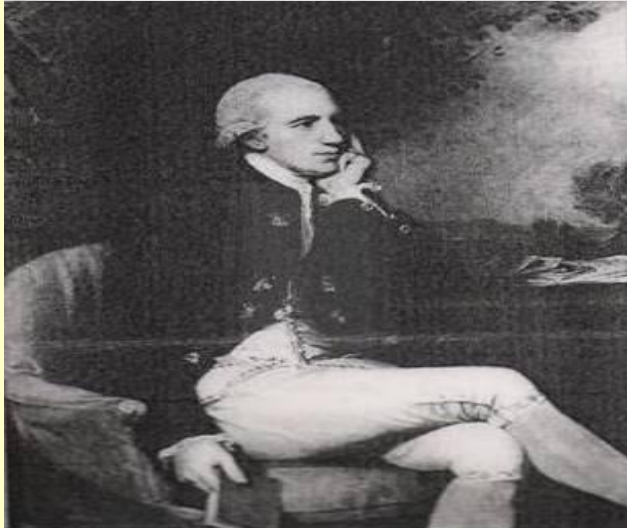


WILLIAM PETRIE (1748 -1816)



The Madras observatory from which the Indian Institute of Astrophysics has evolved started as a private Observatory of William Petrie, who was a member of Madras Civil Services in 1786. He was the Director of the Madras Observatory during the period (1786 – 1789). The main aim of the Observatory, as Petrie explained, was to provide navigational assistance to the company ships and help determine the longitudes by observing the eclipses of Moon and the satellites of Jupiter