



**Selections from the Records of Fort St George**

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**PAPERS RELATING TO COCHIN**

**WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE**

**DUTCH POSSESSIONS AND CLAIMS**

**AND TO THE**

**BRITISH RIGHTS ARISING THEREFROM**

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**MADRAS**

**PRINTED BY THE SUPERINTENDENT GOVERNMENT PRESS**

**1915**

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## HISTORICAL NOTE.

A brief history of Cochin is to be found in the Imperial Gazetteer of India. The history of the present town begins with the arrival of the Portuguese in 1500, when Cabral came to Cochin after his attack on Calicut and met with a friendly reception from the Raja. In 1502 Vasco da Gama founded a factory there and in 1504 Albuquerque was allowed to build a fort which was the first European fort built in India. The Portuguese held the place for rather more than a century and a half that is until 1662, when the Dutch, whose power in the East had increased while that of Portugal declined, attacked the settlement. The first attack (February 1662) failed, but it was renewed in November and Cochin surrendered to the Dutch on 7th January 1663. The first article of capitulation was as follows:—

“The town of Cochin shall be surrendered with all its jurisdictions, old privileges, revenues, lands, with the documents and papers relating thereto and whatever else is held in the name of the King of Portugal, all rights and titles thereto, being ceded to the Dutch General or his Worship’s representatives.”

2. Before Cochin fell, Portugal and Holland had already made peace, the treaty having been signed on 6th August 1661, but news of this event did not reach the East till much later and the question of the restoration to the Portuguese of places captured by the Dutch remained in dispute. It was finally decided by a further treaty of 1669 that Cochin should remain in the hands of the Dutch not only until the war indemnity fixed by the treaty of 1661 had been paid by the Portuguese but also until a special indemnity for the cost of the Dutch East India Company’s fleet and of all military operations had been liquidated. In the end Cochin remained in Dutch hands from its capture in January 1663, until it was taken by the British in 1795.

3. When the Portuguese arrived on the Malabar Coast in 1500 they found the Cochin Raja at war with the Zamorin of Calicut, and these chiefs continued to be at war intermittently for the next 250 years. The Dutch for the most part gave their protection to the Raja of Cochin and were in consequence frequently embroiled in hostilities with the Zamorin, whose route for invasion of the Cochin Raja’s territories lay along the shore by Chetway and Cranganore. The Payencherry Nair, in whose territory Chetway lay and the Prince of Cranganore were tributary to the Zamorin, but in 1710 the Dutch forced the Zamorin to cede to them the suzerainty over these minor chiefs. They proceeded to build or extend a fort at Chetway, and tho’ in 1715 the Zamorin surprised and took the Fort, he was signally defeated on the 16th January 1717, Chetway was retaken, and in December 1717 peace was concluded. Under this treaty the Dutch were placed in possession in complete sovereignty of a strip of sea coast (Province Paponetty) forming part of what was called “The Sandy Land” between Chetway and Cranganore, now a southerly projection of the British District of Malabar, cutting off the Cochin State from the sea. They were also confirmed or established in the sovereignty over Cranganore and other petty States. From 1739 to 1742 the Dutch were engaged in a war with the King of Travancore. They were at first

successful, but the administration in Java was unable to send reinforcements, and when peace was made, the political result of the Dutch policy was that Travancore absorbed all the smaller principalities south of Cochin and a part of Cochin itself and attained its present dimensions while the Cochin State only continued to exist because it was under Dutch protection.

4. Meanwhile on the East Coast the English were now engaged in the prolonged struggle with the French which ended in making the former masters of Southern India. War was declared in Europe by England against Holland on 20th December 1780 and this war which lasted from 1781 to 1784 financially ruined the Dutch East India Company and went far to destroy its influence on the West Coast of India. When war broke out again with England in 1795, the Netherlands had been overrun by the French, the King William V was a fugitive in England, and the capture of Cochin by the British was an easy matter (Introduction by Mr. Galletti to Dutch Selections No. 13.—“The Dutch in Malabar”). The Dutch Governor Van Spall refused to surrender, and the town was therefore besieged and taken by Major Petrie on 20th October 1795. Since 1795 Cochin has remained in the hands of the British. The Cathedral, the Fort, and many of the Dutch houses were blown up by the British in 1806. The town was finally ceded to the East India Company under the Paris Convention of 1814.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### HISTORICAL NOTE.

#### PART I.—TREATIES.

	PAGE
(i)	
Treaty between the Dutch East India Co. and the Rajah of Cochin, 1663 ...	3
(ii)	
Treaty between the Dutch East India Co. and the Rajah of Cochin, 1770 ...	4
(iii)	
Treaty between the Dutch East India Co. and the Rajah of Cochin, 1772 ...	4
(iv)	
Treaty between the Dutch East India Co. and the Rajah of Cochin, 1785 ...	4—6
(v)	
Treaty between the Rajah of Cochin and the English Company, 1790 ...	6—8
(vi) *	
Dutch Capitulation of Cochin, 1795 ... .. .	9—11
(vii)	
Treaty between the English and the Rajah of Cochin, 1809 ... .. .	12—13

#### PART II.—OTHER DOCUMENTS.

(i)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 4th January 1811 ... .. .	17—19
(ii)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 7th January 1812 ... .. .	19—23
(iii)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 21st February 1812 ... .. .	23—24
(iv)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 28th April 1812 ... .. .	24—26
(v)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 9th June 1812 ... .. .	26
(vi)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 30th June 1812 ... .. .	26—27
(vii)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 3rd July 1812 ... .. .	27—28
(viii)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 24th July 1812 ... .. .	28—30
(ix)	
Judicial Consultation, dated 11th September 1812 ... .. .	30—37

	Page
(x) Judicial Consultation, dated 27th October 1812 ... ..	37—39
(xi) Judicial Consultation, dated 13th November 1812 ... ..	39—51
(xii) Judicial Consultation, dated 15th December 1812 ... ..	51—53
(xiii) Public Consultation, dated 8th January 1813 ... ..	53—55
(xiv) Judicial Consultation, dated 2nd February 1813 ... ..	55—64
(xv) Judicial Consultation, dated 30th April 1813 ... ..	64—68
(xvi) Judicial Consultation, dated 14th May 1813 ... ..	68
(xvii) Judicial Consultation, dated 17th August 1813 ... ..	69—85
(xviii) Public Consultation, dated 12th November 1813 ... ..	85—86
(xix) Public Consultation, dated 10th December 1813 ... ..	86—88
(xx) Public Consultation, dated 23th January 1814 ... ..	88—89
(xxi) Public Consultation, dated 1st March 1814 ... ..	89—90
(xxii) Judicial Consultation, dated 1st March 1814 ... ..	90—96
(xxiii) Political Consultation, dated 5th July 1814 ... ..	96—97
(xxiv) Political Consultation, dated 16th August 1814 ... ..	97—111
(xxv) Public Consultation, dated 16th September 1814 ... ..	112
(xxvi) Political Consultation, dated 21st March 1815 ... ..	112
(xxvii) Political Consultation, dated 10th June 1815 ... ..	112
(xxviii) Political Consultation, dated 8th March 1816 ... ..	113—117
(xxix) Revenue Consultation, dated 9th August 1831 ... ..	117—119
(xxx) Revenue Consultation, dated 10th September 1839 ... ..	119

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

	PAGE
(xxx i)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 28th April 1840 ... ..	120—121
(xxx ii)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 13th August 1840 ... ..	121—125
(xxx iii)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 15th September 1840 ... ..	125—128
(xxx iv)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 11th August 1846 ... ..	128—129
(xxx v)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 12th January 1847 ... ..	130—132
(xxx vi)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 5th October 1847 ... ..	132—139
(xxx vii)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 5th December 1848 ... ..	139—143
(xxx viii)	
Political Consultation, dated 30th January 1849 ... ..	143
(xxx ix)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 27th February 1849 ... ..	144
(xl)	
Revenue Consultation, dated 1st May 1849 ... ..	144—145
(xli)	
Political Consultation, dated 18th October 1854 ... ..	145—150
(xlii)	
Political Consultation, dated 30th January 1855 ... ..	150—155
(xliii)	
Revenue Board's Proceedings, dated 1st July 1858 ... ..	153—158