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COURSE : HISTORY III.

SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORY.
ARRIVAL OF THE INDIANS.

DUE DATE : 23 MAY 1983.

..... then came the Indians..

by Graham Subban.

With acknowledgements to Pennusamy Makkannan without
whose co operation I would have been left in straits,
and to my uncle who helped me type it.

Subban

CHAPTER ONE

In the nineteenth century India was a part of the British Empire, although it was not ruled in the same manner as Britain's colonies of settlement. Control over India ultimately rested in the hands of a special department of the British government (the India Office), while within the country itself there was a mixture of direct rule by British officials and control through the Indian princes.

The Indians themselves arose as a separate race through the merging, many centuries ago, of the light-skinned Aryans with the dark-skinned Dravidians. About eighty percent of them were Hindu (the inhabitants of the present-day India) while the remainder were mainly Moslems (the Pakistanis of today), although along with these two main groups there were smaller groups of Buddhists and peoples of other faiths. However, they were not by any means a united people even in the nineteenth century, for there were distinct sects and castes. These castes represented people of different social classes, and it was not permissible for those of a higher caste to mix with a lower caste. Indeed, social distinctions were carried to an extent not seen anywhere else in the world—the gap between the highest classes and the lowest was far greater than that between noblemen and peasants in any European country.

Along with the differences in social classes, there were differences in wealth. The princes were men of enormous riches, while the poorest classes were in the most dire straits and were generally undernourished.

Even in the nineteenth century, India was a vastly over-populated country, and while the princes lived in a luxury equal to that of the French kings before the Revolution, the lowest classes earned hardly enough for a bare existence. It was not unnatural, therefore, the lower castes of the Indians should welcome the chance of settling in other parts of the British Empire, and this in fact large numbers of them did—in addition to Natal, East Africa, Mauritius, and the West Indies absorbed quite a few Indians.

¹ E. Bradlow: Indentured Indians in Natal and the £3 tax, pp 38-53

CHAPTER TWO

¹ During the 1850's the economic situation in Natal underwent a fundamental change with the introduction of sugar plantations (the work largely, of Edmund Morewood, who came to Natal from the sugar-growing island of Mauritius). The new crop soon proved its worth to the farmers who had turned their lands over to its cultivation and exports began almost at once. However, one crucial factor lay in the shortage of labour, for at that time hardly any of the Zulus were prepared to work for the Europeans and even the few who did do did not prove themselves to be very efficient.

In Mauritius, indentured Indian labour had been imported with successful results, and the Natal sugar planters were keen to bring in such labour to their Colony. (Note that an "indentured" labourer is one who enters into work contract for a specified period of years only. During that period he may not leave his employer to work elsewhere, but once the time is over he is free to go where he wishes). The matter was first raised in 1855 and Sir George Grey, Governor of the Cape, was sympathetic to the suggestion—remember that up to 1856, Natal was a sub-colony of the Cape. However, nothing was immediately done about the matter.

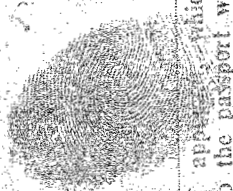
When Natal gained representative government in 1857 and became a separate colony, the issue was again raised, but the majority of the members of the newly formed Legislative Council were against the idea. However, the farmers kept on voicing their demands, and they were strongly supported by the "Natal Mercury" (the only Durban Newspaper of the time). Petitions were lodged with the government, and eventually in 1859 a bill "to provide for the introduction of Coolies into this Colony at the public expense" was put before the legislature and duly passed.

¹ E. Bradlow : "Indentured Indians in Natal and the £3 tax" pp. 38-53

Portret van houër
 Photograph of bearer
 Photographie du titulaire



Handtekening van houër
 Signature of bearer



appears on the passport w

BESKRYWING VAN HOUER
 DESCRIPTION OF BEARER
 SIGNALEMENT DU TITULAIRE

Beroep
 Occupation
 Profession

AFGETREE
 RETIRED

Plek van geboorte
 Place of birth
 Lieu de naissance

INDIE
 INDIA

Datum van geboorte
 Date of birth
 Date de naissance

1901

Woonplek
 Residence
 Domicile

SUID-AFRIKA
 SOUTH AFRICA

Geslag
 Sex
 Sexe

☒ M Manlik
 Male
 Masculin

☐ Vroulik
 Female
 Feminin

Lengte
 Height
 Taille

5 voet 4 duim
 feet inches

Kleur van oë
 Colour of eyes
 Couleur des yeux

BRUIN
 BROWN

Kleur van hare
 Colour of hair
 Couleur des cheveux

GRYS
 GREY

Persoonsnummer
 Identity number
 Le numéro de la carte d'identité

800/339965

EXERPS FROM PONNUSAMY'S PASSPORT.

CHAPTER THREE

1 My subject Pennusamy Makkannan is ~~one~~ unique subject on the basis that he is one of the few survivors of the era that saw the introduction of Indian labour to Natal and lived to tell about it.

Pennusamy Makkannan was said to be born on 1901 in the District of Chingleput, Taluq Madurautaram and the village of Pannjeor. However, this birth date is a conflicting one as given by Pennusamy who claims to have been born in the year 1897 thus refuting his "given" age of 82 years.

In India Pennusamy and all his relatives in abodes representing Barracks. According to my subject the system of Castes was very discriminating in India and this effected his family even more on the basis that they belonged to the Paria Caste, a "lowly caste". This was given as one of the major reasons for the coming of the Makkannan family to Natal. Furthermore Pennusamy's parents and relatives were offered food and employment never witnessed in India. With this sort of temptation Makkannan and his family, arrived at the Port of Durban aboard the "Umlazi" on the 15 May 1905. On board with Makkannan and his wife Athima were his son Pennusamy and daughter Kamatchi. Pennusamy's other brother (Ramsamy) and sister Vardamma were born in Natal.

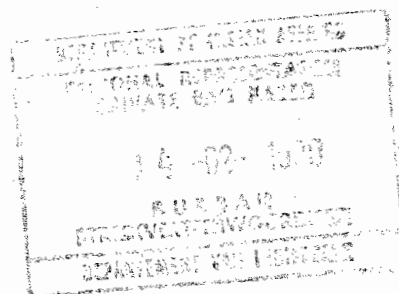
When Pennusamy arrived in Natal he was said to be four years old (his said age 7 years). The family first settled in Cornubia Estate but later moved to Inyaninga Barracks near Tongaat. His father Makkannan was put to work on the sugar cane plantations. When my subject Pennusamy was five years old he started working. His first work concerned the chasing of locusts during the locust attack on agriculture. Later he was given the task of carrying filter press to the cane plantations. He also worked with the ladies gang doing menial tasks. As concerns his wages he received ~~rewards~~ which would be seen today as meagre.

1 P. Makkannan : "My Arrival and Settlement"
(based on Interview).

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

Serial Number	:	454
Colonial Number	:	113441
Date of Arrival	:	15 MAY, 1905
Name of Ship	:	"CINLAZI"
Place of Registration	:	_____
Date of Registration	:	_____
Number in Register	:	_____
Name	:	PONNUSAMY
Father's Name	:	MAKKANNA
Age	:	4 YRS.
Sex	:	MALE
Caste	:	PARIA
District	:	CHINGLEPUT
Thanna/Taluk	:	MADURANTAKAM
Village	:	PANJITTOOR
Height	:	_____
Bodily Marks	:	_____
Name of Next-of-Kin	:	FATHER - MAKKANNA
Relations Accompanied	:	_____
Small Pox/Vaccinated	:	VACCINATED
Remarks	:	_____

Certified a true copy.



REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

1 He remembers his first wages as sixty cents a month excluding rations. He stayed in Inyaninga Barracks for about eleven years. He states that after the Gandgi strikes he shifted to the Tongaat Section, popularly known as Ramsamy's Barracks and he resided here for 59 years.

He subsequently became a tramline sirdar then a women sirdar and finally a men and Native sirdar. His wages soon reached R9-00 p.m. with house provided and 1½ rations which was made up of :-

- (a) wood- 100 lbs weekly.
- (b) dholl- 4 pounds.
- (c) rice- 9 pounds.
- (d) oil- 1 bottle.
- (e) mealie meal- 4 pounds.

Pennusamy was allowed one day a month as holiday leave.

When Pennusamy was 21 years old he married Ellamma and had seven children of this union. The names of the children are :-

- (i) Gepaul.
- (ii) Lutchmee.
- (iii) Sigamoney.
- (iv) Pushpa.
- (v) Soobramoney.
- (vi) Sally.
- (vii) Janakie.

However, Pennusamy married again with the woman named Peongavanum. The number of children conceived out of this union was eight and they are:-

- (i) Gengamma.
- (ii) Kandhan.
- (iii) Ralph.
- (iv) Gengan.
- (v) Arumugam.
- (vi) Ronnie.
- (vii) Baby.
- (viii) died at birth.

27/11/66

A. Thirumalaiah
Uyirathur & Sons
Chennai 600 006
Tamil Nadu
India

A LETTER FROM RELATIVES IN INDIA.

PAR AVION
हवाई पत्र
AEROGRAMME

TO
M. POONUSAMY
c/o KANDIAN P.
DAVID-WHITEHEAD & SONS
NATAL SOUTH AFRICA

R.S.B.



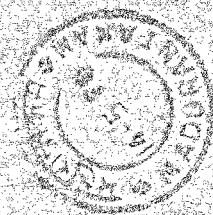
द्वितीय तह - SECOND FOLD

एन. एन. के. अंतर्गत आता है - NO ENCLOSURES ALLOWED

प्रेषक के नाम और पता - SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

FROM THE RUMAL

PAID BY AIR MAIL



CHENNAI 600 006
S. India. M.K.M. T.K.
HINDIA

1890

கி.மு. 1800-ல் உருவான இந்தக் கோட்டை
 1900-ல் கட்டப்பட்டது. இது கட்டப்பட்ட
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[illegible]

¹ Both Pennusamy's wives are dead.

From the first marriage only one child is living and from the second union only one child has died. Pennusamy completed his indenture contract in 1927 at the age of 26 years old.

My subject Pennusamy likes to socialise alot and his chief hobby is fishing. In these days there were hardly ~~in~~ any political activities, however, Pennusamy adhered to Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence. Pennusamy is very religious He has in fact built a temple and carried kavady (a religious activity) for 58 years. He prepegates the Hindu religion and ~~can~~ read fluently and write in tamil. In those days they were hardly any schools for Indians and the fact that he can read and write is quite extra ordinary. He used to organise religious festivals. He took part in ancient tamil dances and organised plays. He also ran a tamil school for many years giving his pupils invaluable service in dance routines and drama. Pennusamy has never forgotten his mother country and frequently makes trips to India and also corresponds with relatives there.

When Pennusamy Makkannan retired from the Tengaat Sugar Company he presented with a cheque of R4000-00 and was complimented for all the years of invaluable service he rendered to the Company. Pennusamy still lives on and presently he is living with his daughter , Sally in Flat D, Deer No.2 Chelmsford Heights, Tengaat.



KINDLY
"DONATED"
By
MY
SUBJECT.

WITH RELATIVES IN INDIA

¹ (Based on Interview)

BRITISH INDIA STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY LIMITED

No. B/ 294813

This ticket is issued subject to the conditions and regulations set out on the covers containing this ticket.

Passengers Record

Not good for passage

NOT TRANSFERABLE

☐ ONE-WAY ☐ TWO-WAY ☐ THROUGH-VOYAGE ☐ TOUR *Season* TARIFF

SHIP	Sailing Date			Voyage No.	Class	Grade	Cabin	Berth	Occupied by	Passage Money by Sections
	Day	Month	Year							
<i>HARIALA</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>70</i>	From: <i>BOMBAY</i>						
				To: <i>SURBAN</i>	<i>Economy</i>					<i>US\$247/-</i>
				From:						
				To:						

PASSENGER'S NAME and INITIALS:

MR. PONNUSAMY

A C C I Port Taxes

1 - - -

Total Passage Money

*US\$247/-*CURRENCY. *DOLLARS*

The amounts shown above are not necessarily the refund value. Any refund may be made to the payer only in

S.A. (Country)

Passage Money is calculated on the basis of the fares for the grade of accommodation reserved as shown on this document ruling on the date of issue of this voucher, which is issued and is to be accepted only upon the condition that the Company has the right to charge the Passage Money according to the fares in force 28 days before the day of sailing.

REMARKS:

Issued against Surban Ticket B/295793 & Cash slip No.

ISSUED AT

BOMBAY

BY

FOR BRITISH INDIA STEAM NAVIGATION CO. LTD.

M. M. & Co. Ltd. Bombay

DATE

PASSAGE MONEY PAID BY

THIS TICKET IS VALID FOR TRAVEL AS DETAILED ABOVE ONLY WHEN SUPPORTED BY THE RELEVANT TRAVEL VOUCHERS. THIS PORTION TO BE RETAINED BY THE PASSENGER.

Address at port of embarkation: Section One

Address at port of embarkation: Section Two

CONNECTING CARRIERS (IF ANY)

FROM	TO	CARRIER	SHIP/FLIGHT	DATE	TICKET NUMBER

PONNUSAMY'S SHIP TICKET TO INDIA

REFERENCES:

- 1). BRADLOW, E. : "INDENTURED INDIANS IN NATAL AND THE £3 TAX, in SOUTH AFRICAN HISTORICAL JOURNAL , 2, 1970, pp 38-53.
- 2). MAKKANNAN, P. : "MY ARRIVAL AND SETTLEMENT", based ON INTERVIEW, 1901, INDIA.