

PROJECT ON

BULDAV KHAGASAR SINGH AND BALDAV MAHADEV SINGH

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Mrs Jumna Singh - wife of the Late Mr Khagaser Singh

Mr Inderjeeth Singh - son of the Late Mr Khagaser Singh

Also Miss N Singh for obtaining the necessary documents from the Department of Internal Affairs.

SOURCE LIST

1. Mrs B K Singh (Jumna) - my grandmother,
Date of interview - 3 April 1983.

2. South African Indian : Who's Who and Commercial
Directory compiled and edited by Dhanee Bramdaw -
second issue printed by the Natal Witness,
Limited, 1939.

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BULDAV KHAGASAR SINGH

AND

BALDAV MAHADEV SINGH

INTRODUCTION

This project is on my paternal grandfather Buldav Khagaser Singh and his brother Buldav Mahadev Singh. Both Khagaser and Mahadev were born in South Africa. In order to trace their origin it was necessary to go as far back as their grandparents who were originally from India.

Difficulties, however, arose with regards to the date of departure and reasons for leaving their original country, India. I was able to obtain some information from the Department of Internal Affairs and the rest from my paternal grandmother, Mrs Jumna Singh who is now 81 years old. She has been of great assistance.

1. PLACE OF ORIGIN IN INDIA

Khagaser's grandfather Seeusungkur came from the district called Bensil in North India. The thanna was Sasrawo and the village was Arrah (Appendix 1). His grandmother, Pauroo

came from the district of Jargo. The thanna was Jhauldah and the village was Purooleea (Appendix 2). It would appear that both Seeusungkur and Pauroo were not married when they came to South Africa although they travelled together on the same ship. He was 25 years old and she was 13 years old. They married while living in Durban.

2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

There seems to be no information with regards to their socio-economic background.

3. REASONS FOR LEAVING ORIGINAL COUNTRY - INDIA

It could be assumed that Seeusungkur came to South Africa to seek adventure since I was told he did not come down as an indentured labourer. He was employed as a labourer and then as a Sardar in Durban. The reason for Pauroo coming to South Africa is not known.

4. DATES OF DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL IN SOUTHERN AFRICA

They arrived in Southern Africa on 26 November 1860.

5. NAME OF SHIP AND PORT OF ENTRY

The ship Seeusungkur and Pauroo arrived in was the Belvidera and the port of entry was Durban.

6. FIRST PLACE OF SETTLEMENT

Seeusungkur and Pauroo lived in Durban.

7. FIRST OCCUPATION

Seeusungkur was first employed as a labourer and subsequently became a Sardar.

8. BIRTH OF CHILDREN

Seesungkur had one son named Buldav. Buldav married and he had two sons, Mahadev born on the 13 August 1885 and Khagaser born in 1877. Both Mahadev and Khagaser were born at Umgeni Road, Durban. Mahadev married the daughter of the late Dulsingar Singh of Kearsney. Khagaser married Jumna, one of the daughters of the Lata Baboo Roopsingh Mont Moreland in Verulam. She (my grandmother) is still living and is about 81 years.

9. OCCUPATION OF BULDAV AND HIS SONS

Buldav had his own cows and his occupation was selling milk. He also had his own vegetable garden in Cato Manor. He then opened a small general dealers business. The business was situated where the present Amedia School now stands in Bellair Road, Mayville.

Subsequently Mahadev and Khagaser opened the first Indian wood and coal yard in Umgeni Road. Their business was called Singh's Wood and Coal.

Khagaser also branched out into the sand business. He purchased a truck, bought and sold sand dredged from the Umgeni River. Thereafter he bought his own machinery and leased a part of the Umgeni River near Quarry Road to dredge sand. He eventually acquired a fleet of 7 tip trucks and 4 travelling trucks. For the maintenance of the trucks he employed a White, Indian and Coloured mechanic and about 200 African labourers. Khagaser was the first Indian to import a convertible Hupmobile from America at the cost of one thousand pounds (Appendix 3).

By this time Khagaser became very prosperous. There was a boom in the building industry and there was a great demand for blue stone. Khagaser then bought blue stone from the Coedmore Quarry and sold it. Business was so

profitable that he decided to buy the Umgeni Quarry. The day before he intended signing the necessary legal documents for the purchase of the quarry he had a strange dream. This dream was related to me by my grandmother. His deceased father (Buldav) told him not to buy blue stone from the quarry since he had it in his own front yard.

The very next day Khagaser brought in engineers to survey the area. It was found that there was blue stone present. He thereafter acquired a licence and began his own blue stone quarry.

Mahadev also branched out into his own business. He opened a number of butcheries. One in Clairwood, two in the Indian Market and the well known Singh's Mutton Market in Warwick Avenue. He was also a prominent race horse owner.

During the time of prosperity, my grandfather, Khagaser and Mahadev built a huge double storeyed mansion which they called the "Lion's Den" in Bellair Road, Mayville.

10. SOCIAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Although Khagaser remained in the background, Mr B.M. Singh became a prominent figure in the social, religious and

political fields. He was the vice-president of the Natal Indian Congress, trustee of the Durban Hindu Temple, was one of those responsible for the building of the Aryan Benevolent Home and School at Cato Manor, president of the Cato Manor Cemetery, trustee of the Durban Indian Sports Ground Association and official of numerous other bodies.

Dignitaries who came from abroad often frequented and dined at the "Lion's Den". To name just a few:

Madame Sarojini Naidu, - elected first woman president of the Indian National Congress in 1925; member of the Government of India Deputation to South Africa in 1932. The following were just a few positions that Madame Sarojini Naidu held (Appendix 4);

The Right Honourable V S Strinivasa Sastri, Agent of the Government of India who came to South Africa between 1927-1929. He was responsible for the erection of 'Sastri College' at a cost of R18 000 which was donated by the Indian community of Natal.

There was also Sir Kunwar Maharaj Singh and his wife Lady Kunwarani Gunwati Singh, Sir Kunwar Maharaj was the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa

between 1932-1935. His wife laboured in the cause of social and women's upliftment. She did much to create a new outlook with regard to the improved attitude towards Indian womanhood in the country (Appendix 5).

11. CONCLUSION

All the grandeur of the "Lion's Den" and the wealth of that went with it came to an end when Mr B M Singh passed away in 1937 and Mr B K Singh in 1939. Mahadev had left in his will, half of his estate to my late father Mr Ranjith Singh who passed away in 1958 at an age of 41 years and his brother Inderjeeth because he had no children of his own. The remaining half was left to his wife. But due to ignorance and sheer stupidity she contested the will on the grounds that Mr Ranjith Singh and Mr Inderjeeth Singh were not her own children. The issue reached the Supreme Court. Mrs B M Singh lost the case. By the time legal costs and creditors were settled there was hardly anything left of the estate. Properties and businesses were sold. Mrs B M Singh eventually lived in a room off Wiggins Road in Mayville where she passed away in the early 1950's a pauper. All that was left of the "Lion's Den" and the B M and B K Singh empire was just a memory.

B.M.25

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

Serial Number	:	<u>29</u>
Colonial Number	:	<u>371</u>
Date of Arrival	:	<u>26.11.1860</u>
Name of Ship	:	<u>BELVIDERA</u>
Place of Registration	:	<u>-</u>
Date of Registration	:	<u>-</u>
Number in Register	:	<u>-</u>
Name	:	<u>SEE SINGH KUR</u>
Father's Name	:	<u>JODOO ROY</u>
Age	:	<u>25 yrs</u>
Sex	:	<u>MALE</u>
Caste	:	<u>RAJPOOT</u>
District	:	<u>BEHAR</u>
Thanna/Taluq	:	<u>SASERANIO</u>
Village	:	<u>AREAH</u>
Height	:	<u>-</u>
Bodily Marks	:	<u>A SMALL SCAR UNDER THE EYE</u>
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	<u>-</u>
Relations Accompanied	:	<u>-</u>
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	<u>VACCINATED</u>
Remarks	:	<u>-</u>

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 REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

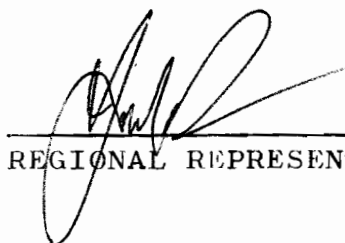
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B.M.25

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

Serial Number	:	<u>231</u>
Colonial Number	:	<u>573</u>
Date of Arrival	:	<u>26.11.1860</u>
Name of Ship	:	<u>BELMIDERA</u>
Place of Registration	:	<u>—</u>
Date of Registration	:	<u>—</u>
Number in Register	:	<u>—</u>
Name	:	<u>FAUROO</u>
Father's Name	:	<u>MOYAN</u>
Age	:	<u>13/15</u>
Sex	:	<u>FEMALE</u>
Caste	:	<u>TAUTTI</u>
District	:	<u>JARNO</u>
Thanna/Taluq	:	<u>JHARJAN</u>
Village	:	<u>PURGOLEA</u>
Height	:	<u>—</u>
Bodily Marks	:	<u>—</u>
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	<u>—</u>
Relations Accompanied	:	<u>—</u>
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	<u>VACCINATED</u>
Remarks	:	<u>—</u>

Certified a true copy.


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