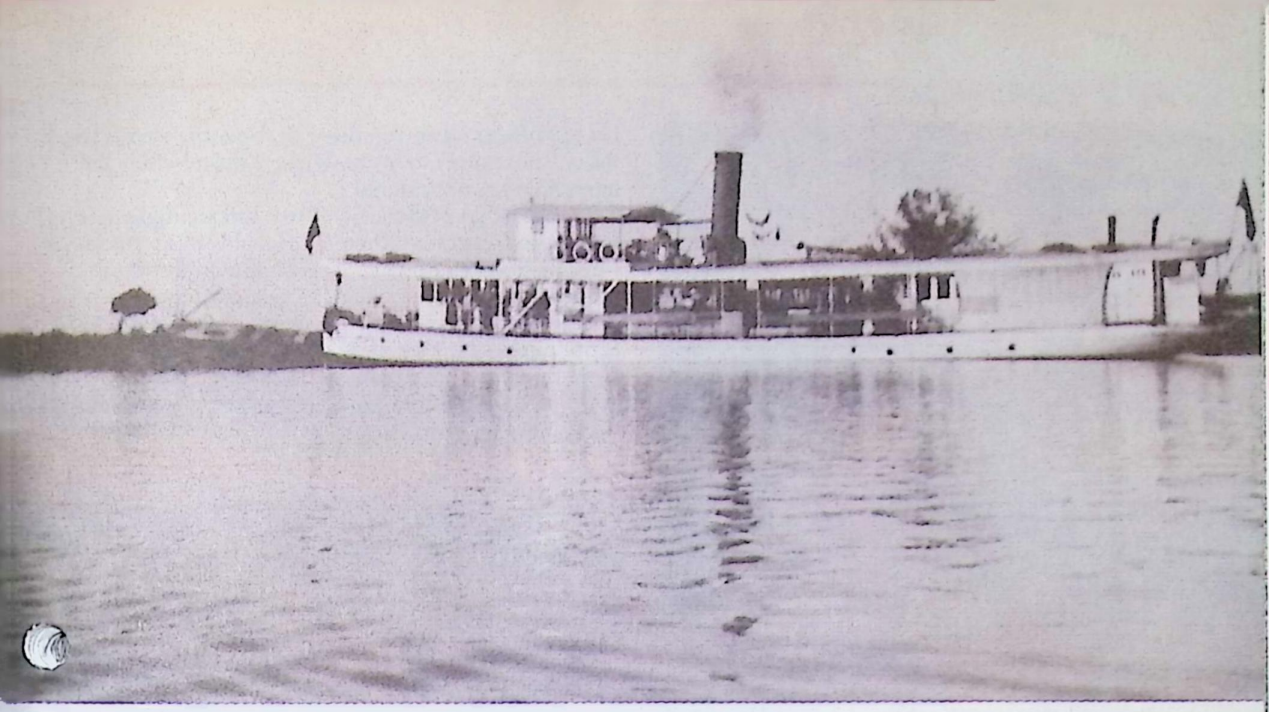
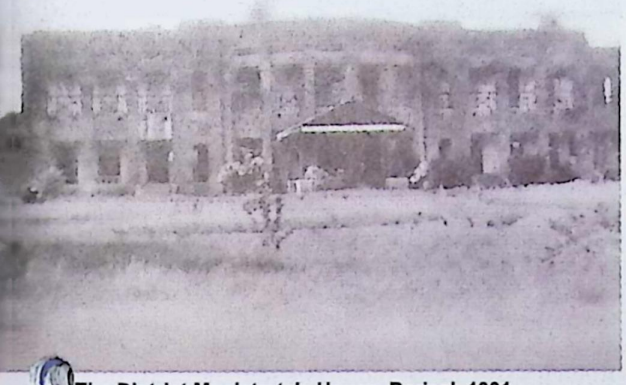


The District Magistrate's Launch,
The May Queen, Barisal, 1931.



The District Magistrate's House, Barisal, 1931.

Service (ICS). Interestingly, he started his career in the then East Bengal (now Bangladesh) as an Assistant Magistrate and Collector in Chittagong in 1920.

Sir Harold had a chequered service career in British India. A brief summary of his service postings are as follows: 1920-Assistant Magistrate and Collector, Chittagong; 1922-Kuseong (Darjeeling district); 1923- Serampore in Hooghly; 1925-Joint Magistrate and Deputy Collector, Dhaka; 1926- District Magistrate and Collector, 24 Parganas; 1927 to 1931 posted in various places in Bengal: Midnapore, Birbhum, Howrah, Calcutta and Bakerganj (Barisal); 1933-Commissioner Chittagong Division; 1933 to 1934- Midnapore and 1935 to 1947- Calcutta. His last posting in Calcutta before the partition of 1947 was that of the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal and Advisor to the last British Governor of Bengal, Sir Frederick John Burrows (1887-1973) GCSI, GCIE. Sir Frederick was Governor of Bengal from 19 February, 1946 until 14 August, 1947.

During his ICS career, Sir Harold was both a witness and participant in momentous historical events in Bengal, India. His tour of duty in Chittagong in 1920-21 took place under politically charged atmosphere of the Ghandhi led non-cooperation (boycott) and Khilafat movements against the Raj. The movement began to lose steam, when he moved to Kuseong in 1922. While posted as Commissioner of Chittagong Division in 1933, a very important and sensitive posting then, Sir Harold had to deal with the aftermath of the famous Chittagong Armoury Raid led by the valiant Masterda Surya Sen. It was a very difficult period requiring a high degree of professionalism. During the whole period of the Second World War (1939-45), when the entire British Indian government machinery, both civil and military, went on a war footing, especially with the imminent threat of a Japanese invasion through Eastern India, Sir Harold was posted in Calcutta then the capital of undivided Bengal, holding important government portfolios including that of the Home Department as its Head, a powerful and sensitive post from 1945-47, the last European to do so. As the Food & Civil Supplies Commissioner in 1943, he was engaged in tackling the Great Bengal Famine for which he was later felicitated for his untiring dedication to alleviate the misery of those affected. Subsequently, towards the end of his Indian career he was also a witness to the horrendous bloodletting on 16 August, 1946, remembered in history as the Great Calcutta Killings that inexorably set in motion a process which culminated in the fateful partition of India on communal lines in 1947.