PART I.

GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND.
CHAPTER - I.

GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING OF LAKHIMPUR.

INTRODUCTION TO LAKHIMPUR.

The country in the North East of India, that was burning in the
great blame of Burmese plunderers, that helplessly accepted the yoke of
the foreign ruler with all reluctance, was Assam. The Treaty of Yandaboo
in year 1826, is the land-mark of British rule in Assam. By the year 1838,
the whole of the Brahmaputra plain constituted a part of the British Empire
which was consolidated into one province and was divided into six districts
such as, Kamrupa, Darrang, Nowgong, Lakhimpur and Muttaick or Sadiya. The
present Lakhimpur thus emerged out as one of the integrated administra­
tive unit of the province of British Assam.

GEOGRAPHICAL ANTIQUITY OF LAKHIMPUR VIS-A-VIS
UPPER ASSAM.

Geography of Lakhimpur is not unknown in the classical work.

References of this part of the country is available in the Geography of
Ptolemy, a work of about 150 A.D. The names of these places, its people,
trade and commerce are referred in the Ptolemy's Geographia, are duly
recognized, indentified and confirmed by Dr. P.C. Choudhury. He describes
serica as being bounded on the east and the north, by unknown regions and
the south by 'India-extra-Gangem' and the country of the Sinas. This
evidently refers to Upper Assam. The serica, the sinas and the contiguous
country were famous for silk and ivory and had carried on flourishing trade
with Byzantine through the Doanes (indentified as the Brahmaputra). Thus
the river Brahmaputra and Lakhimpur vis-a-vis Upper Assam have classical
fame and repute and were widely known to western world even before
the beginning of the christian era.

1. Dr. Choudhury, P.C. - The History of Civilisation of the people of
Assam to 12th century, pp - 33-38.
The Geographical setting of Lakhimpur is as significant as that of the State of Assam in the north-east corner of the Indian Republic. The location can be expressed in three explicit terms viz. mathematical, natural and relative, in accordance to the Geo-political, economic and social significance of the district. The present boundary had been laid down by the British Government for administrative conveniences as far back as 1873. Under the provision of Regulation V of 1873, an inner line was laid down, which served as the Northern and Eastern administrative boundary of the district. The district as defined by the inner line is situated between 26°45' and 27°50' north latitude and 93°45' and 96°05' east longitude. Thus mathematical limitation implies that Lakhimpur is a country of the great subtropical belt, a region of classical significance of the globe.

The enclosed map, shows that Lakhimpur is the extreme eastern extension of the submontain basin of the Assam Himalayan range, and a part of the great Indo-gangetic synclinorium. All the three frontiers are demarcated by natural boundaries. On the north the Kameng, Subansiri and Siang Frontier divisions of the Northern Hill Districts, abodes of Dafila, Aka, Abor Monpa, Mili and Miyahmi tribes, about the frontier. The Lohit frontier and the Tirap frontier divisions a country of the Mishmis, Khamtis, Singphos and Iaga tribes lie in the east and south east of Lakhimpur. To be more precise, the boundary on the north, east, south east coincides almost with the 500 ft. contour line except where Brahmaputra enters into Lakhimpur. It is bounded on the west by the district of Darrang and the Kameng Frontier divisions and on the south by the Sibsagar and the Tirap Frontier divisions of N.E.F.A.

So far as its relative location is concerned, it is an enclave in a great tribal surroundings of earlier Feudal State, having closer affinities with the tribes

2. The Egyptian civilization, the Arabian civilization, the Babylonian civilization etc.
of southern Tibet and northern Burmah. This surroundings had a conspicuous
reflection upon the politico-economic condition of the region, as Lakhimpur
had four distinct trade routes to Bhutan, Tibet, Burmah and China, through
Charduar, Kundil, Fatkai range and across Hoa Dihing respectively. The heavy
trade traffic through these routes, during the pre-British period was of much
consequence and this speaks of a closer socio-economic tie between Lakhimpur
and the neighbouring sovereign States of China, Ava, Burmah, etc. The plain
of Lakhimpur always remained as the cock-pit of the fighting Mongolian hordes,
coming either from China or Burmah through the north eastern passes who
finally mixed up with the people of the country.

The mighty Brahmaputra river flowing from north east to south west
virtually bisects the Lakhimpur plain into two distinct terrains. It acted
not only as natural boundary of the older feudal States, but also served as
the only communicating link between east and the west of Assam. This division
of Lakhimpur by the Brahmaputra is the single most important control in the
genesis of the drainage pattern of the plain. Two distinct sets of drainage
have developed on either plains, one is longitudinal flowing almost in
north-south direction and the other is latitudinal flowing in east-west
direction in the southern plain which may be conveniently distinguished
as northern and southern drainage system.

The broad plains together are bounded on three sides by hills. To
the south these hills are only a few thousand feet above the level of the
sea and their sides are for the most part clothed in dense tropical forest.
They lie in tumbled ridges, sharply serrated at the summit and slopping steeply
into the valleys and each of the main ridges is buttressed with spurs thrown
out on either side. The hills that shut in the eastern end of the valley are
considerably higher. Their sunny peaks can be observed very distinctly in

4. Dr. Das. B.P. - Forest of Assam, "A study in Economic Geography",
any clear day. These peaks though lower in comparison with the giant Himalayan peaks, attain the altitude of the Mont-Blanc. Along the northern frontier, the nearer ranges are generally high enough to conceal the eternal snow beyond. There are points on the north of North Lakhimpur which are nearly 10,000 ft. above the sea level, but a little east of Subansiri river, the hills gradually recede in north east direction and the altitude falls. The outer hills here are not more than two to three thousand feet in height. This fall does not continue and the altitude abruptly rises six to seven thousand feet near the gorge of Dihang. In this zone of multilateral drains of Dihang, Dibong and Lohit, the hill recedes further north and the valley widens eastward which culminates beyond the Brahmaputra gorge. This triangular plain between Lohit and Dihang river within the 500' contour line is henceforth named as the plain of Rukmini after the name of the legendary princess Rukmini, daughter of the king Bhishama.

The plain south of Brahmaputra is fairly high and constitutes a broad belt of country, sloping gradually from the lofty Patkai Range beyond the administrative boundary of Lakhimpur, towards west. In the south east the plain is studded with outliers of the Tipam and Tikak hills, which terminate at the confluence of Namdang and Burhi Dihing or roughly on the southern bank of Burhi Dihing. This broad belt of country along the foot of the hills is clothed with dense evergreen forests where creepers spread in every direction over the larger trees, knitting them into one great mass of foliage and drop down here and there in graceful coils and loops. The forest is clustered with bamboos, plantains, palms and huge tree ferns and the creeping canes, its spikes and thorns are effectual check for easy access. The central portion of the plain is cleared off considerably which is now covered with fields of waving rice or with stiffer bushes and shade trees, in rows with mathematical precision and pruned down with accuracy to the same level. The
planter's bungalows, the factories and the labour lines standing above the rows of green shrubs, interrupted by hamlets, villages and countries, shaded by green roof of the evergreen trees, add lustre to the scenic beauty of Lakhimpur. Large swamps and marshes even along the banks of Brahmaputra are comparatively less, which offer advantages to the streams and rivulets to sweep down the rain water to the main rivers.

The northern plain is long and tapering between the northern hills and the Lohit Suti, a branch of the Brahmaputra. This plain is somewhat different from the southern plain. The level of the plain is lower and a large portion is still covered with tree-forest. The slope of the country gradually declines from the north to the northern bank of Brahmaputra. Unlike the southern plain, the North Lakhimpur has a large number of marshes and swamps, while much of the country is exposed to annual inundation during the rainy period and is covered with dense masses of grass and reeds of considerable height, ranging from ten to fifteen feet. The second biggest river island of Upper Assam is in the Subansiri river course, enclosed by Ghuman-Suti and the Subansiri. The waving rice fields of vivid green in the summer, change into gold as harvest time approaches. The lanes of groves of slender palms, broad leaved plantains and feathery bamboo round the edges of the rice fields, provide a scenic beauty of the land. The hamlets, cottages and the villages, hidden under the shades of bamboo groves, behind the background of a dark green forest on the north, simply move a casual observer. On the far north and east, the peaks of the high hills glitter white with snow, the rocky sides of which always remain fresh and green. Along the central axis of the plain, the river valleys tumble down in rhythmic trends and widens out in unrestricted course. These valleys leave behind a trail of sandy beds, infested with reeds and grasses.
EARLY HISTORY OF LAKHIMUR.

The earliest history of this area is based on local legends. These legends suggest that Hindu princes were reigning in Lakhimur some centuries before the Christian era. The old remains of a fort, sculptures and ruins of buildings found between the gorges of Dixraog and Dibong rivers in the extreme north east are traditionally assigned to the king Bhisnaka of Mahabharata. But this is controversial because king Bhisnaka actually ruled in Vidarva (Barar). Nevertheless the technical skill and craftsmanship exhibited especially in the construction of the fort with known granite, surmounted by a breast work of loop-holed bricks, evidently proves the high standard of culture and civilisation of the people that flourished in this part of Assam. The Tamreswari temple with its terracotta ruins and the remains of so called Rukmini Nagar and Bhismak Nagar, remove all doubt about the existence of a civilised territory. There is little doubt that this rich kingdom was overthrown by Chutias, a powerful tribe, who infiltrated into the plains of Brahmaputra, through the north eastern corner. The Chutias are believed to be the members of the great Bodo race. The early history of the Chutias are not much known. The founder of the Chutia kingdom in Lakhimur is said to have been a chief, named Birpal (Birabar), who claimed to be a descendent from the mythical king Bhismaka. By overpowering few villages of Abor and Miris, on a hill called Sonagiri Birabar, started conquering the neighbouring villages. The process of conquest began by the father and was carried on still further by his son. The son assuming the name Sonagiri Pal alias Gauri Narayan, subdued the Chutias of the

neighbouring areas and turned his arms against the king Bhadra Sen who ruled in the plains. After defeating Raja Bhadra Sen, Gauri Narayan established his capital at Ratnapur, which is said to have been situated in Majuli or in the North Lakhimpur subdivision and he assumed the name Ratnachwaj after his capital. According to the Chutiya Buran, Ratnachwaj was succeeded by five kings and they reigned till 1523 A.D. The Chutiya kingdom, thrived from the beginning of the 13th till 16th century, when the mighty Ahom invaders finally subjugated the Chutiyas and assumed the control of Sadiya, the capital.

During the later part of the Chutiya rule in the east, the western part of the present North Lakhimpur subdivision was ruled by the Baro Bhuyans, the progenitor of which was one Samadra, Sumucra who was succeeded by his son Monohar, but eventually they were defeated by the Ahoms.

MORANS OR MUTTOCK (MOA-MORIAS).

A small kingdom on the South bank of Brahmaputra, comprising more or less the present Dibrugarh Sub-division (only the southern part of Brahmaputra), was established by the Morans. Though systematic records of the Moran rule and the nature of their Government is not available, it is said that the Morans became independent after the fall of Bhauma Pal dynasty. During the period of Ahom invasion, this kingdom was ruled by a king, Bedancha by name. The Ahom invader, Sukapha defeated the Morans, but very wisely he adopted a conciliatory measures and by treating them as equals and encouraging inter-marriage, he welded the Morans with them into one nation. The Morans, however,

5. Nath, R.M. - The Background of Assamese culture, p - 60.
never forgot the insult of defeat. They revolted again and again and ultimately shook off the yoke of Ahom rule in 1786. Bharat Singh had overthrown the Ahom capital, Rangpur and virtually possessed the Ahom throne till 1794, when with the help of British troops, the Ahoms re-occupied Rongpur. In the year 1805, the Moa-Morias, rose again against the Ahoms, under the chieftainship of Sarbananda Singha who established himself at Bengoma. Sarbananda Singha met with a crushing defeat at Bahotiating, and was subjugated. The Ahoms, however, became liberal in attitude towards the Moa-Morias and relaxed their attitude towards the insurgents. They recognised their chief and awarded the title Bor-Senapati, who remained loyal to the Ahoms.

THE AHOMS.

Let us now trace the history of Ahom rule in Lakhimpur who preceded the British sovereignty. The Ahoms, a Shan Tribe, from the kingdom of Fong in the Upper valley of the Irrawady, under the leadership of Sukapha invaded the Brahmaputra valley in the year 1228. They first overthrew the Chutiya kingdom at Sadiya followed by a series of conquest on the west of the valley. The first noteworthy Ahom king was Suhungmung or the Dihingia Raja who ruled from 1497 to 1539 and conquered the Chutiyas, the Kacharis and Koches. The Ahom kingdom extended to the whole of Sadiya tract, almost the entire North Lakhimpur Sub-division and the Matak territory. The Ahoms thus opened a new chapter in the history of Assam, and ruled this part of the country very successfully till the year 1786. The Moa-Moria insurrection severed the Ahom rule in the same year and the Ahom king was compelled to seek the help of the British forces, who were gradually encroaching to the eastern India.

LAKHIMPUR DURING 1826 -1836
POLITICAL TERRITORIES.
The Administration of the country remained in a state of great disorder and chaos till the last Ahom king Chandra Kanta Singha ascended the throne in the year 1809, especially due to internal troubles such as Dafla attack and the Moa-Moria rising. Though the other troubles subsided temporarily, the internal troubles gained momentum in an unfathomable pace. The Borphukan or Viceroy of Gaunati incurred the suspicion of the Bura Cohain or the Prime Minister and fled to Burma via Calcutta for Burmese help. At the beginning of the 1816, the Burmese army took the route of the Ahom invaders and crossed the Fatkai and reinstated the Borphukan. The matter did not end there. Shortly after the withdrawal of the Burmese army Chandra Kanta Singha was deposed and Purander Singh was enthroned in his place. The banished king appealed to the Burmese, who in 1818, returned to Assam with a huge army and reinstated him on the throne. Unfortunately this help proved to be a pandora’s box and the saviour became a sworn enemy to the people of Assam. The Burmese started gross atrocities in the country burning houses, plundering villages, killing the people irrespective of age and sex. Assam groaned under the torture and tyranny of the Burmese. The barbarous and inhuman attitude of the Burmese depopulated the country, which had already been thinned by successive civil wars, Moa-Moria insurrections and hill tribes attack. In the mean time, Chandra Kanta Singha fled to Goalpara from where he started a series of abortive attempts to recover his lost country. The Burmese stimulated by their gains in the vast depopulated valley, entered the British territory on the west. In 1824, the East India Company declared war against the Burmese and occupied Rangpur in 1825. In the year 1926, by a treaty at Yandaboo, the Burmese were expelled from the Brahmaputra valley, and Assam was ceded to the East India Company. The above is a synopsis of the Ahom rule of Lakhimpur vis-a-vis Assam.
EARLY BRITISH RULE IN LAKHIMPUR.

After the expulsion of the Burmese, the Administration of the remote, jungle infested areas, was entrusted to the semi independent chiefs. The Muttack country between the River Dibru and Burhi Dihing was controlled by Bor-Senapaty a chief of the Morans. In 1836, the Bor-Senapaty proposed to resign in favour of his second son Majoo Gohain. Later Majoo Gohain and the other sons of Bor-Senapaty together founded their capital at Bangagora and refused to recognise the authority of the British. They firmly declined to abide by the terms and condition, imposed on them regarding payment of revenues and taxes. At this the company was very much annoyed, and the administration was taken over from Majoo Gohain by Capt Vetch in November, 1839.

Sadiya, on the north bank, was administrated by a noble man, called the Sadiya Khowa Gohain during the Ahom rule. When the Burmese occupied Assam, this office was conferred on one Khanti chief and on the accession of the British Government this innovation was confirmed by the Governor General's Agent. The Sadiya Khowa had to contribute to the expenses of a State military contingent of one hundred men. This officer was suspended in the year 1835 and Sadiya was placed under the Administration of a political Agent. The Khantis waged the last insurrection against the British in 1839 and destroyed the military station at Sadiya, killed the commandant and the political Agent Col. White. They were, however, finally repulsed and driven out of the country. Since then Sadiya remained as the frontier military out post and head quarter of the Sadiya frontier track, till the great earthquake of 1950 when Sadiya was completely destroyed by devastating flood and erosion.

THE LAST AHOM RULER.

The British Administrator, probably for conducting an experiment for creation of protectorates, placed the portion of the valley lying between the river Dhansiri and the Burhi Dihing, south of Brahmaputra, and between Bishnath and Sadiya on the north bank, under Raja Purander Singha. He was bestowed with the position of a protected king. Raja Purander was entrusted with full civil powers and was asked for an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000 by the British Government. It was very hard on the part of Purander Singha to realise the tribute from the peasantry after incurring the expenses of his administration, with all his paraphernalia. While he was busy in collecting the tributes, the Daflas, the Mishmis, the Miris, began atrocities on the north western boundary of this territory which was left unprotected. Vigorous charges and complaints were raised against this administration from every side of the country. The experiment of the British ruler was proved unsuccessful and the territory of the last survivor of Ahom kingdom was, however, resumed by the British Government in 1838. This access on to the British empire extinguished the flame of glory of the great kingdom of Ahom for all time to come.

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The word 'Lakhimpur' is of recent origin. In fact the word Lakhimour was derived from the original name Lakhimpur. The district was christened Lakhimpur at its birth, i.e. at the time when the East India Company formed a separate administrative unit, consisting of the tract lying to the north of the Brahmaputra river, between Bishwanath and Sadiya (exclusive) in Upper Assam. The naming had taken place, probably in 1836, the year in which the Company assumed the administration of Lakhimpur by relieving the last Ahom King Raja Purander Singha. This tract had a variety of names based on the names of the prominent towns or localities and inhabited by different groups of communities. But the common name for the whole tract was 'Uttor-par' (North Bank) during the Ahom period.

This was a common practice of the British Administrators to name the districts after the names of the Head Quarters, unless they are famous otherwise. Lakhimpur was originally selected as Head Quarter of the district; hence the name. It was only after the annexation of the Watak country and Sadiya, on the south bank of the Brahmaputra in 1842 and taking up both these acquisitions to the district that its Head Quarters were shifted from Lakhimpur to Dibrumukh in the Watak country. The most memorable and decisive battle was fought, during the Ahom-Chutiya war at the mouth of Dibru river, known as (2) Dibrumukh. The Ahoms and the Wataks built forts (garrisons) at this place for offence and defence respectively. So the place became known as Dibrugarh.

1. For example - Dinajpur, Nowgong, Sibsagar, Kangpaur, Goalpara, Lyengensing, etc.
I have seen an old 'Mausader's Sanad', granted to late Dangaria - Maheswar Sarma Bapu-Barua in manuscript on an old style cotton paper (tulapat), now in possession of Sri Sarbeewar Barua, B.L. a retired pleader of North Lakhimpur town. This sanad was granted on 18th February 1839, i.e. immediately after the resumption of the area by East India Company from their protected Prince Purander Singha as referred above. The official seal of the principal Assistant Commissioner mentioned the district (Zilla) as Lakhimpur in region (Maluk) Assam - Uttarpar (north bank). It is dated "Lakhimpur", the 18th February 1839, to the effect that the station from which it was issued was then known as "Lakhimpur". This must set at rest all controversy about the origin of the name of the district.

It was imperative on the part of the British Administrations to transfer the head quarters from the isolated and interior town of Lakhimpur to Dibrugarh. The large area comprising the territory of Sadiya and the Mattock country, represented two thirds of the newly formed district. This region, with its immense potentialities for industry, commerce and political developments, had better communications with Dibrugarh, situated on the right bank of Brahmaputra river, till then the only high way for trade and commerce. Besides the strategic importance of Dibrugarh was better than that of Lakhimpur, for which this shifting was justified.

This shifting made the western areas remote and consequently the original area of Lakhimpur was curtailed, by including Dhemaji thana area in the Dibrugarh Sub-division and by transferring the western most part, comprising the Behali and the Kohpur thana to Darrang district. The remaining portion was termed as North-Lakhimpur Sub-division, on account of its geographical situation with its head quarters at the old Lakhimpur, renamed as North-Lakhimpur.
cotta designs engraved on the sides of the bricks, collected by the Ex-Governor of Assam, Sri Jairamdas Daulatram, also depict the name of the king as Shri Shri Laskmi Narayan. These have been recovered from among the ruins of a fort with dilapidated walls lying on the site of an ancient town, associated with the name of legendary princess, Rukmini. These bricks are treasured in Rajbhawan, Shillong.

These findings, definitely prove that the two kings Satya Narayan and his son Lakhim Narayan were reigning at Sadiya during the 14th and 15th century A.D. and extended their kingdom from Dhal river in the Dhemaji Mausa to the North Lakhimur, where land grants were made to the Brahmins on either side of the Subansiri river. There are traces of an old and abandoned town between the Dhal and the Ghagar rivers, about five miles to the east of the present town of North Lakhimur. I have explained in the chapter early settlement that there are enough evidences of migration of population from the east to west especially on the north bank of Brahmaputra. The present establishments of the Gharmara Satra are very recent, roughly about 200 years old. Due to a great earthquake followed by devastating flood, the Satra was shifted to the present site. Besides this there are enough reasons to believe that centuries ago this town sank below the flood level and new settlements began in the present site of North Lakhimur town.

This is very likely that king Lakhminarayan built a frontier town here and named it after him. Sri Raj Mohon Nath has also opined that the old township moved several miles to the south west. Therefore, it may be concluded that the name of Lakhimur must have

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**This is the second D al river and is distinct from the Dhal river of Dhemaji mausa and flows three miles east of North Lakhimur town.**

originated from the name of the Chutiya king Lakhai Narayan and because of its location on the north of Brahmaputra, it has been renamed as North Lakhimpur just to distinguish it from the district.

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EARLY SETTLEMENT AND DEMOGRAPHY.

The history of early settlement in Lakhimpur area is strikingly rare. Some informations regarding settlement and population of this part are available in various reports of the European explorers and those of later periods can be had from the British officers. It is doubtless that once this territory was comparatively thickly populated. The archaeological relics - as far as north of Sadiya, (Rukmini Nagar or Bhismak Nagar), the scattered shrines and temples, and the evidences of successive waves of immigrations from west and North Burmah to this part definitely foretell the existence of a flourishing and nourishing country in this corner. Mr. Robinson (A.D.1840), thus remarked on Lakhimpur "It now presents little more than a miserable picture of depopulated villages, and orchards and plantations run to waste, or covered with dense jungle". The annual floods, frequent earthquakes and invasions and harassments caused by Hill tribes and the Burmese invasion and plunder, there were constant migration of population from Lakhimpur. This is further supported by my personal observations and queries of family history of some of the Goswamis of North Lakhimpur. * The present Satra-Dhikar of Gharmara Satra

I. Robinson - Account of Assam, 1849, p. - 322.
* Gharmara Satra (Vaishnavite Hi du) situated about 3½ miles west of North Lakhimpur.
situated near North Lakhimpur, produced family history, written by the old Satra-Dhikar, where the names of the forefathers, their original abodes, the names of the kings and their constant migrations are mentioned. During the reign of the Chutiya king (1100 Sakabda Sukla Dashami, Maghaaha) the earliest ancestor of this family came from Kanawaj by boat and disembarked on the bank of Gharmara-Nadi, where the then Chutia king received him as his (priest) Puruhit. After a period of about 45 years there was an outbreak of devastating flood in the Gharmara and Lokit, followed by an earthquake, in which the temple constructed by the king was shattered and the whole Goswami family shifted to the bank of Senga-Nadi. Since then they gradually moved to the west from Senganadi to Barabilah, from Barbilah to Dhem-khanda and there after to the bank of Dhalnadi – along with their disciples where the present Satra was established about 100 years back. This shows that there was a continuous migration from east to west along the northern bank of Brahmaputra.

Though the early history of settlement is very difficult to trace, yet it can doubtlessly be stated that Lakhimpur was inhabited by superior Aryan people with high standard of culture before the coming of the Chutias. Gradually the communal structure became more complex with the influx of a variety of tribes from the north-east, east, and south eastern hills. On the basis of the predominating groups the settlement structure of the pre-Ahom and Ahom period may be grouped as follows:

1. **Chutia** – Dominating region was between Sadiya and Dhal Nadi including present North Lakhimpur Mouza.

2. **Khamtia** – Dominating areas – North and North East of Sadiya and east of Noa-Dihing.
3. **Matak** - Dominating area was between Dibru Nadi on the north, Burhi Dihing on the south, Noa-Dihing on the east and Brahmaputra on the west.

4. **Singphos** - Phakials and Duaniyas inhabited in the eastern frontier region - Tikak and Tirap Hill and Plain region of Upper Burhi Dihing valley.

5. **Naga** - Dominating region - South eastern boundary of Lakhimpur, N.E. borders of Sibsagar district i.e. Joypur high land.

6. **Ahom** - West of North Lakhimpur Mouza, a narrowstrip of the bank of Brahmaputra from Dibrugarh south ward.

The northern, eastern, south eastern frontier regions of Lakhimpur were gradually infiltrated by a large number of refugees from northern Burmah and the adjacent Hills especially during the time of Raja Caurinath Singha (A.D. 1780). Of the infiltrates the following are noteworthy - the Khemtis, Phakials, the Kuluks, Duaniyas, Mishmis, Abaras, Miris, Akas, Dafias, and Nagas. According to the district census report of Mr. C.F. Magrath, 1872, there were 121,267 aboriginal tribes, Hindu casts and people of Hindu origin 20,305, Mahamans 3826 and others of various castes 360. This census covered only about 3145 Sq. miles of the present area of 5012 sq. miles including the transferred frontier tracts. Some records of earlier estimates of population are found in various descriptive writings, which cannot be relied upon.

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The old district of Lakhimpur was bounded by 28°17' 30" latitudes and 93°15' 30" and 97°4' 58" East longitude containing a total area of about 11,500 sq.miles. The first official census of 1872 covered an area of 3,145 sq.miles and enumerated a total population of 1,21,267 persons.* This comprised of only the regularly settled portion of the district.

The northern frontier was guarded by a series of hills named after the predominant tribes, such as Dafla, Miri, Abor, Mishmi, and Khanti, on the east by Mishmi and Singpho. The Lohit-suti of the Brahmaputra and the lower courses of the Burhi Dihing river defined the boundary between Lakhimpur and Sibsagar district. On the west the district was bounded by the district borders of Darrang and Sibsagar on the right and left bank of the Brahmaputra respectively. During this period the boundary on the north and east was undefined and undeclared. The south and south east boundary was however settled between the British and the Burmese Governments. The intermediate tract was inhabited by savage tribes, over which the British could not assume any control. The Burhi Dihing river constituted the natural boundary between the districts of Lakhimpur and Sibsagar on the south, but the transfer of the fiscal division of Jaypore and Khowang in 1666 from Sibsagar to Lakhimpur left the boundary on this corner undefined, till the completion of Revenue Survey, when the river Mora-mor-nai was made to mark the western boundary. The reorganised district thus situated between 26°49' and 27°52' N. latitude and 93°46' and 96°05' E. longitude and covered an area of 4229 sq.miles.**

As described in the History of Lakhimpur above, the district was naturally divided into three divisions, based on the old rule,

the Lakhimpur on the north, Sadiya on the east and the Mutock territory on the south bank of the Brahmaputra. The Matak Region is again divided into upper and lower Matak area. The upper Mutock-Salikhowah, contains an area of 21,600 acres. The lower Mutock lies between the Buri Dihing and the Brahmaputra river and contains an area of 432,124 acres, including the unsurveyed class of the Brahmaputra portion.

**Administrative Divisions.**

The district covers a total geographical area of 5022 sq.miles. For administrative purposes, the district is divided into two sub-divisions, viz. Dibrugarh and the North-Lakhimpur sub-division. The former, as described in the previous chapters, occupies the southerly portion of Brahmaputra and small portion of the north bank, i.e. the Dhemaji thana; the latter is wholly confined to the north bank of the river Brahmaputra. The headquarters of these two sub-divisions are the two towns bearing the respective names of the sub-divisions. These two towns along with Doom Doema, Tinsukia and the Oil town of Digboi constitute the five towns of the district and may be considered as urban centers. Due to the recent concentration of population in Moran, Naharkatia, Daliajan and Margherita, consequent upon the development of Petroleum industry and plywood industry, these places may also be considered as growing towns. The total geographical area of the north bank is 1,791 sq. miles (446 sq. miles for Dhemaji thana and 1,345 sq. miles for North Lakhimpur sub-division). The southern bank covers the total geographical area of 2,362 sq. miles. The Dibrugarh sub-division is divided into nine thanas, viz. Moran, Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Bardubi, Jaipur, Tinsukia, Doom Doema, Digboi and Margherita, whereas

The North La'himur sub-division is constituted of three thanas only: Bihpurie, North Lakhimur and Dhakuakhana. Besides these administrative units, the district is divided into a number of circles which are again subdivided into Mazrass for revenue administration. With the recent development of communication on the north bank, a strong move has been in progress for creation of the third sub-division with Dharsjai and Dhakuakhana thana. There is no doubt that if this is implemented, the area will achieve rapid all round development.

TRANSFERRED AREAS.

In the year 1954, the NEFA region was reorganised and the present names were given to the new zones. During this period the boundary of Lakhimpur was extended to include the developed plain regions of Sadiya Frontier tract of the Mishmi Hills division, the Markangeliack and the western portion of the Tirap Frontier tract. These areas are placed under the charge of three assistant Political Officers (State) with their head quarters at Margherita, Sapakhova and Jongi for Tirap, Mishmi Hill and Markan seck respectively. The Sadiya transferred area is placed under the jurisdiction of Sadiya thana whereas Tirap transferred tract is placed under Margherita thana. So far as the revenue administration of these regions is concerned, both these areas fall under the jurisdiction of the S.V.C., Tinsuria circle.

RECENT ADMINISTRATIVE REORGANIZATION IN LAKHIMUR.

The two sub-divisions of the district (i) Dibrugarh and (ii) North Lakhimpur are put under the charge of two sub-divisional Officers. The sub-divisions are again divided into thirteen thanas. Besides these normal administrative divisions - there are revenue and development and planning divisions, based on local-self government. For revenue
Administration, the district is divided into eight circles each are placed under the control of one sub-deputy Collector. The circles are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Circles</th>
<th>Area in acres</th>
<th>Circles</th>
<th>Area in acres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Bihpuria</td>
<td>1,67,035.24</td>
<td>5. Dibrugarh (East)</td>
<td>1,24,634.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. North Lakhimpur</td>
<td>1,48,384.33</td>
<td>6. Dhemaji</td>
<td>73,034.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Subansiri</td>
<td>3,21,376.00</td>
<td>7. Dibrugarh (West)</td>
<td>1,79,609.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Naharkatia</td>
<td>2,64,827.46</td>
<td>8. Tinsukia</td>
<td>3,28,411.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These circles are again divided into fifty-five mauzas each headed by a Mauzadar. Under the provisions of the Assam Panchayat Act of 1959, a new administrative set up has been introduced — known as Panchayati Raj. According to the provisions of the Act, three committees are formed at different levels — from village to sub-divisional levels — on the basis of adult franchise. These committees are responsible to each other from the lowest ladder upwards and are vested with restricted judicial and financial powers. The organisation of the Panchayati Raj is as follows:

- Deputy Commissioner
- Sub-Divisional Officer
- Mahkuma Parishad
- Anchalik Panchayat
- Gram-Panchayat

The formation of the Anchalik and Gram Panchayats and their jurisdictions directly depend on the strength of population. The introduction of this new administrative set up has opened avenues for self determination and rapid development of the country.