In presenting this volume, the second in the series of West Bengal District Gazetteers now being published under a scheme jointly sponsored and financed by the Union and the State Governments, I should like to say at the outset that it is by no means a rehash of its predecessor written by L. S. S. O'Malley in 1908 but is altogether a new book both in its treatment and contents. It closely follows the pattern approved by the Government of India, the slight departures being needed for a better arrangement of the text.

The draft was completed towards the middle of 1966 but certain alterations have since been made in it as recommended by the Central Gazetteers Unit and the West Bengal District Gazetteers Advisory Committee, the latter consisting of Sri B. Sarkar, I.C.S. (Retd.), Chairman; Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose, F.N.I.; Dr. Bhabatosh Datta, M.A., Ph.D.; Dr. Nalinakshya Datta, M.A., Ph.D.; D.Litt.; Prof. Sashi Bhusan Chaudhuri, M.A., Ph.D.; Prof. Pratul Chandra Gupta, M.A., Ph.D.; Dr. P. N. Chopra, M.A., Ph.D.; Sri J. C. Sengupta, I.A.S. and the State Editor. I am indebted to them for their helpful suggestions intended to improve the quality of the publication. Apart from their advice, we, on our own, have introduced new matters to bring the text up to date. To mention only one example, a section on the Fourth General Elections held in February 1967 was incorporated long after the initial draft was prepared; other instances would be evident to the discerning reader.

A key to the diacritical marks used is given with the Index at the end of the volume. For technical limitations, place names etc. occurring too frequently in the text have been so marked only sparingly. The photograph credits are given at p. 584.

In acknowledging my deep debt of gratitude to numerous scholars, Government departments, libraries, private institutions and well-informed individuals without whose unstinted co-operation I could not have discharged a task so immense and complex, my mind turns first to Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji and Prof. Nirmal Kumar Bose who permitted me time and again to draw from their encyclopaedic erudition which is matched only by their large-heartedness. The fact that I have worked on this book to the point of obsession and have spared no pains to make it worthy of their acceptance is my humble thanksgiving to them.

To Sri Pulinbihari Sen, Dr. Asutosh Bhattacharyya, Sri Rajyeswar Mitra and Sri Santibhusan Nandi—recognized experts in their respective fields of study—I am bound by gratitude for their special contributions included in this volume. Sri Maniklal Sinha of Vishnupur placed at my disposal his prodigious knowledge of the district and Prof. Sibsundar Deb, Dr. es. sc., F.N.I., kindly went through the section on Geology and suggested improvements. I am grateful to both of them.

Numerous Central and State Government departments and various branches of the district administration rendered valuable assistance by supplying information and data. The Anthropological, Botanical, Geological and Zoological Surveys of India as also the Deputy Director-General of Observatories, Poona helped us with their technical reports. The Geographical Society of India prepared the maps used in this volume. The authorities of the National Library, Asiatic Society
Library, West Bengal Secretariat Library, Commercial Library, Bangiya Sahitya Parishad Library and the West Bengal State Archives gave us all the facilities we needed. Non-official institutions and private individuals, too numerous to mention, also co-operated in ample measure. I am deeply indebted to all of them.

My heartiest thanks are also due to my team of officers who compiled with the aid of Research Assistants materials for this volume of which Chapters III, XIII and portions of Chapters I, II, XV & XVI were initially drafted by Pranabaranjan Ray, Assistant Editor; Chapter XI and a portion of Chapter XV by Suvrantsu Ghosh, ex-Assistant Editor; a section of Chapter XV by Satyaranjan Sengupta, Assistant Editor (then a new-comer); Chapter V and the major part of Chapter IV by Kiransanker Sengupta, Research Officer; Chapters VI, X and portions of Chapters I & II by Saugata Prasad Mukherji, Research Officer; Chapters VIII, IX & XII by Ramendra Narayan Nag, Research Officer; Chapters VII, XIV, a section of Chapter IV and processing of data for the maps by Nirenda Nath Sen, Research Officer, and portions of Chapters XV & XVI by Hitesranjan Sanyal, ex-Research Assistant. The preparation of the bulk of Chapters I, XVI and certain portions of Chapters II & VII rested with me. All the initial drafts were, however, subjected to meticulous editing at my level and I alone am responsible for the final presentation of the text in its entirety. I would also like to express my high appreciation of the very creditable performance of each member of my staff of whom Tarapada Maity and Tarapada Pal, Research Assistants, did painstaking spadework for preparing the Index and Rathindra Kumar Palit, Publication Assistant, and Dhirendra Nath Datta, Proof Reader, gave me steady support in seeing through the unending proofs.

Finally, I thank the management of Sree Saraswaty Press Ltd. for their efficient printing, binding and block-making which have made the volume presentable.

A word to explain the similarity of many passages occurring in this volume and the District Census Handbook: Bankura published in April last year. My office and that of the Superintendent of Census Operations, West Bengal & Sikkim are on the best of terms facilitating exchange of data and other materials. We had, accordingly, lent them the manuscript of the present volume.

Another regret is that for limitations of time (we are supposed to prepare a draft within six months) and of man-power, we were precluded, much against our wish, from undertaking original research. We have, nonetheless, pointed to a number of promising fields for further exploration. Consistent with the high traditions of Gazetteer writing in India, we have tried to do our best; how far we have succeeded should best be left to the judgment of the reader.

Amiya Kumar Banerji

Calcutta,

12 September 1968