

Title: A glimpse into the life and works of Radha Gobinda Chandra, the village astronomer from the Indian sub-continent

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Abstract: Born in a small village called Bagchar in undivided India (currently in Bangladesh), Radha Gobinda Chandra (1878-1975) became one of the major contributors of variable star observations to organizations like the AAVSO and the British Astronomical Association. If he lacked higher education (having never gone to college), he more than made up for it through dedication and meticulousness. Between 1919 and 1955 he contributed an astonishing 51,850 visual observations to AAVSO. These observations were primarily made using either a 3" refractor that Chandra bought with all his savings, or a 6.25" refractor loaned to him by AAVSO.

While most of Chandra's own papers and correspondence were lost when he had to relocate after the partition of British India into India and East and West Pakistan, most of the letters and original data submission forms sent by him to AAVSO have been well preserved in the AAVSO archives. Over the past few months I have been digitizing these documents, especially his correspondence and observing report summaries. These correspondences, especially with the early Recorders/Directors of AAVSO Leon Campbell and Margaret Mayall, reveal interesting insights about his work, his scientific temperament, and other events that shaped his life.

I will present a summary of these historical documents, and share what we have learned about Chandra and his remarkable journey through the stars spanning more than three decades.