HISTORY III
RESEARCH PROJECT

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REG NO : 17007

TOPIC : RESEARCHING THE ARRIVAL OF INDIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA

540 "The immigration of Mr Marimuthu Arumugam to South Africa."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank the following people who assisted me to compile this project :-

1. My parents.
2. My grandmother.

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Introduction

"While Indian South Africans are just over a hundred years old, they trace their roots in India to one of the oldest known world civilizations, that of the Indus valley."[1]

The S.S. Truro, on the 16 November 1860 brought to Durban the first Indians to arrive in Natal, numbering three hundred and forty one. The Truro departed from Madras and the voyage took thirty four days. Aboard the Truro were two hundred and three males, fifty seven women, nineteen girls, twenty one boys, ten infants (including one birth).

"This was the start of a new epoch in Natal and from that early begining has grown the large population which now has its roots firmly embedded in South Africa."[2]

Reasons for Indian Labour

The majority of Indian South Africans, are the descendants of indentured workers brought to Natal between 1860 and 1911 to develop the country's sugar belt.

In 1851 the first Sugar Industry was established by Edward Morewood on the Natal North coast. Around this time Mauritus was recruiting labour from India. Officials in Natal hoped for a similiar system since there was a shortage of labour. In order for the Sugar Industry to prospe the

1 Y. S. Meer : Documents of indentured labour Natal 1851-1917, page 1

2. Unknown : Century of Indians 1860 - 1960, page 15

needed a stable labour force. After negotiations between the British Government and the Indian Government, labourers were obtained from India.

Law 14 of 1859 was passed which provided that the Government could introduce labour from India and that, individuals could also obtain labour from India.

Conditions laid down by British Government

1. Any Indian who came out as an indentured labourer would have to work for five years with the minimum wage of ten shillings per month.
2. It was stipulated that there be a fixed ratio of men to women but this never happened.
3. Accomodation had to be provided by the employer.
4. Medical attention was free.
5. Labourers were required to work fifty four hours per week.
6. After residing in Natal for ten years labourers could obtain a free passage to India but they were not forced to leave. If they did not want to leave or reindenture the Government had to give them land. According to H. Tinker this system is liken to that of slavery and perhaps it was because "India prohibited the indenturing of labour to Natal, nine years earlier, because of her disgust with that colony's treatment of Indians."[3]

3. U. S. Meer: Documents of indentured labour Natal 1851-1917, page 1.

Place of Origin

Indians came mainly from Calcutta and Madras people who came from Madras, South of India, were mainly Tamil and Telegu. Since 2/3 of indentured population came from the South Tamilian and Telegu speaking people dominated.

Place of Settlement in Natal

The Indians labourers settled on the north coast of Natal because they worked on the sugar planations. Later they were consigned to coalfields, railways and wattle planations. This accounts for their distribution over the entire Province of Natal.

When they completed their indenture and became free, most of those who chose to remain in the colony took to the cultivation of land.

" MARIMUTU "

Do my roots go back to one of those indentured labourers? In an attempt to answer this question I have traced the life history of my Grandfather (fathers - father)

THE LIFE HISTORY OF MY GRANDFATHER

Date of arrival in South Africa

On 14 August 1906, at the age of four my Grandfather, Marimuthu landed on South African soil together with his parents.

Reasons for leaving original country

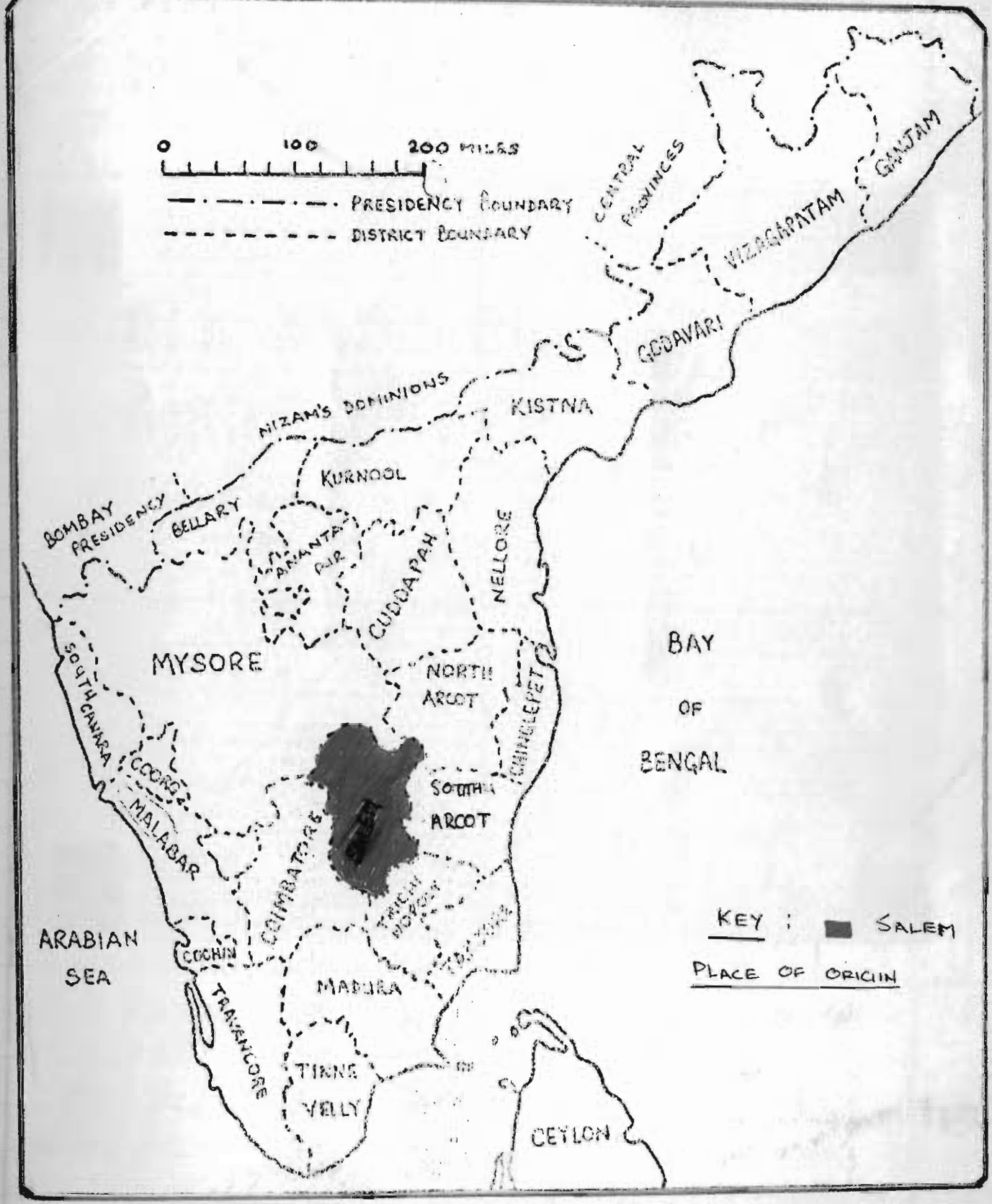
They ventured to South Africa for economic reasons. Their main aim was to earn enough money and go back to India. Marimuthu was brought along since he was the youngest in his family.

Place of origin in India

They originally came from the village of Mannarpaliyam in the district of Salem in India. The district of Salem is still in existence in this present day in the South of India. The family was Tamil speaking Hindus thus we have carried this religion for the past decade or more.

Name of Ship and Port of Entry

They departed aboard the S.S. Umzinto 41st I was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VIZAGAPATAM
GODAVARI
KISTNA
NIZAM'S DOMINIONS
KURNOOL
BOMBAY PRESIDENCY
BELLARY
ANANTAPUR
CUDDAPAH
NELLORE
MYSORE
NORTH ARCOT
CHINGLEPUT
BAY
OF
BENGAL
SOUTH CANARA
COORG
MALABAR
SOUTH ARCOT
COIMBATORE
TRICHINOPOLY
TANJORE
ARABIAN SEA
COCHIN
MADURA
TRAVANCORE
TINNEVELLY
CEYLON
KEY : SALEM
PLACE OF ORIGIN

EVIDENCE THAT HE WORKED AT THE HIND BROS. LTD.

The Hind Bros. Indian Social Club held a banquet at the Moon Hotel when Mr. Jack Naicker presented a floating trophy to Mr. Gopaul who is an official of the club.

Photo Bala Govender.

unsuccessful in obtaining information on the Port of Entry of the S.S. Umzinto 41st

First place of settlement in Natal

Manmuth and his parents settled in the 'Junction' area presently known as 'Tinland'.

Reasons for remaining in South Africa

The family lived in South Africa for seventeen years. In 1923 when his parents were returning to India Manmuth was twenty one years old. He was a member of a soccer team and on that particular day his team was playing. Since he was twenty one years his freinds asked him to stay back. He took the plunge to remain. For a short while he corresponded with his parents but later they lost contact.

First Occupation

Before he began working he attended school and achieved a standard five education.

At about the age of twenty he was employed at the Hind Bros. Ltd. He attained the post of supervisor since he was well educated considering the period. At work he was known as Mr. Jack Naicker.

He was employed with this company until his retirement at the age of sixty five years.

Marriage, children, grandchildren etc

At the age of about thirty years Manmuth

married Gengama (my grandmother)

He accepted her hand in marriage because he was very lonely and he had no family in South Africa

Number of children

Munimutu had six children. The eldest child was born in 1931, that being my father. There are three boys and three girls. My grandfather is succeed by sixteen grandchildren and two greatgrandchildren.

Date of Death

My grandfather passed away peacefully in the year 1970 at the age of sixty eight. He is loved and remembered by all of us.

OTHER DETAILS

According to the information I obtained from Department of Internal Affairs my grandfather was of Vannia caste.

Vannia

The Vannia's were also known as the Vannijan, who were equvalent to an agricultural caste of Southern India. According to Hutton, the Vannia are spoken of as painters. In modern times Vannias have assumed the title "Mudaliyar", used by the chief painters of the Malabar (Tamil) caste in 1680.

Some Vannia also used the title "Padayachee"

or "Padachi". With South Indians of Tamil origin, the surname "Padayachee", "Mudaliyar" and "Moodley are common.

From this information I could not make a link between the Vannia caste and our present family since we carry the surname "Naicker."

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I would like to give my personal opinion of this project. Although it was quite difficult to compile, I personally feel that it was quite an original project. It was very satisfying to both my family and I because it answered many searching questions that we have wondered about for many, many years.

My family and I have benifitted a great deal from this project for we are now much more informed about my grandfather.

B.M.25

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

COPY OF SHIP'S LIST OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT

Serial Number	:	374
Colonial Number	:	125357
Date of Arrival	:	14.8.1906
Name of Ship	:	S.S. UMZINTO 41ST
Place of Registration	:	—
Date of Registration	:	—
Number in Register	:	—
Name	:	MARIMUTHU
Father's Name	:	ARUMUGAM
Age	:	4 YRS
Sex	:	MALE
Caste	:	VANNIA
District	:	SALEM
Thanna/Taluq	:	SALEM
Village	:	MANNARPALAYAM
Height	:	—
Bodily Marks	:	—
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	—
Relations Accompanied	:	—
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	VACCINATED
Remarks	:	—

Certified a true copy.

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE
PRIVAAT SAK X54330
03 -04- 1923
STREEKVERTEENWOORDIGER
DEPARTEMENT VAN BINNELANDSE AANGELEENTHEDE

REFERENCES

1. Anil Sookdoo : History Thesis , Printed in 1982

2. Unknown : Century of Indians 1860 - 1960 , Printed in 1960. Published by Cavalier Publishers.

3. Meer, Y.S. : Documents of indentured Labour Natal 1815-1917, First edition 1980. Published by the Institute of Black Research, Printed by Unity Publications