

594 [The Immigration of Munien Andy to South Africa]

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1983

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7. Miss K. Suraj who so willingly and efficiently typed out the script.
8. My friends and relatives who shared their knowledge of my grandfather.

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DEDICATION

To my only son, Darryl so that he will have a better understanding of my grandfather and his culture.

MAP OF NATAL



HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

The Indian population of South Africa owes its presence in the country to the labour problem experienced by pioneer white farmers in the British Colony of Natal during the 19th century. With the harvesting of the first crop in 1851 a valuable industry emerged making it abundantly clear where the prosperity of Natal lay.

HISTORY AND PROGRESS

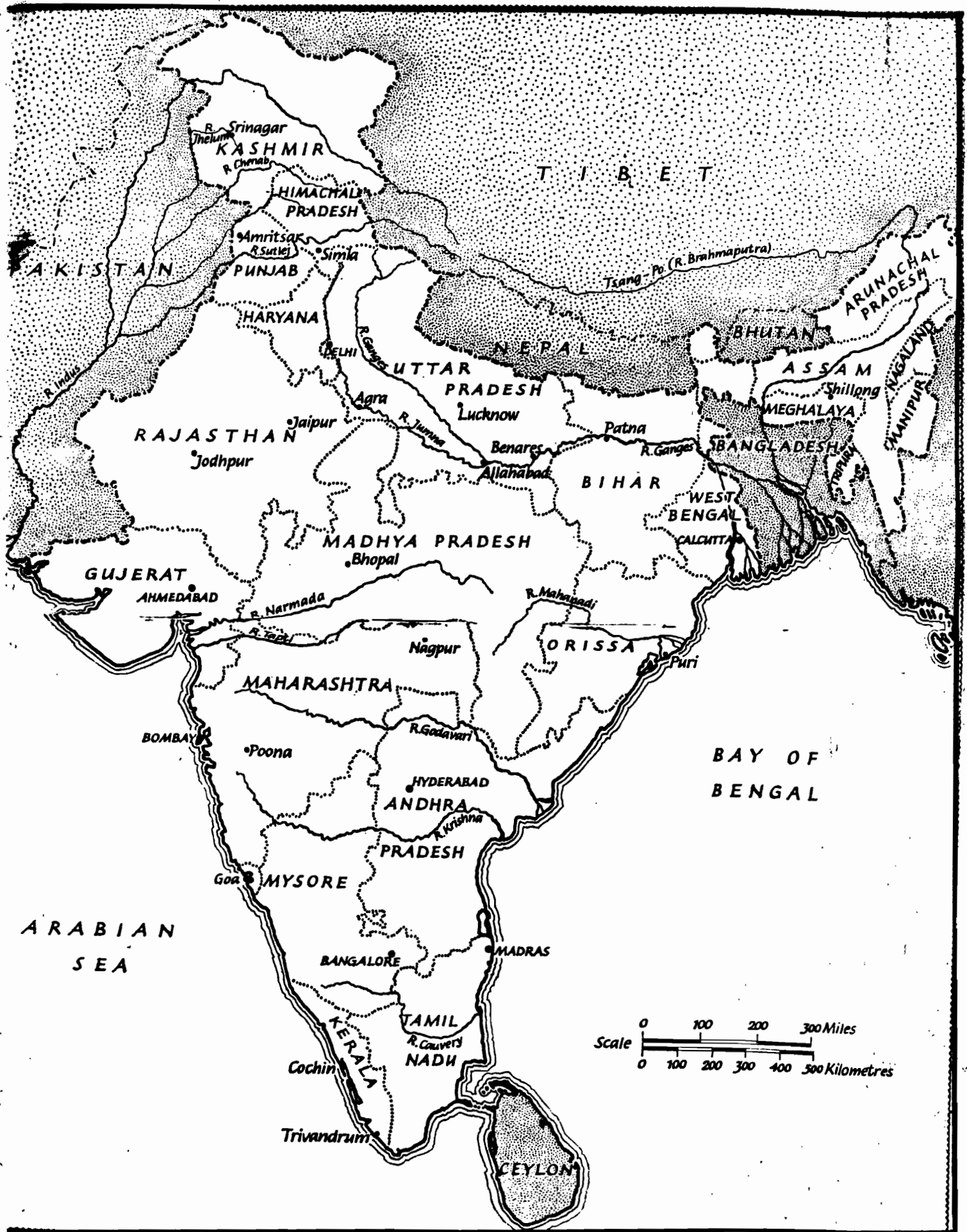
The recruitment of indentured Indians workers for the cane fields of the West Indies, British Guiana and Mauritius was already in full swing then, but the employment of black labour force for the South African canefields proved unsuccessful. The Zulu people of Natal had their own tribal interests and were unwilling to leave their homes for any unstipulated periods. The colony's success with cane, however was to^{be} linked with a continuous supply of cheap, reliable labour. As the local Bantu failed to fulfil the demand for labour the growers appealed to the authorities to recruit workers from India for the Natal canefields.

Legislation was passed in 1859 which resulted in an expansion of the indentured labour project to include the requirements of South Africa. "The Govt not only actively encouraged the introduction of indentured labour but also held inducements for the labourers to remain in Natal after the expiry of their contracts".

The first contingent of Indians arrived on the S.S. Truro that docked in Durban on November 16, 1860. Later that month more arrived on the Belvedere. Recruiting officials in Madras and Calcutta implemented the scheme and between October 1860 and February, 1861, they sent 5 ships to Natal with a total of 1360 Indian men and women. Women made up 25% of the immigrants, but this figure, later increased to 41%. Many of the indentured workers were accompanied by their relatives or friends, but

1. Eric Walker: The Cambridge History of the Br. Empire.
Volume viii.

MAP OF INDIA



there were many who travelled alone.

"The indentured Indians came from all parts of southern and eastern India and different factors motivated them. For most it was a case of escaping from conditions of extreme poverty with its resultant misery and disease, while others were spurred by ambition or a sense of adventure".² Coming as they did from all parts of India, different languages and cultures were present among the immigrants. The majority were Hindus belonging to the different caste systems but there were a few Christians and a small number of Muslims.

The period of indenture was 3 years but this was subsequently extended to 5 years. At the end of their contract period the Indians were offered one of three choices:

1. to renew their original indenture.
2. to return to India at the South African Governments expenditure or
3. to accept a piece of Crown land equal in value to the cost of a return passage.

Many chose lands and took up occupations to which they were suited. Others sought work as labourers in various sectors of the economy, while some farmed the Crown land they had received. Few chose to return to India.

"Indentured or immigrant labourers were followed by "free" or passenger Indians who came at their own expense. Most of these came from Bombay and settled in Natal with the purpose of trading amongst the indentured Indians. It was customary with the Indians that traders should emigrate along with the contract labourers in order to supply them with the necessities of life. If the Natal Government would have forbidden traders to come to Natal, they would probably not have succeeded in

2. The Indian South African - compiled by the Depart. of Inform.
pg. 3.

recruiting contract - labourers."³

The flow of Indian immigrants remained steady with the exception of an interruption between 1866 and 1874, and by 1891 no less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of the indentured labourers were no longer bound by contract. In that year the number of Indian residents in Natal had increased to 35 763. There were many difficulties which delayed the granting of land. By 1872 the Indian gardeners were occupying land for which they paid annual rentals up to £1 per acre. In Durban they carried on a lucrative vegetable and tobacco trade. "At around this time a further economic weakness appeared; namely the superior industry of the Indian labourer, many of whom stayed in the country after expiry of their contracts. They proved more efficient than their white competitors and although the Govt could legislate against this development, the cheapness and ^{efficiency} ~~efficiency~~ of the new community outweighed."⁴

3. Gordon Talbot: From Dias to Vorster. Page 233

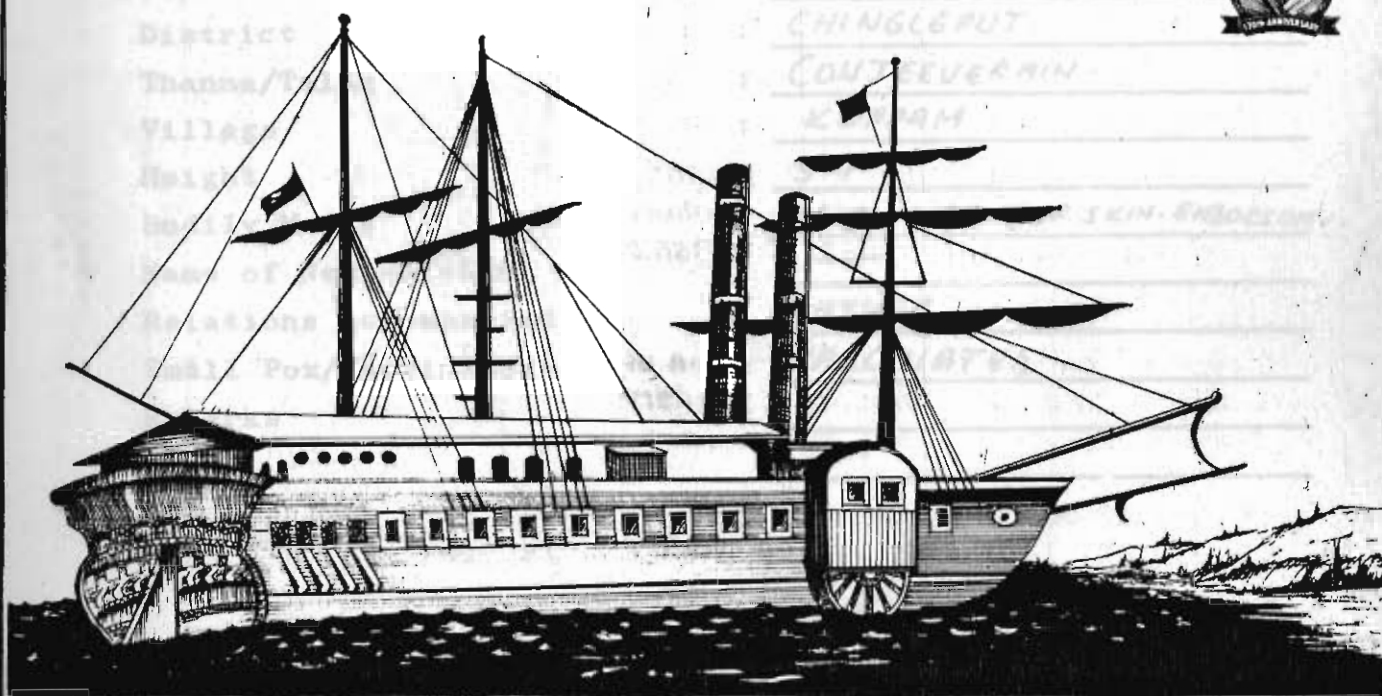
Source material on South Africa.

4. Donald Denon: Southern Africa since 1800. Page 60

LATER CONTINGENTS

From time to time batches of indentured labourers and passenger Indians arrived at Port Natal from India. Appearing below in alphabetical order, are some of the many ships which carried Indian Immigrant labourers from India to Natal. The number of labourers immigrants brought into the colony totalled 152 184.

Atlanta	Copenhagen	John Allen	Northern Monarch	Suffolk	UMLAZI — last ship, arrived July 21, 1911.
Belvedere	Courland	John Dave	Philosopher	Taif	
Blenheim	Cyrene	Jumna	Plassey	Umfuli	Warora York
Canada	Dumphaile Castle	Laurel	Pongola	Umhloti	
Carnatic	Foyle	Lord George	Quathlamba	Umkuzi	
Castleton	Gainsborough	Bentinck	Red Riding Hood	Umona	
Chupra	Glenroy	Mars	St. Kilda	Umtata	
Coldstream	Huzard	Merchant Man	Soaphia Joakim	Umvoti	
Congella	Jason	Naderi	Sophia	Umzinto	



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

B.M.25

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

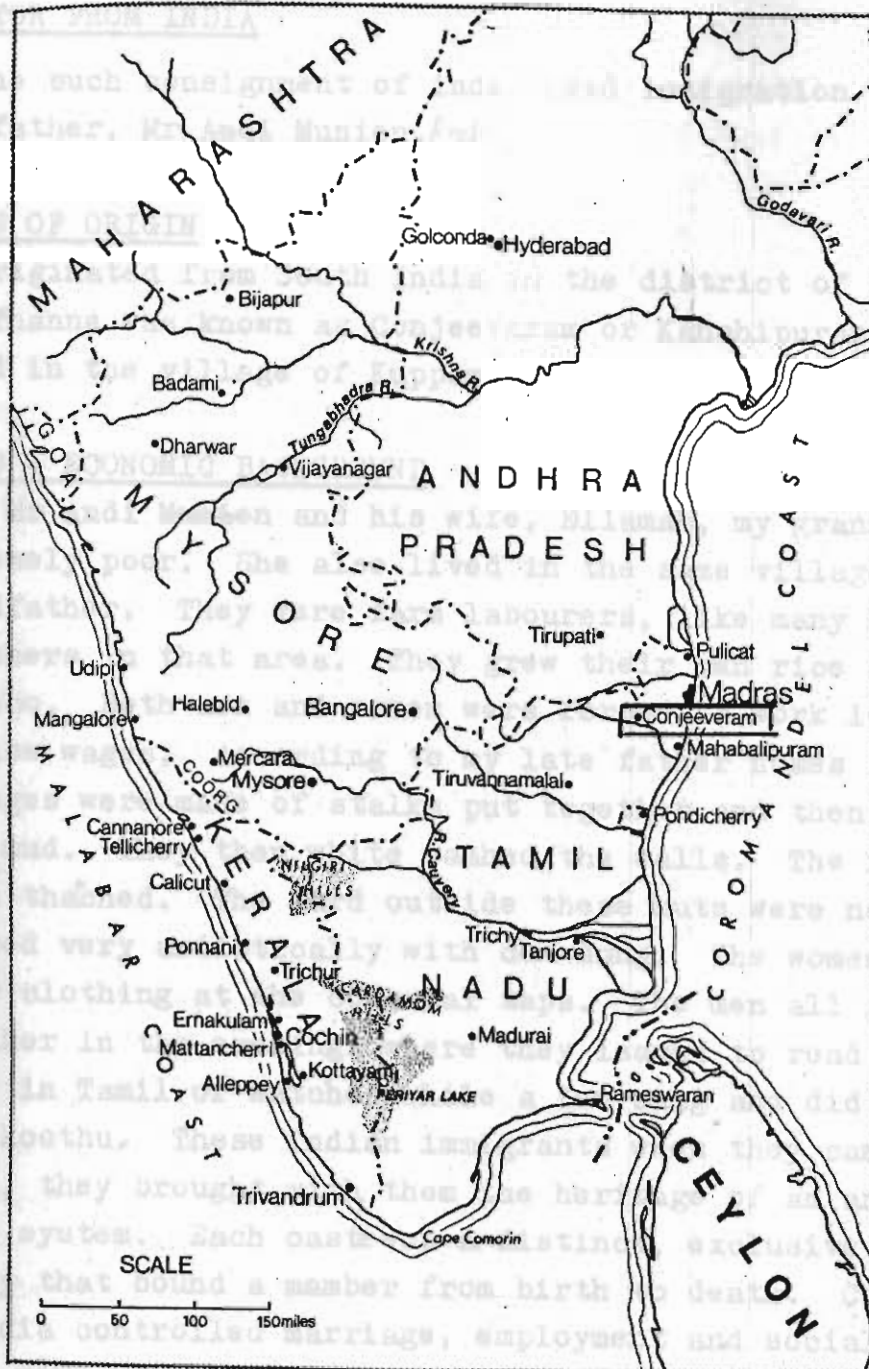
COPY OF SHIP'S LIST OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT

Serial Number	:	<u>254</u>
Colonial Number	:	<u>53127</u>
Date of Arrival	:	<u>8-6-1893</u>
Name of Ship	:	<u>S.S.UMZINTO IV</u>
Place of Registration	:	<u>—</u>
Date of Registration	:	<u>—</u>
Number in Register	:	<u>—</u>
Name	:	<u>MUNIEU</u>
Father's Name	:	<u>ANDI</u>
Age	:	<u>25 YEARS</u>
Sex	:	<u>MALE</u>
Caste	:	<u>PARIA</u>
District	:	<u>CHINGLEPUT</u>
Thanna/Taluq	:	<u>CONJEEVERAIN.</u>
Village	:	<u>KUPPAM</u>
Height	:	<u>5'7"</u>
Bodily Marks	:	<u>DISCOLORATION OF SKIN. ENBORESUM.</u>
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	<u>—</u>
Relations Accompanied	:	<u>FATHER</u>
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	<u>VACCINATED</u>
Remarks	:	<u>—</u>

Certified a true copy.



Qell
REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE



SOUTH INDIA SHOWING CONJEEVARAM

MY ANCESTOR FROM INDIA

During one such consignment of indentured immigration arrived my grandfather, Mr Andi Munien. Andi.

PLACE OF ORIGIN

He originated from South India in the district of Chingleput. The Thanna was known as Conjeevaram or Kanchipuram. He lived in the village of Kuppam.

SOCIO - ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Both Mr Andi Munien and his wife, Ellamah, my granny were extremely poor. She also lived in the same village as my grandfather. They were farm labourers, like many hundreds of others in that area. They grew their own rice and tobacco. Both men and women were forced to work long hours for low wages. According to my late father homes in Indian villages were made of stalks put together and then plastered with mud. They then white washed the walls. The roofs were often thatched. The yard outside these huts were normally smeared very artistically with cow-dung. The women washed their clothing at the communal taps. The men all gathered together in the evenings where they learnt to read and write in Tamil or watched while a few sang and did the Tharukoothu. These Indian immigrants when they came to Natal, they brought with them the heritage of an ancient caste system. Each caste was a distinct, exclusive social entity that bound a member from birth to death. Caste laws in India controlled marriage, employment and social status.. There were no real middle - class people in Conjeevaram. The majority of the Indians in Kuppam spoke in the Tamil vernacular. They adhered to the Hindu religion and worshipped Lord Krishna. Harvest Festival where the first fruits and vegetables were offered to the Lord. At this time the whole village rejoiced. There was much singing and dancing as well.

REASONS FOR LEAVING ORIGINAL COUNTRY

According to Nagappa, my father's brother, his father was given to understand that money grew on trees. Those that had returned to India, after the contract had expired explained too, to them, about the plots that could be bought. They also explained that the climate was ideal for growing fruit and vegetables. The Indians from Conjeeveram were thus induced to leave their homeland by a variety of incentives namely: a promise of greener pastures; poverty; ambition; domestic tensions; restlessness of spirit; the urge to escape an epidemic or some other misfortune. My grandfather, according to my late father was extremely restless, always wanting to travel around, always changing his occupation from time to time. His greatest desire was to travel from village to village playing his thubla and teaching vernacular to children. Therefore when some of his father's relatives returned and spoke favourably of South Africa as well as informing them of the scarcity of Tamil teachers, my grandfather immediately called up an impromptu meeting with the elders of his village and informed them of his decision to leave for South Africa. Since my great-grandfather had no other close relative beside his son Munien and wife, Ellama he decided to accompany them.

DATES OF DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL TO SOUTH AFRICA

The Andi Munien family left Madras on 15th April 1893 together with 340 other Indians mostly indentured immigrants. It was not an enjoyable voyage but the ship docked safely at the port of entry, Durban on the 8th June 1893.

NAME OF SHIP AND PORT OF ENTRY

My grandfather travelled by the S.S. Umzinto IV. The S.S. Umzinto docked at Port Natal like so many other ships that arrived with the indentured Indians or 'Free' Indians from 1860 onwards.

FIRST SETTLEMENT

Since my grandfather arrived with his wife both were assigned to Mr C.B. De Gersigney, a sugar plantation owner from La Meroy. Fortunately his father too was

assigned to the above employer. My grandfather's father did casual jobs around the house, did some weeding in the flower garden, kept the lawn trim and cleaned out the horses' stables.

My grandfather worked in the canefields at La Mercy. Each labourer was given his own task. Since my grandfather was 25 years of age he was strong and energetic. Mr Gersigney noticed his performance and soon put him in charge of planting seedlings, a job, reserved for skilled planters.

His wife Ellama, like so many other women was very proficient at weeding inbetween rows of sugar-cane. During the cutting season these women had to roughly clean the sugar-cane stalks and pile them neatly so that the tractors could cart the cane easily to the mills.

The Indian labourers were housed on the estate where they were employed. The huts were made of dried cane or mealie stalks put together. They were allowed a couple of days to build these huts at a cost of £- 10^s, and any improvements that were necessary had to be done on Sundays. Luckily for my grandparents Mr Gersigney helped them to build a fairly strong wood and iron 'compound' as it was called. Each worker with a family, was given a little plot on which he could cultivate his or her own vegetables. We must remember that these Indians came from the crop - raising areas of the great river plains of India. It was said of the Indian - "he had behind him centuries of labour and struggle against the elements, and he did not have to be trained to work."⁵

According to my late father, the major portion of those that arrived in the S.S. Umzinto IV were not field labourers as mechanics, household servants, domestics and gardeners. My great-grandfather it is believed was a very skilled carpenter in his younger days.

Many of the cane workers were each given a set of implements with which he worked.

All persons desirous of possessing 'coolie' servants were requested to apply to the Immigration Agent in Durban, stating the description of servants required, and the name of agent for selection. Each then had to sign a contract of service with Indian immigrants. My grandfather ^{and} his family that is, wife and father had each to sign one very similiar to this.

(MAN'S)
**CONTRACT OF SERVICE WITH INDIAN
 IMMIGRANTS.**

We it Remembered,

That on this 23rd day of April
 in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-Nine
Telucksing of Suckum Indian Immigrant
 and Bandhu
 No. 41698 appeared before me,
Louis H. Mason Protector of Immigrants,
 and in my presence signed (or made his mark) to the following Contract of Service:—

The said Telucksing agrees to
 hire the services of the said Indian Immigrant, and the said Indian Immigrant agrees to
 render the said
 his services in the capacity of General Labourer for Five Years, commencing on the
23rd day of April, in the Year of our Lord
 One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty-Nine

And it is further agreed between the said Parties, that the said Indian Immigrant shall be employed as above for six days in each week, save as in such Law is mentioned, and that the hours of labour shall not be more than nine hours daily, between sunrise and sunset, with a break of at least an hour for

And it is further agreed between the said Parties, that the said Telucksing shall
 pay to the said Indian Immigrant, as such servant as aforesaid, wages at and after the rate
 of TEN SHILLINGS for the first year, ELEVEN SHILLINGS for the second year, TWELVE
 SHILLINGS for the third year, THIRTEEN SHILLINGS for the fourth year, FOURTEEN
 SHILLINGS for the fifth year, for the remuneration of the services of the said Indian Immigrant, and that such wages shall be paid on the first day of each month.

And lastly, the said Telucksing
 doth hereby bind and oblige himself to give, grant, and provide, to and for the said Indian Immigrant, and for such family as may be allotted, good and comfortable lodging, wholesome and suitable food, and proper medical attendance and medicines, during the period for which this present contract is made, and otherwise to observe and fulfil all the conditions and obligations of the Coolie Laws of the Colony so far as the same are applicable to this Contract and Agreement.

Bandhu

His X mark.

The preceding Agreement was signed by the above-named Parties in my presence, on the day and year above written, voluntarily, the same being, as far as I am able to judge, fully understood by them respectively.

L. H. Mason
 Protector of Immigrants.

Although the Indian Immigrants became 'free' in every sense of the word an expiration of their indenture, their movements were, however restricted to Natal and they were not allowed to leave the colony without a licence. Therefore it was compulsory that each Indian carried the Pass. This was passed in 1895 under the Act 17. Below is an example of the Pass that my grandfather carried around with him in Natal.

Certificate of Discharge.

Pass under Act 17, 1895

No. 9308 D

Pass the Indian Immigrant

Colonial Number

Sex Age Height

Bodily Marks

...he having paid the Annual License of (£3) Three Pounds sterling, as required by Section 6, Law 17, 1895.

This Pass expires on the 1900

and must then be renewed.

Issued at the R.M. Office

100 R.M.

After the period of indenture my grandfather and his family each received a Certificate of Discharge from Mr C.B. De Gersigney.

NATAL

Certificate of Discharge.

SCHEDULE H (SECTION 106)

No. _____ 189

I HEREBY CERTIFY that _____

Indian Immigrant No. _____ has duly completed his term of indenture of five years in terms of Indian Immigration Law No. 25, 1891, and is released from obligation to perform further service in this Colony under indenture.

Father's Name _____

Age _____

Height _____ Feet _____ Inches

Bodily Marks _____

Date of Arrival in Colony _____

Ship _____

Last Employer _____

OFFICE OF THE PROTECTOR OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS
DURBAN, NATAL.

Protector of Indian Immigrants.

Since my great-grandfather was already 58 years old he felt that he ought to return to India and live amongst his relatives in Kuppam. He thus accepted the 'free' passage offered by the South African Government back to India after his period of Indenture. He was also quite happy with the conditions in Natal and therefore agreed to his son's (Munien's) decision to remain and lease small-holdings in Natal.

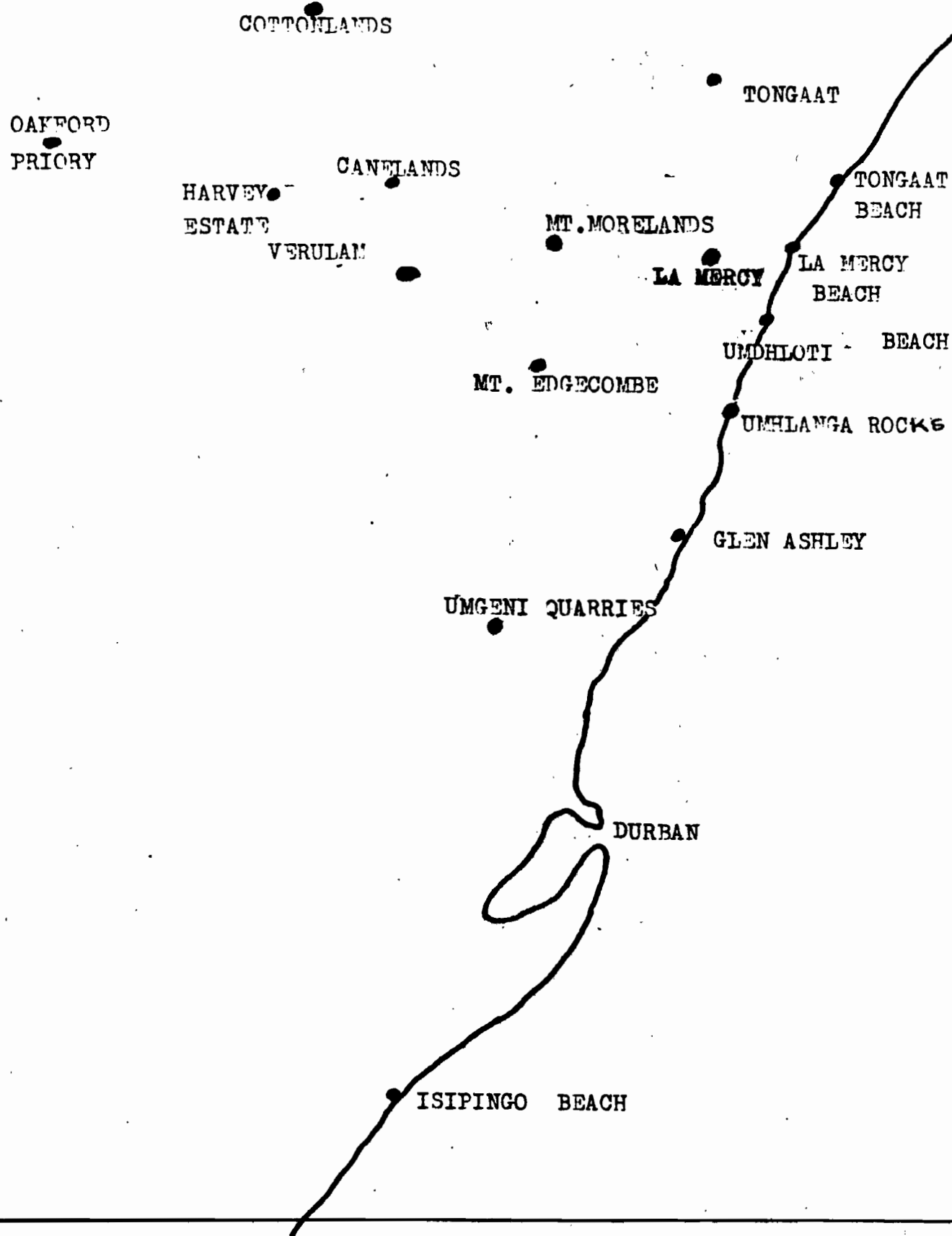
Act 17 of 1895 provided that any Indian exindentured labourer who should choose to settle in the colony would

be required to take out a licence on payment of £ 3 per year. In some cases these small-holdings were subsequently sold to the tenants who purchased them out of savings or paid them over a period on the hire purchases plan. In this way most of the land held by Indians in Durban, Clairwood, Cato Manor and Overport and also on the North Coast districts of Inanda and Stanger were acquired. "The Indians with their industrious habits and capacity for comparatively few wants did remarkably well as cultivators" quoted the Natal Mercury on January 19, 1865.

Here below is a typical scene showing indentured Indian labourers working in the cane-fields.



A typical scene showing indentured Indian labourers working in the cane fields during the eighteen sixties.



SUBSEQUENT SETTLEMENT

After his period of contract my grandfather worked in Canelands as a sugar-cane labourer. His wife did not work because the children were very young and her health too was not too good. They lived here for 5 years.

Thereafter he moved off to upper Cottonlands where Mr Reddiar leased land to Indians. Here he grew tobacco, ground nuts, mealies and green peppers. He was given the option to buy off the house for £ 10. He agreed to pay off £ 10 plus interest by letting his son, my father, to work for the land-owner. Besides payment my father received 6 shillings, food and clothing. My father worked in this manner for 5 years. My uncle, Nagappa after his period intervened because he learned so far, my father's labour was only paying the interest and not the capital. Nagappa then took over my fathers job and within a year completed payment of house at £ 1 : 10 s : 6d per month.

My grandfather at this time had already engaged his services at the Oakford Priory Estate as an ordinary labourer. My granny, to supplement my grandfather's wage worked in the nuns' vegetable garden. She was fortunate in that they treated her very kindly and increased her food ration. The nuns appreciated the work done by the Indians on their estate. With the help of some of the workers themselves they built better living quarters for the Indian Estate Workers.

An example of the so - called barracks is shown below.



My father soon joined his father at Oakford Priory as an ordinary labourer. My father, because of short - temperedness was reported to the manager in Oakford Estates. He was relieved of his duty and he then sought work at Jankos Polkinon Estate, another sugar grower near Mount Moreland.

Friends soon visited my family and reported to them about the increase in wages at the Umgeni quarries. Both my uncle Nagappa and my father were immediately employed. They received £3 per month and accomodation was found.

They soon convinced my grandfather and his family to move down to Umgeni. He did go to work in the quarries but after working there for two years could not manage due to ill-health. He moved back to Oakford Priory to live with his wife and relatives.

The new manager running the Oakford Priory Estate, Mr Olivier, needed an Indian who could run the dairy for the estate. The other Indians proposed the name of my grandfather. He soon traced him at the quarries and convinced both the brother to come down to Oakford. They were offered £3:10s per month. My father in addition to running the dairy helped the Mother Prioress, Sister Ita to plant and care for fruit trees. They realized that he was a very concientious worker and after 12 years of service as an ordinary worker raised him to "Induna's" job. He had to be in charge of a number of Bantu and Indian workers on this Estate at Oakford.

My grandfather died in 1931 at Oakford after being bedridden for 2 years. My grandmother lived for a further 20 years and died of an heart attack in 1951.

They left behind a host of children, grand-children, great-grand-children and great-great-grandchildren.

MARRIAGE, BIRTH OF CHILDREN, ETC.

My grandfather came to Natal with Ellama as man and wife. Their first child died at birth at La - Mercy during the first year of their indenture. The son, my father was born in 1897. Two years later my aunt Munimah was born. She died at a very tender age of 2. My surviving uncle Nagappa was born in 1905. in Canelands. My late uncle Perumal was born in 1910 in Cottonlands. My granny had more children but they all died at birth and only 3 sons survived. My grandparents were very attached to their children and like most of their relatives they believed in having extended families.

SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

During the period of indenture, by virtue of the conditions of the contracts, the controls that were exercised over them and the nature of living arrangements provided for them, it was not always possible for the people to observe many of these customs and religious practices as they did in their native villages of India.

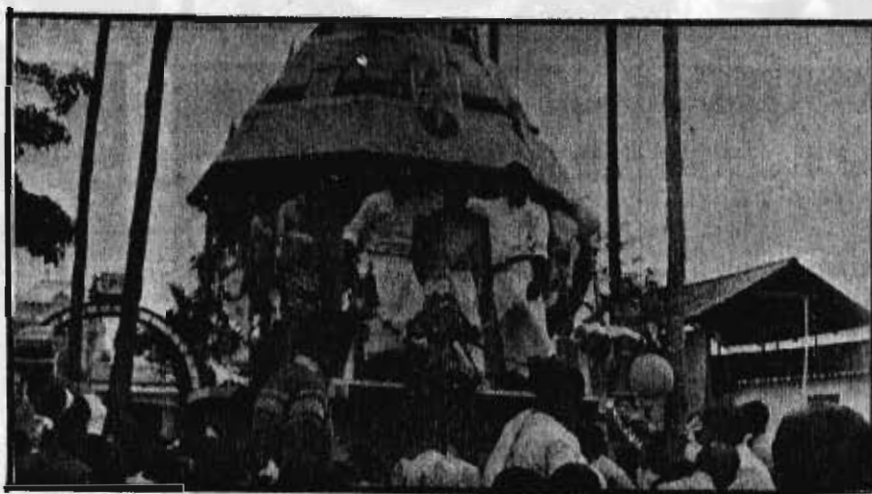
They adhered, however, to as many of their former ways of life as it was possible in the new environment. In time, however many of their older customs were abandoned some considerably modified in keeping with new circumstances and altered conditions. My grandfather moulded his sons and friends^{as} actors for the Tharukoothu or dance dramas. This was one of the earliest forms of entertainment in the area where settlers resided in large numbers. These were very popular because there was no other form of entertainment in the early days. It did not require elaborate stage settings and was performed in open air. These dance dramas were well patronized and were held regularly. They provided a means to raise funds for the Temple during the course of the year. There were no actresses because all female parts were performed by males.

My father, his 2 brothers and some very close friends belonged to the "Six - foot" dance that travelled from one sugar estate to another. This form of dance in those days never seemed to lose interest. My grandfather always travelled with them.

RELIGION

Most of Indian settlers were from southern India and their belief was "Do not settle in a region where there is no temple" and that "it is always good to worship in a temple". Apart from this they had come from a land where temples abound and where temple architecture is seen at its best.

My father always mentioned that his father had always believed that all residents gathered during times of the several festivals that were celebrated there. They always sang bajans. My grandfather was a very devout Hindu and always abstained from meat during the Kavady festivals. My father took over such performances when his father grew too old.



A traditional Muni impersonating a woman during a performance.



Mr Perumal Munien impersonating a woman during a Performance.

This form of religious worship promoted the social development of the residents as well. It was at the insistence of the Indian labourers at the Oakford Priory Estate run by Dominican Catholic nuns that they were allowed to build a temple. This was known as the "Perumal Koil". The cleaning of the temple grounds as well as the brassware inside was the job of the wives of the labourers.

POLITICAL

My grandfather, nor his sons, took any active part in any political uprising. They seemed to have detached themselves to a quite rural life in the north coast estates. My grandfather was a meek person. He knew about the passive resistance of Gandhi and his struggle for the recognition of the trodden Indians but himself never took any active part. Moreover those sugar barons he worked for, although kind to their employees warned them against political gatherings or meetings constantly. We have to realize too, that these people were just ordinary workers, who just wanted enough to ^{live} a moderate life.



Early Indian Settlers on a Sunday off which was usually spent in visiting the labourers on the neighbouring farms

B-I 20

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REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

VERKORTE STERFTESERTIFIKAAT

ABRIDGED DEATH CERTIFICATE

(Uitgereik kragtens Wet No. 81 van 1963)

(Issued in terms of Act No. 81 of 1963)

Gesertifiseer 'n ware uittreksel uit die sterfte-
register van:Certified a true extract from the death register
of:Identiteitsnommer
Identity number

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

Van
Surname

MUNEN

Volle voorname
First names in fullGeboortedatum:
Date of birth:Dag
Day

—

Maand
Month

—

Jaar
Year

—

64 YRS

Geslag
Sex

MALE

Bevolkingsgroep
Population group

INDIAN

Huwelikstaat
Marital status

NOT

STATED

Datum van afsterwe:
Date of death:Dag
Day

21

Maand
Month

07

Jaar
Year

1980

Plek van afsterwe
Place of death

DARFORD, INANDA

Oorsake van dood
Causes of death

OLD AGE. BED - RIDDEN

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE PRIVATE BAG/PRIVAATSAK X54030 06 -05- 1983 DURBAN 4000 STREEKVERTEENWOORDIGER DEUR-EM-NT VAN BINNELANDSE AANGELIENHED
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DIREKTEUR-GENERAAL
 DIRECTOR-GENERAL
 INTERNAL AFFAIRS

D/R 1781/30

G.P.-S.53858—1970-71—1 000-100 S

CONCLUSION

Although my grandfather did not take part in politics, he nevertheless imparted some knowledge on Religion and his culture amongst his people. The dance group only disbanded in 1960 when my father fell very ill. However we still have musicians in the family who play the instruments, especially the thubla, very well.

The Indians originally came to work in the cane-fields of Natal, but today the majority have left the land and the few who have remained are mostly successful owners of market gardens and sugar farms. Only about 3,7% are employed in agriculture.

They have become an urban population manufacturing clothing, furniture, steelgoods, jewellery and stationery. Many earn their living as tailors, grocers, fresh produce vendors and chemists.

The Indian economy is becoming so independent that Indians are now working for Indian - owned enterprises.

The Indians are developing towards self - government on a local level in areas that have been set aside for their exclusive ownership and occupation.

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