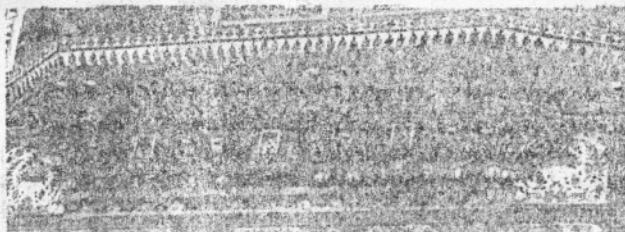




Lahore has always been the centre of interest to people from far and near. The stories of its populace and accounts of visitors are keenly read. The real historical city of Pakistan, Lahore, is proud to show its many facets, brilliant, dazzling, or sometimes sombre. While, visitors may see Lahore as a city of monuments and lively bazaars, to a *Lahoria* its charm emanates from the City, the traditional centre of activity. A few may get a chance of experiencing its life. Fewer still become part of it and share the amusing secrets of its bazaars, *gallees* and by-lanes or savour the delights of its haunts or pastimes of its inhabitants, diversions of the affluent, the recreation of the indigent, the city slicker, or the leisured.

Although some sort of a focal point since times immemorial, it became an important political centre of this part of the world about a thousand years ago and continues to be so today. It is, conceivably, the most important political centre of the South Asian Sub-Continent, despite other cities, such as



Embellishments of Havelee Naunihal Singh

Lahore: lores and legends

SAJID ABBAS says we need to protect our heritage for future generations

the gardens of Shalimar, to name a few. The Citadel and the Shalimar are part of the Heritage of Man as put on their list by UNESCO.

Looking at things, one feels that we seem to have left it to others to serve

there came a band of men who loved this place more than the natives. There were the Lawrence brothers, Henry and John. Henry came as Resident at the Lahore Durbar during the Sikh Rule, then after the occupation of the Punjab, he, along with John, ruled the country as a member of the Board of Administration. Henry was against the annexation of the Punjab to the rest of the territory ruled by the East India Company, so was Montgomery, who appeared on the scene later. Both served in their own way and were responsible for initiating schemes resulting in prosperity of the people of the Punjab. Both were respected and liked by the people for that, so much so that towns were named after them.

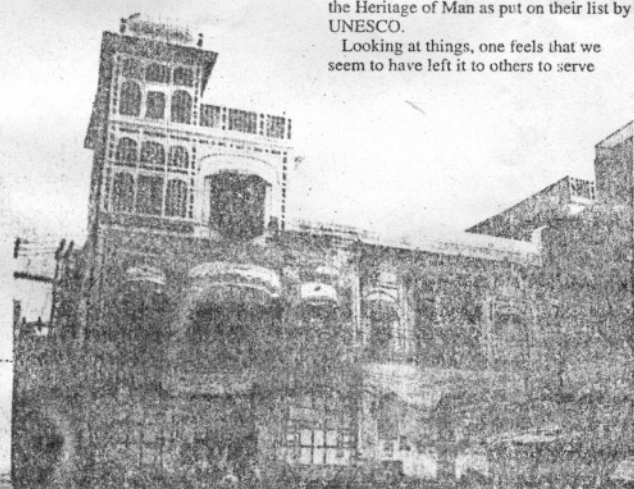
Then there were others who did their bit for this land, again more than the natives themselves, for instance, the Kiplings, Lockwood and Rudyard. While the father, Lockwood, laid the foundations of exhibiting the culture of this place, the son, Rudyard placed Lahore on the international literary map. Rudyard's several short stories and the famous novel

'Kim' pay the finest tribute to Lahore. His writing, probably, has done more than any English, Pakistani or other writer.

Lahore started to move into the modern era sometimes during the days of Ranjeet Singh. Nevertheless, one of the very first public building of modern Lahore is the Railway Station built in 1859 in a peculiar style of an English fort. Next were the Lawrence and Montgomery Halls in 1861 and 1866, the combined structure is now known as the Quaid-e-Azam Library. The Mayo Hospital was built in 1871 followed by the Albert Victor Hospital in 1890. Readers may be interested to learn, that a public hospital, the Dar-ush-Shifa, was founded during Ranjeet Singh's days by Fakir Syed Noor-ud-Deen. Dr. Honigberger, formerly of the army of Napoleon was the Superintendent. The Government College (now Government College University) with its tall steeples, though founded in 1864, was built in 1872-77 and the Senate Hall of the University of the Punjab in 1876. The main hall of the university was, however, built in 1905.

It was in 1875 that Lahore got its first school for teaching arts and crafts. Additions were made later, including the Museum in 1890. The eighteen eighties seems to be the time when the maximum number of edifices were added to the skyline of Lahore. Notable were, the Medical College in its Italian Style (1883), Lady Aitchison's Hospital (1887), Aitchison College, designed by Col. Jacob, X.E.N., Jaipur, (1886), The Cathedral, Church of Resurrection (1887), The High Courts (1889) and The Victoria Jubilee Town Hall was completed and inaugurated in 1890 by HRH Prince Albert Victor for 'wise and quite debates'.

One of the many lasting monuments that the English have left behind was and is the showpiece of modern Lahore—the Mall. Eversince it was built it has been Lahore's most important thoroughfare. Whether it will remain so and withstand the onslaughts aimed at mutilating it beyond recognition, depends clearly upon



Havelee Naunihal Singh

Calcutta, appearing on the map of the world a couple of so centuries ago, as the seat of the government of the English administered India and the second largest city of the erstwhile British Empire.

Lahore acquired glory during the days of the Grand Moghuls, Akber, Jehangir, Shahjehan and Aurangzeb, especially during Shahjehan's times when it reached its peak. Lahore progressed to become a centre of refinement and culture; and barring some periods of misrule, continues to be so. Monuments of those times still exist today, the Citadel, the Mosque

Lahore in a befitting manner. We "Pakistanis are great ones-for singing patriotic songs, waving the crescent and star at every conceivable excuse and for waffling away about this *sohni dharti* (Beautiful Land) which indeed God alone is keeping. When it comes to more substantial matters we prefer someone else to do the job." This is what a learned and responsible person has observed in one of his works, a collection of essays superbly depicting in vivid colours the life in this part of the world.

Talking of others doing our work, we find that when the English took over



Gate of Zebunnis



Remnants of Haveli Naunihal Singh

...lores
...gends
...to protect our heritage for future
The Nation
...Lahore
...4-10-03

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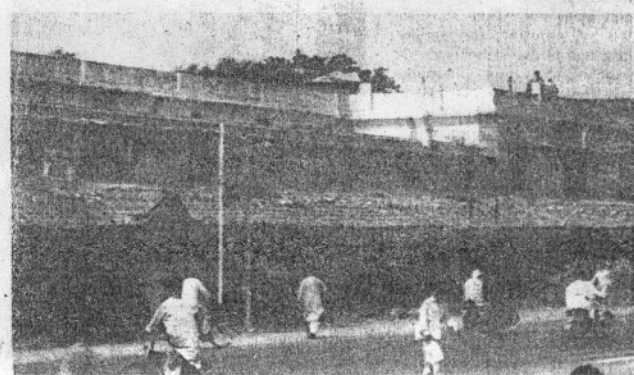
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our attitude towards conserving our history, our heritage, past and present. The Mall was built almost one hundred and fifty years ago, as a "direct road from Anarkali to Mian Mir", that is, from one cantonment to another. Perhaps many may not be aware of the fact that Anarkali Gardens were the cantonments or *chhaonees* of Lahore during the days of Ranjeet Singh. It was here that Ranjeet Singh encamped when he came to



Old Tollinton Market before repairs

capture Lahore in 1799. The place became the cantonment of the troops of East India Company when they garrisoned Lahore.

Many years ago, so-called efforts were made to 'improve' the Mall, but the result was a colourless and insipid place tending to turn into a ghetto. The rot of the Mall set in when somebody got the idea of pulling down those fine buildings and setting up pigeon holes instead, greed was perhaps the motivator and all good planning was thrown to the winds. The first class restaurants gave way to the *chaiwalas* (tea vendors) and the *rehreewalas*. The proliferation of small shops have not helped matters rather problems have multiplied. High rises, too, seem to offer no solution.

The social life along the Mall (and other places, too, even in the City) more or less vanished. The landscape along the Mall changed, albeit, not to its benefit. One passed up and down the Mall without ever noticing what was on his right or left, the rapid pace of the traffic forced one to get out of the rush and chaos without delay. The mad race never allowed one to enjoy the sights and increasing pollution adversely affected the character of this comely stretch. Nevertheless this undesirable trend was checked to some extent when the PHA stepped in. Let us join hands and vow to stop the decline and gather to promote the love our predecessors had for this City of ours.

One wishes that the same old spirit of affection for this City be revived. We did

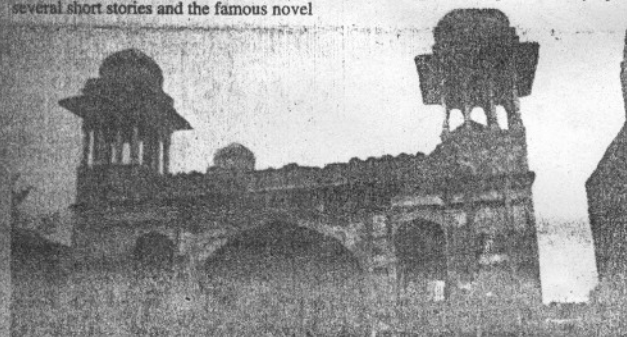
that some years ago, why can't it be done again? Doesn't one remember that the grand haveli in Chunamandi was restored. The haveli is reputed to have a history of more than three hundred and fifty years, now it is a college for girls. Then there is the Haveli Naunihal Singh, another mansion of note dating back to the Moghul days and once the residence of the grandson of Ranjit Singh, which was converted to a school,

Victoria High School, in the days of the English, it was repaired not long ago. Today, both these havelies are being used for a good cause—as educational institutions.

That is not all. Though, we have had face-lifts, done earnestly by PHA, such as, the food streets in various quarters of the City, one feels that our history and heritage needs plenty of care and preservation. There are many places which require attention, for instance, the Shalimar Gardens, the deserted Havelies of the City, even the erstwhile entertainment quarters of McLeod Road and why not bring good restaurants to the Mall again.

One is overjoyed to see the old Tollinton Market on the Mall being saved and restored these days by the authorities. The old Tollinton Market is no ordinary building, it is one of the oldest structures of modern Lahore and has the distinction of being indirectly the place where the foundations of the Road to Pakistan were laid when many thousand artefacts and exhibits of this land were shown to the world in the first ever exhibition held here in 1864, telling the world that we were a people different to those living in other parts of the South Asian Sub-Continent.

Let us wish the well-wishers of this City success in their efforts for the noble cause to preserve the heritage of this beautiful city and save our traditions from the nefarious designs of vandals and people who are out to banish our history to obscurity. ●



Gate of Zebunnisa's garden