India’s Islamic heritage in the 1940s

This collection of amateur clips features some of the most important landmarks of Islamic power in India.

This second collection of footage taken by Col. E.T.H Alexander takes us around the Qutb complex, built by the founder of the Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526), and the incredible Mughal complex at Agra: we see the Fort, Jama Masjid and tomb of I’timād-Ud-Daulah, as well as Fatehpur Sikri, the one-time-capital of the Mughal state under Emperor Akbar, and the Taj Mahal.

This film is made in 1946 or early 1947, on the eve of Britain’s withdrawal from the subcontinent and just before Alexander left India for good. During World War II, Alexander served in the Engineer Corps of the Indian Army and considerable footage is devoted to wells and water holes that show the sophisticated nature of Mughal water engineering. Perhaps the film recorded a final tour of some of India’s most important historic monuments but, made just before India was partitioned on religious grounds, it is also a poignant record of the Muslim heritage of undivided India.

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