

DR. H.T. SORLEY

BY
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Dr. H.T. Sorley probably born in 1892, belonged to Indian Civil Service and started his service career in the Bombay Presidency. He worked as Collector (Deputy Commissioner) of Hyderabad, Nawabshah (Sanghar included) Tharparkar and Jacobabad districts which then constituted about 2/3rd of whole Sindh.

He was Director Fisheries for Bombay Presidency in 1928, when he wrote 'Marine Fisheries of Bombay Presidency'. The book describes the sea fisheries along the coasts of Sindh, Kutch, Kathiawar, Gujarat and Maharashtra and gives description of important sea fishes and crustaceans, their scientific names, family, common English name as well as Marathi, Gujarati, Kathiawari and Sindhi names. Methods of catch and fishing equipment too are described in details and from these it appears that the information could not have been collected, without accompanying the expeditions of fishermen.

He was in-charge of the Census of India in Sindh in 1931 and had compiled report on Sindh, published as Vol. IX in 1932. It describes races and tribes of Sindh in some details. He was a member Pakistan's Central Board of Revenue from 1950-52 when he retired. He published "Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit his poetry, life and times" from Oxford University Press in 1939?

His *Mus per Vacuus* published from London, in 1958 (1953?) and discusses Greek, Latin, Arabic, Sindhi, French and Urdu classical poetry and compares Shah Abdul Latif with other poets.

One of his numerous hobbies was collecting butter-flies.

A collection of 20,000 butter-flies from Sindh was sold to Government of Sindh in 1954 after his retirement. The collection along with holding frames contained in wooden cup-boards, is now not traceable in Sindh.

He settled in Salisbury (South Rhodesia), at Shahi Bagh, 10-A Montgomery Road Highlands, where he had one of the best collection of books on Sindh and also on English, Urdu, Sindhi, Arabic, French, Latin, Greek and German literature. The future of his collection is not known.

In 1955 Sindh Government decided to assign the job of writing up to date Gazetteer of Sindh and H.T. Sorley was to be assigned the job.

Invitation from N.A. Farooqi Chief Secretary West Pakistan was issued in 1956 and Sorley visited Lahore to enter into contract with West Pakistan Government. He spent about 26 months from October 1957 to December 1959 to complete the Sindh Gazetteer,

which was not printed until 1968. He visited Pakistan only in 1956 to collect the material. The publishers i.e., Board of Revenue West Pakistan, had this gazetteer edited and editors in their own words decided to “expurgate as far as possible, all that was likely to constitute a solecism albeit an inadvertent one” i.e., they removed all that was not acceptable to “One Unit Government”. The original text still in possession of Board of Revenue Sindh, can be checked and extracts expurgated reprinted in some journal. The Gazetteer describes administration of Sindh from 1907, where Aitkins gazetteer had left to 1955. In his own words the 20 years from 1935 to 1959 saw birth and death of Sindh as a Governors province.

He died in 1963 at age of 71 and was awarded posthumous degree of D. Litt. by University of Sindh in 1973. His in depth knowledge of Sindh and Sindhi language, surpasses that of Burton and Lambrick; the # other two names Sindh can hardly afford to forget.