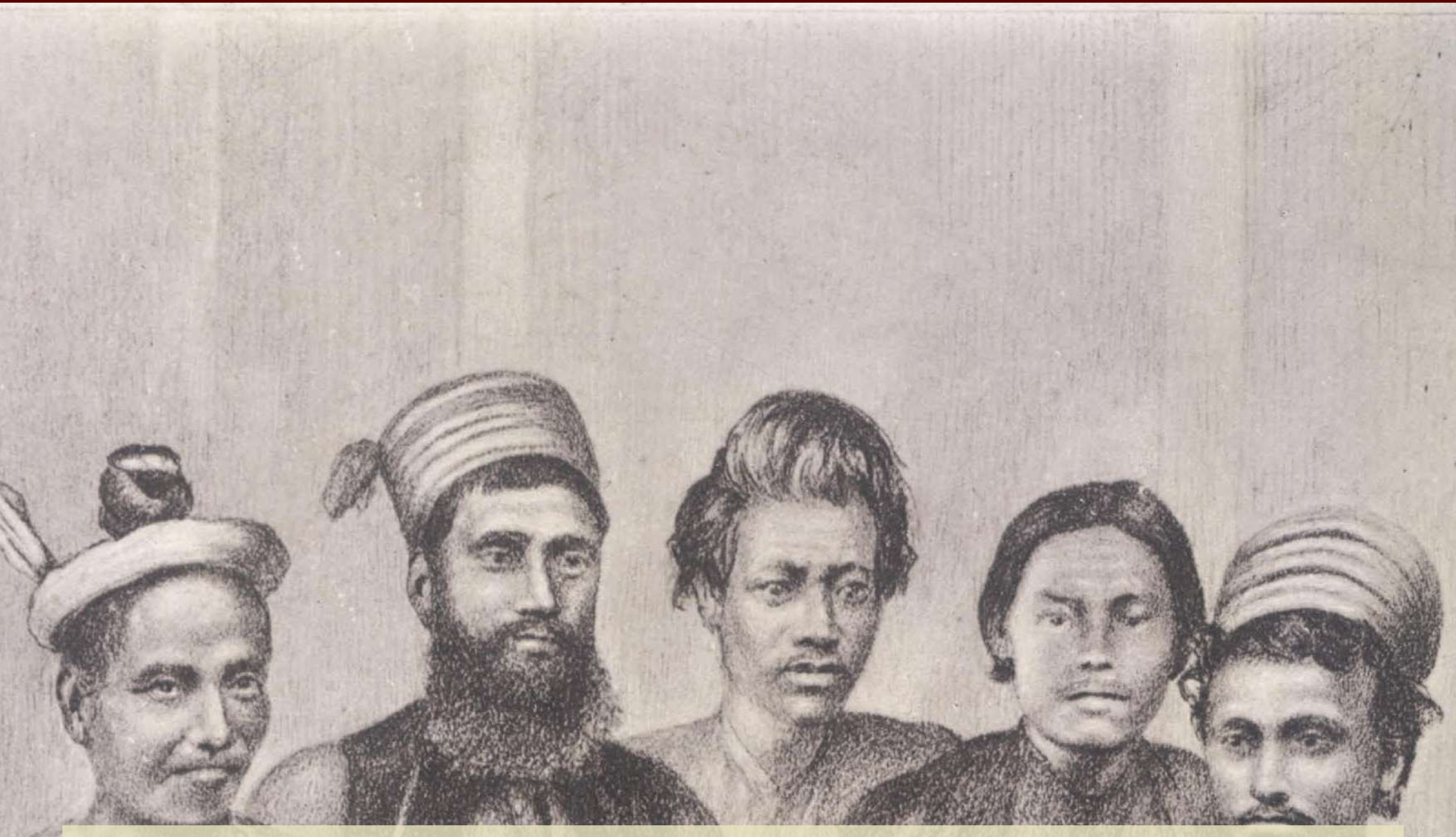


Bengalis in London's East End



Settlements of sailors

Although some early Bengali migrants to Britain were servants, most were sailors recruited in India to work on merchant ships. The majority of Bengali seamen came from Sylhet, but others came from Chittagong and Noakhali. Their presence was noticed as early as 1765, when an Indian visitor to Britain wrote, 'The English were not unacquainted with [men from] Chatgaon (present day Chittagong) and Juhangeernuggur (Jahangir Nagar present-day Dhaka).

Over the years, the community grew slowly, and by the beginning of the 20th century, groups of seamen and ex-soldiers, including a number of Bengalis, had settled near the docks of East End of London, Cable St and the Shadwell area. They joined the small number of Asian professionals mainly doctors, businessmen and lawyers who had established themselves in Britain from the middle of the 19th century.

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