

T I T L E P A G E

RESEARCH PROJECT:

TRACE THE ORIGINS OF YOUR ANCESTOR (S). RESEARCH THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ARRIVAL OF YOUR GRANDEFATHER/GRANDMOTHER WITH REFERENCE TO:

1. Place of origin in India
2. Socio-Economic Background
3. Reasons for leaving India
4. Dates of departure and Arrival to South Africa
5. Name of ship and Port of Entry
6. First place of settlement
7. First Occupation
8. Subsequent places of settlements and occupations
9. Marriage, Birth of children
10. Social, Religious and Political Activities.

1983

D. CHETTY

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A. INTRODUCTION

In researching the 'roots' of my grandfather, Polu (Paul) Chetty I found that I was faced with a number of obstacles. His second wife, my grandmother, Jeamma Chetty was still alive but she had reached the age of ~~senility~~ and she was bedridden.

She is presently hospitalised at the Aryan Benevolent Home, Dayanand Gardens, Chatsworth. I thought, initially, she would have been of immense help to ~~him~~^{me} because she is over a hundred years of age, although she was born in South Africa in the 1880's.

Another obstacle I was faced with was the lack of documents letters and photographs. None of the descendants of Paul Chetty have documents pertaining to their father and the only person, who can produce such documents, if there are any is Jeamma.

However, Polu Chetty had a son, Frank, from his first wife, who clearly remembers most things about his father. I interviewed him and my project is based entirely on interviews with him, my aunt's and on documentation received from the department of Internal Affairs.

A. NAME: POLU (PAUL) CHETTY (NO. 56346).

B. PLACE OF BIRTH: North Arcot, Arkot, Anakavoor,
Nuruvathiyar, SOUTH INDIA.

C. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND:

Polu Chetty came from a rural area and his family were farmers. However, on his father's death, the role of breadwinner fell on his shoulders. Unfortunately he could not do so and this is evident by his departure for South Africa leaving a destitute mother and widowed sister behind.

D. REASONS FOR LEAVING INDIA:

According to Frank Chetty, Polu Chetty was a man of adventure and he came to seek his fortune in the 'land of gold'. Being an adventurous man, he sought to make his home in a new land, amongst 'new' people. He was easily deceived, therefore, by the recruiting agents who told him that Natal was the 'land of gold', it was not.

He left India at the age of 21, leaving behind a widowed mother and widowed sister. He was only son and was asthmatic. He never returned 'home' and neither did he write 'home'.

I personally feel that being asthmatic could be seen as a reason for him, sole breadwinner of his family, to leave India. He left his family in Nellore, South India before his departure.

E. DATES OF DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL TO SOUTH AFRICA:

DATE OF DEPARTURE: 2-10-1894 PORT: Madras

DATE OF ARRIVAL: 24 -10-1894

F. NAME OF SHIP AND PORT OF ENTRY

NAME OF SHIP: S.S PONGOLA

PORT OF ENTRY: Durban

G. PLACES OF SETTLEMENT:

1. STANGER:

Lived with a Doctor Jones, who was then District Surgeon of Stanger.

2. KEARSNEY:

He lived in the barracks at the Tea Mill, which was allocated to indentured labourers. This was to be his last fixed abode and on his death in 1937 he was buried in the area set aside for that.

H. OCCUPATION:

1. STANGER:

On his arrival in Natal (Durban) he was indentured to the District Surgeon of Stanger, a Doctor Jones. He was employed as a 'houseboy' and his job entailed doing the cooking, gardening, housework, amongst other things.

However, Doctor Jones was transferred from Stanger and Polu Chetty's contract was then transferred to the Hullet's Sugar Company, who were then, a small but thriving sugar family.

2. KEARSNEY:

Polu Chetty was then indentured to the Hulut's Group, who ~~was~~ involved in sugar but he wasn't going to work on the sugar plantations.

At Kearsney, Hulut's experimented with tea, which was also grown there. They opened a tea mill and used indentured labour to 'mill' the tea. Amongst the labourers employed there was Polu Chetty. This mill was opened in 1894 or 1895.

Polu Chetty was to live there and work there until his death in 1937. He worked as a labourer, initially, until he was promoted to Sirdar and he then became overseer over the indentured labourers.

Today, this mill exists no more. It was closed down in 1948/49, and today, is a ruin surrounded by sugar cane.

I. WEALTH:

At his death, Polu Chetty was earning 3 pounds - 10 shillings per month. On contract, his eldest son, Frank, was earning 4 pounds - 2 shillings per month.

Although, Polu Chetty, earned very little, he had the

ability to save, through earnest persuasion by Jeamma, his second wife. He used his savings to purchase land in:

1. Kearsney
2. Lot 14 (Stanger)

Today, only the property in Lot 14 exists because I inherited from my father, Venketasu Chetty. The other property in Kearsney was developed by his sons and they built a 6 bedroomed house on it.

Polu Chetty, however, never saw the house because he died first before it was completed. This house was then sold to a White Woman by Shrimp, eldest son from the second wife, who swindled his brothers. This property was sold for R30 000 and was recently sold for R160 000.

J. FREE INDIAN:

Polu Chetty paid the 3 pound tax on completion of his indenture to become a free Indian.

K. MARRIAGES AND CHILDREN:

Polu was married twice. He was married to Ankammah, who was a married woman who left her husband in India. Their only child was Frank Chetty. She died in 1899, two years after the birth of Frank.

Polu, then married Jeamma and they had ten children, namely, Chinamah, Narisumulo (Shrimp), Seethamma, Sundrama, Venkatasu and Mariamma.

Today some of Polu's grandchildren and great grandchildren are in the forefront of community work, commerce, education, sport and journalism.

EXAMPLES:

EDUCATION:

1. D. Chetty (Teacher)
2. V. Chetty (Teacher)
3. Bala Chetty (lecturer in English - Zimbabwe)

4. George Chetty (lecturer in Biology - Zimbabwe)
5. Ken Chetty (retired school principal).

JOURNALISM:

1. Rajendra Chetty (Drum, formerly of Sunday Times)
2. Devan Moodley (Natal Mercury)

MERCURY

MEDICINE:

1. Dan Chetty (M.D. London)
2. Preggy Chetty (M.D. Durban)

LEGAL AFFAIRS:

1. Iver Chetty - Attorney General of Zimbabwe.

SPORT:

1. Kirukan Naidoo - Natal Athlete & cricketeer and presently director of sports centre in Birmingham, England.

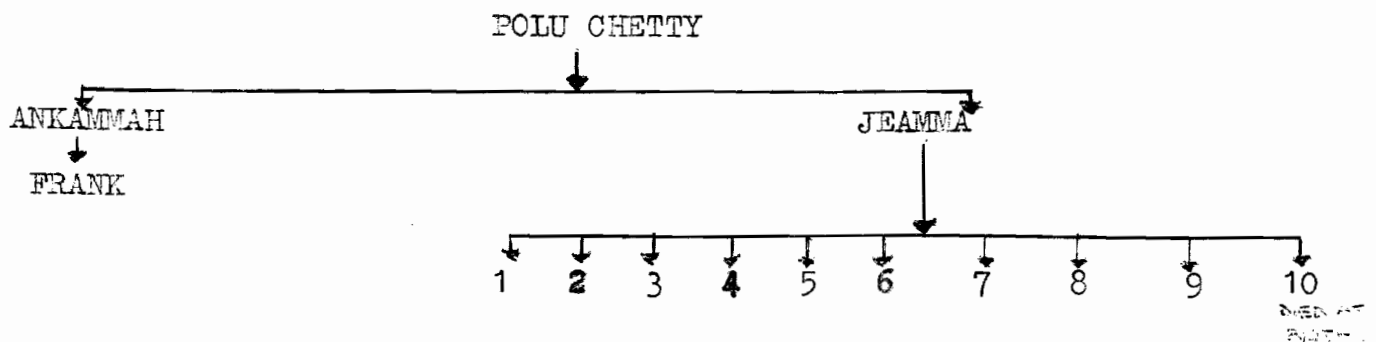
COMMUNITY WORK:

1. Dhanpal Naidoo - Former President of Chatsworth Indian Child Welfare
2. Mala Naidoo - Social Worker

COMMERCE:

1. Dhanpal Naidoo - Chatsworth Centre
2. R.E. Moodley - L.A.C. member and prominent businessman in Stanger.

MARRIAGE AND BIRTH OF CHILDREN



KEY :

1. Chinammah (7-10-1905)
2. Narisumulu (Shrimp) (17-15-1907) - (5-5-82)
3. Seethama (1-2-1910)
4. Sundramma (23-7-1915)
5. Pathmanathan ((17-12-1920)
6. Kankamah (6-1-1922)
7. Verajulu (7-9-1923)
8. Venketasu (26-3-1925) - (30-10-79)
9. Mariama (8-6-1930)

N.B. CHILDREN ARE FROM ELDEST TO YOUNGEST.

L. SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES:

Being a rural area Kearsney was far removed from the hub of political activity, Durban. Paul Chetty, was therefore, never motivated by any political activity. He wasn't interested.

According to Frank, he was a learned scholar in the Hindu religion. He was well versed in Tamil and Telegu but he could never speak English.

The community work that he did was to be that of spiritual leader at the Kearsney barracks. If people had a problem they consulted him.

M. CONCLUSION:

Both Palu's son, Frank and his grandson, Freddy went back to India to look for our relatives. Unfortunately no trace of them could be found in Nellore, near Madras.

However, two of my grandfather's cousins did settle down in South Africa, near Harding, in Natal but both of them returned to India and no trace of them could be found.

To further complicate matters Polu did not want to write to his family in India. When persuaded to do so by his children, he told them, "Shut up!"

SOURCE LIST:

1. INTERVIEW WITH FRANK CHETTY
2. INTERVIEW WITH KANKAMAH NAIDOO

9.
N. APPENDIX

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW WITH FRANK CHETTY

1.. Where was your father born?

I was given a document by the I.A.D. just before I left for India.

2. When Paul arrived here in South Africa whom did he work for?

1. Dr Jones.
2. Hulutts Tea Mill.

3. Why did he leave India?

1. Adventure.
2. He was bluffed by the recruiting agents.

4. Where did he live?

1. Dr Jone's house.
2. Kearsney barracks.

5. Was he a political activist?

No

6. Why did he not write to his family in India?

Because he left them destitute.

7. Was he harsh as a Sirdar?

No

8. Did you trace any of our relatives in India?

No

9. How did the 1913 Strikes affect Kearsney?

There wasn't any strikes in Kearsney.
Polu wasn't a political activist.

N.B. THE REST OF THE INTERVIEW IS ON TAPE AND CONTAINS PETTY
EVENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN KEARSNEY