

NAME : (L NASAREE)⁵⁹⁴
701

REG NO : 1519

HISTORY PROJECT

TITLE : [AN INDENTURED LABOURER - A STUDY]⁵⁹⁴

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I'd like to thank my father for his invaluable information and patience in the face of interminable questions that I put before him. Without him, it would be needless to say I would not have had to do this marvellous project and it is through his vigorous encouragement and sometimes painful promptings, that I was able to set down the road of history and arrive safely at my grandfather's village and back to Natal.

I'm especially indebted to Miss P. Chetty and Mr. Kooblall for their painstakingly close and conscientious reading of the manuscript and their delighted reception of it which did so much to restore my confidence, so much so that I was able to prepare a bold front and attack the veils of history, acidly and assiduously, to emerge, on the other side, confronting the "historical truth".

PREFACE:

We, who are South African Indian citizens owe a debt to those pioneering spirits of our forefathers. Through immense hardship, these pioneers made it possible for their children to achieve a firm foothold on the shores of Africa and share in her wealth and prosperity. ^{THEIR} These deeds of courage and unflagging fight for justice, in the face of hostility and even aggression, on a strange shore, should be recorded for posterity and serve as a beacon for the struggle for future justice and freedom in South Africa.

My father is a colonial born Indian. He, being the closest and oldest known relation of my grandfather proved to be the major source of my information. When I interviewed him I did not adopt a question-answer type interview rather I allowed him to waffle along bringing up little anecdotes and incidents that involved my grandfather, so that gradually I could create a picture, albeit a hazy one, of him.

I asked my father to tell me of my grandfather and what he told me was illuminating, as well as, informative. What I have subsequently done was to edit the interview, to paraphrase it, so that it fitted into the context of my essay.

What he did tell me of my grandfather was that he was a Telugu speaking man from the villiage of Kakinada in the district of Golconda. His father had told him that his family had to adopt the Muslim faith on the fear of death. So for generations his family had followed the Muslim faith; even his name was Shaik Madar, and his father was Nasser Saib. He told my father that he had come to South Africa to make his fortune and return to India. Also he said that he had six brothers living in India and that they were involved in cotton farming.

Furthermore , he recounted that the promises made by the recruiters were too fantastic for him to ignore. Despite protests from his family for him to remain, he had made his mind to come. Also the cotton industry, because of competition from the English Lancashire mills, was deteriorating and this was the last straw that drove him to South Africa.

He had packed his meagre belongings and gone to Madras from there he was assigned to a certain batch and sent on board a ship which was the SS Umkuzi.

At first everything was exciting, the bustle of the recruiters, the port officials and seeing new faces and making new acquaintances. He was unfortunate in that there were very few Muslims on board the ship. They were put into the ship's hold and they set sail. He was fortunate, he told my father that he was single for married men had the problem of looking after their wives, and to fight off the advances of the sailors.

After a tiring journey and a monotonous diet they dropped anchor at Port Natal. His first impression of Natal, he told my father, was -disappoint^{ing} for he had expected, as promised, gold lying on the streets, but this was not so.

Instead of making his fortune he was forced to work for his living. He was assigned to a Mr Ladlaw of Umhlali to work in his farm, cutting cane, which was back-breaking work, and completely foreign to him, who had worked at picking and planting cotton. For this he was paid ten shillings a month with board and lodging.

Because of the lack of mosques and, he, being the only muslim on that estate, he gradually lost touch with his religion. But he did keep some remnants of his religion by performing certain auspicious functions such as the flag-raising ceremony. He eventually found a woman as a partner. This woman was an Hindu speaking woman. There was no elaborate ceremony to consecrate the wedding. They lived together as man and wife.

From this union sprang up three children. Following the traditions of his father, he took another wife, this being the "sirdars" daughter, a Tamil woman and out of this union a lot of benefits accrued to him. The Hindi lady was forced, through the domineering attitude of the Tamil lady, to quit the house. She departed with her children.

Soon after, my grandfather tried by stealth to return to India. He had booked his place on the ship; up till today my father does not know how my grandmother got wind of his absconding, but she immediately asked her employer (she was working as a domestic servant) to ask the port authorities to hold him back, which they did.

My grandfather was forced to spend the rest of his days in Natal, until his death, at the age of 79 in 1950. Being illiterate he was forced to ask a close friend to write letters to his brothers and parents.

When I was over with the interview I was faced with the task of editing and paraphrasing, but more significantly I was faced with the task of verification.

To this end I went to Indian ^{AFFAIRS} in ^{STANGER} stanger street to ask for a ships-list on my grandfather. There after many problems they were able to produce one for me. It was informative and provided information about my grandfather from scars on his body to the district and village from which he came differed from my father's assertion. I confronted my father with this contradiction, expecting him, to recognize the area in the ships list from possible talks with my grandfather-; but he was quite adamant that his father had told him repeatedly, that he had come from Kakinada in Gokonda.

To verify this further, I checked the Atlas map and I was amazed to find no sign of the place mentioned in the ships list. However I was able to check Kakinada in the map.

What I must conclude is that either the name of the area was changed as most names were changed in India, or, the ships captain who recorded all the information had not been too particular in taking down the correct place of domicile or, the phonetic difficulty of translation had obscured the name.

Knowing that I could not possibly verify a possible error in translation I decided to tack on another course to verify my fathers story.

Fortunately for me I was aware of a little of the social configuration or caste system of India, in which people were assigned to a certain caste, by virtue of the job they did.

Dr. BRAIN

Dr. Brown was obliging enough to check the caste out for me. On the ship's list the caste was listed as "Dorakuen." When checking all the castes I was unable to find any reference to this particular caste, however I was aware that he should be listed under something referring to cotton. In this way I was able to find out that his caste was in fact "Dudekula", or cotton scutchers from the locality of Telingana.

The locality and the reference to cotton was all in keeping with my knowledge of my grandfather except that he was a moslem and should not have any caste, since moslem do not believe in the caste system so all I can infer from this is that my grandfather adopted this caste when asked by the ship's captain for the sake of formality.

What also confirms my belief in the assumption that the ships captain was negligent in taking down details or was overwhelmed by the foreign dialect is the fact that, 'Dudekula' is given as 'Dorakuen' in the ships list - a clear case of mis-translation.

Referring to my map I was able to ^{place} ~~plan~~ Telingana as the area in which Golconda and the village of Kakinada is found. This confirms my earlier standpoint that my grandfather had come from Golconda rather than Kishoa as stated in the ships list.

To verify my grandfather's story that he was a converted moslem. I checked books on the history of India. I deduced that if he arrived in Natal in 1900 at the age of 19 I should trace the history of India as effecting the area from which he came. However the ships list offered his father's name as Nasser Saib, a definitely Islamic name and which my father verified. I then deduced that I had to search the history of India even prior to his deat birth. Realizing this I was unable to judge whether he -was a third generation moslem or fourth or fifth, so I was faced with the tedious but interesting task of checking histories of Islamic invasion of India effecting the area of Golconda.

I was lucky enough to find a lot of information regarding the conversion of Hindus to the Moslem faith in India, as pertaining to my grandfather's birthplace.

So one history textbook goes:

Golkonda

The history of the other major South Indian kingdoms that emerged from the ruins of the Bahmanid state, that of Golkonda, resembles in many respects that of the neighbouring state Bijapur.

In 1485 Sultan-Quli form Hamadan was able to save his king in one of the internal struggles between the Deccanis and the foreigners.

He was accorded the title Malikutb Al Mulk and posted to Telingana. There he declared his independence in 1512 and immediately introduced the Shia faith.

Sultan Ibrahim (1550-1580) was the first to use the royal title for himself and in spite of numerous wars was able to create an interesting cultural life blending Muslim and Hindu traditions, and strengthening the positions of Telugu besides Arabic and Persian. His successor, as devout a Shia as Muhammed.Quli Qutb Shah was, his policy has been called a conscious fusion of Hindu and Muslim cultures not only at the court but also among the aristocracy and the common people'.

What I could deduce from this was that in the area that my grandfather had lived, there was constant inroads being made on the Hindu faith by the Moslem invaders and that it is though this fermentation that my grandfather became converted.

However my fathers reference to my grandfather having said that his forefathers were forced to convert to Islam at the point of a sword I could only have verification during the rule of Aurang-Zib, who did use violence, and the sword is mentioned specifically as being used to convert Hindus.

So vis-a-vis the confusion with dates and rulers I can state that my grandfather's story is plausible.

The letters that his friend wrote for him to his brothers in India, have been irretrievably lost. His friend ^{had} ~~has~~ past away soon after him in 1955 and due to my father's ~~negligence~~ or indifference or ignorance, the letters were kept in his friend's family until they got rid of it as so much trash. For when I asked them for it, they obliging looked for it but could not find it. Also they were quite young at that time and could not have known what had become of the letters. ^{With the} ~~with the~~ like letters missing and all the old people, comrades of my grandfather having passed away, I was obliged to concede defeat and be satisfied with the valuable information that I had unearthed.

My grandfather DID NOT LEAVE US A LOT OF MATERIAL WEALTH
~~My fa~~
What We have inherited from him is not so much wealth but the courage to persevere. Also in terms of cultural heritage we inherited a mixed bag of religious beliefs, of moslem beliefs and practices from my grandfather and Hindu beliefs and practices from my grandmother.

The most comical aspect of our history is not so much my grandfather's eccentricities but rather Indian affairs inefficiency. The comedy arises out of the distortion of our surname. When my father was born, this is what my father told me, my grandfather had told him that he had wanted to ^{KEEP} ~~keys~~ his name as Nasser Saib in honour of his father. However there being some misunderstanding and bureaucratic errors my father ended up with the name of Madarsaib and the surname of Nasaree.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
ABRIDGED BIRTH CERTIFICATE

(Issued in terms of Act 81 of 1963)

Certified a true extract from the birth register
of:

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA
VERKORTE GEBOORTESERTIFIKAAT

(Uitgereik kragtens Wet 81 van 1963)

Gesertifiseer 'n ware uittreksel uit die
geboorteregister van:

Identity number
Identiteitsnommer

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

Surname
Van

NASAREE

First names in full
Volle voorname

Date of birth:
Geboortedatum:

Day
Dag

02

Month
Maand

07

Year
Jaar

1919

Place of birth
Geboorteplek

UMHLALI

Sex
Geslag

MALE

Population group
Bevolkingsgroep

INDIAN

4172/19

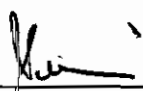
DEPARTMENT OF
INTERNAL AFFAIRS
(ORIGINATIVE
date stamp) X54330
60-1-1983
kantoor datumstempel
STREK... WOORDIGER
DEPARTEMENT VAN
BINNELANDSE AANGELEENTHED

[Signature]
DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS
Sekretaris van Binnelandse Sake

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

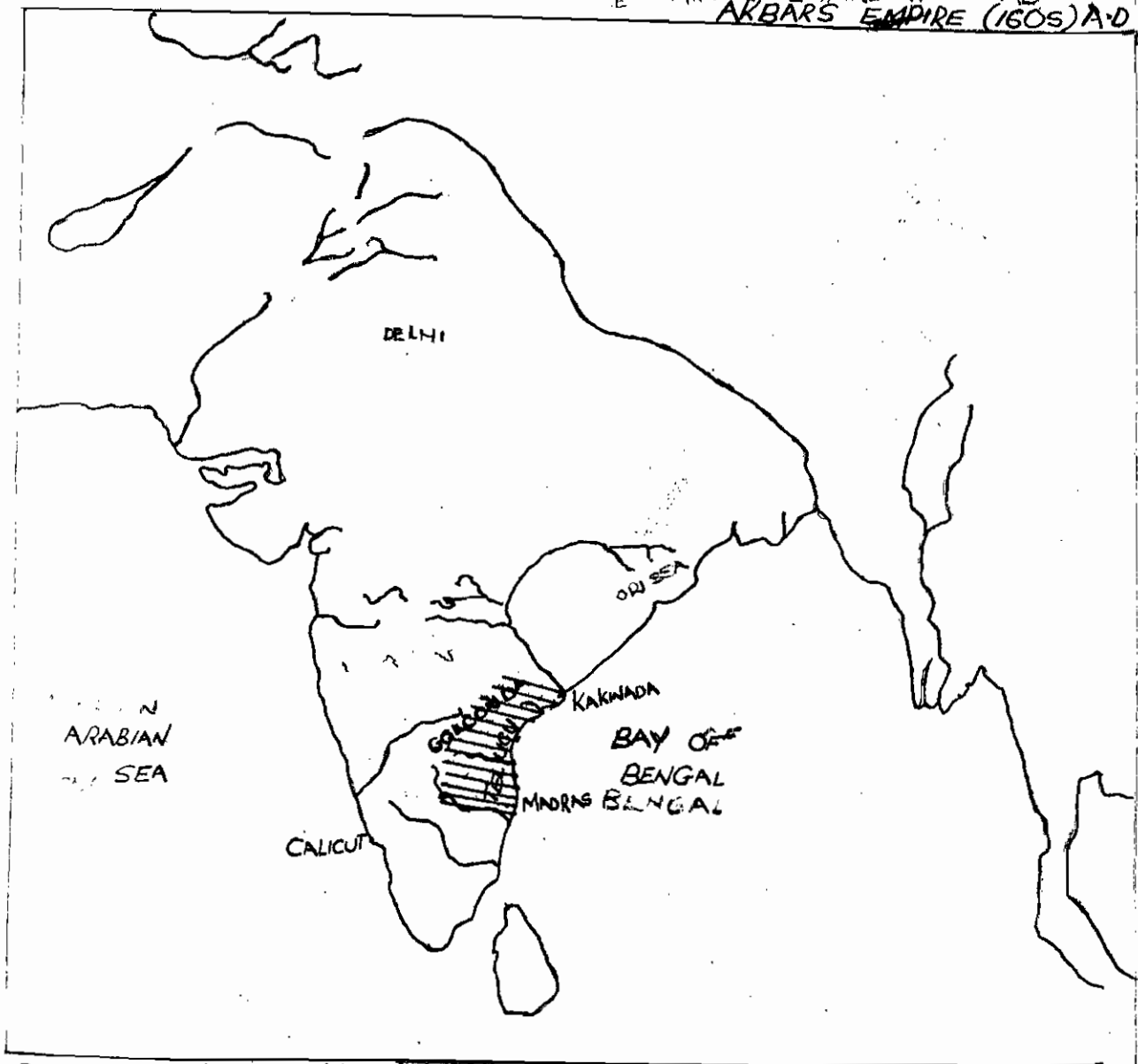
Serial Number	:	120
Colonial Number	:	804TG
Date of Arrival	:	14 AUGUST 1900
Name of Ship	:	S.S. LANKUZI
Place of Registration	:	—
Date of Registration	:	—
Number in Register	:	—
Name	:	SHAIK MADAR
Father's Name	:	NASSAR SAIB
Age	:	19 YRS
Sex	:	MALE
Caste	:	DOORAKUEN
District	:	KISHEA
Thanna/Taluq	:	NIMIKANGU
Village	:	NEHAMVADORAIM
Height	:	5' 8"
Bodily Marks	:	SCAR ON FOREHEAD
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	(FATHER)
Relations Accompanied	:	—
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	VACCINATED
Remarks	:	—

Certified a true copy.


REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE



AKBAR'S EMPIRE (1606) A.D.
AKBAR'S EMPIRE (1605) A.D.



P.S. GOLCONDA IS MODERN DAY ANDHRA PRADESH

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