

## Bachhil Rajputs of Badaun

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### ABSTRACT

The Bachhil Rajputs who are now a minor group pre-dating the major Rajput group have managed to achieve superiority over almost all the pre-Rajput tribes of north India and the pre-Bachhil Rajput tribes like the Bhars, Bharthaars, Bhuihars, Bhils were displaced. Regarding the martial skills and castle making the Bachhils played significant role in the formation of historical path of Shahjahanpur and Badaun. Itself a monument of historical significance, Jalalabad Fort has twenty-five feet high walls, which in those days were a symbol of invincibility – a structure now associated with the Chandelas after Jalaluddin Khilji renamed the city. Though put up stiff oppositions at the hands of Akbar during and Shahjahan the Bachhils suffered heavy reverses losing thousands of men under Diler Khan. They kept on fighting through the example of the Bachhil brothers of Myau who fought very fiercely during the Revolt of 1857. In a battle with the Chauhan leaders, they were defeated, but the songs that have been sung to the tune of last breath rendered by them became songs of Bachhil lineage to eternity. The factors which are discussed in this article include genealogy and pedigree of the Bachhils with special consideration of the current and future subordination and the tales of bravery that the Bachhils continue to pass on.

**Keywords:** *Bachhil Rajputs, Jalalabad Fort, Shahjahanpur, Myau Brothers, Rajput Resistance*

Bachhils are discussed among those tribes who defeated the tribal communities here and established their kingdoms before the Rajputs. Kingdoms of Ahirs and Gujjars were also established during the period of Bachhils. The original inhabitants of this place, Bhar, Bharthaar, Bhuihar and Bhils were driven away and forced to live in the rugged forests of Terai. Bachhils have had special influence in Shahjahanpur district. Like Bhars, Bachhils have also been fond of building forts.

The famous fort of Jalalabad whose walls were twenty-five feet high was built by these Bachhils. This fort has been famous in the entire region for its grandeur. This fort was taken over by the Chandelas of Mahoba. When Jalaluddin Khilji came here, this fort was named

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Received 23 March 2018; Accepted 20 July 2018. Available online: 25 August 2018.

Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension)

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Jalalabad. In 1555, Hussain Khan, a general of Akbar, destroyed all the Rajput kings here. During Shahjahan's time, thirteen thousand Rajputs were martyred in the attack of Diler Khan. Among them, the number of Bachhils was also quite high.

In the sixteenth century, Tilhar town of Shahjahanpur district was settled by a Bachhil Rajput Chand. Katheria Bachhil and Gaur of Shahjahanpur have been famous for their bravery. Muslim armies going east from Bareilly used to avoid this area. The Rajputs here fought a long battle with the Delhi Sultanate. It was considered impossible to defeat the Rajputs here or to collect taxes from them.

A branch of Bachhil Rajputs settled in Risauli near Ujhani in Badaun district. They established a state of Bachhil Rajputs by occupying the following twelve villages.

The Bachhils had control over Bara, Abdullaganj, Rauli, Jamrauli, Allahpur, Niranjapur, Barsuma, Kathauli, Pusganwa, Gathuna Garhi and Risauli. Their capital was Risauli. The credit for settling the Tomars here goes to the Bachhils. They married the Bachil daughters to two descendants of King Anangpal Tomar and gave Sanjarpur village as dowry. The Bachhils of Risouli have been famous for their bravery. Two brave brothers from here, Sumer Singh and Khan Chand Singh, were called to their maternal grandmother's place in Myau village before the revolt of 1857 so that they could protect the Rankwar Rajputs here from the Pathans of Myau. The Pathans were Rankwar Rajputs a few days ago. They had converted to Islam along with a Brahmin family.

Both the Bachil brothers had planted the flag of their bravery in the Myau region. In 1857, a group of rebels from Bela Dandi marched under the leadership of two Chauhan leaders Bakhtawar Singh and Kandhari Singh. These people used to collect land revenue from the rich. If they did not get the money, they used to commit suicide by burning. The terror of these two was so much that the Badaun district used to tremble at their name. Both of them used to wear chain mail. These leaders with gigantic bodies became heroes of folk tales. According to Muslim folklore, there was a person named Dhappu Dham. He was so fat that four porters used to lift him while sitting on a plank. He had also attacked Badaun city with the desire to convert Badaun's Jama Masjid into a temple again, which was foiled by a fakir by force. These brave Bachhils of Myau, Dhappu and Dham, heroes of many such true and false stories, were also

attacked. All the Thakurs of the village remained quietly locked in their houses. When the roof of the Bachhils was set on fire, both the brothers jumped into the battle alone.

When these Bachhil brothers showed their swords and inflicted a fierce battle, both the Chauhan leaders had to come forward. Both the Bachhil brothers were defeated when their swords got stuck in the armour of these leaders. By the time the swords were taken out, their heads were cut off.

The bodies of both the Bachhil Rajputs kept fighting for a long time, their swords kept on killing. It is said that the bodies were silenced only when the legs of these brave men were cut off. Even today, old people narrate many stories of the bravery of these Bachhil brothers.

Among these Bachhil brothers, the lineage of Sumer Singh continued. Descendants of these brave Bachhils are still present in Myau.

A Bachhil Sardar Jorawar Singh was present in Abdullah Ganj near Ujhani around 1800. This family was earlier employed on high posts with Ruhela Nawab Abdullah Khan of Ujhani. After this, in 774, during the rule of the Nawabs of Avadh, Thakur Jorawar Singh was a high official. He had no son. To get a son, he served a Muslim Saint Reta Shah and got a brilliant son. This son was named Bahadur Singh. Bahadur Singh was adept at sword fighting since childhood. At the age of 12, on hearing his father's taunts, he looted the government treasury going to Sahaswan and rebelled. Five soldiers were sent from Bareilly to arrest him. He killed four of these soldiers, one soldier escaped and went to Bareilly and informed about this. A whole contingent of the British was sent to arrest him. Bahadur Singh fought a fierce battle with the British at Ghuiyan Wale Bagh in Ujhani. The British were defeated in this battle. Bahadur Singh received many wounds in this battle. But he did not die. He had received the boon of *Iccha mrityu*. Saint Reta Shah had said that this child will die by his own wish.

Many Britishers were killed in this war. Bahadur Singh escaped and hid himself with his brother-in-law Thakur Ganga Baksh Singh of Piprao.

These days, the British Commissioner of Bareilly, who was earlier a Colonel in the army, was once caught by Thakur Bahadur Singh in the battle of Kamona (Meerut). He was let off by Thakur Sahib. This grateful Commissioner repaid this favour. A Yadav named Bahadur Singh

was shot dead and it was announced that the rebel Bahadur Singh was killed and in his place the loyal Raja Bahadur Singh was appointed as the ruler of the Ujhani region.

Raja Bahadur Singh had no son, so his two nephews Laxman Singh and Gulab Singh inherited his property. After the marriage of these two, the Badgujar family of Khaspur came to this property. At present, Thakur Kalyan Singh is living in Bahadur Ganj locality of Ujhani. He has remembered the glorious stories of his ancestors with great emotion. The prominent heroes of 1857, Bakhtawar Singh and Kandhari Singh were residents of Bela Dandi. One of their grandsons, Thakur Omkar Singh, was elected MLA and MP several times from 1948 to 1975 with a huge majority. One of Thakur Omkar Singh's sons, Thakur Munindra Pal Singh, is living in Badaun.