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## Resident Barry Close and his Politico- Diplomatic Adventures in Princely Mysore – A Study

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### ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on the diplomatic adventures of Barry Close and its impact on principdom of Mysore. The service of Barry Close is remembered in Mysore for its political and diplomatic significance. Starting his career as a cadet in the army, he rose to the rank of Military General displaying high professionalism and acumen. Barry Close is known for his strategic astuteness , bravery and sound judgement skills which earned him admiration in both military and civilian spheres. His political and diplomatic manoeuvres supported the consolidation of East India Company rule in South India. He played a major role in stabilizing British influence post the 4<sup>th</sup> Anglo Mysore War and defeat of Tipu Sultan. He was given the responsibility of negotiating the Wodeyar king his throne back. He collaborated with Dewan Purnaiah to administer the restored Hindu kingdom under a young Wodeyar Prince. He strategically supported in designing administrative plans and implementing policies for the newly created Mysore Principdom which later supported in stabilizing the political landscape of the Mysore region. He successfully administered indirect rule in Princely Mysore along with preserving the traditional native institutions intact. His political manoeuvres and key campaigns ensured strategic dominance and consolidation of East India Company rule in South India.



**Introduction:** Barry close was an army General in the East India Company who played a major role in the diplomatic and political negotiations concerning princely Mysore. His diplomatic talent was noticed by the East India Company and he was raised to the rank of Resident in prncedom of Mysore after the defeat of Tipu sultan in 4<sup>th</sup> Anglo Mysore wars in 1799.

### **Early services of Barry Close- Barry close belonged to a**

Barry Close entered the Madras presidency army as an infantry cadet in 1771. By 1780 he attained the rank of subaltern and participated in the defense of Tellicherry agaisnt Hyder Ali's forces. His early service demonstrated competence in frontier operations leading to his selection for boundary negotiations with Mysore in 1780s.

### **Deputy Adjutant General**

Barry close served as deputy adjutant general under Lord Cornwallis during the first siege of Sri rangapattana and in 1799 and general chief of staff under General Harris contributed to the siege of the city and defeat of Tipu Sultan for which he received a sword of honour from the Maras government. He served as the under James Stuart commander in chief of the Madras Army.

### **As captain**

He became the captain in 1783 and was appointed to negotiate with the Diplomatic counter parts of Tipu Sultan.

### **As Deputy Adjutant General**

He also served as the **Deputy Adjutant General** of the Madras Army during the seize of Tipu Sultan's capital city of Sri Rangapatatna.

### **As lieutenant colonel**

Close was raised to the rank of lieutenant colonel in 1797 While working with Madras Army Close made several innovative changes and he created the Madras Military Fund and also proposed a forma permanent Police committee to improve the Law and order situation in Madras.

### **Other services**

Close was posted to deal with the Mysore rulers drafting treaties with them Close was made the **First Resident** of the Court of Mysore. He was also given responsibilities of managing the court of Nawab



of Arcot and was later posted resident of the Peshwa court in Poona. His military career significantly bolstered British campaigns against Mysore particularly during 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Anglo Mysore wars

### **Knowledge of several Dravidian languages**

Close had knowledge of several languages including Persian, Marathi, Dravidian languages of Tamil and Kannada. As a result he could converse easily with soldiers, officers and military officials. This also supported him to get promotion to the rank of Colonel in Madras Native Infantry in 1805. He was able to intervene with the Madras Mutiny and prevent further damages. His Tamil knowledge helped him to solve the rebellion in the Madras army. His knowledge of Kannada language also helped in playing a major role in Partition of Mysore, administering subsidiary alliance treaty and collaborating with Dewan Purniah in post Anglo Mysore war political developments.

### **Barry Close services in Mysore state**

Barry Close served on the British commission established at Sri Rangapatana following the 4<sup>th</sup> Anglo Mysore war in 1799 to reorganize the government of Mysore after the defeat and death of Tipu Sultan. As British Resident of Mysore 1799 – 1801, he collaborated with Dewan Purniah to administer the restored Hindu kingdom under a young raja implementing policies that stabilized the Mysore region politically and prevented French influences in Mysore. He aligned with Governor General Richard Wellesley and his redesigns of administration of Mysore early application of indirect rule preserving native institutions while ensuring British strategic dominance which contributed towards consolidation of EIC rule in South India.

### **Administering Subsidiary treaty**

Close's diplomatic efforts exemplified the subsidiary system which bound Indian states to British protection in exchange for autonomy limits fostering a policy of non intervention in internal affairs but absolute control over external policy and military matters. His tenure in Mysore demonstrated tact and firmness enabling the East India Company to establish firmly in south India. His professional drafting of the Treaty helped the company to forge as a major power of the Southern kingdoms. He was able to prevent unified resistance thereby making transition from commercial to territorial empire in India. He professionally handled the treaty negotiations despite Tipu Sultan's delay tactics and British Troops' fever outbreak. He was very much involved in the siege of Sri Rangapatana where he clearly handled the issues of coordinated logistics intelligence and departmental operations. This contributed to the decisive defeat of Tipu Sultan dismantling Mysore's Military Threat and enabling



British reconfiguration of southern Indian power dynamics. Diplomatically Close's residence period at Mysore from 1799 to 1801 involved co-administering the restored Hindu kingdom alongside Dewan Poornaiha stabilising governance post conquest and integrating British oversight into local structures. Close's combined military prowess and diplomatic acumen advanced British Strategic dominance in India by neutralising Mysore's resistance and fracturing unity laying ground work for the company's transition from a trade entity to a territorial sovereign. He is remembered for his contemporary assessments facilitating of policy shifts making protective alliances minimizing direct company control. He also helped the company to get higher yields and revenues. His actions were supportive and instrumental in securing imperial stability.

### **Personality -**

Close is considered as a pragmatic officer whose military background informed his diplomatic firmness. His post-war administration in Mysore is also noteworthy. His legacy endures modestly through the naming of Closepet symbolizing localised British Administrative imprint rather than broader imperial innovation. Overall accounts credit Close with competent execution of expansionist policy but critique the long-term destabilization it fostered contributing to the gradual dismantling of short-term Hyder Tipu rule in Mysore.

Close's implementation of the Subsidiary alliance treaty as British Resident in Mysore from 1799-1801 aligned with Wellesley's expansionist policies which required Indian states to maintain British troops at their expense in exchange of protection through EIC armed forces. Effectively by curtailing their autonomy.

This framework while stabilizing British influence post the 4<sup>th</sup> Anglo Mysore War drew criticism from contemporaries like Sir John Shore for fostering dependency and fiscal strain in princely states though Close's specific execution received approbation from Wellesley for averting unrest and securing tribute arrangements from Mysore.

No personal scandals or misconduct allegations marred his official service tenure. He has unblemished promotions as he offered notable political and military services. No corruption or abuse charges. Close exemplified as a tool of imperial subjugation.

Close demonstrated scholarly interest in oriental languages with knowledge of several Indian languages which facilitated diplomatic negotiations and administrative duties.



He was portrayed by his contemporaries as embodying classical virtues reminiscent of ancient Roman ideals with a robust physical constitution keen intellect and unwavering moral fortitude. He was hailed as a man of many virtues. He had unshaken courage, fixed principles, and disdain for ostentation and personal indulgence—qualities that underscored his selfless devotion to public service.

**Conclusion-** His early services displayed his professionalism as he was known for his premeditated planning and good judgment. He was admired for his military, diplomatic, and civilian credentials by Company officials and Mysore Government officials. Present-day Ramanagara district was earlier named as Closepet in the honour of Barry Close. The services of Barry Close are remembered in the annals of the History of Mysore Princedom as reinstating of the Wodeyar kings on the Mysore throne as well as bringing political anarchy caused by the interim succession of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan to a decisive end.

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