where he encamped. Here again the inhabitants had fled on his approach, but many were pursued and slain.

From Fatehabad the invaders marched to a place called Ahruni, which very possibly corresponds to Ahrwan, an Arain village on the Joiya stream. The place was sacked and destroyed by fire, and the march was then resumed through the jungles of the Ghaggar valley to Tohana. On the march a detached party of Taimur's troops attacked and defeated a tribe described by the native historians as Jats, who were famous robbers. They were probably the predecessors of the present Pachadhas, and are said by Taimur in his autobiography to have been Musalman in name, but it is scarcely possible that they had been converted at that date. The Jats retreated into the "Sugarcane Jungles," the mention of which suggests a much greater and continuous flow of



water in the Ghaggar than is to be seen now when the cultivation of the sugarcane in that tract is unknown. On his march from Tohana towards Kaithal, Taimur again attacked and defeated the Jats near the present villages of Himmatpura, Puru Majra and Udepur.

The tract surrounding Hansi and Hissar felt the full force of those intestine discords which rent the Delhi Empire in the concluding days of the Tughlak dynasty. In 1408 Hissar fell into the hands of the rebels, but was recovered by the royal army under the Emperor Muhammad Tughlak in person. In 1411, however, the district or tract of Hansi came into the hands of Khizar Khan, who subsequently in 1414 ascended the throne of Delhi as the first of the Sayad dynasty. Sarsuti appears to have been a not unimportant place in the reign of Mubarak Shah, Sayad ; it is mentioned as being the rendezvous of the troops of the neighbouring districts for the expedition against the rebel fortress of Sirhind ; it would, therefore, seem to have been certainly a military centre, if not more. In the same reign in 1428 the fief of Hissar was conferred on Mahmud Hassan as a reward for good service.

During the feeble dynasty of the Lodis, Hissar or rather Haryana continued to form a part of the Delhi Empire, but it is probable that the authority of the latter was not very strong at such a distance from the metropolis. We read of Haryana being granted as a fief to one Muhabat Khan in the reign of Bahlol Lodi.

The town of Hissar Feroza appears to have been the quarters of an Imperial garrison at the time of Babar's invasion, and it was a strategic centre in the operations prior to the battle of Panipat in 1526. The army quartered there was in a position to operate effectually on the flank of Babar's line of march from Sirhind southwards towards Delhi. On reaching the Ghaggar he learnt that the troops from Hissar were advancing against him : he accordingly despatched Prince Humayun against them. The latter succeeded in defeating them, and his light troops pressing on made themselves masters of the town of Hissar, which Babar handed over to Humayun as a reward for his success in this his first military expedition. During the reign of Sher Shah Sirsa continued to form a part of the empire, but became for a time the head-quarters of Rao Kaliyan Singh of Bikaner who had been driven out of his territories by the Jodhpur Rao. Sher Shah, however, defeated the latter at Ajmere,

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and Humayun.

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and restored Rao Kaliyan Singh to his throne of Bikaner. On the renewed invasion of India by Humayun in 1553, Hissar with the Punjab and the district of Sirhind fell without a struggle into the hands of Mughals.

Hissar was in the reign of Akbar a place of considerable importance: it was the head-quarters of the revenue division or "sirkar" of Hissar Feroza, itself a sub-division of the metropolitan Subah, or Province of Delhi. The latter embraced the whole of the present district, inclusive of the Sirsa Tahsil, and parts of the modern Rohtak District, and of territory now included in Bikaner and in the Sikh States to the east.

The following list and accompanying account of the *mahals* contained in this *sirkar* is extracted from Beame's edition of Sir H. Elliot's Supplemental Glossary, pages 132—55:—

*Sirkar Hissar Feroza.*

1, Agroha; 2, Ahroni; 3, Athkhera; 4, Bhangiwal; 5, Punian; 6, Bharangi; 7, Bharwala; 8, Bhattu; 9, Birwa; 10, Bhatner; 11, Tohana; 12, Tosham; 13, Jind; 14, Jamalpur; 15, Hissar; 16, Dhatrat; 17, Sirsa; 18, Sheoram; 19, Sidhmukh; 20, Swani; 21, Shanzdeh Dehat; 22, Fatehabad; 23, Gohana; 24, Khanda; 25, Mihun; 26, Hansi.

There are twenty-seven *mahals* in this *sirkar* (Hissar being counted as two) and four *dasturs*, Haveli Hissar Feroza, Gohana, Mahan and Sirsa. There are, however, several *parganas* excluded from the *dastar* list, for what reason does not appear. Of these *mahals* those which did not retain their old name in our territory are Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21 and 24, 26.

2.—Ahroni is partly in Ratia and partly in Fatehabad. The historians of Taimur point out its position, by saying it is on the road from Fatehabad to Tohana. The place was burnt and pillaged by the conqueror, merely because the inhabitants did not come out to pay their respects. Ahroni has now reverted to its original name of Ahurwan, whereas in Sirkar Chanar Ahirwara, which derived its name from the same tribe, has now been corrupted into Ahrora.

3.—Athkhera is under the Raja of Jind, and is known by the name of Kasonan.

4.—Bhangiwal, so called from the tribe of Jats which inhabited it, is the old name of Darba, in which place the



officers of the Raja of Bikaner built a fort, and thenceforward it came to be considered the chief town of a *pargana*.

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5.—Punian, called also after a tribe of Jats, is in Bikaner, but is now included in another *pargana*.

6.—Bharangi is also in Bikaner.

8.—Bhattu is partly in Fatehabad and partly in Darba. Bhattu Khas is in the former *pargana*.

9.—Birwa is in protected Sikh territory.

10.—Bhatner.—The old town of Bhatner is in Bikaner, but part of the *pargana* is now included in Rania.

13.—Jind gives the name to one of the protected Sikh States.

14.—Jamalpur is included in the late cession from Patiala. The old town of Jamalpur is near Tohana.

16.—Dhatrat was in Jind, but is now in British territory.

18.—Sheoram is in the Bagar country, in the *jagir* of Nawab Amir Khan. Two-thirds of Sheoram are now in Loharu, the remainder in Dadri.

19.—Sidhmukh is in Bikaner.

21.—Shanzdeh Dehat or Kariat (*i.e.*, the sixteen villages) is included in Ratia Tohana amongst the late cessions from Patiala. The *ilaka* is generally known by the name of Garhi Rao Ahmad.

24.—Khanda is in Jind. To these may be added 25, which is probably Maham in Rohtak.

26.—Is of course the modern Hansi.

The modern *parganas* are :—

- |           |  |           |
|-----------|--|-----------|
| 1. Bahal. |  | 3. Ratia. |
| 2. Rania. |  | 4. Darba. |

Bahal was originally in Siwani, from which it was separated in A. D. 1758 by Jawani Singh, a Rajput who built a mud fort at Bahal, and maintained possession of a few neighbouring villages.

Rania was in Bhatner. The old name of the village was Rajabpur. The Rani of Rao Anup Singh Rathaur took up her abode here, built a mud fort, and changed the name of Rajabpur to Rania, which it has since retained.



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Ratia is now included in one *pargana* with Tohana. It was composed of villages from Ahroni, Jamalpur, and Shanzdeh Kariat.

Darba,—see Bhangiwal.

Disintegration of  
the empire.

We hear nothing much of the tract included in the district during the reigns of the succeeding Mughal Emperors up to the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, when we find that Nawab Shahdad Khan, a Pathan of Kasur, was Nazim of the Sirkar of Hissar. His tenure of office continued till 1738, and thus witnessed the series of sanguinary struggles for the succession to the Imperial throne, which resulted in the accession of Muhammad Shah in 1719. During the rule of the Nawab the district appears to have enjoyed a fair measure of peace and prosperity, the last which it was destined to see for a long time.

Shahdad Khan was followed by Nawabs Kamgar Khan, Faujdar Khan and Aolia Khan of Farrukhnagar in the Gurgaon district, who ruled from 1738 to 1760 successively.

The rise of Ala  
Singh and ascend-  
ancy of the Sikhs.

It was during this period that the invasion of Nadar Shah in 1739 shook the Imperial throne to its foundation. With the accession of Ahmad Shah in 1748 the disintegration of the empire advanced apace, and the present Hissar District became the scene of a sort of triangular duel between the sturdy Sikhs of the north-east, the marauding Bhattis of the north and north-west and the Musalmans of the south. In 1731, Ala Singh, the founder of the Patiala State, had begun a struggle with the Bhatti Chiefs of Bhatner and Fatehabad, which lasted for his lifetime. The Bhattis at this period were a pastoral race, fierce and restless in their habits and impatient of any control. They were little more than a band of robbers, but their boldness, the rapidity of their movements, and the savage character of their country, saved them from being crushed by their powerful neighbours of Patiala and Jind, whom they continually irritated by their raids. They lived, for the most part, in open villages, or wandered about with their flocks in search of pastures.

A few towns, or rather fortified villages, were scattered through the waste, which the Bhatti tribes made their rendezvous on the approach of danger. These were Fatehabad, Sirsa, Rania and Abohar.

Ala Singh's struggle with the Bhattis, the chief of whom was Muhammad Amin Khan, dragged on for 10 years without any very definite result. In 1754 the Sikh Chief with



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his son, Lal Singh, overran the *mahals* of Tohana, Jamalpur, Dharsul and Shikarpur, which at the time belonged to the Bhatti Chiefs Muhammad Amin Khan and Muhammad Hassan Khan. The latter solicited the aid of the Imperial Governor or Nazim of Hissar, and he sent reinforcements, but the Bhattis were defeated in an engagement at Akalgarh, now in Patiala territory; this was followed up by a successful night surprise on the Bhatti camp, and Muhammad Amin therefore fled to Hissar. He there received a fresh reinforcement of Imperial troops, with whose aid he again faced the Sikhs in 1757. The combined forces of Bhattis and Imperialists were overthrown in the battle of Dharsul, and the Hissar Governor himself slain. The Sikhs on this occasion appear to have penetrated as far as Hissar itself, which they sacked, and in 1761 they treated the fortified town of Tohana in a similar manner. In consequence of the anarchy which had set in throughout the district the Imperial Wazir, Najib-ud-daula, himself proceeded to Hissar, and, probably, as a counterpoise to the Sikhs, appointed Nawab Amin Khan, the Bhatti Chief of Rania, to be Nazim of Hissar. This measure, however, failed to stem the tide of Sikh depredations, and in the course of the next five or six years Gajpat Singh and Amar Singh, Maharaja of Patiala, succeeded in making themselves masters of the *mahals* of Jind, Safidon, Kasuhan and Tohana. In 1768 Nazir Khan, a Rohilla Chief, was deputed by Wazir Najib-ud-daula to proceed to Hariana, and endeavour to stop the invading Sikhs: he was, however, defeated and slain at Miran near Barnala in Patiala, and shortly afterwards in 1771 Amar Singh obtained possession of the fort of Bhatinda. The next two Nawabs of Hissar were Taj Muhammad Khan, a Biloch, and Najab Ali Khan, but they were not successful in putting matters on any more satisfactory footing than before. The power of the Sikhs increased daily, and in the winter of 1774 Maharaja Amar Singh with Nanun Mal, his famous Minister, laid siege to Bighar, a stronghold of the Pachadhas near Fatehabad. The Bhatti Chiefs endeavoured to relieve the place, but met with a sharp reverse, and the fort fell. The Raja then took Fatehabad and Sirsa, and invested Rania held by the Bhatti Muhammad Amin Khan.

The Delhi authorities again made a vain attempt to maintain their power, and a strong army under Rahim Dad Khan, a Rohilla Chief and Governor of Hansi, was sent



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to oppose the Sikhs. His operations were directed against Gajpat Singh, the Raja of Jind. Amar Singh sent a force under Nanun Mal to his assistance. The combined armies succeeded in totally overthrowing the Imperial army at Jind, and Rahim Dad Khan was himself slain. As a consequence of the victory the district of Gohana and a part of Rohtak fell into the hands of Raja Gajpat Singh, and Amar Singh possessed himself of Hansi, Hissar and Tohana. Meanwhile Rania fell, and the whole of Sirsa *pargana* passed into his hands. He erected or rather restored an old fort on the hill of Tosham, and built another on the old mound of Agroha, and a residence for himself at Hissar. The district now became the scene of an interminable struggle between Sikhs, Bhattis, Pachhadas and the Jatu Rajputs, and a large part of it lay an uninhabited waste.

In 1781 a last attempt was made by the Delhi Government to restore something like order in the district. Najaf Ali Khan with Raja Jai Singh proceeded to the district with an army, but an arrangement was made with the Sikhs by the treaty of Jind under which the *parganas* of Hansi, Hissar, Rohtak, Meham and Tosham were reserved to the empire, the remaining territory which the Sikhs had annexed they were allowed to retain, and Fatehabad and Sirsa were made over to the Bhattis. Raja Jai Singh was appointed Nazim of Hissar.

The 'Chalisa' famine of 1783, which will be described later, more than sufficed to complete the final ruin of the district, and stronger than the Imperial armies, compelled the Sikhs to retire into their own territories.

George Thomas.

The last noteworthy actor in the history of the district before the advent of the British power was the adventurer George Thomas. He was an Englishman of some tact and courage who had come to India as a sailor in 1781. After entering native service in South India he travelled up to Delhi, and there entered the service of the celebrated Zeban Nissa Begam, better known as the Begam Samroo of Sardhana. In 1782 he was forced by intrigues to leave her service, and entered that of Apa Khandi Rao, a Mahratta Chief, a relative of Maharaja Sindhia, and at that time in possession of the Jhajjar, Dadri and Narnaul Territory. Thomas raised troops for his master, and received a fief in Jhajjar and Rohtak for their support. He rendered good service to Apa Khandi Rao and his son and successor



Wamun Rao, service which appears to have been ill-requited.

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Intrigues again forced him to quit his position, and he then conceived and carried out the project of setting up his authority over the tract of Hariana which, owing to the series of events narrated above, had been reduced to little more than an uninhabited waste. He first reduced the fortified village of Kanhaura, now in Patiala, and then established his head-quarters at Hansi, which he re-fortified, and inaugurated a rough form of Government over the surrounding country. His authority was quickly extended over the tracts of Hissar, Tosham and Barwala and several refractory villages were sacked. He established a post at Kasuhan in Patiala, and subsequently raided into the Shekawati country of Jaipur. In 1798 he made a rapid marauding expedition into Bikaner and collected a large quantity of plunder. In the latter part of the year he laid siege to Jind, but the place was relieved by the united forces of Patiala, Nabha and Jind, and Thomas retreated to Meham; thence after a night march he made a sudden attack on the Sikhs who were encamped at Narnaund, and completely routed them. After the famine of 1783 Muhammad Amin Khan, the Bhatti Chief of Rania, had recovered the whole of the Ghaggar valley from Bhatner to Fatehabad, and on his death his dominions were divided between his two sons, Khan Bahadur Khan, who took Fatehabad, and Kamar-ud-din Khan, to whom was assigned Sirsa and Rania.

In 1799 Thomas undertook, at the invitation of Kamar-ud-din Khan, a marauding expedition through Budhlada and the Bhatti country into Bikaner, in the course of which he realized a considerable sum of money as blackmail. In the same year he went to the assistance of Ambaji Anglia, who was at that time engaged against Lakwa Duda, then in revolt against Sindhia. He then undertook a marauding expedition into Sikh territory which was to be the cause of his ruin. He penetrated as far as Bansur, but there overawed by a large assembly of Sikh contingents he returned through Kaithal, Jind, Sonapat and Panipat, to Georgegarh, where he erected a fort now known as Jehazgarh in the Rohtak District, Jehaz being the native corruption for George. Disturbances in the Hansi territory recalled him thither in the beginning of 1800. Meanwhile Thomas' growing power was a cause of jealousy and



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apprehension to Sindhia, and his General Perron. Negotiations were entered into with Thomas with a view to the latter subjecting himself unreservedly to the authority of Sindhia. This Thomas declined to do, so that when the Sikh Chiefs asked for Perron's assistance in destroying Thomas, they received a favourable hearing. Negotiations, having for their object the curtailment of Thomas' power, were re-opened without any result. Perron then resolved to attack Thomas, and for this purpose despatched his lieutenant Bourquin, with a force which included the future Colonel James Skinner. After rapid marching and counter-marching on the part of Thomas a most sanguinary battle without any definite result took place at Baree near Georgegarh. After the battle Thomas lay for some time encamped at Baree, but subsequently made a rapid retreat to Hansi, whither he was followed by Bourquin. After a desperate fight the town was carried by storm, and Thomas retreated into the fort. Negotiations were shortly opened and Thomas surrendered on favourable terms. He abandoned all his conquests and retired into British territory. Bourquin stayed some time in the district for the purpose of restoring order. He is said to have rebuilt the towns of Tohana and Hissar. In 1802 he left Mirza Ilias Beg, Mughal of Hansi, as Nazim of the district, nominally on behalf of the Mahrattas, and himself returned to Aligarh.

The advent  
of British rule.

Meanwhile the treaty of Bassein in the same year led to the second Mahratta War in which the British with their allies were engaged in a life and death struggle with the Mahratta Chiefs, Sindhia and Bhonsla. The battles of Laswari and Argaoon in November 1803 led on the 30th December to the signature of the treaty of Sarji Anjangaon by which Sindhia agreed to cede to the British Government and its allies all his territories between the Jumna and Ganges and also all those to the north of the Native States of Jaipur and Jodhpur. The latter included the present districts of Gurgaon, Rohtak, Hissar, and by the partition treaty of Poona, dated five months later, these together with other territory were assigned to the British Government.

Condition of the  
tract.

The condition of the tract contained within the present district at the time when it came into the hands of the British may be inferred from the above sketch of its previous history. By far the larger part of it was uninhabited waste. In the whole of the present Sirsa Tahsil there were



only 11 inhabited villages all on the Ghaggar, belonging to Musalman Bhattis, Joiyas, Tunwars and Chauhans with a few Rains.

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The valley of the Ghaggar was covered with a dense growth of *kair* and *van* shrubs; and the whole of the great Rohi tract, and of the tract south of Ghaggar valley, was a rolling prairie of long grass, with hardly a tree, except a few *jands* round some hollow in which the water gathered in the rains, and stood for some time. Over this prairie roamed wandering pastoral tribes, almost all Musalman Rajputs, Bhatti, Tunar, Joiya, Chauhan or Panwar, driving their large herds of cattle hither and thither in search of grass and water.

The Sikh Jats of the Malwa too were also in the habit of driving their cattle southwards into the prairie for pasture.

The scantiness and uncertainty of the rainfall made this life extremely precarious. The greatest difficulty was to get drinking water. There were no masonry wells throughout the tract. The water collected in the natural depressions dried up in the hot weather, and the only resource left was to dig unbricked wells, a work of some labour and difficulty, for the underground water-level is more than 150 feet below the surface in a great part of the tract, and the water is generally too brackish to drink except close to the ponds, where the percolation of the rain water makes the water of the wells sweet. When the rains failed, not only did the grass dry up and the ponds become exhausted, but the water of the unbricked wells became brackish and undrinkable, and the cattle died in hundreds of thirst and starvation, while the herdsmen, who had nothing to support them except the flesh and milk of their cattle and the berries and seeds which grew of themselves in the prairie, were reduced to great straits. In such times no wild animal could live in this tract, and not even a bird was to be seen. It is said by the people that even in ordinary hot seasons they did not give their cattle water oftener than once in three days, and that if the weather was not excessively hot and dry, the cattle were often eight days without water. This Debateable Land was the scene of many border raids and forays. The Bhattis and Tunars of the Sotar valley, the Rajput Thakurs of the Bagar (Bikaner), and the Sikh Jats of Malwa (Patiala), often made dashes into and across the prairie, carrying off as many cattle as they could lay



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hands on. There was a regular system on which these raids were conducted. Sometimes one or two men would steal off towards the encampment of their foes and endeavour to carry off by stealth a few of their cattle. These were called simply *chor* (thieves). Or a band of six or ten armed men would make a dash upon some grazing herd, drive off its armed herdsmen and carry away the herd by violence. Such a band was called *dhar* and the members of it *dharvi* (robbers), words corresponding to the Hindi *daka* and *daku*, i.e., dacoit. But sometimes a leader of note, such as the Bhatti Chief of Rania, would organise a large expedition of two or three hundred men, some of them mounted on ponies, and take them for a foray fifty miles or more into the enemy's country, carrying off their cattle and other spoils by sheer force. Such a raid was called *katak*. When those attacked raised the outcry and pursued the raiders, the pursuing force was called *var*, and it was the rule for the *katak* to divide into two parties, one to drive off the spoil and the other to keep back the pursuers. The men who were most successful in these exploits were most honoured among their fellows and many tales are told of the skill and prowess displayed in border raids by the fathers and grandfathers of the present generation. The arms carried were swords (*talwar*), matchlocks (*toredar banduk*) and sometimes short spears (*barchhi*); but the characteristic weapon of the country was the *sela*, a heavy spear sometimes 20 feet long, with a heavy iron head (*phal*) some three feet or more in length and a bamboo handle. This was wielded with both hands by men on foot. (Many such spears were seized in the Mutiny, some villages contributing a cart-load.) Nor were other dangers wanting. Prairie fires were common and when the grass was luxuriant and the fire got head before the strong hot wind it was difficult to stop it; and sometimes to save themselves and their cattle the herdsmen had recourse to the expedient of starting a new fire to burn up the grass near them before the great fire should overtake them. But so rapidly did it sometimes come on that men and cattle were burnt to death. There is a tradition of a great prairie fire, which about the year 1700 A.D. began at Abohar in the neighbouring Ferozepore District, and swept across 70 miles of prairie to the Sotar valley at Fatehabad; and of another still greater in 1765 A.D., which began at Laleke near the Sutlej, and burnt the whole country as far as Panipat near the Jamna, a distance of some 200 miles.



In the tract within the four southern tahsils of the district a few villages were to be found along the Ghaggar valley, but in the remainder of the tract the population had left the smaller villages and concentrated into the larger ones which were more capable of defence against forays of Bhattis, Sikhs and Pachadas, which though of the same nature as those which have just been described as taking place in the Sirsa tract, were of less frequent occurrence.

The villages along the Western Jumna Canal appear to have maintained their existence through the troublous time, in which only those whose inhabitants could wield the sword as well as drive the plough, survived. In short, when the district came under what was at first only nominal British rule, it was a complete desert in the north-west, while towards the south it was sparsely dotted with large village communities which had managed to hold their own in some sort against human foes and natural adversities.

Although the territory included in the present district had been formally ceded by treaty in 1803, yet the hold of the Mahrattas in the country had been, to say the least, of a very slight and doubtful character, and for many years the authority of the British was little more than nominal and no steps were taken to define its boundaries.

In 1803 a military fort was established at Hansi, and Mirza Ilias Beg, Mughal of Hansi, was appointed Nazim of the districts of Haryana and Rohtak by General Ochterlony. The Bhattis under Khan Bahadur Khan of Fatehabad and Nawab Zabta Khan of Rania continued their raids as of yore. Mirza Ilias Beg marched against them with the Hissar garrison, but was defeated and slain at Fatehabad. He was followed in quick succession by three Nazims, Nawab Muni-ud-din Khan, Ahmad Bakhsh Khan of Loharu and Abdul Samad of Dujana: confusion reigned supreme, and the Nazims quickly resigned their uncomfortable position. From 1808 to 1810 there appears to have been no Governor at all.

Consolidation of British rule.

At last in 1810 the Hon'ble Edward Gardiner was deputed with a body of troops to restore order in Haryana. The British force contained a troop of cavalry commanded by the famous Colonel James Skinner. The first operation was the capture of the town of Bhiwani, the garrison of which opposed the British advance. A British Officer,



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named Bull, was killed in the attack, and lies buried at Bhiwani. The force then proceeded *via* Hansi and Hissar to Fatehabad, where the Bhatti Khan Bahadur Khan was defeated and expelled the country, his territories being taken under direct British rule. At Sirsa Nawab Zabta Khan gave in his submission, and was left in possession of his territories. The civil head-quarters were fixed at Hansi, and Mr. Gardiner held charge of the district for some six years.

Nawab Zabta Khan continued to encourage raids, and in consequence a British force was sent against him in 1818, and all his territories were confiscated. The whole of the present Sirsa Tahsil was then for the first time brought directly under British rule.

At the time of the Mutiny nearly the whole area at present within the district was divided between the districts of Hissar and Bhattiana. The present Sirsa Tahsil was wholly in the latter and the other tahsils, with the exception of the town of Bhiwani and a few villages around it, were in the former.

## The Mutiny.

In May 1857 detachments of the Haryana Light Infantry and the 14th Irregular Cavalry were stationed at Hissar, Hansi and Sirsa, the head-quarters being at the former place where Major Stafford was in command. The Civil Officer at Hissar at the time was Mr. Wedderburn, Magistrate and Collector. As soon as news of the outbreak at Delhi and the capture of that city by the mutineers was received, Mr. Wedderburn had the treasure removed to the building used as the residence of the Superintendent of the Cattle Farm, where it was likely to be more secure and capable of defence than in the Government treasury at the *kacheri*. An additional troop of cavalry was obtained from the Nawab of Dadri and the customs peons were called in and placed as sentries at the city gates.

Up to this time there appears to have been no suspicion of the fidelity of the native troops, though disturbances in the villages appear to have been anticipated. Meanwhile, however, the storm was brewing. It broke at Hansi on the morning of the 29th May at 11 A.M. when the troops stationed there revolted. Major Stafford and some others who had received intimation from one of the native officers and a loyal Bunya, named Morari, managed to escape, but the rest of the Europeans and Christians were massacred and their bungalows set on fire.



Meanwhile a rebel sowar was despatched to Hissar, and on his arrival at 2 P.M. the troops stationed there revolted. Lieutenant Barwell, the Officer Commanding, on going out to enquire the reason of the disturbance, was shot by one of the treasury guard, and the mutineers went off to the jail to release the convicts. A body of them then galloped on to the *kacheri* where the Collector was engaged as usual; seeing what had happened, he at once bravely set off towards the city to guard the treasure, but was murdered by some of the rebel sowars.

Two of the English clerks, Messrs. Jefferies and Smith, succeeded in escaping into the Bir. After the murder of the Collector the uproar became universal. The native troops, the Dadri sowars and the Customs peons all joined in, the convicts in the jail were released, and houses of the Europeans were set on fire, while two ladies Mrs. Jefferies and Mrs. Smith, with their children, were cruelly murdered by their servants. Mrs. Barwell and Mrs. Wedderburn, with their children, were residing at the house of the Superintendent of the Cattle Farm, and they and their children were there massacred by the mutinous troops, while Mr. David Thompson, the Tahsildar of Hissar, was murdered by his chaprasis. In all 23 Europeans and Christians were murdered, 12 at Hissar and 11 at Hansi. The massacre formed one of the darkest episodes of the mutiny.

Thirteen persons, including Mr. Taylor, the Superintendent of the Cattle Farm, and Mr. Waghorn, the Civil Surgeon, escaped, in most cases with the assistance of natives, whose fidelity formed a bright contrast to the general disloyalty of the district. On the morning of May 30th, a person named Muhammad Azim, an assistant patrol on the Customs line, who styled himself "Shahzada," entered Hissar with the intention of putting himself at the head of the revolt in the district. He stayed a few days, and then went off towards Delhi to procure assistance from the Emperor.

At Sirsa the effervescence began as soon as the news of the mutiny at Meerut on the 11th May and the subsequent capture of Delhi by mutineers reached the town. The Banias began to leave the place, and the doubtful expedient of entrusting the defence of the place to the Bhatti Nawab of Rania was resorted to. The news of the outbreak at Hissar reached the European residents of Sirsa a few hours before it was conveyed to the native troops. They



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at once took to flight. Captain Robertson, the Superintendent of Bhattiana, went with his family by Dabwali and Bhatinda to Ferozepore, which they reached in safety, while the remaining Europeans, some 17 in number, many of them women and children, started for Sahuwala, under the leadership of Mr. Donald, Assistant Superintendent, and being joined there by Mr. Bowles, Customs Patrol, reached Rori after some trouble from the inhabitants of Thiraj and other villages who threatened them as they passed. At Rori the party took refuge in the small mud fort, and were compelled by the disaffected attitude of the townspeople to shut the gate and stand sentries. They could not procure food from the town and were prevented from getting water from the well outside. But in the darkness of the night, Baba Janki Das, a *fakir* of the place, brought them supplies of water and flour, and passed them through the aperture under the fort gates. The party was thus enabled to hold out until the arrival of some Patiala troops, who escorted them to a place of safety in Patiala territory. They were hospitably treated by the Patiala authorities until the restoration of order enabled them to return to Sirsa. The only Europeans left at Sirsa were Captain Hilliard, the Officer Commanding the Detachment, and his brother-in-law Mr. Fell, Assistant Patrol. These gentlemen were not in Sirsa when the others left it. They had gone out with some troops towards Jodhka to suppress some local disturbance, and were brought back to Sirsa by their men. The mutineers refused to obey Captain Hilliard's orders, but supplied him with money and allowed him and Mr. Fell to depart unmolested. They were, however, treacherously murdered by the Muhammadan inhabitants of Chhatrvan, a small village beyond Sohuwala. The mutineers, when left to themselves, plundered the treasury of some Rs. 8,000, but without much other violence marched off to join their comrades at Hansi. The Hindu inhabitants of the town of Sirsa fled in dismay, chiefly to Bikaner territory, and the Muhammadan population of the surrounding villages rose *en masse*, and began to plunder the town and the neighbouring Hindu villages. The Tahsildar of Sirsa, the Revenue Sarishtadar and the Kotwali Muharrir were murdered, and the records of the District Office were torn and scattered about, but most of them afterwards recovered, and comparatively few of them were altogether destroyed. The destruction of property was most wanton. Whatever the insurgents were unable to carry away they



burned or broke to pieces, and for a time the most violent portion of the population had it all its own way.

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The Ranghars and Pachhadas of Hissar and the Bhattis of Sirsa at once took advantage of the subversion of British rule to revert to their old predatory habits, and the district was at once plunged into utter anarchy and confusion.

At this time General Van Cortlandt was Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepore, and had, at the beginning of the disturbances in May, raised, by order of Government, a levy of Sikhs. On the 1st June intelligence was received at Ferozepore of the events which had transpired at Hissar and Sirsa. On the 8th June the General marched towards Sirsa with a force of 550 men with two guns, and he was accompanied by Captain Robertson as Political Officer. At Malaut a reinforcement of some 120 men was received. The first encounter with the rebels took place at Odhan on June 17th, when some 5,000 Bhattis attacked the advancing force, but were decisively routed. On the 18th the village of Chhatrvan, where Captain Hilliard and his brother-in-law Mr. Fell, had been treacherously murdered, was burnt to the ground. On the 19th a force of rebel Bhattis and Pachadas was again encountered at Khaireka on the bank of the Ghaggar and almost annihilated with a loss to the British force of 6 killed and 32 wounded. On the 20th Sirsa was reached when the Bikaner contingent of 800 men and two guns, loyally sent to our aid by the Raja of Bikaner, marched in as a reinforcement. The civil organization of the district was at once re-established, and in a short time things reverted to their former state.

Meanwhile, on June 21st, a force of 400 Bikaner horse and two guns, under Lieutenant Pearse, was sent on to garrison Hissar which was threatened by the insurgent Ranghars of Mangali, a village which took a leading part in the insurrection.

On the 8th July, after restoring order at Sirsa and leaving Mr. Oliver there as Superintendent of Bhattiana, General Van Cortlandt marched *via* Fatehabad for Hissar, which he reached on the 17th, having halted six days at Fatehabad to receive the submission of the revolted Pachadas.

From Hissar, a Tahsildar, Ahmad Nabi Khan, and a few sowars were despatched to restore the civil power at Hansi. On the 20th the Ranghars of Jamalpur, a village which was the leader in the revolt, attacked Hansi, but were



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repulsed by the Tahsildar and his garrison. Re-inforcements joined at Hissar, and on the 8th the force marched to Hansi, leaving a garrison at Hissar.

Meanwhile the Shahzada returned from Delhi with re-inforcements for the rebels amounting to 1,500 cavalry, 500 infantry and 3 guns and the insurgent Ranghars of Mangali, aided by some men from Jamalpur, made an attack on Hissar, but were decisively repulsed by the garrison, aided by some re-inforcements from Hansi. On September 2nd, the Jamalpur rebels made an attack on the tahsil at Tosham, where they killed Nand Lal, Tahsildar, Piyare Lal, Thanadar, and Khizan Singh, Kanungo. On 6th General Van Cortlandt burnt the village of Hajimpur near Hansi, which was a stronghold of the rebels, and on the 11th an attack was made on the village of Mangali which was carried by storm and burnt. This was followed up on the 13th by the capture and burning of the village of Jamalpur which was defended by the rebel Ranghars and the Delhi troops under the Shahzada.

This practically concluded the military operations in the district, and thereafter it began gradually to settle down, but the Haryana Field Force was not finally broken up till May 1st, 1858. After order had been restored 133 persons were hanged in the Hissar District for the part which they had taken in the revolt, and 3 others were sentenced to transportation for life, of whom 2 were subsequently pardoned. The proprietary rights in seven villages were forfeited, among them being Mangali and Jamalpur, while fines were levied on as many more. At the same time many *mafi* grants and pecuniary rewards were given to those who had rendered conspicuous service.

The attitude of the various classes of the population at this trying period is worthy of notice. The inhabitants of the towns and the Bagri villagers were, with rare exceptions, incapable of combining for mutual defence, and their only resource was flight. They made no attempt to interfere with their neighbours, but on the slightest threat of danger they fled with their valuables, leaving their heavier goods a prey to the first body of plunderers, however insignificant. The Musalmans of the Ghaggar valley and of the district generally, finding the forces of order non-existent, rose to plunder their weaker and less-spirited neighbours.



The Ranghars of the district, especially those who were Musalmans, threw themselves heart and soul into the revolt. Large numbers of them had been serving in the native regiments which had mutinied in other districts, and many of these returning to their villages helped to fan the flame of insurrection. The rebels, however, could never make any stand against disciplined force, and their numbers alone rendered them formidable, and after their defeats any insurrectionary movements on their part subsided.

The Jats, Sikhs and Deswalis maintained a strictly defensive attitude, and were both strong enough and energetic enough to maintain themselves against the attacks of the insurgents. The inferior police officials and customs peons either deserted their officers or actively combined for plunder, but the native officials of the district seem to have on the whole remained at their posts as long as could be expected while several distinguished themselves by their fidelity.

The neighbouring States of Patiala and Bikaner sent considerable bodies of troops to aid the authorities, and though their services were not of a very valuable kind, still the fact showed a feeling of loyalty on the part of these States, which should never be forgotten. They also afforded a ready refuge to fugitives and treated them with hospitality.

The divisions of the district under the rule of Akbar have already been noticed. The divisions of the district.

Immediately previous to the British conquest Haryana was divided into 19 districts, all of which were nominally subject to the Mahrattas in 1803, *viz.*, Beri, Rohtak, Mahm, Bhatner, Safidon, Dhatrat, Kasuhan, Hansi, Hissar, Agroha, Barwala, Siwani, Bahal, Ahrwan, Fatehabad, Sirsa, Rani, Jamalpur and Tohana. Of these the last 12 were wholly or partially within the limits of the present district.

In 1810, the date of the first actual establishment of the British authority in this part, the whole of the Delhi territory ceded by the Mahrattas was subject to the Resident of Delhi, and was divided into two districts—Delhi directly under the Resident and the outlying districts, including Hansi, Hissar, Sirsa, Rohtak, Panipat and Rewari, under the immediate charge of an assistant to the Resident. In 1819 the Delhi territory was divided into three districts, the central which included Delhi, the southern including



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Rewari, and the north-western including Panipat, Hansi, Hissar, Sirsa and Rohtak. In 1820 the latter was again sub-divided into a northern and a western district, of which the latter included Bhiwani, Hansi, Hissar, Sirsa, the headquarters being at Hansi. In 1824, Rohtak which had previously been in the western district, was constituted into a separate district, to which Bhiwani was transferred.

During the 15 years, from 1803 to 1818, while the English had paid no attention whatever to the state of their border, the chiefs of the neighbouring Sikh States had not been idle.

Prior to the famine of 1783, Sikh colonists had pushed into the Hariana of Hissar, the Rohi of Sirsa and along the valley of the Ghaggar. That calamity had driven them back for a time, but the forward movement soon began again and with enhanced speed after the nominal annexation of the tract by the British, for the Sikhs understood clearly that the tract, though at that time depopulated and void of cultivation, would, with the establishment of a settled government, become increasingly valuable, and in anticipation of this they were careful to take all steps necessary for manufacturing the strongest claims to as large a portion of the unoccupied and debateable tract as possible.

The final overthrow of the Bhattis in 1818 removed the last barrier to their encroachments. In 1821, passing over the belt of waste land, the Patiala Chief erected an outpost at Gudah, 16 miles to the north of Sirsa, and next year Sikh troops were stationed at the place, and colonists from Patiala territory were induced to take up land for cultivation in the waste. In 1827 the Sikh Chiefs took possession of Abohar and the tract around it.

The notice of Government was drawn to the unsettled state of the border in 1818, and again a few years later by the District Officers, but no definite action was taken. In 1819 an attempt was made to establish a sort of military colony, especially in the Ghaggar tract, by giving revenue-free grants of waste land to the officers and men of the cavalry regiments, disbanded after the Pindhari wars. The attempt to stop encroachments in this way was only partially successful, as the grantees or *sukhlambars*, as they were called, did not in many cases take up their grants for many years. Most of them were natives of the Doab, and did not relish the idea of settling in a wild and desert country, and even now most of their descendants are non-residents.



The following account of the dispute with Patiala is abridged from pages 163—180 of Griffin's "Rajas of the Punjab." :—

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It was not till 1835, when Sir C. Metcalfe was Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, and Mr. William Fraser, Resident at Delhi, that it was determined to bring the matter to a settlement. The Collector of the district, Mr. Ross Bell, was selected for the duty, and certain principles were laid down for his guidance. These were that whatever belonged to Patiala at the time of British conquest of Haryana in 1803 should be adjudged to that State, and whatever belonged to the Government which the English had superseded should be adjudged to the latter. With regard to the district of Fatehabad and the portion of the Bhatti country conquered in 1810 and to the remaining portion of that country conquered in 1818, the same principle was to hold good, and the status of those years to be maintained, the Sikhs retaining all they held in these two portions of the country, respectively, prior to 1810 and 1818. Mr. Bell's report bears date 15th September 1838. His conclusions may be summarized as follows :—Haryana, including the Bhatti territory (or Bhatiana) was made up of 19 districts, all of which were nominally subject to the Mahrattas in 1803 : Beri, Rohtak, Mahm, Hansi, Hissar, Agroha, Barwala, Siwani, Bahal, Ahrwan, Fatehabad, Sirsa, Rania, Bhatner, Safidon, Dhatrat, Jamalpur, Tohana and Kasuhan. Of these the first 10 were considered by Mr. Bell to have passed into British possession from the Mahrattas in 1803, and were at once adjudged to the English Government. Sirsa, Rania and Fatehabad required subsequent reconquest from the Bhattis, and the question of the right to these was to be decided according to the status of 1810 and 1818. Bhatner never came under British rule, and was not included in the present controversy. It now forms an integral portion of Rajputana. Safidon and Dhatrat had been made over to Bhag Singh of Jind by the Mahrattas, and were accordingly adjudged to that State. Jamalpur, Tohana and Kasuhan, together with the forts of Badriki and Kankauri, alone remained for adjudication. Of districts affected by the conquest of 1803, Kasuhan originally belonged to Patiala. It was wrested from him by George Thomas in 1798, and from George Thomas in turn by General Perron in 1802, but on the cessation of hostilities was again made over to Patiala. This tract was accordingly adjudged to Patiala. A strip



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of country adjoining Kasuhan and known as the Gorakhpur *ilaka*, which had been in turn held by Thomas and Bourquin, and had in 1803 been made over to three Chiefs by the British, was claimed by the Raja of Patiala on the strength of four letters from General Perron, ordering it to be made over to him. As, however, there was no evidence of a transfer of possession from Bourquin to Patiala, Mr. Bell rejected the claim. The forts of Badriki and Kanakauri were adjudged to Patiala on the same grounds as the Kasuhan district. Jamalpur and Tohana were in the possession of Patiala at the time of Mr. Bell's investigation, but it was clear that that State could not have acquired possession prior to 1809, for they were in the hands of Mahrattas in 1803, and the Bhattis held territory till 1809, which intervened between them and the Patiala frontier. These Mr. Bell adjudged to the English Government.

There remained for consideration the effect of the reconquest of Fatehabad, Sirsa and Rania in 1810 and 1818. In Fatehabad, Mr. Bell found 25 villages in the possession of Patiala and 21 in possession of Kaithal. Raja Amar Singh of Patiala had conquered Fatehabad, Sirsa and Rania from the Bhattis, but the famine of 1783 having completely devastated the country, the Bhattis recovered possession in 1784, and retained it until subdued by the British. The possession of Sikh Chiefs in Fatehabad dated accordingly from a period subsequent to the conquest in 1809, and the district was adjudged to the English Government. Sirsa, in the same manner, was in the possession of the Bhattis until 1818 and though in 1836 the whole was in the possession of the Sikh States of Patiala, Kaithal and Nabha, their claims were rejected, except as to four villages. In Rania the Sikh possession was ascertained to date from 1821, subsequent to the conquest of the Bhattis, and the claims of the Chiefs were absolutely rejected.

This decision having given to the British Government a tract more than a hundred miles long and from ten to twenty miles broad, a large part of it, including Sirsa, Rania and Abohar, was separated from Hissar and formed into a new district, which was administered by an officer bearing the title of Superintendent of Bhattiana, subordinate to the Political Agent at Ambala. The Government, however, while accepting Mr. Bell's conclusions as generally correct, declared itself willing to take a liberal view of any



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doubtful points, and the Court of Directors at home, adopting a still more lenient line of argument, sent out directions which ultimately led to the re-opening of the whole question. The position taken by the Court of Directors was the less called for by reason of the fact that the Patiala and other Sikh Chiefs had forfeited by their conduct all claims to the consideration. The Raja of Patiala had refused to acknowledge the right of Mr. Bell to make enquiries; he had forbidden the cultivators of the disputed villages to give any information as to the time when they were settled; he had thrown every obstacle in Mr. Bell's way and he thwarted him to the best of his power. The fact was that the Chiefs being in possession of the whole of the disputed land could only lose by the enquiry, and they resolved to protract the struggle to the utmost. Mr. Bell, however, received orders to decide on such evidence as he could obtain. He did so, with the results already detailed. But the remonstrances of Patiala had their effect on the Government at home, and on 1st January 1840 instructions were issued to Mr. Conolly to effect some sort of compromise, not in any way surrendering the principle which had been originally laid down, but pressing it against the Sikhs less rigorously. Mr. Conolly submitted his report in May of the same year. He proposed to give up the most valuable portions of the Hissar District, lying principally in the neighbourhood of the Ghaggar, and his proposals were accept-

ed by the Government of the North-Western Provinces. The marginal tabular statement shows the financial result of Mr. Conolly's decision as far as the Hissar district was concerned.

	No.	Cultivation in acres.	Total area in acres.	Approximate annual value in rupees.
Villages to be restored.	119	99,403	272,415	90,000
Villages to be retained.	147	68,788	623,255	60,000
Total ..	266	168,191	528,038	1,50,000

Mr. Conolly reported also upon the Bhattiana or Sirsa frontier. Here he was inclined to give up 40 or 50 villages; but the want of an accurate map prevented him from making definite proposals. The Maharaja of Patiala, though he had obtained so much, still, with characteristic obstinacy, held out, and asserted his right to the whole tract. On receiving, however, a peremptory warning that



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The dispute with  
Patiala.

he must either accept what Mr. Conolly gave or nothing, he came to his senses, and consented to take over the villages assigned to him in Hissar, and was paid their revenue, less 20 per cent. for the cost of management from the time they had been in English possession. This final transfer was made in 1842. The adjustment of the Bhattiana border was postponed, pending a survey of the country. This being completed, a report, based upon the scheme suggested by Mr. Conolly, was drawn up in 1842, recommending the restoration of 42 villages to Patiala. No action, however, was taken upon this report. The Raja again and again protested against what he considered a deprivation of territory. The Sikh War of 1846, followed by the transfer of the Political Agency to Lahore, and then the second Sikh War and the annexation of the Punjab, combined to postpone a settlement of the question, and it was not until 1856 that final orders were passed. In that and the preceding year the matter was taken up by Mr. G. Barnes, Commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej States, who proposed the restoration of 20 villages only, urging that the offer of 42 villages made in accordance with Mr. Conolly's proposal had been rejected by Patiala, and had fallen to the ground. The Punjab Government, however, supported by the Imperial authorities, decided that Mr. Ross Bell's decision having once been re-opened, and Mr. Conolly's award endorsed by the Government, it was necessary to abide by the latter. Government accordingly in July 1856 directed 41 villages to be given to the Raja with arrears of revenue from 1843 to 1856. This arrangement, with the exception of the substitution of a few villages for others, was shortly afterwards carried out. Twenty-six villages were made over by the Superintendent of Bhattiana, and five villages, yielding a revenue equal to that of remainder, were transferred by the Bhadaur Sardars, who received as compensation an assignment on the revenues of Government villages. Thus ended this long dispute memorable on account of its intricacy, and the magnitude of the interests at stake. The origin was in 1803, and its conclusion in 1856, every step being marked by importunity or obstinacy on one side and concession after concession upon the other. The pertinacity of the Sikh almost deserved success; and if the English Government obtained far less than was its clear right, it could at least afford to be magnanimous.

Encroachments  
from Bikaner.

Encroachments were also attempted from the Bikaner side. Within ten years after the British annexation, Bagri



## CHAP. I. C.

## History.

Encroachments  
from Bikaner.

Jats of the Bahniwal clan from Bikaner had fully occupied the sandy tract south of the Ghaggar, now in Sirsa Tahsil, and the Raja of Bikaner laid claim to this territory. In 1828, however, Mr. E. Trevelyan, who had been deputed to settle the dispute, decided that it had not belonged to Bikaner, but had been successively under the Delhi Government and in the hands of the Bhattis. This tract, consisting then of 40 villages, was finally declared to be British territory, and the claim of the Bikaner Raja to the Tibi villages between Bhatner and Rania was rejected.

In 1837 the tract of country included in the former Sirsa Tahsil with other territory subsequently ceded to Patiala was separated from Hissar and created into a separate jurisdiction, called Bhattiana, which was placed under a separate Superintendent. In 1838 the *pargana* of Darba, including the sandy tract now in the Sirsa Tahsil to the south of the Ghaggar, was transferred from Hissar to Bhattiana. In 1847 the small *pargana* of Rori, confiscated from the Raja of Nabha for lukewarmness in the Sutlej campaign, was confiscated and attached to the tract.

Changes in the  
boundary of the  
district.

In 1858 the districts of Bhattiana and Hissar with the rest of the Delhi territory were transferred to the Punjab, and the district of Bhattiana was henceforth known as that of Sirsa.

In 1861, 24 villages of the Meham Bhiwani Tahsil of Rohtak were transferred to the Hissar District, 18 including the town of Bhiwani, the present Bhiwani Tahsil and 6 to Hansi. In addition to this, 5 villages confiscated from the Nawab of Jhajjar, for misconduct in the mutiny, were in the same year added to the Bhiwani Tahsil, and 12 villages received from the Maharaja of Jind in exchange for certain villages in the Thanesar (Karnal) District were added to the Barwala Tahsil. The Tibi villages, 42 in number, were also made over to Bikaner in recognition of mutiny services.

In November 1884 the Sirsa District was abolished and the whole of the Sirsa Tahsil, consisting of 199 villages and 126 villages of the Dabwali Tahsil, were added to the Hissar District and form the present Sirsa Tahsil. With effect from March 1st, 1889, 15 villages, forming a detached block of British territory, and known as the Budlada *ilaka*, were transferred from the Kaithal Tahsil of the Karnal District and added to the Fatehabad Tahsil of the Hissar District. No transfers of territory to or from the district have taken place since that date.



## CHAP. I. C.

## History.

Changes in the boundary of the district.

The Barwala Tahsil containing 139 villages was abolished with effect from January 1st, 1891, and its area was distributed between the three contiguous tahsils, 13 villages going to Hansi, 24 to Hissar and 102 to Fatehabad. At the same time 13 villages were transferred from the Hissar to the Bhiwani Tahsil, and a sub-tahsil was established at Tohana in Fatehabad.

In 1905 a small village was transferred from the Fatehabad Tahsil to Bikaner, and another in 1906 from the Sirsa Tahsil. These transfers were made in consideration of concessions given elsewhere by the Maharaja.

The short account of the history of the district, which has been given above, has shown the political and economic condition of the tract when it came into our hands. The whole of it, and perhaps more especially the portion now included in the Sirsa Tahsil, had been reduced to an uninhabited waste by the famine of 1783 and by the struggles of contending armies and predatory bands. With the pacification and political settlement of the district under British rule an immense stream of immigration from the surrounding Native States forthwith set in, and has continued, especially in Sirsa, to within recent years. It has however now ceased.

History during recent years.

Of late years the history of the district has been tranquil, and calls for little remark. Its most salient points have been the failures of crops to a greater or less extent that have occurred at intervals, and some of which have amounted to famine. These, however, form part of the economic history of the district, and are consequently dealt with in Chapter II

List of British District Officers since 1867.

The following is a list of the officers who have held charge of the district from 1867 to date :—

Name of District Officer.				From	To
Colonel F. F. Forster	...	...	...	1867	1890
Mr. M. Macauliffe	...	...	...	1890	1881
Major W. J. Parker	...	...	...	10-3-81	15-10-81
Mr. Ogilvie	...	...	...	16-10-81	8-9-83
Captain C. F. Massey	...	...	...	9-9-83	9-11-83
Mr. Ogilvie	...	...	...	10-11-83	27-8-85
Mr. A. H. Diack	...	...	...	28-8-85	10-10-85



## HISSAR DISTRICT.]

[ PART A.

## CHAP. I. C.

## History.

List of British  
District Officers  
since 1867.

Name of District Officer.	From	To
Mr. Ogilvie ... ..	11-10-85	20-10-85
Colonel L. J. H. Grey, C. S. I. ... ..	21-10-85	10-3-86
Mr. F. C. Channing ... ..	11-3-86	30-7-86
Mr. M. W. Fenton ... ..	31-7-86	14-8-86
Lieutenant C. S. B. Martindale ... ..	15-8-86	18-8-86
Mr. A. Anderson ... ..	19-8-86	14-7-88
Mr. J. G. M. Rennie ... ..	15-7-88	12-10-88
Mr. A. Anderson ... ..	13-10-88	31-5-90
Lieutenant F. P. Young ... ..	1-6-90	22-7-90
Mr. A. Anderson ... ..	23-7-90	14-11-90
Captain C. G. Parsons ... ..	15-11-90	8-4-91
Mr. P. J. Fagan ... ..	9-4-91	23-7-91
Captain C. G. Parsons ... ..	24-7-91	19-11-92
Mr. A. Anderson ... ..	20-11-92	8-3-93
Mr. A. E. Martineau ... ..	9-3-93	19-4-93
Mr. C. P. Thompson ... ..	20-4-93	16-4-94
K. Muhammad Aslam ... ..	17-4-94	14-3-96
Mr. C. H. Atkins ... ..	15-3-96	29-4-96
K. Muhammad Aslam ... ..	30-4-96	20-11-96
Major J. R. Dunlop Smith ... ..	21-11-96	6-10-97
Mr. P. D. Agnew ... ..	7-10-97	5-10-98
Mr. M. S. D. Butler ... ..	6-10-98	2-1-99
Mr. P. D. Agnew ... ..	3-1-99	23-3-99
Mr. R. Humphreys ... ..	29-3-99	31-8-00
S. Asghar Ali ... ..	1-9-00	25-11-00
Mr. R. Humphreys ... ..	26-11-00	23-5-01
Mr. B. H. Bird ... ..	29-5-01	25-6-01
S. Asghar Ali ... ..	26-6-01	18-10-01
Mr. A. M. Stow ... ..	19-10-01	14-4-03
Mr. O. F. Lumsden ... ..	15-4-03	23-10-03
Mr. C. M. King ... ..	24-10-03	4-7-04
Mr. H. S. Williamson ... ..	5-7-04	18-8-04