

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.

I would like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Sathia, Mr. John and Matthew for their assistance. I also thank Mr. Gaddam Reddy for allowing me to interview him and I am especially grateful to Mrs. Thomas for her hospitality and allowing me the use of family letters and documents.

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1983

B.E. FRANCIS

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PREFACE

The title of my project is , "The Indian Immigrant and his contribution to the Sugar Industry in South Africa". When confronted with the project of tracing my routes, I was placed in a dilemma. My great grand parents had died many years ago and my parents had only a vague memory of them. Using my mother's birth-certificate, I acquired some information about my grandfather through Indian Affairs. Apparently he had been a horse-groom in Northdene. I felt, that I had to get someone who worked as a labourer on the sugar plantation, so that I could place him against a relevant historical back ground, in this case the development of Natal as a sugar producing colony and his contribution to it. I decided that my research would be much more effective and authentic if I could get an interview with an ex-indentured labourer. After a month of searching around I began giving up hope of ever getting to speak to an original immigrant until I received a call from a family friend that got my project off the ground. Apparently her father was still, alive, a hundred years old and residing in Asherville. My subject, is not very well and his hearing and memory has been impaired with age. However with help from his family I managed to get a sketchy outline of his life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

PART 1.

CHAPTER 1 - HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

CHAPTER 2 - BRIEF HISTORY OF MT. EDGECOMBE ESTATES.

PART 11.

CHAPTER 3 - INTERVIEW - LIFE OF SUBJECT.

APPENDIX. - 1. SKETCH MAPS.
2. EXTRACTS FROM PASSPORT.
3. CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE.
4. CORRESPONDENCE FROM INDIA.

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PART 1.CHAPTER 1.HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION:

Due to the reluctance of the Natives to work on the sugar estates , there was a shortage of labour for sugar production. Sugar planters petitioned the Government for an alternative source of labour. This resulted in the passing of Laws 14 and 15 of 1859 by the Natal Legislative Council; law 14 provided for the importation of Immigrants at Public expense and for the regulation and Government of such Immigrants, while law 15 enabled private individuals to introduce labourers at their own expense.....(1). The Indian Government passed Act No. XXXI of 1860 which extended the provisions of Act No. 21 of 1855 to include the colony of Natal.

Immigration Agencies were opened up at Bombay, Madras and Calcutta for the recruitment of Indian labourers. At each of these agencies was stationed an official, the Protector of Emigrants, to ensure that no coercion was used on the emigrant and that he understood something about the five years contract he was making. In Natal Law 14 of 1859 provided for the appointment of a "Coolie Immigration Agent", in charge of the "Coolie Immigration Department."

Provision was made for the drawing of contracts between employers and ~~Immigration~~ Immigrants. Indians who came out as indentured labourers would have to work for five years at wages not less than 10 shillings per month. Women and children received half the amount. Stipulated in the agreement was that there should be a fixed ratio of men and women, but this was not so as the ratio of women dropped. They got free accommodation, medical attention, a set of clothes and rations. They were to work a 34 hour week.....If they

(1) PAPERS OF INDIAN IMMIGRATION - MARITZBURG ARCHIVES

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If they remained in the colony for 10 years, that is, reindentured for another 5 years, they were to get a free passage back to India. Alternatively, if they did not wish to leave, the Government had to give them land of equivalent value.

On Friday, 16 November, 1860, the first ship carrying indentured labourers to South Africa, "THE TRURO" arrived at Durban Bay.

Between 1860 and 1866, about 5,000 men, women, and children were imported.....(2) In 1866, a depression in Natal temporarily stopped the importation of labourers. In 1867, the first batch of indentured labourers returned home and complaints of ill-treatment resulted in the Colonial Government instituting an enquiry into the conditions of the Indians still working in Natal. The outcome of the enquiry failed to satisfy the Indian Government which forbade the resumption of Emigration to Natal. On the basis of the Natal Legislative Councils acceptance in 1874 of amendments proposed by the Indian Government, the latter permitted the resumption of emigration to the Colony in that year. Indian (Emmigration) of labourers from India was terminated in 1911.

The labourers were housed in Estates and were virtually serfs through a special system of laws designed in theory for the protection, but in practice working for the benefit of the employers.....(3) The details of the indentured labour system were such that once a labourer had been imported from India, 10 years of labour was expected from him. In addition to these advantages, he was an effective agricultural labourer for he came from the crop raising areas, the great river plains of India. A number of Indians paid their £5 commutation fine and released themselves from their contract as ^{early} ~~early~~ as 1863. During the first 5 years of indenture, about 2,226 of them left Natal without obtaining free return passengers passages to India to which they were entitled.

(2) E. BRADLOW : INDENTURED INDIANS IN NATAL AND THE £3 TAX.

(3) THE SETTLERS (1860-80), P.54.

Although the Indian immigrants became "free" on the expiration of their contract, their movement were however restricted to Natal and they were "not allowed to leave the colony and move to another without a licence." These Indians having very little or no money with which to buy land, leased small holdings from European owners. In some cases these holdings were sold to the tenants who paid from their savings or paid on the higher purchase plan. In this way most of the land owned by Indians in Durban, Clairwood, Cato Manor, and Overport and also on the North Coast in the districts of Inanda and Stanger, were acquired.

CONTRIBUTION OF INDIANS IN NATAL.

Opinion at both the official and non-official level was that the economic prosperity of the Colony laid in the presence of Indian labourers. The Indians with their industrious habits and comparatively little ~~wants~~ wants did remarkable as cultivators. In numerous localities they converted waste and unproductive land into well kept gardens, planted vegetables, tobacco, maize and fruit trees. European public opinion had reacted favourably to the value of the Indian labourer and on January 19, 1865, the "Natal Mercury" wrote : "Coolie Immigration after several years experience of its kind is deemed more essential to our prosperity than ever. It is the vitalising principle. Had it not been Coolie labour, we should certainly not have had it to say that our sugar exports increased from £26,000 to £100,000 from 1863 to 1864 and has prospects of greater increase before it. Had it not been for Coolie labour we should not hear of coffee plantations springing up on all lands and of the prosperity of all the areas being sustained through the agency of the East India men.".....(4)

There was very good reason for this jubilation. The Indian had made is impact felt on the production of sugar. From an export figure of £19,401 in 1861 to it arose to £180,496 in 1871. Even the Mayor of Durban was loud in his praise for Indian labourers and declared in triumphant tones in 1865 : "Only six Kaffirs remained in the employ of the Corporation, the bulk of them being discharged and the town gang consists with this exception, entirely of Coolies who are found to work satisfactorily under superintendence, of the foreman.

CHAPTER 11.BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FOUNDATION OF THE MT. EDGECOMBE.
SUGAR ESTATES.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM SMEARDON engaged in trade with the Cape. In 1849 at Cape Town, he married and settled down in Natal in 1850. In Durban, he opened up a store in partnership with Joseph Henderson and sold goods to Boers, ivory hunters and Zulus. At this time, he was already developing his Mt. Edgecombe Estate. He planted cane, and erected a steam mill in 1861. At the end of 1876 he sold the mill to a Mauritian named Langlois who erected a £100,000 sugar mill. In 1878 the Natal Sugar Ltd. acquired Mt. Edgecombe Estates and was itself in 1895 taken over by Natal Estates Ltd.(5)

(5) R.F. OSBORN : VALIANT HARVEST, THE FOUNDING OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN SUGAR INDUSTRIES, P. 220.

PART 11.CHAPTER 111.

Mr. Gaddam Penchal Reddy was born in India in 1883 "A.1!" He formerly resided with his family in the town of Rajpur of the village Nellore..... "A.2". He is the son of the late Mr. Gaphi Reddy, a Telegu of the Kapu caste. According to Risley and Thurston, the Kapu caste is ranked as below Brahmin... Komati, Golla and above Sole, Togata and others in social status (6).

Mr. Reddy emigrated to South Africa for two reasons. As a young man, he preferred to work elsewhere rather than in his own village because the jobs available to him there were not to his satisfaction. He left home with a group of friends but his attempts to find suitable employment was not successful. As a result, he was forced to return to Rajpur and his family two months later. However on return, he was treated as an out-caste by his family. For example, he was forced to use separate eating utensils and could not eat together with the rest of the family or share in the families social or religious activities. Treatment as an out-caste at home and according to Mr. Reddy, "we had to work very hard for less money," were the two reasons for emigrating to South Africa. After reading the advertisements for jobs in South Africa my subject recruited as a labourer at the Immigration offices in Madras. He then embarked on the Umlazi (27) at Madras and arrived at Durban bay on the 23rd January, 1906. He was one of the 11,641 indentured labourers who came to South Africa that year..... (7).

My subject worked for the Mt. Edgecombe Sugar Estates as an indentured labourer, and lived at 'G' Cotree (barracks)... "A.3!"

As a He reindentured.....

(A.1.: A.2 : A.3.) - SEE APPENDIX.

(6) G.S. GHURYE : CASTE AND RACE IN INDIA, P. 123.

(7) A.T. ARKIN : THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE INDIANS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY, P. 36

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He reindentured when his contract expired and worked for the company for a total of 15 years. On reindenturing, he was promoted to Sirdar (Foreman) and moved to another barracks (Willing Cotree). Besides free lodging in the company barracks, he received a weekly ration of one dish of rice and mealie meal and a monthly ration of salt, dholl and rice, and oil. As a Sirdar he earned a monthly salary of five rupees. In 1907 at the age of 24, Mr. Reddy married. However he lost his wife who left him a daughter. In 1910 at the age of 27 Mr. Reddy re-married. From this marriage he received four sons and two daughters, thus having a total of seven children.

A.4 After his contract expired in 1921, Mr. Reddy moved to South Coast Junction (Rossburgh).⁴ My subject at this point seemed a bit hazy about the type of work he did here. Members of his family suggested that he may have worked Hulletts Sugar Refineries but they were not certain of this. What is certain however is that during the five years after leaving the Mt. Edgecombe Estates he saved money and in 1926, he bought some land and built a "Wood and iron" house, in Titren Road, Sea-View. Mr. Reddy then started work at the Stellawood Jewish Cemetery as a caretaker where he worked till retirement. He presently collects a pension from the Durban United Hebrew Congregation. In 1936 Mr. Reddy converted to Christianity and since has been a member of the Bethesda Church. As a Christian Mr. Reddy went on a religious pilgrimage to Jerusalem and other holy Cities of Israel. He also reconciled with his family visited them in India and receives correspondence from them....."A.5."

(A.4.: A.5) - SEE APPENDIX.

CONCLUSION:

South Africa today is one of the world's largest producers and exporters of sugar. Production by the S.A. African Sugar Industry at present averages between 1.6 and 1.7 million metric tons of sugar. Of this approximately 900,000 tons is allocated to meet the full requirements of domestic use, leaving 7/800,000 tons available for export. Sugar production in 1967 amounted to 1 864 000 metric tons. Local consumption was valued at R114 000 000, while exports to Japan, Canada and the U.S. brought in R85 000 000 in foreign exchange. South Africa's export sugars are acknowledged by leading refiners in Japan, Canada and the U.S. as the finest in the world.(8)

However, in the 1860's the very survival of this industry was threatened through the lack of sufficient and suitable labour. It was the diligent labour of people like my subject that contributed to the survival and budding of the Sugar Industry to the "GIANT" it is today. Twenty-one years years of work as an indentured labourer on the Mt. Edgecombe Sugar Estates, has earned my subject his place as one of the pioneers of the South African Sugar Industry.

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Portret van houer
Photograph of bearer
Photographie du titulaire



Handtekening van houer
Signature of bearer



BELANGRIJK.—Sonder burgerskap verloor of hield van hierdie paspoort, moet die houer dit oorgaan aan die Uitreisburo, en inligting vir Reisigers op bladsy 38.

Suid-Afrikaanse
verval die geldig-
wys na die Uitreis-

IMPORTANT.—Whenever the holder of this passport loses his South African citizenship or acquires a passport of another country, the validity of this passport expires and must be surrendered—see Conditions of Issue and information for Travellers on page 40.

RENNY	
VAN VAN HOUER/SURNAME OF BEARER NOM DU TITULAIRE	
GALDRIEM PENCUAL	
VOORNAME/FIRST NAMES/PRENOMS	

VERGESEL VAN	☐	KINDERS
ACCOMPANIED BY	☒	CHILDREN
ACCOMPAGNE DE	☐	ENFANTS

Nasionaliteit * Nationality
Nationalité

SUID-AFRIKAANSE BURGER
SOUTH AFRICAN CITIZEN
CITOYEN SUD-AFRICAIN

KINDERS * CHILDREN * ENFANTS

Naam Name Nom	Datum van geboorte Date of birth Date de naissance	Geslag Sex Sexe

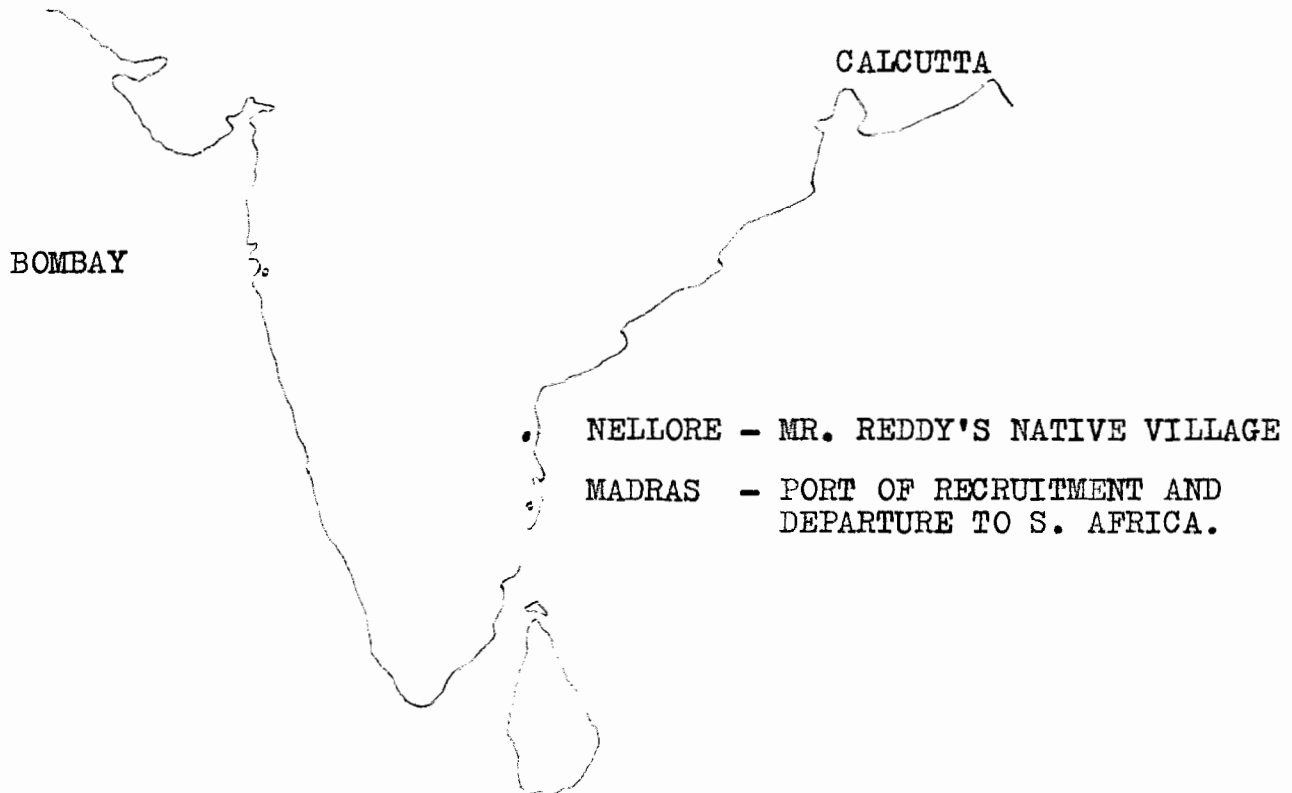
EXTRACTS FROM PASSPORT.

A. I.

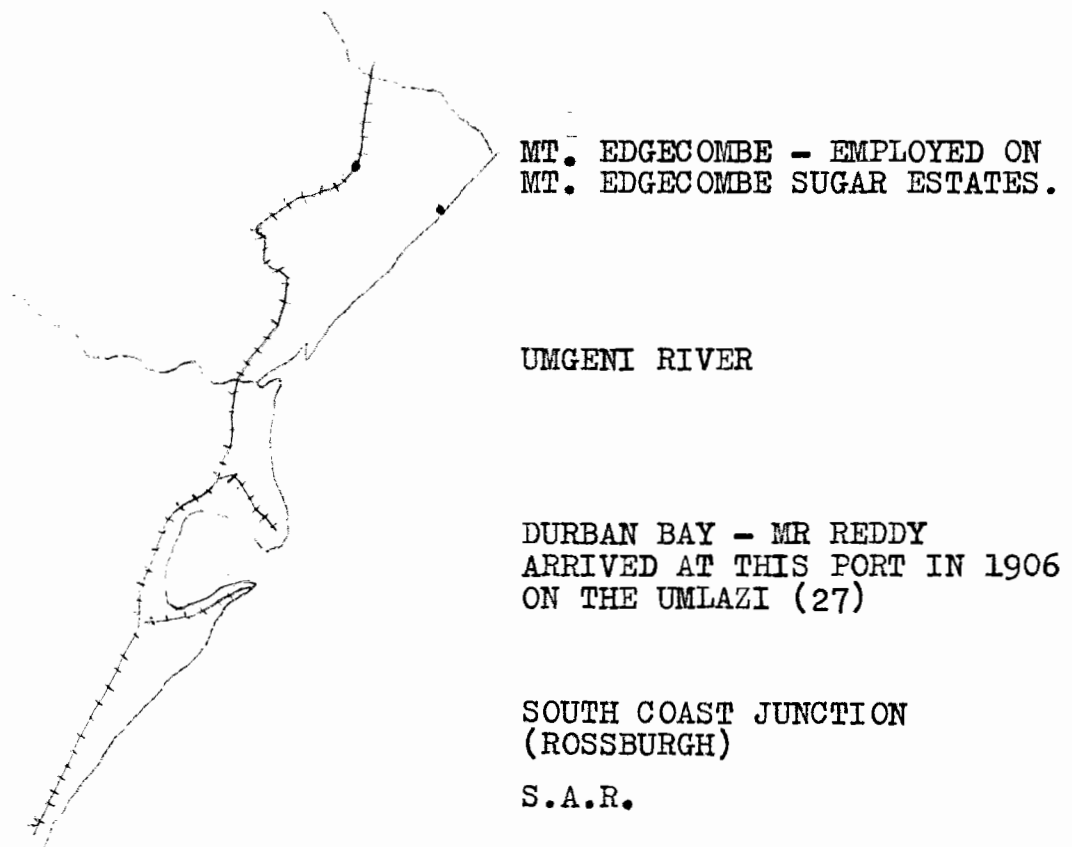
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(behoudens die visum- of ander toelatingsvereiste van die land)
COUNTRIES FOR WHICH THIS PASSPORT IS VALID
(subject to the visa or other entry requirements of each country)
PAYS POUR LESQUELS CE PASSEPORT EST VALABLE
(Sous réserve des formalités d'entrée ou des conditions
d'entrée requises par chaque pays)

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SKETCH OF INDIA - SHOWING AREA MR. REDDY EMIGRATED FROM : A.2/3.



SKETCH OF NATAL COAST - SHOWING AREA IN WHICH MR. REDDY WAS EMPLOYED AS INDENTURED LABOURER.



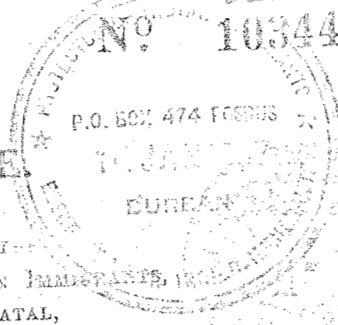
G.P.S. 3146—1050.1—10-200.

Reference 195 (D.I. 167).



UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

CERTIFICATE OF DISCHARGE.



OFFICE OF THE
PROTECTOR OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS, NATAL,
DURBAN, NATAL,

File 67468
I hereby certify that

Indian Immigrant No. 117574

duly completed his

term of indenture on the 1st March 1921

In terms of Indian Immigration Act No. 18 of 1925

and is released from his obligation to service in this Province under indenture.

DESCRIPTION.

Father's Name S. Papi Sanyal

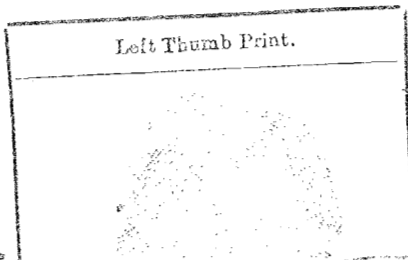
Age 73 yrs (1925)

Height 5' 8" feet 8" inches

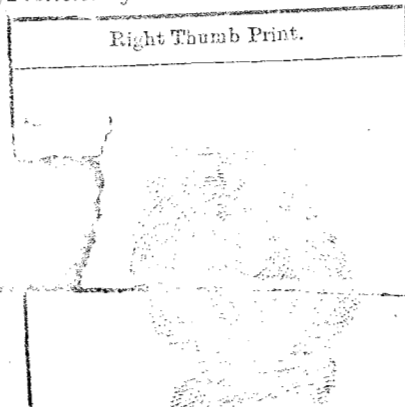
Bodily Marks scar on face

Red
Protector of Indian Immigrants, Natal.

Left Thumb Print.



Right Thumb Print.



हवाई पत्र
AEROGRAMME



Co. F. 1st Regt.

Spencer, P. 2



दूसरा मोड़ SECOND FOLD

AT 14 0000Z 98 - 1 PPM NO ENCLOSURES ALLOWED

भेजने वाले का नाम और पता:- SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS:-

INDIAN

CORRESPONDENCE FROM LIT. DEPT. IN INDIA A.5.

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