
NAME: [VANILLA MOODLEY ⁷⁰¹₅₉₄]

REGISTRATION NO.: 14830

HISTORY 3 PROJECT

TOPIC: [PERUMAL MOOPEN - THE INDENTURED LABOURER] ⁵⁹⁴

LECTURER: MRS. U. MESTHRIE

DUE DATE: 24 MAY 1983

PREFACE

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT FOR GIVING THE HISTORY 3 STUDENTS AN OPPORTUNITY TO RESEARCH THIS PROJECT. THIS PROJECT HAS ENLIGHTENED NOT ONLY MYSELF BUT THE REST OF MY FAMILY, WHO DISPLAYED GREAT INTEREST WHILE WORKED ON IT. THIS EXPERIENCE HAS NOT ONLY WIDENED MY KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MY FAMILY ROOTS, BUT IT HAS ALSO ADDED A NEW DIMENSION TO MY CULTURE AND HERITAGE.

I MUST ADD HOWEVER, THAT IN RESEARCHING THIS PROJECT I EXPERIENCED MANY DIFFICULTIES. I INTERVIEWED THE SUBJECT'S SON, WHOSE VERBAL INFORMATION WAS NOT ALTOGETHER CORRECT. IN CHECKING THIS OUT, I DISCOVERED THAT THE INTERVIEWED HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT CONFUSED. THE INFORMATION THAT I FINALLY ACCUMULATED IS LIMITED, BECAUSE THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE INFORMATION ON HIS PARTICULAR PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT. MY SUBJECT MR PERUMAL MOOPEN, WAS NOT A PROMINENT FIGURE AND LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT HIS SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, IF HE DID HAVE ONE. FURTHERMORE, THE INFORMATION ON HIS SUCCEEDING PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT WAS GIVEN VERBALLY AND COULD NOT BE VERIFIED.

THIS RESULTS IN THE PROJECT BEING VERY LIMITED.

V. Woodley

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2. FAMILY RECORD OF PERUMAL MOOPEN
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4. A PICTURE OF THE AMATIKULU MILL

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS MY THANKS AND APPRECIATION TO THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE WHO CAME TO MY ASSISTANCE IN SOME WAY OR THE OTHER WHILE I WAS WORKING ON THIS PROJECT.

THANKS ARE DUE TO THE FOLLOWING:

1. MR RUNGASAMY MOOPEN WHO READILY AND WILLINGLY PROVIDED ME WITH VERBAL INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTS REGARDING PERUMAL MOOPEN, THE SUBJECT OF MY PROJECT.
2. MRS Y. PILLAY FROM THE DOCUMENTATION CENTRE, DURBAN-WESTVILLE.
3. DR. BRAIN AND PROFESSOR BHANA FOR CHECKING OUT THE COLONIAL NUMBER AT THE ACHIVES IN PIETERMATIRZBURG.
4. MEMBERS OF MY FAMILY WHO TRIED VERY HARD TO HELP IN SOME WAY WAY OR THE OTHER.
5. FINALLY, MRS G. GOVENDER WHO MADE MANY SACRIFICES TO TYPE OUT THIS PROJECT.

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1 The coming of the Indians to Natal was no spontaneous uncontrolled movement of adventurous individuals, seeking a better livelihood than their country gave them. It was part of a elaborate system organised and and controlled by the government of Great Britain and India.

In 1851 Edward Morewood set up a first sugar mill on the Natal coast. The building of the sugar industry was rife and many Natal colonists went into sugar cane farming. In order to be prosperous they had to have a good labour force. They were dissatisfied with african labour, so they had to look for alternatives.

After May 1807 no British ship was permitted to clear port with a cargo of slaves, and from the 1 March 1808 no slave could be landed in a British colony from any ship. This obviously posed a serious problem for the South African labour market. They certainly had to look for alternates sources of labour. They tried out Malay and Chinese labour. Unfortunately this scheme became ridden with problems and slowly phased out. They now turned to India for assistance. The idea of recruiting indentured labour from India was flavoured by the success of the indentured Indians in Mauritius.

2 The Indian government extended the system of indentured emigration to Natal, not enthusiastically or over enthusiastically but slowly and deliberately. Negotiations initiated in 1856 by the Natal government dragged on for years of anxiety and exasperation for the sugar cane planters in the colony, who having failed to make use of the warriors of the populous of the zulu nation to become labourers, were in need of reliable labour.

In November 1860 a beam of light flashed on the labour problem when the first ship the Truro carrying indentured labourers from India arrived at Port Natal. The following report was made in the Natal Mercury on 22 November 1860.

3 " A large barque , made the anchorage and signalled the fact, of her having a large number of coolies aboard. The past will long be memorable against Anglo Natalians. At last, after the discussion of years and the extinction of hopes innumerable the planters pet project has been realised."

1. M. Palmer: History of Indians in Natal - Page 5

2. A. Soekdoe: Indentured Indian Immigration in Natal with special emphasis on the 1890s and the Caste structure among Indians.
November 1982. - Page 1

3. Ibid.

The passengers aboard the Truro came from various places in India, but they were shipped from Madras and Calcutta. The Indians came under certain conditions. They had to work for a five year contract. For the first five years they were to receive a minimum wage of ten shillings a month. Thereafter there would be an increase of one shilling. Women and children got half the wage. Food rations were given weekly. They received rice, mealie meal, dhall, ghee and salt fish. Accommodation was free and the employer had to provide one set of cloathing each. Medical attention was free. Each worker had to work a fifty four hour working week. After the contract expired the indentured labourer could renew the contract for another five years. If he did so, after ten years he would get a free passage to India. He could remain if he chose . If he did so, he now got free land and could engage in farming.

After the Truro many other ships arrived in the succeeding years. The Belvedere arrived on the 26 November 1860, the Sandian arrived in 1863 and the Saxon arrived in 1864. In 1866 the depression hit Natal and they tried to get rid of the Coolies already assigned. In 1871 the ship the Red Riding Hood took the first batch of completed indentured Indians back to India. These people complained about their harsh conditions and the harsh government that they had to face in South Africa. These complaints however did not stop future ships from coming to South Africa.

The Labourer Concerned:

On the 16 April 1907 the S.S. Congella XLV111 arrived in Natal. One of the passengers on this ship was Mr Perumal Moopen. He was 21 years of age and was the son of Mr Chinna Moopen. He was 5ft 4 in in height and was identified by a distinct mole below his right collar bone. He came from a village called Melpathi in a district north Arcot. North Arcot is one of the tamil districts where many indentured labourers came from. His colonial number was 130887.

Socio Economic Background:

Perumal was a peasant farmer. The rural economy of India never stayed in equilibrium. Peasant farmers at all periods were losing their land through falling into debt or suffering illness or other domestic disaster. Although Perumal was a peasant farmer he was not a victim of the former or the latter. He together with his brother and father owned a hundred acres of land in north Arcot. This farm still exists today. It was visited recently in 1979 by Perumal's son Rungasamy. The descendents of Perumal's remaining family are still living on that farm and grow coconut, rice, sugar cane and beetle leaves.

Reasons for leaving original country:

It causes one to wonder why a man who had prospered fairly well on his own farm should want to leave this farm and come to South Africa to work as an indentured labourer. I am certain that by 1907 the Indians in India ~~in India~~ discovered that there was no gold on the streets of South Africa as they were initially told in 1860. I am making this deduction from the fact that some of the Indians that came in 1860 had returned in 1871, These people must have informed the inhabitants of India, that they were fooled about the gold in South Africa and that they really came here to slave in the sugar cane fields.

Perumal's reasons for leaving India were personal. In 1901 his father, Chinna Moopen left for Bangalore. In 1906 he returned with a new wife. Perumal became disillusioned. He assaulted his father and fled from home. At about that time the agents in India were canvassing for indentured labourers to come and work in South Africa. To Perumal this was God sent. Leaving India seemed to be the only solution to his problem.

Date of Departure and Arrival in South Africa:

He departed from Calcutta and arrived on the 16 April 1907 at Port Natal. He came on the S.S. Congella XLV111.

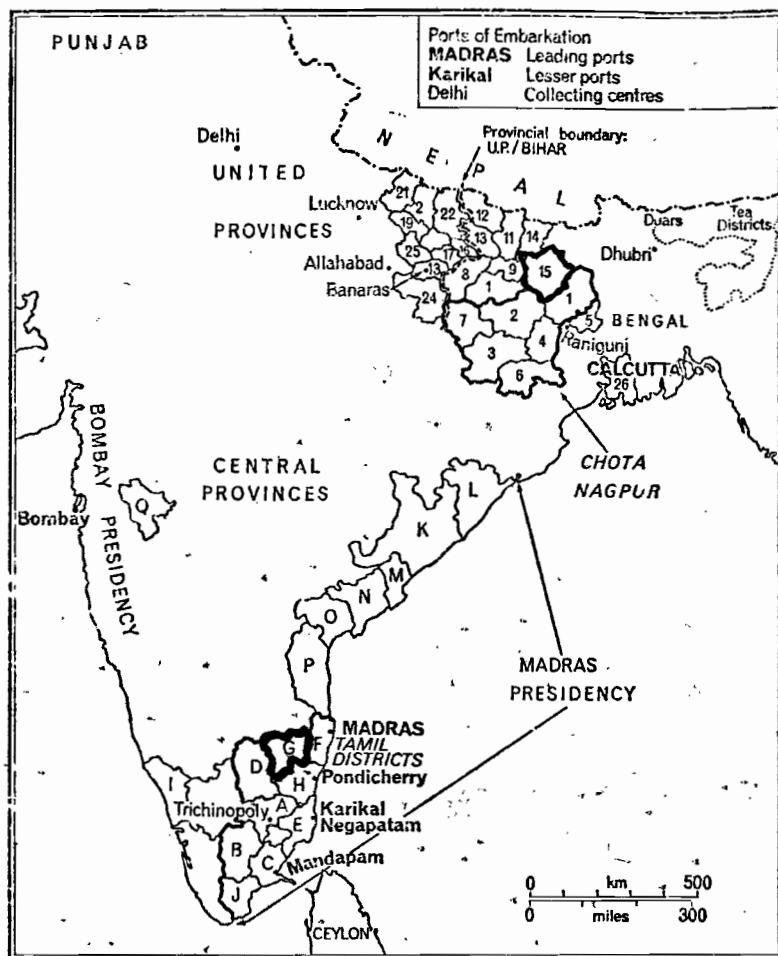
First Place of Settlement:

He settled in Zululand initially, and worked at a place called Umlalazi as an indentured labourer.¹ He was assigned to Douglas Innes Grant on the 30 April 1907. He worked here till his contract expired in 1912.

Subsequent places of Settlement and Occupations:

After his contract expired he could go back to India or remain in South Africa. He remained and worked at the Amatikulu sugar mill. He was responsible for feeding the conveyor belt with sugar cane, thus causing the cane to be crushed. He worked a twelve hour shift day and night. Perumal resented the system and the conditions and tried to do something about it. He was responsible for breaking the crushers. He did this by throwing a piece of iron onto the crushers thus breaking the entire set of crushers. This stopped production for approximately six months., because new parts had to be imported to repair it. Fortunately for Perumal he was not caught but he was suspected. He was then given a job inside the mill as a pan boiler.

He then left the Amatikulu mill and worked for the railways unindentured. He then married Chinamma Gramoney. They now leased a farm in Lansdale Lower Tugela. On this farm they spent many years. He grew maize, ground nuts, yellow beans and vegetables.



Main Districts of Recruitment

Note: each group is listed in order of concentration of recruitment

SOUTH INDIA

The Tamil Districts

- A. Trichinopoly
- B. Madurai
- C. Ramnad
- D. Salem
- E. Tanjore
- F. Chingleput
- G. North Arcot
- H. South Arcot
- I. Malabar
- J. Tinnevely

Telugu Districts

- K. Vizagapatam
- L. Ganjam
- M. East Godavari
- N. West Godavari
- O. Guntur

P. Nellore

Bombay Presidency

- Q. Ahmednagar District

NORTH INDIA

Hill Coolie Districts

1. Santal Parganas
2. Hazaribagh
3. Ranchi
4. Manbhum
5. Birbhum
6. Singhbhum
7. Palamau

Bihari Districts

8. Shahabad
9. Patna
10. Gaya
11. Muzaffarpur

12. Champaran

13. Saran

14. Darbhanga

15. Monghyr

Districts of the United-Provinces

16. Ballia
17. Ghazipur
18. Azamghar
19. Fyzabad
20. Basti
21. Gonda
22. Gorakhpur
23. Banaras
24. Mirzapur
25. Jaunpur

Calcutta Metropolitan Area

26. Twenty-Four Parganas

PERUMAL MOOPEN came from the district NORTH ARCOT, denoted by the letter G.



The Colony of Natal, 1910.

PERUMAL MOOPEN was assigned to DOUGLAS INNES GRANT at UMLALAZI Zululand.



Reproduced from the "The Natal Sugar Industry" 1924.

The first Hulett mill, Tinley Manor, 1903.



The first Hulett concession mill, Amatikulu, 1908.

After his indenture was over, he worked at the
AMATIKULU SUGAR MILL.

Social and Religious Activities:

Perumal was a Savite. He was a very religious man. Savism is the most ancient living faith in the world. It is the choicest product of the Dravadm cult, the most elaborate, influential and undoubtedly the most intrinsically valuable of all religions in India.

Savism is strictly a monotheistic religion, holding that God is Truth, Intelligence and Bliss. It calls God by the name Sivan simply because this term specifies the essential quality of God which is pure love and pure bliss. Savism is a religion of humanity it is not dogmatic or an outward rite, the realisation of a supreme spirit, a divine reality in where we are all one.

Marriage and Children:

Perumal married Chinnamma Gramoney in Tugela and they had six children. Unfortunately for him three of these children were tragically destined. His eldest daughter died tragically whilst playing under a cave. The cave collapsed and she was buried alive. Tragedy struck once again when his second son was trampled to death on the floor by a stampede of children. Once more tragedy struck when one of his sons Runganathan died at eleven years of age. He was on holiday at his uncle's farm in Inyazana, Zululand. He was severed to death by a tractor that linked two trailers together. Fortunately his remaining three children managed to evade tragedy and are still alive today. The surviving children are Rungasamy, who now lives in Durban, Kista who lives in Zululand and Marie who lives in Doringkop. Perumal's life seemed to be plagued by tragedy and he too was tragically destined. On the 20 October 1962 he fell from a tractor and injured his brains. Perumal died instantly.

1. Savism, Dawning of the Golden Age

CONCLUSION

We are now into our hundred and twenty third year, since the first arrival of the Indians in South Africa. It was through those humble labourers who sacrificed and toil the land of South Africa, that we now have great cause for pride and joy. Life today is totally bearable, flogging and ill treatment in a working situation is unheard of but to our forefathers is was a prevalent condition. Through pain and misery they paved the way for a better life for us. Our fate today would have been a totally different one if it were not for those important soles, who came to South Africa to boost the economy of the country and at the same time sowed the seeds for the present Indian population in South Africa. We should be grateful to each and everyone of them.

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SOURCE LIST

1. Palmer, M. : History of Indians in Natal
Cape Town, Oxford University Press, 1957.
2. Tinker, H. : A New System of Slavery. The export of
Indian Labour Overseas, 1830 to 1920
London, Oxford University Press
3. Brookes, E.H. and Webb, C.D. : History of Natal
University of Natal Press, 1965.
4. Meer, Y.S. : Documents of Indentured Labour in Natal, 1851 to 1917
Institute of Black Research, 1980.
5. Sookdoe, A. : Indentured Indian Immigration in Natal with special
emphasis on the 1890's and the cast structure among Indians.
November 1982.

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DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRSCOPY OF SHIP'S LIST OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT

Serial Number	:	<u>17</u>
Colonial Number	:	<u>130887</u>
Date of Arrival	:	<u>16.4.1907</u>
Name of Ship	:	<u>S.S. CONGELLA XLVIII</u>
Place of Registration	:	<u>-</u>
Date of Registration	:	<u>-</u>
Number in Register	:	<u>-</u>
Name	:	<u>PERUMAL MOOPEN</u>
Father's Name	:	<u>CHINNA MOOPEN</u>
Age	:	<u>21 YRS</u>
Sex	:	<u>MALE</u>
Caste	:	<u>GANAR</u>
District	:	<u>N. ARCOT</u>
Thanna/Taluq	:	<u>GUDIATHAN</u>
Village	:	<u>MELPATI</u>
Height	:	<u>5'4"</u>
Bodily Marks	:	<u>MOLE BELOW RIGHT COLLAR BONE</u>
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	<u>FATHER</u>
Relations Accompanied	:	<u>-</u>
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	<u>VACCINATED</u>
Remarks	:	<u>-</u>

Certified a true copy.


REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE



29/2/2/4

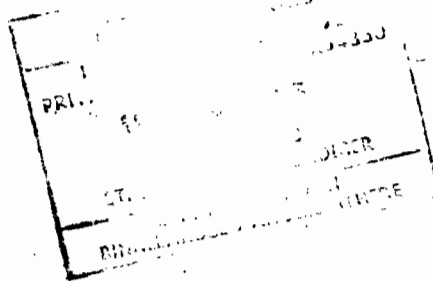
C E R T I F I C A T E O F O R I G I N

It is hereby certified that according to the records maintained by the Regional Representative, Department of Indian Affairs, Durban, RANGASAMY MOOPEN was born in TUGELA, in the Province of Natal on the 10th day of MAY 1927 and his birth was subsequently registered against birth entry number 26/27

RANGASAMY MOOPEN is a direct descendent of PERUMAL MOOPEN Indian Male, Nos. 130887

who arrived in Natal under the Natal Immigration Laws from N. ARCOT, GUDIATHAN, MELPATI India on the 16th day of APRIL 1907 on the ship "SS CONGELLA".


REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE
DURBAN



REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS (INDIAN AFFAIRS)

FAMILY RECORD

- FAMILY RECORD**
- for **GRAMONEY.** **MOOPEN.**
1. (a) Surname. ~~GRAMONEY~~
(b) First name(s). **CHINNAMMA**
2. (a) Identity number. **800/368 994** (b) File number.
3. Other names. -
4. Registration Certificate, Domicile Certificate, or other Certificate No.
5. Place and date of birth. **19/11/1905. TUGELA, Rep. of South Africa.**
6. Name of father. **VELA GRAMONEY.**
7. Name of mother. **BAGIUM.**
8. If not born in the Republic, date and place of first entry into the Republic. -
9. Occupation. **(Pensioned).**
10. How many times married? **1**

PARTICULARS OF MARRIAGE(S)

Name of wife (° or husband)	Date and place of birth	Date and place of marriage	Identity No.	Present whereabouts (If dead, give date of death)	File No. of father
Rumal M. Japen	India,	Tugela	800/87519 A	Deceased.	-

11. Children of each wife (if any children have been lost by death, their names should be given with the remark "Dead" under heading "Present whereabouts"):

[illegible]

* Applicable if person in respect of whom this form is completed, is a woman

12. Particulars of brothers:

DIA 2

Names	Present whereabouts	Names of wives	Present whereabouts of wife
Ramsamy Anamala Shanum	Tongaat. Zululand	Gengama. Papa.	Tongaat. Zululand.

13. Particulars of sisters:

Names	Present whereabouts	Names of husbands	Present whereabouts of husband
Shanum	Isipingo.	L.R. Maitso	Deceased

I declare that I understand the above questions and have answered them truthfully

Witnesses

(1) [Signature]

(2) Shakesuni

Signature or thumb print

R/H/T/P

Residence in full

18 Satara Road, Merbank, Durban

placed

before me at Durban this 12 day of November 1981

THUMB IMPRES-
OF PERSON/S UN-
TO SIGN HIS/HER
NAME

Right

Director-General: Internal Affairs/Magistrate/Police Officer

MINISTER OF POLICE

MARRIAGE OFFICE FOR NATAL

Telegramadres } "PROTECTOR"
Telephonische address }
Navrae//Enquiries.....
Tel. No. 33-2356
Bylyn/Ext.....



B.M. 43 D

Verwysing/Reference
No. 29/2/3/3/982

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA • REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
DEPARTEMENT VAN BINNELANDSE AANGELEENTHED
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

DIE STREEKVERTEENWOORDIGER
THE REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Esplanadestaatskantore (Stangerstraat)
Esplanade Government Offices (Stanger Street)

H/v Victoria-oeweroord en Stangerstraat
Cor. of Victoria Embankment and Stanger Street

Privaatsak/Private Bag X54330

DURBAN

4000

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to confirm that the holder CHINNANNAIA
GRAMONEY residing at 18 STARA RD.
MEREBANK, DURBAN. has applied for an
Identity Document.

The document will be issued by the Director General, Department
of Internal Affairs, Pretoria, in due course.


REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

