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1983

L. RAMDHANI

15060

A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T S

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5. Santhie Debedayal Audh.
6. Sithapathi Audh.
7. Rajpathi Audh.

I N T R O D U C T I O N

To trace my past in this research was for me a unique and an enjoyable experience. Audh Mohan was my great grand-father. I had lived for several years with my grandparents at Cornubia Estate which was under the control of the Natal Estates Ltd. Looking back, I find that I was fortunate to have associated with my great grandfather for ten years and therefore have first hand knowledge of his experiences in later life. I was also fortunate in that some information regarding his early life was imparted to me while he was alive while others were easily obtainable from his surviving children. It was interesting to note that during my research, interviews were conducted independently and the facts obtained were exactly the same on each occasion. Thus, one can say in this instance, that oral evidence was true and documents attached in the appendix verifies the oral evidence.

Unfortunately certain documents were not available because the surviving children changed residence several times and these documents were lost in the process. The Archive in Pietermaritzburg and the Protector's Reports in the Durban Public Library could not furnish any information. Nevertheless, I managed to accumulate sufficient information and documents on other aspects of his life. During my research, I wanted to re-live the past and travelled to inspect the Trenance Estate which was his first place of settlement, and Cornubia Estate, which was his subsequent place of settlement until his death in 1968.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE COMING OF INDIANS TO SOUTH AFRICA

The organized system of indentured Indian emigration came about chiefly as a result of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834. The freed slaves in many areas refused to work, and in Mauritius in particular, the planters were desperate for labour. Indian recruiters, already accustomed to supply Indian labourers to Ceylon, though not under indenture, now contracted to bring Indian immigrants to work on the Mauritian sugar plantations.¹ In 1842, in Great Britain, a special body was set up to control emigration - the Colonial Land and Emigration Commission.² At first regulations were drawn up for emigration to white countries like Australia and New Zealand but the British Government arranged that the Land and Emigration Commission should help in drawing up regulations with regard to Indian emigrations.³

Natal was annexed by the British in 1843 and early in the nineteenth century it was recognised that sugar was the main crop for which the Natal coastal area was most suitable. Several considerable plantations and cane crushing machinery were already in operation by the middle of the 1850's.⁴

¹M. Palmer: The History of the Indians in Natal, p. 4.

²Ibid., p.6

³Ibid., p.7

⁴Ibid., p.10

At first, two obstacles, namely, inexperience and lack of capital had been overcome but labour was not easily obtained. For the cultivation, reaping and manufacture of sugar there had to be an abundant, reliable and uninterrupted supply of labour. This was particularly applicable to the only method of sugar plantation that was envisaged in Natal at that time - production on large estates, where sugar was both grown and milled.⁵ The Native labour was insufficient and unreliable. Besides, Theophilus Shepstone, the Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes, steadily blocked any proposals for compulsion on the Native population.⁶ The Natal planters turned to the idea of importing labour from India and petitions were submitted.⁷ After further representations, Laws 13, 14 and 15 of 1859 were passed through the Legislative Council to implement the scheme.⁸ Negotiations took place with the Indian Government to authorise emigration to Natal and wages and conditions of service were finalized. Finally, the Indian Act XXX111 of 1860 authorised the comprehensive system of emigration from India.⁹

⁵L.M. Thompson: "Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1872", in Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol. 11, p.4.

⁶Ibid., p.6

⁷Ibid., p.9

⁸Ibid., p.13

⁹Ibid., p.15

In India, eighteen million people perished of famine in the first eighty years of the nineteenth century. There was a constant battle with starvation.¹⁰ Most of the population - over eighty per cent, were tied to the land. The rural economy never stayed in a condition of equilibrium. Peasant farmers, at all periods, were losing their land, through falling into debt or suffering illness or other domestic disasters. These folk then found themselves landless labourers. Some drifted off to the towns in search of casual employment. The drift from the land became large-scale movement during any time of troubles: famine, flood or invasion and so a pool of casual-labour was formed in the great cities of India.¹¹

Others, like the Dhangers or "Hill Coolies" were attracted to metropolitan Calcutta, with its opportunities for seasonal employment, and soon to be lured into ships for Mauritius. During the 1840's and 1850's, the Dhangers formed a sizeable proportion of those taken overseas under indenture.¹² The people of Shahabad were the readiest recruits, they spoke Bhojpuri, a form of Hindi, and they responded to the recruiters willingly, it was said from a spirit of adventure.¹³

¹⁰L.M. Thompson: 'Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1872', in Archives Year Book for South African History, VOL 11, p.4.

¹¹H. Tinker: A New System of Slavery; the export of Indian Labour Overseas, p.39

¹²Ibid., p.49

¹³Ibid., p.53

The Indian Government envisaged the movement as a permanent migration which would relieve the population pressure in India. Recruiting in India was done by agents in Madras and Calcutta and on 16 November 1860 the S.S. Truro from Madras docked in Durban with the first 341 immigrants on board. Ten days later the S.S. Belvedere arrived from Calcutta bringing 351 men, women and children. From then onward, a steady stream of indentured labourers arrived in South Africa.¹⁴ However, between 1863 and 1866 there were many problems encountered by the Natal Government with regard to the cost of Indian immigrants from and to India and new arrangements were introduced and immigration was resumed.¹⁵ In July 1871 the last indentures expired but more immigrants were demanded by planters and more were ordered as soon as the financial impasse was overcome and public money made available. The scheme was abolished in 1911 and the last group of indentured labourers arrived on the S.S. Umlazi on 21 July 1911.¹⁶ The indentured scheme provided that a labourer could re-indenture after five years, return to India or remain as a free labourer in South Africa. Audh Mohan, a flamboyant male of thirty-eight, arrived on the 14 June 1911 and elected to remain as a free labourer.¹⁷

¹⁴L.M. Thompson: 'Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1872'. in Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol 11, p.28.

¹⁵M. Palmer: The History of the Indians in Natal, p.26.

¹⁶L.M. Thompson: 'Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1872'. in Archives Year Book for South African History, Vol. 11, p.54.

¹⁷Appendix 1a; 1b

PLACE OF ORIGIN IN INDIA:

He was born in 1873 in Sarea, a village in the district of Gorakhpur (26°49' N; 83°30' E) which was one of the districts of the United Provinces. Today, it is situated in the State of Uttar Pradesh.¹⁸

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND:

He was a bachelor of thirty-eight on arrival and was a Bania by caste. His parents owned sweetmeat shops in Gorakhpur. He wanted adventure and worked on a ship as an assistant chef in the catering department.¹⁹

REASONS FOR LEAVING ORIGINAL COUNTRY:

He travelled several times between India and South Africa because of his work on the ship. He came into contact with passengers who had signed as indentured labourers before him. He was influenced by these passengers to try a new life in South Africa. Being the adventurous type he registered as a labourer to try his fortune here.²⁰

DEPARTURE, ARRIVAL, NAME OF SHIP AND PORT OF ENTRY:

He set sail from Calcutta on board the S.S. Umkuzi in 1911 and disembarked at Durban on the 14 June 1911. He was assigned colonial number 150 167.²¹ The vessel that he travelled in

¹⁸Appendix 2; 3.

¹⁹D. Audh and others: Interview.

²⁰D. Audh and others: Interview.

²¹Appendix 1b

had to conform to scientific standards of space and dietary requirements. A medical man was on board. The ship had separate holds for married couples, single men and single women.²²

FIRST PLACE OF SETTLEMENT AND OCCUPATION:

He settled on the Trenance Estate which was by then under the control of The Natal Estates Ltd.²³ He was employed to work in the sugar fields. He was paid six shillings (60c) per month. He was provided with free accommodation which consisted of a hut house with thatched roof. He was provided with a weekly ration of rice, dholl, salt, oil and mealie meal. He also received free firewood.²⁴

SUBSEQUENT PLACES OF SETTLEMENT AND OCCUPATIONS:

He continued to work in the sugar fields but there was a change in the place of residence.²⁵ He moved from the Trenance Estate to Cornubia Estate, which was also under the control of The Natal Estates Ltd.²⁶ He lived with his sons here until his death on 29 November 1968. He retired in 1950 and was paid a pension of £1 (R2) per month.²⁷

²²Appendix 4.

²³Appendix 5.

²⁴D.Audh and others: Interview.

²⁵D.Audh and others: Interview.

²⁶Appendix 6.

²⁷D.Audh and others: Interview.

MARRIAGE, BIRTH OF CHILDREN:

He was married to Ramkalia whilst residing at Trenance Estate. From this marriage were born four boys and five girls. The surviving son, Debedayal, was born in Cornubia Estate on the 5 November 1929 and he was registered on the 23 November 1929. He now resides at 39 Parthab Road, Red Hill.²⁸

One of the surviving daughters, Sithapathi, was born in the Trenance Estate in 1915. As mentioned earlier, this was the first place of settlement. She now resides at 186 Stonebridge Road, Precinct A, Phoenix, and the other, Rajpathie, was also born in the Trenance Estate on the 4 April 1925. She now resides at Road 503, House No. 41, Precinct G, Clayfield, Phoenix.²⁹ At the time of death on 29 November 1968, he had four sons, five daughters, forty-three grand children, approximately thirty great grand children and approximately five great, great grand children.³⁰

SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS, AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES:

Religious: His religious interests were only confined to his immediate family and to his relatives. He guided and assisted in family and religious activities in his own family. He did attend public religious gatherings and customary festivals but did not serve on any religious bodies.³¹

²⁸Appendix 7

²⁹Appendix 8a; 8b

³⁰Appendix 9

³¹D. Audh and others: Interview.

Political: He had very little interest in political matters.³²

Social: He took his social life seriously. He spent a great deal of his time in card playing and on horse racing. He was a professional card player and visited the gambling houses in Durban.³³ He loved horse racing and even at a very old age did not miss the popular "July Handicap" and the "Gold Cup" in Durban.³⁴ These activities were intermingled with his frequent visits to the homes of his children, grand children, and friends. He always grabbed the opportunity to socialize when invited to various functions among relatives and friends.

His life in later years was one of enjoyment and achievement. He lived to a grand old age and upon his death, was dearly missed by all for he was a senior member of his community and was one of the privileged few among the early Indian immigrants who had lived his life from dawn to dusk.

³²D. Audh and others: Interview.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Appendix 10

C O N C L U S I O N

On looking at my great grandfather's life in the past and comparing it with the present, I feel that his family of several generations is greatly indebted to him. He had endured many hardships but remained to lay the foundation for a better life for many today. It is my wish that this research about his life must be acknowledged as a tribute to his spirit of adventure, his courage and his dedication to his family.

B.M.25

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

COPY OF SHIP'S LIST OF INDIAN IMMIGRANT

Serial Number	:	33
Colonial Number	:	150167
Date of Arrival	:	14 JUNE 1911
Name of Ship	:	S.S. UMKUZI (33 RD)
Place of Registration	:	—
Date of Registration	:	—
Number in Register	:	—
Name	:	AUGH
Father's Name	:	MOHAN
Age	:	38 YRS
Sex	:	MALE
Caste	:	BANIA
District	:	GORAKHPUR
Thanna/Taluq	:	SAIJANWA
Village	:	SAREA
Height	:	5'3"
Bodily Marks	:	SCARS ON BOTH KNEES
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	RAMDAS (BROTHER)
Relations Accompanied	:	—
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	VACCINATED
Remarks	:	—

Certified a true copy.


 REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE


AUDH MOHAN



ELDEST DAUGHTER

YOUNGEST CHILD

HIS WIFE

AUDH MOHAN

(PHOTOGRAPH TAKEN IN 1961)



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. Ramanathapuram
- D. Salem
- E. Tanjore
- F. Chingleput
- G. North Arcot
- H. South Arcot
- I. Malabar
- J. Tinnevely

Telugu Districts

- K. Visagapatnam
- L. Ganjam
- M. East Godavari

F. Nellore

Bombay Presidency

- Q. Ahmednagar District

NORTH INDIA

Hill Caste Districts

1. Simla Pargana
2. Bawal Pargana
3. Raichal
4. Manikpur
5. Barabanki
6. Bareilly
7. Patna

Bihar Districts

8. Shahabad
9. Patna

12. Champaran

13. Saran

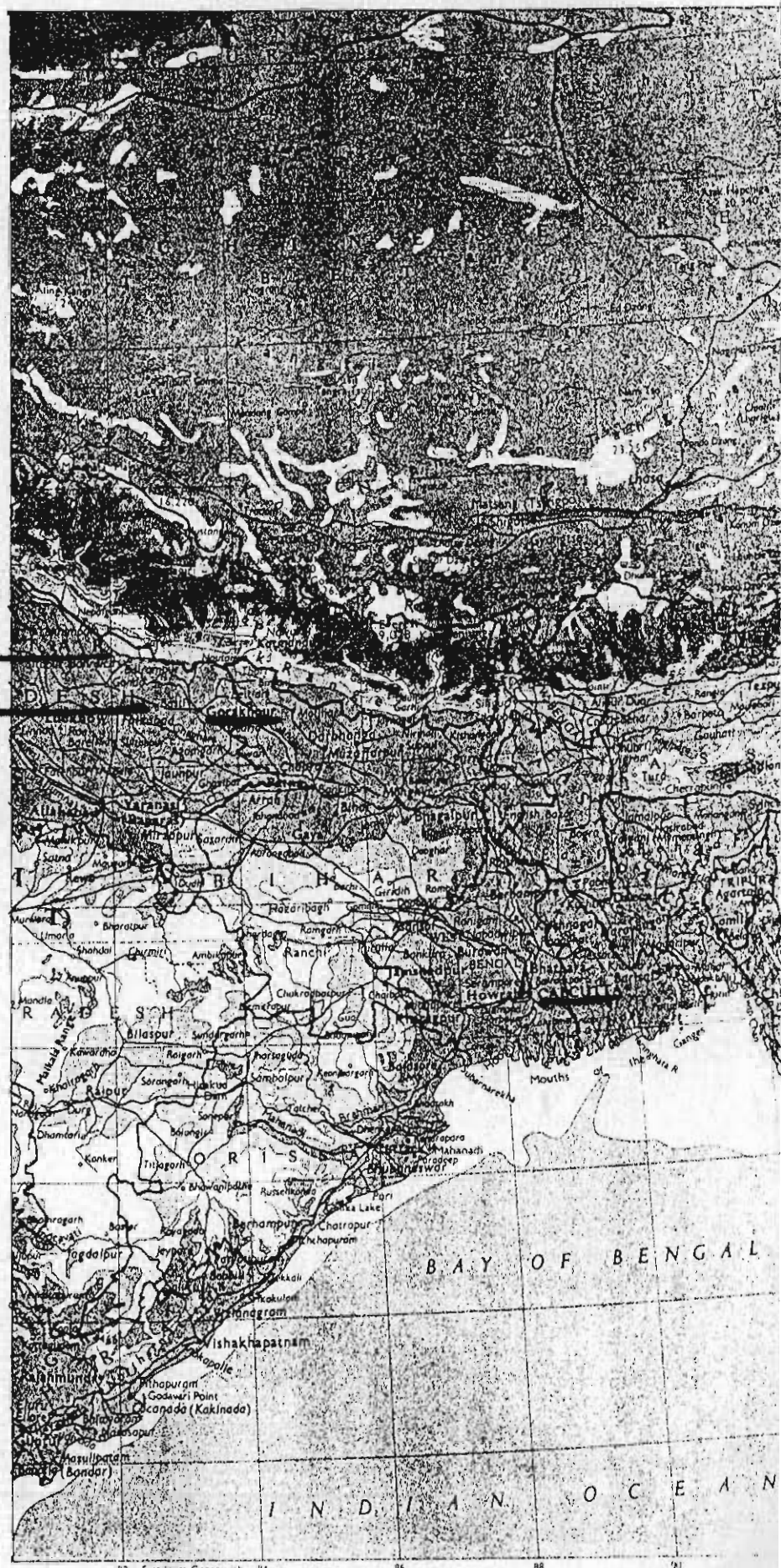
14. Darbhanga

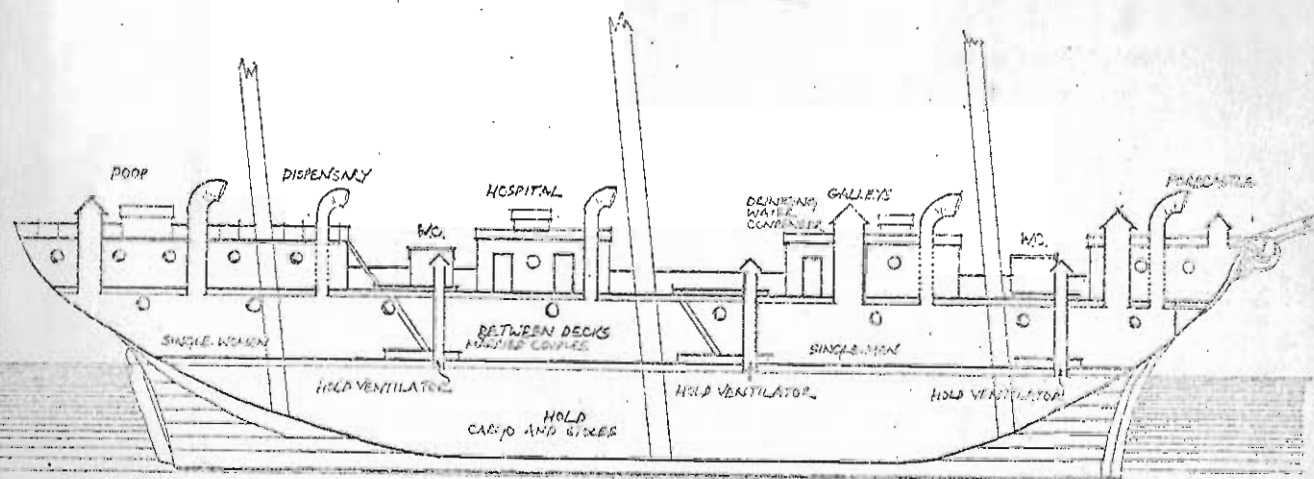
15. Muzaffarpur

Districts of the United Provinces

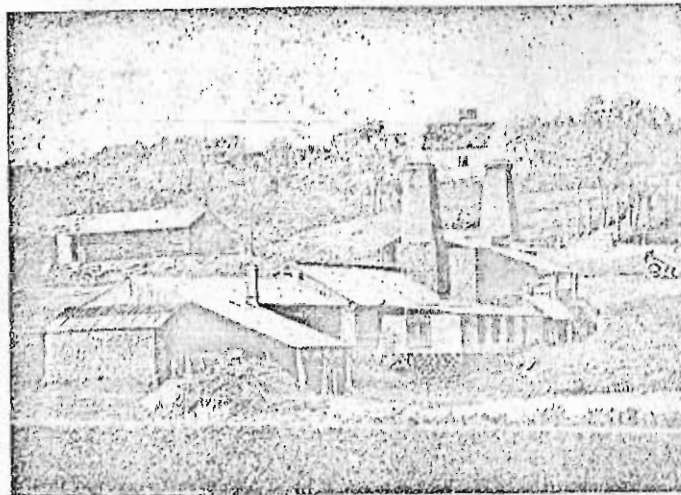
16. Ballia
17. Ghazipur
18. Arrah
19. Fyzabad
20. Buxar
21. Gonda
22. Gorakhpur
23. Banaras
24. Mirzapur
25. Jaunpur

Calcutta Metropolitan Area





Cross-section of a coolie ship c. 1880



Original photograph by courtesy Wm. Palmer & Son.

TRENANCE SUGAR ESTATE

1861

to the present time



The stone shed at top left still stands on Trenance, owned by the descendants of William Sykes.

"The estate we are now traversing may fairly be considered one of our older plantations. From the first it has continued under the same management — that of Mr. Richard Acutt and his two energetic sons . . ."

So wrote John Robinson of the Trenance Estate in 1870. "There are 400 acres under cane," he says. "The mill . . . occupies a roomy fabric . . . A disc pan is in operation as well as wetzels, and is found to work well. The engine is a perpendicular one, of considerable power, and gives great satisfaction. . . . Mr. Acutt is fortunate in having the co-operation of his two eldest sons, Messrs. Leonard and Courtney Acutt, who are notable proofs that Natal can produce good sugar planters as well as good sugar . . ." At the International Exhibition of 1873, in London, Richard Acutt exhibited wetzel sugars made at Trenance.

230

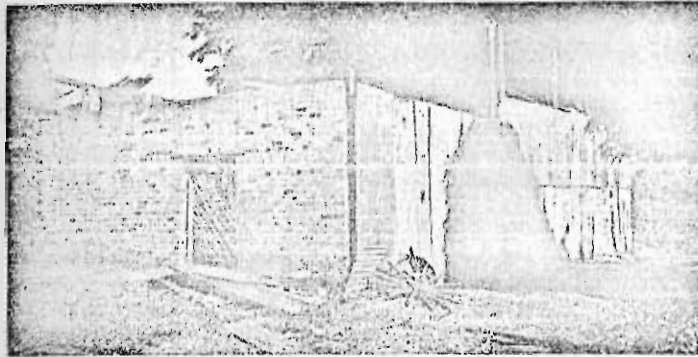
VALIANT HARVEST

Richard Acutt founded Trenance in 1861. He died at the age of 77. When he first arrived in Natal he occupied the "Riversdale" property.

In 1878 Trenance mill equipment included 1 by 12 h.p. engine, 1 by 6 h.p. engine, 2 wetzels, 2 centrifugals. The foundations of an original building on this estate when first started are to be seen today, a stone-walled shed still stands.

Trenance was purchased by William Sykes in 1888. The mill was closed down in 1916, and Trenance became a direct supplier of cane to the Natal Estates mill. The estate is still in the hands of the Sykes family.

William Sykes at one time managed the original Mt. Edgecombe mill for Capt Smerdon, later owning his own small property near Phoenix.



The old Cornubia mill-house still stands, serving as a tool room.

CORNUBIA SUGAR ESTATE

1870 — 1882



The brothers F. H. and W. Lean were the original owners of Cornubia where, up to 1870, they had grown coffee. The Government blue book for 1872 records that the Lean Bros. of Cornubia had a 10 h.p. steam sugar mill in operation, thus identifying the Lean's first cane planting with the year 1870. In 1874, however, Hill & Co. owned the Cornubia Central Estate, with which they were completely successful. By 1877 Leonard Acutt was managing Cornubia, now crushing $4\frac{1}{2}$ tons daily, and at the season's opening Acutt was congratulated on "advancing the central factory system". In 1878 the plant consisted of a mill, a 16 h.p. engine and an 8 h.p. engine, 5 wetzels and 6 centrifugals.

In 1879 Marshall Campbell was installed as manager at Cornubia, and in July, 1882, this estate passed into the hands of the Natal Central Sugar Co. Ltd., later to become The Natal Estates Ltd.

app No. 844

1/63/3544

Revenue/Inkomste 196.

800/455696 A.

60020

FEE PAID.
BEDRAG BETAAL.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

A COPY FROM REGISTER OF BIRTHS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE
PROVINCE OF NATAL—SCHEDULE F. LAW No. 25 OF 1891.

(This certificate is in the form of the entry as finally amended.)

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

'N AFSCRIF UIT REGISTER VAN GEBOORTES VAN INDIËRIMMIGRANTE IN
DIE PROVINSIE NATAL—SKEDULE F. WET No. 25 VAN 1891.

(Hierdie sertifikaat is volgens die inskrywing soos finaal gewysig.)

1 No. Nr.	2 When Born and Where. Wanneer en waar gebore.	3 Name. Naam.	4 Sex. Geslag.	5 Parents' Names. Name van ouers.	6 Parents' Official Numbers. Offisiële nommers van ouers.	7 Indentured or Free. Ingeboek of vry.	8 Father's Occupation. Beroep van vader.	9 Parents' Residence. Woonplek van ouers.	10 When Regis- tered. Wan- neer geregi- streer.	11 Remarks, Signature of Registrar, etc. Opmerkings, handtekening van Registrateur, ens.
6705 1929	CORNUBIA ESTATES, MOUNT EDGECOMBE. 5th November 1929	DEBEDAYAL.	M.	ANDH. RAMKALIA	150167 150455	FREE LABOURER.		CORNUBIA ESTATE.	23 29	(SGD) W. L. H. Burns

Certified a true copy.
Gesertifiseer as 'n ware afskrif.

H. Rawan
Protector of Indian Immigrants.—Beskermmer van Indiërinnimmigrante.

Durban

P.D. BOX 474 DURBAN

19

Parents' Population Reg. No.
Ouers se PersoonsnommerFather
VaderMother
Moeder

6/12/1939

PERSONS No. 800/422568A.
IDENTITY No.

Revenue/Inkomste 196.

FEE PAID.
BEDRAG BETAAL.



A246277

UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA.

A COPY FROM REGISTER OF BIRTHS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE
PROVINCE OF NATAL—SCHEDULE F. LAW No. 25 OF 1891.

(This certificate is in the form of the entry as finally amended.)

UNIE VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

'N AFSCRIF UIT REGISTER VAN GEBOORTES VAN INDIËRIMMIGRANTE IN
DIE PROVINSIE NATAL—SKEDULE F. WET No. 25 VAN 1891.

(Hierdie sertifikaat is volgens die inskrywing soos finaal gewysig.)

1 No. Nr.	2 When Born and Where. Wanneer en waar gebore.	3 Name. Naam.	4 Sex. Geslag.	5 Parents' Names. Name van ouers.	6 Parents' Official Numbers. Offisiële nommers van ouers.	7 Indentured or Free. Ingeboek of vry.	8 Father's Occupation. Beroep van vader.	9 Parents' Residence. Woonplek van ouers.	10 When Registered. Wanneer geregi- streer.	11 Remarks, Signature of Registrar, etc. Opmerkings, handtekening van Registrateur, ens.
1906 733.	1915. Trenance.	SITHAPATHI	F	Rudh Ramkala.	150167 150455	Free. Free.	Labourer. Trenance.	 Trenance.	1933	(Sgd.) E.C. Ruyssen

Certified a true copy.
Gesertifiseer as 'n ware afskrif.

Protector of Indian Immigrants—Beskermer van Indiër-immigrante.

Durban



Parents' Population Reg. No. Father
Ouers se Persoonsnommer Vader

Mother
Moeder

80 X-02M02A

P.S. 1512677-1961-62-500-200

PERSOONSNR
IDENTITY NO.

Revenue/Inkomste 195

04226

FEE PAID.
BEDRAG BETAAL.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

A COPY FROM REGISTER OF BIRTHS OF INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE
PROVINCE OF NATAL. SCHEDULE F. LAW No. 25 OF 1891.

(This certificate is in the form of the entry as finally amended.)



REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

'N AFSKRIF UIT REGISTER VAN GEBOORTES VAN INDIËRIMMIGRANTE IN
DIE PROVINSIE NATAL. SCHEDULE F. WET No. 25 VAN 1891.

(Hierdie sertifikaat is volgens die inskrywing soos finaal gewysig.)

1 No. Nr.	2 When Born and Where. Wanneer en waar gebore.	3 Name. Naam.	4 Sex. Geslag.	5 Parents' Names. Name van ouers.	6 Parents' Official Numbers. Offisiële nummers van ouers.	7 Indentured or Free. Ingeboek of vry.	8 Father's Occupation. Beroep van vader.	9 Parent Residence. Woonplek van ouers.	10 When Registered. Wanneer geregistreer.	11 Remarks, Signature of Registrar, etc. Opmerkings, handtekening van Registrateur, ens.
1905 1925.	IRENANCE ESTHER MOUNT EDWARDS	RAE PATHIE	F	(VINI) RAE		FREE LABOURER		IRENANCE ESTHER MOUNT EDWARDS	1925	STEPHEN

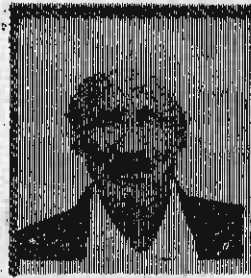
Certified a true copy.
Gesertifiseer as 'n ware afskrif.

Protector of Indian Immigrants. — Beskermmer van Indiërimmigrante.



Parents' Population Reg. No.
Ouers se bevolking
Father
Vader
Mother
Moeder

86. APPENDIX-X

**AUDH BUNNIAH**

The death occurred of Mr. Audh Bunniah of Corunna, Mt. Edgecombe on November 29, 1968 at the age of 108. He was born in India in 1860 and came to South Africa in 1875, and worked at the Natal Estates Ltd. until his retirement. He leaves behind four sons and five daughters, 43 grand children, 30 great grand children and five great, great grand children.

THANKS

The family of the deceased wish to thank all relatives and friends for their kind assistance and messages of sympathy. 7802



You're never too old to bet so 101-year-old Mr. B. Vvard, of Mount Edgecombe travelled to Greyville last Saturday to have a small flutter. Although he did not win, he provided our photographer with a fine study

S O U R C E L I S T

1. Audh, D.: Surviving son.
Address: 30 Parthab Road, Red Hill, 4051.
2. Audh, D.S.: Daughter-in-law
Address: 30 Parthab Road, Red Hill, 4051.
3. Audh, R.: Surviving daughter.
Address: Road 503, House No.41, Precinct G,
Clayfield, Phoenix, 4051.
4. Audh S.: Surviving daughter.
Address: 186 Stonebridge Road, Precinct A,
Phoenix, 4051.
5. Department of Internal Affairs. Stanger Street, Durban.
6. Osborn, R.F.: Valiant Harvest; the Founding of the South
African Sugar Industry, 1848-1924.
Durban, Brown Davis and Platt Ltd.
7. Palmer, M.: The History of The Indians in Natal.
Cape Town, Oxford University Press.
8. Thompson, L.M.: 'Indian Immigration into Natal, 1860-1872',
in Archives Year Book for South African
History, Vol 11.
Cape Town, Cape Times Ltd.
9. Tinker, H.: A New System of Slavery; the export of
Indian Labour Overseas.
London, Oxford University Press.