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## **SN 5649 - British East India Company: Salaries Paid to 'Clerks', 1760-1850**

**AHDS History Note:** *The list of staff members of the British East India Company between the years 1760 and 1850 is found in the tab delimited file 'staff\_at\_beic.tab'. This document contains further information related to the fields marked with an asterisk in the data file (i.e. 'notes', 'occupation', 'department' and 'total\_income'.*

### **Notes and key to occupations and departments**

#### Notes

All payments listed in the data set are in pounds sterling per annum (£).

Users of the dataset should take care to become familiar with the system of recruiting, classifying, and rewarding the staff that operated in the East India Company between 1760 and 1850 before attempting to use or to interpret material in the dataset. An employee's earnings could include one or more of the following items: salary, gratuities, and perquisites of office. There is no complete list of perquisites though amounts received could exceed total annual salary by a very large margin, as may be judged by the large increases in salary received by some officers in 1815 when all perquisites and gratuities were cashed out into salary following the reforms of 1814. It is also important, when dealing with eighteenth and nineteenth century salaries and earnings of 'clerks' to distinguish between the designations of the different officers. The designation 'clerk' includes many occupations and grades from the lowliest junior office assistant to the highest executive officers in a great bank, trading company, or government department and has almost no analytical value. At the East India Company 'writers' merely copied the documents of higher clerks in fair hand and were paid by the word or page (they should not be confused with 'Writers' in Scottish legal offices who were legal officers of standing); 'extra clerks' usually (though not always) occupied routine jobs requiring less responsibility and were paid on a different, lower and more limited salary range than 'established' clerks who, though paid on an overlapping pay scale in their early careers, were destined to hold jobs of higher responsibility and discretion, and enjoyed a much wider salary scale. A full account of the occupational structure of the Company and of the system of perquisites, gratuities, and salary payment, as well as the various pay reforms may be found in H.M. Boot, 'Real Incomes of the British Middle Class, 1760 – 1850', *Economic History Review*, Nov. 1999, vol. 52, pp. 638-68.

The database lists staff member salary by, among other things, years of experience with the company. In most cases years of experience may be taken as an approximate indication of the age of the clerk since most clerical staff were first employed at about the age of twenty years. Thus a clerk of one year's experience was 20-1; two years, 21-2; 3 years, 22-3, and so on. Occasionally a clerk began working with the company in their late teens, particularly after 1815, and occasionally some entered quite late in life, as in the case of James Mill, while some were promoted to established positions from the extra clerks, and were given credit for their time as extra clerks at the rate of

2 or 3 years as an extra for one year's seniority as an established clerk. It is usually reasonably clear who these clerks are, though it is not always possible to attribute an accurate age in such cases; though by comparing the salary received with the average age-specific salary in the same year, or thereabout, it is possible to attribute an approximate age with reasonable confidence in most cases. For more detail on the significance of relating salary to experience and age see Boot, 'Middle class incomes', op.cit.

#### Key to Occupations and departments

| <b>Occupation</b>                           | <b>Key</b>  | <b>Department</b>                                       | <b>Key</b> |
|---|-------------|---|------------|
| 'Established' clerk                         | C           | Unclassified  | 0          |
| Servant                                     | S           | Examiners   | 1          |
| Hoymaster                                   | H           | Secretary's   | 2          |
| Surveyer (overlookers of packing, etc.)     | U           | Empty set   | 3          |
| Professional (eg. librarian, solicitor etc) | P           | Audit   | 4          |
| Elder                                       | E           | Tea and drug warehouse                                  | 5          |
| Surveyors of shipping inc assist            | V           | Library/museum/marine branch/hydrographers/chart office | 6          |
| Building surveyors (architects)             | B           | Accounts  | 7          |
| Military inspector                          | M           | Coast and Surat warehouse                               | 8          |
| Sealer at warfe                             | d (check w) | Transfers   | 9          |
| Master attendants                           | A           | Blackwall warehouse                                     | 10         |
| Labourer                                    | L           | Audit of Indian accts                                   | 11         |
| Warehousekeeper & Assist. whkpr             | W           | Shipping  | 12         |
| Inspector                                   | I           | Military inspectors                                     | 13         |
| Writer (ie copy writer)                     | R           | Military stores   | 14         |
| Indeterminate                               | N           | Master attendants                                       | 15         |
| Watermen                                    | T           | Long ell and cloth warehouse                            | 16         |
| Inspector of stationery                     | Y           | Freight   | 17         |
| Housekeeper and Assistants                  | K           | Cashiers  | 18         |
| Extra (non-established) clerk               | Ec          | Treasurers  | 19         |
| Registrar and keeper of books               | O           | Bengal warehouse  | 20         |
| Cryer                                       | Q           | Botolph warfe   | 21         |
| Book-keeper                                 | Z           | Private trade warehouse                                 | 22         |
| Cloth examiner                              | X           | Private trade warehouse                                 | 23         |
| Husband at waterside                        | F           | Stationery warehouse                                    | 24         |
| Auctioneer                                  | G           | Military secretary's                                    | 25         |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Committee of buying                                       | 26 |
| Committee of private<br>trade                             | 27 |
| Buying warehouse  | 28 |
| Stationary  | 29 |
| Pepper and saltpeter<br>warehouse                         | 30 |
| Dyed woolens<br>warehouse                                 | 31 |
| Committee of<br>warehouses (check 37<br>and change to 32) | 32 |
| Military fund   | 34 |
| Marine branch   | 35 |
| Paymasters office   | 36 |
| Empty set   | 37 |
| Surveyors of shipping                                     | 38 |
| Private trade   | 39 |
| Frieght   | 40 |
| Leadenhall warehouse                                      | 41 |
| Buying warehouse<br>(deleted, check)                      | 42 |
| Baggage warehouse   | 43 |
| Financial Secretary's                                     | 44 |
| East India Warfe  | 45 |
| Committee of Shipping                                     | 46 |
| Pay Branch for<br>labourers                               | 47 |
| Statistical Office  | 48 |
| India book  | 49 |
| East India College  | 50 |
| Bullion office  | 51 |
| Export stationery   | 52 |