

KATHIAWAD HINDU SEVA SAMAJ



1943-1956

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS • CURRIES FOUNTAIN • DURBAN

UNITY

य एकोऽवर्णो बहुधा शक्तियोगाद्
वर्णाननेकान् निहितार्थो दधाति ।
विवैति चान्ते विश्वमादौ स देवः
स नो बुद्ध्या शुभया संयुनक्तु ॥



May the Lord, Who Himself devoid of colours
and Who with His infinite powers, created this
multi-coloured Universe with a set purpose and
Who destroys it Himself in the end,—may He
bless us with the happy intelligence to become
united.

—Krishna Yajurveda

AUM
KATHIAWAD HINDU SEVA SAMAJ
(Natal)

A SOUVENIR BROCHURE
in commemoration of the
Laying of the Foundation Stone
of the
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
at CURRIES FOUNTAIN
by
His Honour, the Administrator of Natal,
Mr. D. G. SHEPSTONE
on
25th August, 1956

52 LORNE STREET
DURBAN

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।
Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda

अमृतं तु विद्या

न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
*There is nothing in this world so purifying as
knowledge*

—Bhagvad Gita

तमस्तो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
Lead us from darkness to Light, O Lord!

—Upanishad



Edited by Dr. N. P. DESAI

Assisted by:

*MOHANLAL MANJEE, G. N. JOSHI and NARANDAS
VALLABHDASS SONI*

Foreword

By the President, Kathiawad Hindu
Seva Samaj



This souvenir brochure is designed for two purposes, first as a record of the Kathiawadi people of Durban, something that has never been done in the past, and second to give permanence to the occasion of the Laying of the Foundation Stone of the Primary and High Schools to be erected at Curries Fountain.

The pages that follow do not pretend to be a detailed history of our small society. Our intention was to capture a few salient features of character, progress, and achievement which have marked our role in this country, culminating in this most recent and crowning endeavour, the foundation of our new schools.

We have reason for pride and jubilation, and if pride and jubilation touch the story between these covers, so, we hope, does a great gratitude and deep thankfulness. There is so much for pride and so much for gratitude as we look back over the years.

Perhaps in no sphere have Indians as a whole in this country proved themselves worthy of recognition as in the sphere of education. In this work Indians have found the deepest satisfaction, and we, the Kathiawadis, look upon our part in it as a privilege as well as duty.

Our happiness on this occasion is due to so many. We think, for example, of the encouraging help and sympathy of the Natal Provin-



*goodwill
and
greetings*

cial Administration, the officials of the Natal Education Department, to whom we have been able to look at all times for so much generous advice and for such financial aid as to make our own efforts twofold in achievement. Our thanks go to them, and among them a very special word of gratitude to His Honour, the Administrator, Mr. D. G. Shepstone, who so graciously consented to perform the ceremony of the Laying of the Foundation Stone, and who, in countless ways, has earned our respect and affection.

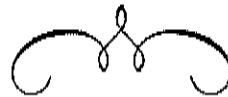
We have also to put on record our appreciation of the manner in which the City Council of Durban made available to us the site at Curries Fountain, perhaps one of the finest sites in the Old Borough.

We remember, too, at this time the munificence of generous donors, the gifts of money they have bestowed, without which our two schools would have remained dreams in the minds of the few. And not only to those so placed in wealth and generous thought that their donations could be so great, but also to all who have come forward with financial help, even the lowliest among us, to them our hearts go out in gratitude, for the spirit that impelled their gifts and the love that prompted them.

For all this and more; for the rich man living peaceably in his habitations; the poor man in his simple home; for all the prayerful thoughts; all the skill of architect and builder; the care of workers with their hands and workers with their minds, we give thanks to the Divine Creator for allowing us the privilege to perform a work in which He delights, the service of our fellowmen.

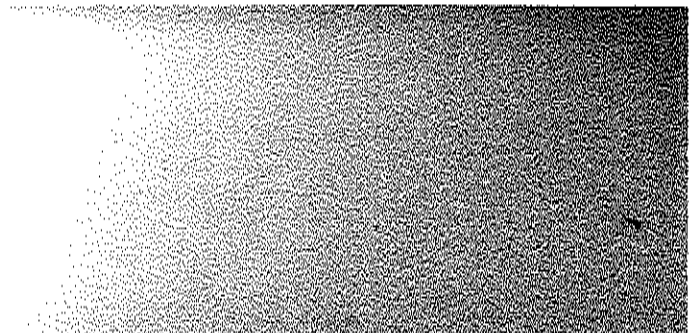
It is in this spirit that we offer this little brochure in the hope that in years to come it will imbue others to perform even greater works in the same service.

—N. P. DESAI





His Honour, the Administrator of Natal, Mr. D. G. Shepstone



TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS
TELEGRAMADRES:
"ADVISING."



ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE, NATAL
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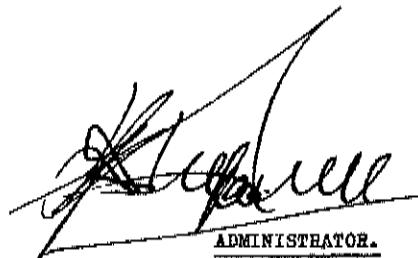
P.O. Box 389/Posbus 389,
PIETERMARITZBURG

19th June, 1956.

I extend my congratulations to the Samaj on reaching this important milestone on their way to the realisation of their grand design – the building of two schools which will compare favourably with any in Durban and will provide education for 700 primary and 450 secondary pupils. This has been made possible primarily through the munificence of three members of the Samaj who between them contributed £25,000 towards this £100,000 project. The other members, too, must have contributed equally liberally, according to their means. This generosity in the cause of the education of your children merits the highest praise. The substantial contribution you will receive from the Administration is in recognition of your service in furthering our common aim of providing schooling for all the children of the Province. I am particularly pleased that admission to the school will not be restricted to the children of your own religious and linguistic group, but that all Indian children will be able to share in the amenities you have provided.

May the structure to be erected here stand for many a year as a monument to your labour in the interests of generations of children.

19th June, 1956.


ADMINISTRATOR.

Message . . .

from His Worship

The Mayor of Durban

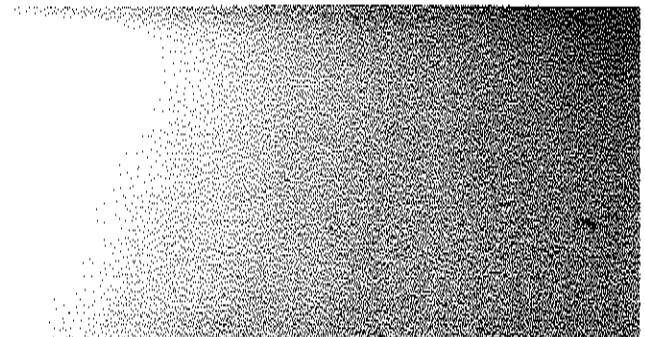
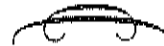
MR. VERNON ESSERY



I am very pleased to send a message of greetings and goodwill to the people of the Samaj on this most auspicious occasion, namely the laying of the foundation stone of the Curries Fountain Schools.

It has cost a lot of money to finance this project, and in view of the comparatively small number in your community, it is significant that such a good start has been made in the provision of education of your children.

In this rather unsettled world, the high ideals of cultural and social advancement, if not abused, can have a far-reaching effect on the happiness of all people, and in providing for the future you are helping to give the future generations a stable foundation on which to build useful and progressive lives.



Message . . .

FROM
THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Dr. McConkey



I congratulate the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj very heartily on the progress it has made with its great Curries Fountain project, the most ambitious educational undertaking yet carried through to the bricks-and-mortar stage by any group of the Indian people in Natal.

The schools to be built will not only serve the small but enterprising and public-spirited community which has planned and provided them, but will meet urgent needs of the Indian people of Durban generally. In recent years the number of primary school places available has increased steadily and steeply (though not steeply enough), and the number of secondary places steadily but more slowly. It is therefore particularly welcome that of the eleven hundred and fifty places to be provided in the project of the Samaj, four hundred and fifty will be high school places.

Indian education in Natal is going from strength to strength. While by far the greater part of the cost is carried—very properly—by the general taxation of the Province, the Indian community has reason to be proud of its own contribution towards the erection of school buildings. When the present scheme is completed the people from Kathiawad in particular will be entitled to carry their heads high.

Message . . .

from

Mr. Biebuyck

Deputy Director of Education, Natal

With the laying of the foundation stone of the Kathiawad schools at Curries Fountain, a great project becomes a reality. The years of planning, of fund-raising and of enlisting the support of sympathisers from far and near have seemed long, but the steadfast and purposeful members of the Samaj have persevered and must be feeling very happy to see the tangible results of their unremitting efforts. They know what their work in the field of Indian education has already meant to thousands of children: they know that they will be amply rewarded by the gratitude of those who in future years will be privileged to receive their education in the schools to be established here.

I am pleased to have this opportunity of joining other well-wishers in congratulating the Samaj on their achievement and wishing them well.



Message . . .

from

Mr. H. Wilter.

Chief Inspector of Indian Education

When the history of Indian Education in Natal comes to be written, fitting mention will be made of certain Indian groups and individuals who played a leading part in the building of schools. On the present occasion, which heralds the building of a magnificent new school at Curries Fountain, I wish to pay tribute to the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj of Natal and to their inspired and indefatigable president, Dr. N. P. Desai.

I shall always remember the first meeting I had, in connection with this school, with Dr. Desai and his band of helpers. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the plans of the school and the concomitant financial implications. My special task was to criticise the plans and to defend the expenditure of public moneys to the last penny.

Of Dr. Desai's helpers, each had given at least £1000 to the building fund, one had given £5000 and two had each given £10,000.

I was impressed with these men, with their humility, their sincerity of purpose, their spirit of high endeavour. I was fired by Dr. Desai's enthusiasm and his insistence on only what was best (He is a diplomat of high degree!) and he salved my conscience in regard to expenditure and had a ready remedy for every one of the weaknesses I found in the plans.

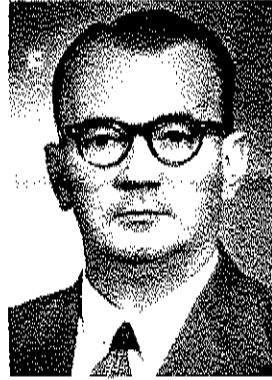
In the end we all put our heads together and planned an even bigger and better school than was originally contemplated.

It is this school of which the foundation stone is now being laid. It is to these men, and to others similarly public-spirited, to whom we look for the building of more and more schools. They are the very foundation stones on which our educational structure for Indian children is being built.

I wish the new school all that is best and invoke God's blessing on it.

Message . . .

FROM THE INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS



Mr. McAllister

The Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj already has a proud record of service in the cause of Indian education in Natal and its present project at Curries Fountain redounds even more to its credit. Inspired by the highest ideals, the Samaj is investing much in the Indian youth of the present and future. My sincere wish is that its hopes will be realised and that in the erection of the new schools it will be establishing yet another monument of which it will ever be proud.

It is therefore with pleasure that I associate myself with those many others who extend greetings and goodwill on this memorable occasion. As time goes on, may all those who are associated in any way with the Samaj and its enterprises, look with pride not only on its edifices but also on the spirit and achievement that is to be found within them.

Message . . .

from

Mr. N. S. Devshi



It is with feelings of deep gratitude that I send this message of congratulation and goodwill on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the new school at Curries Fountain.

Truly the project is a remarkable achievement. The Kathiawad community in Durban is no more than fifty families strong, one of the smallest Indian communities in South Africa. What is more, the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj is no more than thirteen years old. Yet in so short a time, and with so few people, the Samaj has, among other things, erected a valuable school at Lorne Street, Durban, and the Mahatma Gandhi Hall, both of which have quickly become interwoven into the life of Indians.

Now, ten years after these achievements, we are witnessing the laying of the foundation stone of an educational institution equal to any in the land, a combined high and primary school, which in its final cost will be over £100,000 to which the contribution of the community will be in the region of £60,000.

Our people may well be proud of so fine an achievement and be grateful to all those who have sacrificed so much for the fulfilment of the task. In money alone it is evidence not only of generosity and public spirit but of a vital concern for the welfare of our people. Measured in terms of education and opportunity for those who follow us its riches cannot be measured, so great will be its influence for good.

I rejoice with my fellows on this great occasion. May it encourage us all in the service of the whole community, and may the school send out boys and girls worthy of the noble ideals which inspire its creation.

Message . . .

from

Mr. P. S. Joshi



I well remember the auspicious day in December, 1943, when the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj saw its birth in Durban. My association with the inauguration of that society has always been a source of pride to me. Indeed Durban has always commanded my respect, the Indian citizens of which have made a substantial contribution to the progress of South Africa's Garden Province.

Although only now entering its thirteenth year, the achievements of the Samaj have been monumental. Its Mahatma Gandhi Hall in Lorne Street, an attractive and beautiful building, has served as a valuable cultural centre, while the school in the same street has achieved a distinction all its own in the field of education.

Considerable cultural activities have flowed from the leadership of the Samaj which have smoothed out provincial and linguistic differences, unifying all Gujarati speaking people.

Nor has the Samaj confined its activities to its own section. Its work has benefitted the whole Hindu community, and its outlook has encouraged a regard for Indian culture, as well as encouraging an awareness of the responsibility we all owe to the land of our adoption. It has fostered a new love for art which formerly found little expression.

To crown all this comes the historic day when His Honour the Administrator of Natal, Mr. D. G. Shepstone, is to lay the foundation stone of a high school and a primary school at Curries Fountain, an occasion made possible by the generosity of its members.

As a community originally hailing from Saurashtra, the Province of Mahatma Gandhi, the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj has built a sound structure for the future, an indication that the community is determined to uplift itself.

It is, therefore, a great pleasure to me to send my cordial greetings and best wishes on this memorable occasion.

Message . . .

from

Mr. P. R. Pather

Chairman, Indian Education Committee



Some thirty years ago I had the privilege of drafting the constitution of the Kathiawad Patni Association, the members of which at that time were imbued with a sense of service to the community. I do not know whether the association still exists, but in those days its members won the admiration of all for their selfless services.

The Kathiawadis in common with the rest of the Indian community regard South Africa as their home. This is as it should be. The remarkable achievement of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj over less than twelve years is due to a recognition of this fact. The Samaj is playing a glorious part in the development of Indian education. The Kathiawad Government Aided Indian School in Lorne Street was built at a time when school accommodation presented a staggering problem to the Indian community.

Since then considerable improvement has taken place due partly to a sympathetic Provincial Executive under the leadership of the Administrator, Mr. D. G. Shepstone, and to the Natal Education Department whose solicitude for the welfare of our children has won the gratitude of all of us.

The Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj is now embarking upon an even more ambitious scheme. The High School will take its place with Sastri College, and the high schools at Tongaat, Umzinto and Verulam, as shining examples of the sacrifice made by the Indian people for the education of their children. The two schools to be built at Curries Fountain mean that the Samaj will have to find sixty thousand pounds, a very large amount for the smallest section of the Indian population of Durban. Small in number the Kathiawadis excel in their big-heartedness. Those who fold up their sleeves and do the work, instead of indulging in political dialectics, deserve our warmest gratitude.

It is my sincere hope that the two schools at Curries Fountain will turn out good South Africans, who in their loyalty to their country will be no whit inferior to those who enjoy the rights and privileges in the country.

Message . . .

from

Dr. D. G. S. Mtimkulu



I accept, with a very willing heart, this invitation to add my cordial message of goodwill and greetings to the many that will be pouring in so deservedly, to congratulate the Samaj on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of this great project.

One has read with amazement of the public spirit and the selfless devotion of this community in advancing the general welfare of the Indian people during the last fifty years.

The achievements of the Samaj, which has only been in existence twelve years, are an eloquent testimony of not only the drive, initiative, and excellent planning of the organisers, but also, are an indication of that inestimable quality of self-help without which no community can rise.

As an African, I take this opportunity to Salute the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj!

Message . . .

from

Mr. H. H. Dhupelia



Today marks another milestone in the history of the Indian community and in particular of the Kathiawadi people in this country.

Those of us who took the initiative in launching this project were very anxious at one time about our ability to undertake such an immense task.

It was a tremendous relief to find that once the appeal was launched, funds came in so generously that our first misgivings disappeared. Our little community has made many sacrifices in the cause of its upliftment. Only ten years ago they provided the money for a new school and a hall in Lorne Street. Now they have provided the money for this magnificent project.

More and more we are realising that in a rapidly growing community, with its complex way of life and with its increasing demands upon us, how important and essential is the sound education. Without it our boys and girls cannot hope to master their future or to equip themselves for adult life. Gone are the days when standard four education was sufficient for our Indian boys and girls. The time has come when they must be equipped with all the educational facilities that distinguish this modern age from the past.

Our community is now marching into higher education, entering universities, both here and abroad. These young people represent the new generation of Indians in South Africa. I am satisfied that these schools, the foundation stone of which we are laying today, will play their part in this great movement, and I am happy to have played some part in bringing about a project of this size.



Message . . .

from

Mr. H. Nattrass, O.B.E.
(Principal, M. L. Sultan Technical College)

The close co-operation between my College and the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj has intimately affected the lives of hundreds of Indians and Africans. At a time when we were in desperate need of accommodation, the Kathiawad School in Lorne Street was made available to us. College and students are grateful for this generous helpfulness.

I have personally enjoyed the facilities of the Lorne Street Library and can vouch for the standard of its literature.

We are now to have a new Kathiawad Primary School and a new Kathiawad Secondary School alongside us on Curries Fountain. These schools have been sponsored by a small section of the Indian community — a section which has already given substantial donations to my College. Its members are indeed to be congratulated on their generosity and public spiritedness.

We welcome the two new schools knowing that they will maintain the high standard set by the Lorne Street School. We are happy to share this excellent site with them and hope that every success will attend the many students who will pass through the two institutions.

On behalf of my Staff and Students I send hearty good wishes to the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone by His Honour, the Administrator of this fair Province, Mr. D. G. Shepstone.



Message . . .

from

Miss M. Dorey

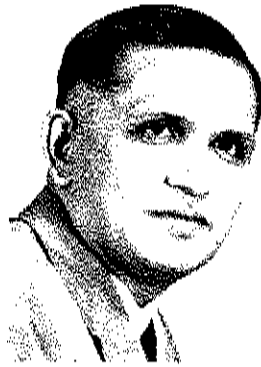


It gives me great pleasure to send my greetings to the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj on the launching of its ambitious scheme for building a Primary School and a High School in Central Durban.

During the last few years, your section of the Indian community has realised increasingly how necessary it is for girls to be educated. Therefore it is fitting that I, as Principal of the Durban Indian Girls' High School, receiving more of your girls each year from the Primary Schools, should send a message of goodwill to you on this occasion.

Your Samaj is doing a great deal to make it possible for every Indian child to attend school. Yet I feel that being able to attend school, and pass examinations will not eliminate all the problems which confront youth at this time. Girls and boys will undoubtedly learn at this time how to cope with various situations and difficulties; but unless book-learning is accompanied by character training, unless passing examinations goes hand-in-hand with the development of a true desire to be upright and honourable in all they do, the value of their school years will eventually be lost.

Knowing that your Samaj does have this larger aim in view when deciding to build schools, I wish you great success in your project, and hope that these schools will become a valuable centre for the training and development of our young people.



Message . . .

from

Mr. N. V. Mehta

●

It is with mixed feelings that I write this message on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone of the Curries Fountain School.

A dream has come true, a long-cherished dream we never thought would come true.

How well I know the enormous difficulties, the immense hurdles, the Samaj has had to overcome, how great the sacrifice, how splendid the zeal, the public spirit, the philanthropy of the few that make up our community. There was a time when we thought the dream was beyond us, mere wishful thinking, a task beyond our reach, for where would we get the money for so huge a project, where would we get the men and women to see it through?

The answer soon came: first in three magnanimous donations of a size that suddenly made possible what we thought was impossible. There followed the magic of the many, poor and not so poor, until, with the help of the Provincial Executive, we saw the picture, the dream, taking shape. Our joy is unbounded, our gratitude supreme.

My only regret on this day is that I am far away in distance, but in spirit I am with you all, rejoicing with you, in this fulfilment, joining with all my fellow-workers and the members of the Samaj, in deep thankfulness and praise to the Creator from whom all good things come.

My fervent prayer is that this dream fulfilled will inspire us to humble service in still greater endeavours in the cause of all humanity.

Message . . .

from

Mr. Ashwin Choudree

B.A., (S.A.) Attorney-at-law



I send you greetings on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone of the new Kathiawad Primary and Secondary School at Currie's Fountain, Durban.

This gallant effort by a very small section of the community deserves every praise, for within a span of ten years they have already given two public institutions at immense sacrifice to themselves.

In the year 1946 we saw the school and Mahatma Gandhi Hall completed in Lorne Street at a cost of several thousand pounds. That school and hall have filled a tremendous gap in the educational and social life of our people. Now we find this community undertaking a task which will cost them well over sixty thousand pounds. Can there be any greater effort of sacrifice? No wonder that Mahatma Gandhi came from this hardy and public-spirited stock. It will be a great day when this fine building is finally completed.

For my own part I am overjoyed, because in some small measure I was able to assist the Samaj in obtaining the present site at Curries Fountain on which this institution is to be built. I felt at the time that if the City Council gave the site to the Samaj, they would never regret the day. I was confident that the Samaj would erect on it a public institution which would serve the entire community in education.

That hope is now being fulfilled. I look forward to the day when hundreds of our children will pass out of this great educational centre to face life well equipped with knowledge and character received as a result of the great-heartedness of the small Kathiawad community of Durban.

Message . . .

from

Mr. S. R. Naidoo

(Pietermaritzburg)



I regard it as a great privilege to be invited to send you a message of goodwill and congratulations on the launching of your school at Curries Fountain.

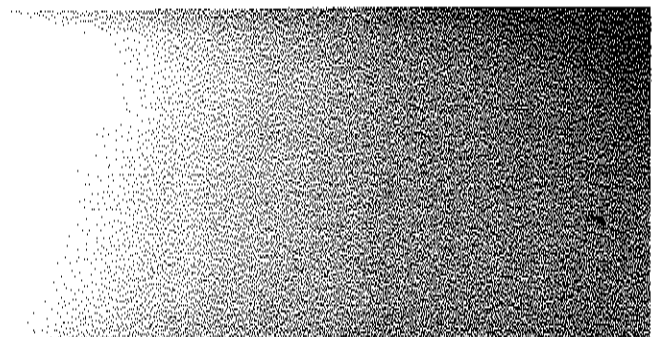
The Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj already has some noble achievements to its credit. I am thinking of the school in Lorne Street and of the Mahatma Gandhi Hall both of which are doing yeoman service.

The Samaj now moves into an even more ambitious scheme in this fine educational institution. They are launching, as it were, a still bigger ship on the sea of educational endeavour. It is another example of that self-help which distinguishes the Indian community from all other section of South Africa.

Perhaps, in no other sphere have Indians done more for themselves than in this sphere of education. In no other sphere have they recognised the magnitude of the need. All over Natal schools have been built by the help of rich and poor. It is something of which we can all be proud. The late Mahatma Gandhi, who was one of your own small community, would have rejoiced with you today, had he been spared to see the fruit of your labours.

This noble cause you are serving so well will reveal itself in the boys and girls, in the men and women, which the school produces and sends out into the world. Their lives will be the richer for your sacrifice. Your reward will be found in the character and the nobility of a new generation.

May this great ship of yours sail into fair seas in the search of havens of truth and knowledge, and may all those who served and sailed in this great new ship rejoice in enlarging opportunities for service.



Message . . .

from

Mr. H. N. Naran



The laying of the foundation stone of the two schools—Primary and High—marks a milestone in the generous service of the Kathiawadi community for the upliftment and benefit of the Indian people here in Natal. It is an occasion of great joy and thankfulness.

Nor am I thinking at this time of the pride we can take in the possession of a palatial building, or of the sentimental value associated with it, important as these things are. I am thinking instead of the service the generosity of the Kathiawadi people is providing in the sphere of education and culture for future generations, opportunities unknown in the early days when the first pioneers came to these shores.

The Kathiawadis have long played a dominant part in the life of Indian people in Natal. Their zest for humanitarian service has always been acknowledged. In reminding ourselves of past good deeds, however, we should take them as an example to follow. No people can live and progress on past glories. Our young people must be raised to follow in the footsteps of our great men, like Mahatma Gandhi.

These new schools of ours are the reward of the new spirit rising in the hearts of our people, and especially of our young people, as a result of the inspiration of Dr. N. P. Desai since 1941. We owe him a great debt of gratitude, for he, more than anyone else, aroused the enthusiasm of the community, and made possible the achievements of the Samaj.

The school at Lorne Street, for example, has gained a valuable reputation in its class records and examination results. Now, with this further institution, an even greater gift is bestowed on our children. It is my fervent prayer that the community will long continue its noble work, and that our people may be enriched in service by the endeavours which have made this day possible.

Message . . .

from

Sorabjee Rustomjee



I offer my sincere good wishes to the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj on its public spirited enterprise in the erection of a secondary and primary school at Curries Fountain, an enterprise that deserves and will receive the warmest praise from the Indian people of Natal.

When the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri conceived the idea of a high school at Durban, away back in 1928, there were many who thought that the Indian people would find it difficult to sustain such an institution. Mr. Sastri was far sighted however, and he knew then, as we know now, how Indians will strive and work to give their children the best possible education.

Sastri College, in the building of which I played a part, provided at the outset accommodation for three hundred boys. I understand that the present number on the roll is about 750. In Durban, Sastri is taxed to the utmost, and it is therefore all the more creditable that the Kathiawad Seva Samaj should embark upon a scheme embracing a High School right in the heart of the Old Borough of Durban.

I am informed that the two schools will cost about £100,000, a very large sum, and it speaks volumes for the generosity of the Kathiawadis that they have raised half the cost.

My association with the Kathiawadi community has been close and intimate, while that of my late father, Mr. Parsee Rustomjee, with Mahatma Gandhi is well known.

The project of the Samaj therefore gives me immense pleasure, not only because it is being promoted by friends whom I have known for so many years, but because it will be a source of inspiration for generations to come.

Already your primary school in Lorne Street, Durban, is playing a notable part in the education of our children. This addition at Curries Fountain will enlarge your educational scope, and all of you deserve the deep gratitude of all of us for the endeavour to which you have put your hands.



Message . . .

from

Mr. S. L. Singh

On this day of jubilation and thanksgiving our minds go back a few years, when we witnessed an upsurge of nationalism in the Kathiawadi Hindus, resulting in the creation of an educational and cultural centre, wherein both Western and Oriental knowledge is being imparted and cultural activities fostering high ideals take place. Today we see the culmination of their noble efforts in the establishment of another primary and secondary school at Curries Fountain.

For a number of years this community concentrated all its energies in developing trade and commerce. They became conscious of the need for education only a decade ago and within the span of few years they are now embarking on a project, which would not only raise their educational standards, but would considerably help the Indian community in relieving the pressure of accommodation.

For a small community, they have achieved glorious results, firstly, by erecting the Mahatma Gandhi Hall and a primary school in Lorne Street for boys and girls and crowning these efforts by the establishment of the proposed secondary and primary schools. Their contributions in other fields for the uplift of the people have not been negligible. This could only be possible through their material prosperity, spiritual strength and unity of purpose.

The community must prove equal to the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Indian nation, himself a Kathiawadi, who preached the gospel of fraternity and equality.

May the Lord grant the Kathiawadi community the necessary strength and courage to carry on the noble work of improving the educational, cultural and social standards of their section in particular and the Indian community in general.

Message . . .

from

Mr. M. A. Gokal



I am proud to think that I have been associated with the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj since its inception over ten years ago. During that time I have watched from Johannesburg with great interest and appreciation the tremendous progress the Samaj has made, from small beginnings and from small numbers.

The Samaj has put Kathiawad, Saurashtra, on the Map. Its activities have inspired us here and made all of us respect the leadership of its officials.

In a way, you are doing here what our motherland, Saurashtra, is doing in India. For our motherland is on the march. A great change has overtaken it, so much so that unless you have been there recently you would not recognise it as the place you knew years ago. Progress and vitality are to be seen everywhere.

A similar thing has happened here among our own people, and this is having its effects not only in our own community, among our young people, but also throughout the life and work of Indians as a whole.

We have many great examples of service in our history. Greatest of them was Mahatma Gandhi, whose life and labour should stand as an abiding example for all of us to follow. Though we in our humble way and with our humble talents cannot hope to rise as he did to play a role in world affairs, we can remind ourselves that we are of the same people as he, and in doing so we can walk in the same paths of service.

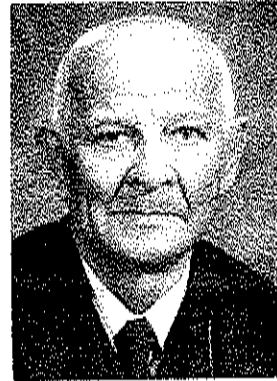
This school at Curries Fountain is an example of that service. Its inspiration lies in your leader, Dr. Desai. Today he and all those who have helped to advance the good name of our community rightly deserve our praise and may rightly be filled with pride.

It is a magnificent ideal they have achieved. It will stand through the generations, doing its valuable work for those who follow us, and reminding them of the sacrifice and the service that have gone before. In this way they too will be encouraged to grow up in the spirit of service to their fellows and humanity.

Message . . .

from

Adv. Albert Christopher



Lack of school accommodation has long been the cause of depriving many thousands of our boys and girls of an education.

For many years the chief concern of Indian leaders, teachers, and welfare workers has been the provision of schools, so that when every new school is erected we all feel it is one more step to the time when all our children will be receiving an education which is surely the right of all.

In this work of building schools Indians stand out from the rest of South Africa. Though all of us appreciate the help we receive from the Provincial Administration, the fact remains that we carry a great burden in the erection of educational institutions.

Various Indian groups have tackled this problem. Among them the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj is one of the youngest. It is also one of the foremost and promising. It has already built that school in Lorne Street at a cost of £25,000. It has to its credit the Mahatma Gandhi Hall. Now it is adding to these monuments, a primary school which will accommodate 700 children and a High School 450 children at the Curries Fountain. There are already 420 children attending its school in Lorne Street, so that in all when the new buildings are completed, it will then have a total of 1570 children in its schools. Truly these things are splendid tributes to a fine spirit of public service and to community generosity.

I am glad to associate myself with your rejoicings today and offer you my hearty congratulations on your devotion.



Message . . .

from

Mr. V. P. Desai



I feel very privileged and honoured in sending my greetings and felicitations to our Samaj on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone of the great Curries Fountain project.

I have been associated with the Samaj since its very inception and with its educational and cultural centre in Lorne Street. And if I have any special thought today it is a realisation how sincere and humble and self-sacrificing endeavours can bring about achievements of great magnitude.

I have read of such things happening in many part of the world and among many different peoples but I had no idea that I could play a small part in such a movement. My association with the Samaj has taught me how from small things great achievements arise. It is mainly due to this spirit that we can rejoice today in laying the foundation stone of our two schools at Curries Fountain.

In a very astonishing way we have been given the strength and the wisdom to serve a cause which is dear to all of us. I feel that in this work are the workings of that Supreme Being from whom all our blessings flow. We can show that Supreme Being our gratitude for His help by continuing to serve Him through service to our fellows.

We can then be both proud and humble at the same time in this achievement, proud to have had a part in it and humble to have been allowed to have a part in it.

In all humility I pray that this great educational institution shall stand as an abiding memorial in the service of our children and through them in the service of the Supreme Being of the Universe, so that our community may be filled with beauty and holiness.

Message . . .

from

Mr. A. M. Moolla



I am very glad to have the opportunity of sending a short message on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone of a new primary and high schools at Curries Fountain by the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj.

It is an occasion for pride and congratulation, as well as a thanksgiving, and I join with many thousands of others in paying a tribute to the Samaj.

I am happy to think that this school is to be erected on the site of Curries Fountain, where there already exists the M. L. Sultan Technical College, and where there is shortly to follow the erection of the Orient Islamic Educational Institute School, making three neighbouring institutions, and making indeed a veritable educational centre in this part of the Old Borough of Durban.

Nearby, there are also missionary schools and Churches. There is Sastri College not far away, and St. Aidan Indian Hospital. I like to think that in this vicinity all these institutions, representing as they do so many aspects of religion and culture, the great religions of the East, the great religion of the West, representing also modern technical and scientific work, will all have a very special role to play in the progress of our community.

It is an inspiring thought that so many aspects of humanity and progress are to be housed so near to each other and I rejoice with all of you who have so splendidly brought this endeavour to its fulfilment.

May all those who enter your school leave it rich in knowledge and service.

Message . . .

from

Dr. S. Cooppan



I wish to congratulate the members of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj upon the boldness and bigness of this additional venture in building simultaneously a primary and a secondary school to accommodate over 1100 Indian children in Durban.

I am sure the generosity and public-spiritedness of all those concerned in this educational project will be richly rewarded in the difficult years ahead of the Indian minority.

The expenditure of such a large sum of money on a public institution is also indicative of the degree of South Africanisation achieved by the Gujarati-speaking people from Kathiawad.

It is, therefore, a pleasure to send you my cordial greetings on the occasion of laying the foundation stone by the Administrator of Natal.



Message . . .

from

Mr. P. M. Joshi



It is a matter of great joy and gratification to know that the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj is embarking upon its second great project within a short span of thirteen years.

This has been made possible, I think, by two things. First the fervour and zeal of the officials, combined with a vision which is the first essential of all progress. Second the Samaj has been fortunate in the generosity of its members. There has been a will to perform. The means have been provided to give that will purpose and direction. So long as both of these things exist in the community, so long will it grow in strength and move forward in purpose.

All education must have a two-fold purpose. It must teach a person how to make a livelihood, and it must teach a person how to live.

These two purposes, I believe, will find their best expression in these two new schools, high school and primary school, the foundation stone of which is now being laid.

As truly as the foundation stone will be laid by our friend, His Honour the Administrator of Natal, so truly must the character of our children be established and founded. For in true character lies not only the hope of the individual but the future of our community. Character lies at the very roots of all education, without it knowledge is useless and life is dangerous. With it a man can be poor and yet remain rich. He can be in rags and yet be respected.

All of us who know of the work put into this plan of the Curries Fountain school will rejoice today in the feeling that here we can see something growing which for all future years will influence for good the humanity around us.

Message . . .

from

Mr. A. D. Lazarus

President, Natal Indian Teachers' Society



Thank you for your cordial invitation to send a message of goodwill on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone for your tremendous educational project on Curries Fountain.

I do so in the name of close on thousand Indian teachers in Natal whom I have the honour to represent. Your Samaj is to be congratulated on its initiative and enterprise in the field of Indian education, for from a very small beginning less than thirteen years ago it has now embarked upon such a monumental educational undertaking for our people. I feel certain that the spirit which motivated the sponsors of the project is the spirit that has and will always in the future, sustain our people and encourage them to higher and greater things. That your new institution will enrich the life of the entire Indian community, goes without saying.

My colleagues and I salute you and express the hope that the efforts of the Samaj in this attempt to provide primary and secondary education for our children, will be crowned with the success it so richly deserves.



Message . . .

from

Mr. M. B. Naidoo

Vice-Principal, Sastri College



The laying of the Foundation Stone for a new Primary and Secondary School by the Administrator of Natal is another milestone in the educational advancement of the Indian people. This venture involving the colossal sum of one hundred thousand pounds subscribed from a handful of Indians of the Kathiawad community compels me to extend to them my congratulations and good wishes.

It is hardly necessary to stress the economic and religious solidarity of this section of the Gujarati community whose vision and sacrifice will be gratefully remembered by posterity.

It is increasingly clear in South Africa's multi-racial set-up that the Indian has to make his contributions towards the intellectual advancement of this country. This he will do if he aims at the attainment of high educational standards at all levels of his scholastic education. I have no doubts that the new Institution will maintain the high educational standards envisaged for it and that the Kathiawad community will be remembered for their efforts towards the promotion of knowledge and culture in this country.

The hope for a more enlightened generation of Indians will be symbolised in the Institution that the Administrator of Natal will dedicate to the future. May this Institution be founded on Faith and Prayer and may it fulfill for ever the aspirations of the Kathiawad community.



Message . . .

from

Dr. G. M. Naicker
President, Natal Indian Congress

The Indian community is proud of its record of self-help, particularly in the field of education. The £100,000 project of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj marks another milestone in our people's great educational effort, in which the rich and the poor throughout the Province have participated.

In 1960, when we celebrate the centenary of our arrival in this part of Africa, in addition to the contribution made by our forefathers in converting Natal into a Garden Colony, our schools will stand out as living monuments of our contribution towards greater enlightenment.

Let us hope in earnest that efforts like the one of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj will make it possible for every Indian child to be attending school when we commemorate the completion of the hundredth year.

If our schools are to serve the community truly, they should be representative of all sections of our people. Sectional bias in any educational institution or in any other venture should as far as possible be checked in order to bring about a healthy growth of the society.

The two magnificent donations of £10,000 each that your Samaj has received has shown how unstinting our people's contribution can be in the field of education.

I wish the Samaj's project every success.



Message . . .

from

Mr. Govanbhai Manibhai
President, Surat Hindu Association



As a Gujarati Hindu of Surat district, I am very proud to associate myself with my friends of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj on this happy occasion.

It is a wonderful achievement for the small number of Kathiawadi Hindus, and if I may say so, singling one man out of many, I should like to pay tribute to your President, Dr. N. P. Desai, on his leadership of the Samaj. I think you all owe him, as indeed we all owe him a real debt of gratitude for the devotion he has shown to the cause not only of this school but of the welfare of the whole community. More than to anyone else, I think, must go the credit for this day of happiness and work done.

I know much about your work. I know how you embarked upon this project when you had no funds at your disposal and when only fate was with you. But as it is the wish of the Almighty to keep His hands on any good and noble work which His followers are doing, He has inspired the minds of your members to subscribe large donations to this enterprise. Behind all the obvious work done are the workings of the Almighty, and to Him must go our heartfelt thanks and praise.

I pray that the Almighty will guide all your endeavours in the school and be with all the boys and girls and their teachers who come to it.

Message . . .

from

Mr. J. Naidoo

Registrar, M. L. Sultan Technical College



I feel honoured to have been asked to send a message of congratulations and good wishes to the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone of yet another magnificent educational project in the short, but enterprising history of this organisation.

The fact that this small organisation consisting of approximately fifty families is embarking on such a huge scheme shows that it is fully alive to the major issues confronting the Indian people in South Africa and that it is not afraid to undertake its share of the responsibility towards extending those facilities so necessary for the cultural and educational advancement of our people. Realising its sense of status in society, the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj is part of something significant for our community and in making a real contribution towards enabling our people to receive a sound training and to possess a reasonable and useful competence in some field, while at the same time setting a noble example to giving freely for the sake of ends larger and better than one's own selfish desires.

I wish to congratulate members of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj on their self sacrifice and service over all these years and to convey my good wishes to them for the speedy and successful completion of this edifice which will be a landmark in the history of education in South Africa.

*Our
Story . . .*

by Dr. N. P. DESAI

Saurashtra—

*The
Land
of
Lions
and
Men*



SAURASHTRA is the only State in India where lions are found—the famous Gir Lions.

Little wonder, then, that the people of Saurashtra share some of the characteristics of that noble animal. Their story in the land of Krishna, of Dayanand Saraswati, and of Gandhiji, goes back into the dim and distant past, revealing in its course rich beauties in the arts of living and a wealth of achievement in almost every sphere of human endeavour. During the course of its development it became a backbone so to say, of Gujarat's culture. In literature, folk songs and folk dance and in architectural and sculptural arts it provided not only parenthood but also dynamic inspiration to entire Gujarat. It was so in the past,

and even today it performs the same function.

Pre-historic discoveries made by scholars reveal Saurashtra's early links with Sindhu civilisation. Later knowledge tells of great resurgences of the human spirit, widespread cultural renaissances under the Mauryas and Guptas, the sudden upsurges of the people and its poets and scholars, the embracing of Buddhism, the appearance of artistic skills, in sculpture and engraving.

It is a story of endeavour.

First and foremost it set the seal on the culture of Gujarat. It was here that poetry and song and literature flowered to full beauty, and scholarship took forms unique and precious, radiating from that famous seat of

learning, Viratnagar, the modern Dholka, where the flower of Saurashtra gathered. All over India today are to be seen the fruits of this flowering, in the lovely temples and the sculptured images that abound as examples of the creative skill of the Sompura Shilpies.

Such riches were too often the envy of the northern invaders, and too often they were despoiled and destroyed by the Arabian hordes who descended on the land. The famous Somnath Temple suffered under the scourge, but with every wrecking, Somnath resurrected itself, again and again, rising under the devoted hands of artists and workers in stone. Whether it was Somnath or Rudramal or Delvara Temples, the Sompura of Saurashtra were supreme in the science of architecture and in the art of sculpture.

In other fields the contribution of our people was no less worthy. The form and shape of the Gujarati language as it developed from Shaurseni Prakrit offered the people a medium for the artistic expression. Much of the development of the language was due to the presence of scholars and poets. It was no accident that the first of the Gujarati poets, Narsim Mehta of Junagadh, was raised in this land.

Narsim Mehta gave expression to this beauty in a manner never attempted before. His devotional songs, for example, are touched with a delicate charm which today rejoice every Gujarati home where they are sung. One of the most beautiful of them, "Vaishnava Jana to tene Kahiye," was selected by Gandhiji as his prayer song, and all over the Gujarati world

Narsim Mehta's verses are on the lips of our people.

There were many who followed him, adding their quota to the rich and ennobling tradition; Kalapi and Nanalal and Meghani. Only recently, in the nineteen-twenties and early thirties, Meghani rediscovered the long-lost folk-lore, the songs and the stories of our people, and re-presented them, capturing their spirit and reflecting their meaning in delightful turns of dialect and language. Who has not read the four volumes of "Saurashtrani Rasadhar?"

But in addition to restoring the past, Meghani made his own mighty contribution to our literature. He was a national bard, singing of the masses, the downtrodden, arousing them to life and struggle, lifting them from their lethargy.

The people of Saurashtra have a long tradition of the sea. From time immemorial, the sea has called adventurous spirits among them to seek distant places, carrying the merchandise of the State, and with it the songs of the past.

Today, this picturesque land throbs with new life and hope. Everywhere you go, you see the evidence of it. There is another resurgence sweeping the land, a feeling of purpose and achievement. The peasants, Ahirs, Vagheirs, Padhiars, share with the rest of the people the end of feudalism and the appearance of modern progress. Brave, simple, unsophisticated, they are on the march once more, towards even greater achievements, united in their common heritage and in their common and great destiny.



Standing: K. Haribhai, Chhaganlal, T. P. Devshi, Bhimjee, Govindjee Samjee, Chaturbhuj, Veljee Jutha
 Sitting: Natha Naran, Trtkamjee D. Dhupelia, Vasanji Devshi, Motilal M. Divan, Harjivandas H. Dbupelia, Shivlal Dharsi Babrawala
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OUR EARLY HISTORY IN NATAL

FOR information about our early history in this country we have had to rely on uncertain records and lively memories of many old people. To give anything like a comprehensive picture we should need to spend much time in historical research. The most we can do here is to take a peep into the past through the eyes of older ones among us whose memories recall people and happenings of other days, and in this way capture the general outline of the story of our community since its arrival.

The earliest records tell us that the immigrants from Kathiawad to the Province of Natal arrived in 1884.

In this year two men of the Saraswat Brahmin section of the community came from Porbandar in India and settled in Tongaat. They were VasANJI and Sunderji.

They stayed no more than four years, going back to Porbandar in 1888, after saving a few hundred pounds.

The good account they gave of the possibilities of business in Natal was not lost on their relatives and friends. The following year for example Mr. V. Valjee came to Durban, and he was followed by others from various places including Ranavav, Bhanvad, Rajkot, Gondal, Jodiya and Morvi.

The year 1893 brought Mr. M. K. Gandhi to Durban. He was a young and promising lawyer in Porbandar, and was engaged by a well-known

business concern here as legal adviser in a long-drawn-out litigation. He came in the company of another batch of immigrants, who were looking for an opening in what had been described as a land of plenty.

Very quickly, Mr. Gandhi saw the possibilities on the coast lands of Natal for young and adventurous people, and he persuaded several of his relatives and friends to accompany him on his second voyage to these parts in the year 1897, which was the year of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

There were one or two other people who should be mentioned as coming to Natal before 1890. There was Devchand Jivraj of the Vanik community who lived at Stanger. There was Vallabhji Maharajh of Wadhwan who settled in Verulam. It is said that he was the founder of the Gopallal Hindu Temple.

Then among these very early settlers were Kara Hira Soni of Rana-Kandorna, Gokal Hirji Soni, also of Rana-Kandorna and Mahashankar Maharajh of Morvi-Vankaner.

It is interesting to note that a few of our people went to the Transvaal before 1890. Later, however, they made their homes in Natal.

Many of them on returning to Kathiawad carried with them enthusiastic stories of the possibility in Natal. Proof of these stories lay in their own financial success. Others, then, were stimulated to make the

venture and to add to the numbers of the community in this part of the world.

It is important to recognise that all of them were prompted to come by economic reasons. They came, as did most others, in search of a better livelihood or in search of wealth. Not all of them succeeded. Many of them, like so many of their Indian fellows, despite their hard work, were very unhappy and helpless.

Mr. Gandhi's concern was directed and focused on the problems of the immigrant Indians. It was here that his mind took on, as it were, a new conception of life and duty. He had come here in the first place in the pursuit of his profession, seeking advancement. Now he was to relegate to the background all thought of self in the service of his people and eventually the world.

His story is so well known that it needs no recital here.

The fact, however, that he was able to persuade a few of his relatives and friends to do likewise is not sufficiently known, or its significance sufficiently appreciated.

The people who came with Mr. Gandhi did so believing that Natal offered them a veritable El Dorado. They came intending to become rich as soon and in as short a time as possible.

They were not the sort of people, therefore, who found it easy to acquiesce in these new ideas of Mr. Gandhi, and to go and live with him at the little settlement he established at Phoenix and stay there on a sort of subsistence economy.

It was probably not easy even for a man who was one day to become a Mahatma and to liberate India from bondage. But for ordinary mortals to agree to live on a mere pittance and to serve the cause of Indians in those early days was a very great sacrifice indeed.

The relatives who went to Phoenix under the affectionate care of Bapu were Chhaganlal Khushalchand Gandhi, Maganlal Khushalchand Gandhi, Purshottamdas Girdhardas Desai and Anandlal Amritlal Gandhi.

Among Mr. Gandhi's friends who settled at Phoenix with him were Harilal Thakar of Hadiana, Virjee Damodar Mehta and Kababhai Amarsi Mehta.

In one of the Holy books of the West it is written: "Some there be who have no memorial."

It is right and seemly that the names should be recorded of all those hailing from Kathiawad who served and lived with Bapu at Phoenix and gave their lives to the cause he held so dear.

Though it was not known then, the arrival of Mr. M. K. Gandhi in the last decade of the nineteenth century was an event that proved to be of great magnitude, an event of world importance. We may well be proud of the fact that it was here in Durban and Natal where was born the Satyagraha, the ideal of non-violence, which in a later day was to be acknowledged by all the nations under heaven as the most potent force on the earth. We may well be grateful in the thought that he who conceived and practised it should be a member of our own people.

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ATTEMPTS AT ORGANISATION

Most of these early pioneers were hard working, thrifty people, who not only supported themselves but also their families and dependents in India. Many were shop assistants, book-keepers and the like. A few started small businesses. The thought uppermost in their minds was to build up a small amount of capital and so expand their interests.

They were not all of the same group or caste. They included Brahmmins, Vaniks, Lohanas, Khattris, Sonis (Pattanis and Girnaras) and others.

In those days Indian society was based on caste. Today caste is losing its emphasis. Society is broadening. In the past it performed a real usefulness in various ways. Certain features of it remain today. Marriage, for example, takes place only between members of the same caste.

But whatever the virtues or the weaknesses of the caste system, it can be said that the sub-groups of the Kathiawadi community have lived so very cordially and amicably side by side that they are today one unit in this country.

They all dine together without exception, meet socially, and their children are taught side by side in the schools.

It is because of the caste background, perhaps, that institutions in the past were apt to take a sectional character. In the course of time, with greater security and stability, people began to think more and more in terms of collective organisation for the public good. In this way they

were brought closer together and developed a broader outlook.

A history of our institutions and activities would undoubtedly reveal this enlarging outlook and show how from a sectional character collective endeavours have emerged.

In what follows an attempt is made to recall some of the earlier efforts at collective organisation.

NATAL LOHANA NITI DARSHAK SABHA

An English translation of this would read: The Natal Lohana Society for the Advancement of Ethics.

It is significant that the people who formed this society lived in very poor circumstances. Their strength lay in deep religious convictions.

The society was established in 1905, and was based on caste, the Lohana sub-group being extremely virile and self-contained.

This sub-group has made tremendous progress during the last sixty years in India, and in East Africa it has advanced greatly in industry and commerce.

Here in Natal, in the early years of the present century, the colony was feeling the great depression that followed the Anglo-Boer War, and Indians, with the rest of the people, suffered considerably as a result.

It was a worthy endeavour on the part of a few people to establish this body as a social organisation, the object of which was to foster good relations between the members of the group and mutually to help each other.

Its first President was Ratanshi Mulji Sodha, and its first Secretary was Trikamji Dharamsi Dhupelia. The second set of office-bearers consisted of Shivilal Dharsi Babrawala as President and Motilal Madhavji Divan as Secretary. Following them came Trikamji Dharamsi Dhupelia as President and Vasanji Devshi as Secretary.

This body continued to function until 1916.

KATHIAWAD ARYA MANDAL

This body, established in 1908, was the first to be properly constituted and representative of all the Kathiawad groups.

In its early stages it did valuable and useful work and earned the generous praise of Mahatma Gandhi. Its members met once a month under a written constitution.

Its first President was Kalidas Parmananddas Gandhi (Gokaldas), popularly known as Kalabhai, and a nephew of the Mahatma. Its first Joint Secretaries were Chhelshankar Mayashankar Vaidya and Dalpatram H. Bhatt, while Chhaganlal T. Poonatar was its first Treasurer.

The second set of office-bearers were: President—Kashiram Bhatt of Rajkot; Secretary—Prabhashankar K. Vyas. The third to follow were: President—Vasanji Devshi; Secretaries—Virjee Damodar Mehta and Dalpatram Hirjee Bhatt. After them came Chhabildas Bhaichand Mehta as President, Harjivandas Hansraj Dhupelia as Secretary, and Pragji Vasanji Devshi as Treasurer.

This organisation refrained from collecting funds in the ordinary way,

preferring to look to their members and friends for contributions for special occasions and needs, as these arose.

One of the pressing needs of the times was help for Mr. Gandhi in his Satyagraha movement, and especially for those passive resisters who had returned to Durban after having been previously deported to India. Many of these people were destitute during their temporary stay in Durban before their departure for the Transvaal. The organisation fed and housed them, feeling it was a duty and privilege to help those serving the cause.

One particular occasion is well remembered.

On the return of Mr. H. S. L. Polak from leading a deputation abroad, the Kathiawad Arya Mandal arranged a welcome reception in the courtyard of Parsi Rustomjee in Field Street.

The reception was a spontaneous expression of the Mandal's gratitude for the people who were doing so much for the community, and the whole occasion was marked by enthusiasm. Everyone left the meeting with a present of a packet of sweetmeats, a gift that is still remembered, for small gestures of this kind had great value in those days.

Gandhiji paid a tribute to the Kathiawad Arya Mandal for their public spirit.

There was another occasion, in 1910 or thereabouts, when the Mandal arranged a dinner at the hall they had rented which is today number 49 Beatrice Street. Four hundred people sat down to partake of the repast. Among them was Gandhiji,

Parsi Rustomjee, Dada Abdulla and Swami Shankeranandji.

In such ways the community sought to bring good relations between the various groups of Indians in the province and city. To do more in public work was not easily possible. The period was difficult and our people in conditions of instability. Their presence here was still of an exploratory character. Their aim was to work hard and live frugally, and so save, in order that one day they might return to India, a thought that was seldom far from their minds. In trying to understand their lives here, it is important to realise that except for business there was no temptation for them to settle in Natal permanently.

We find that many did return to India, thinking never to come back to Natal. In the very nature of things, however, they discovered that back in India business was full of intricate methods which impoverished them and many made their way to Durban once more, finding in this country their ultimate destiny.

In such conditions of uncertainty, with the call of India always present, it is not to be supposed that they gave much thought to permanent organisations here or consideration to a long term programme of social welfare. Usually, then, the main reasons for convening meetings was to say farewell to one of their number on his departure or to bid welcome to some visitor or new arrival.

There was, however, one feature about them that deserves special mention. The love for their culture and their religion was so intense that they never failed to support anyone

who made any attempt to teach their children Gujarati.

Except for the very few, they were not educated in English. Partly as a result of this, and of their in-group character, the Kathiawad community along with the other Gujaratis shewed typical features of vertical development, even in the field of commerce, with little intermingling with other Indian sections.

This in-groupness persisted until a decade ago when a new spirit permeated the community, giving it a larger and broader outlook. The defect, it is true, was misinterpreted by other sections of Indians as either of inherent lack of the co-operative urge or a superiority complex. Neither deductions was true.

Organisations such as the Kathiawad Arya Mandal only function well at special times, in crisis or national difficulty, in the presence of important personalities. Welcomes and farewells to ordinary members become monotonous. Interest lags and is lost. As time went on, therefore, the organisation lost its first promise and it almost ceased to function. It was never wound up, so that when occasion demanded it sprang into sudden life.

Constitutionally, this body can be said to have existed till the inauguration of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj in 1943, but in reality it died early, largely because it refused to adapt itself to the changing times and to reflect the growing promise of the people in education and social progress.

In its time, however, it performed a service. It was essentially a stage in the growth of the community.

THE KATHIAWAD PATTANI SONI ASSOCIATION

This society was formed early in January, 1925. The particular subsection of the Kathiawadis here is more numerous than any other. Mostly they are jewellers and goldsmiths, distinguished as craftsmen and devoutly religious.

At the formation of the society a pro-tem committee was elected consisting of Soni Virji Nathoo, Soni Chhagan Trikam, and Soni Morarji Devraj, and authorised to collect funds, with Soni Kanji Dosa as Treasurer. Eleven members were authorised to frame rules and to put the society on a firm basis.

It appears that the main object of the society was to acquire a property which would serve as headquarters, a very valuable step in keeping members together in a closely knit fellowship, a feature that is strongly marked today.

The first elections were held in the middle of January. Soni Valjee Nathoo was elected President; Soni Virjee Nathoo, Vice-President; Soni Jetha Kara, Secretary; Soni Jetha Sunderji, Assistant Secretary; Soni Kanji Dosa, Treasurer; and Soni Nathoo Devji, Auditor.

The association initially had a membership of forty-five.

At the following meeting in February, held at the residence of Soni Virji Nathoo, rules were framed, membership fees fixed, and donations arranged for special occasions.

Constitutionally established, this body met regularly and kept proper records and minutes, up to the

present day. It is a tribute to these older people not versed in English or in the ways of constitutional organisation that they recorded all their meetings in proper manner.

Usually, meetings were held at the residence of officials, of Soni Virjee Nathoo, Soni Kanji Dosa, Soni Kara Devraj or Soni Harilal Nathoo.

The society purchased a property on the South Coast Road in 1925, but disposed of it later, feeling that a property in central Durban would be more useful.

The property presently in the ownership of the society and used as its headquarters is at 214 Umgeni Road and was purchased in 1941. There is a small hall for meetings. It is the centre of the sporting activities of the younger members and the venue for the annual great Navaratri festivals.

In 1934, the society was represented at the conference of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha by the following delegates: Raghavji Mamaiya, Mohanlal Valjee, Kalyanji Kathad, Harilal Nathoo and Jetha Kara.

The present officials of the association are: Chairman—Soni Pragjee Kara; Vice-Chairmen—Soni J e r a m Premjee, Vallabh Damjee Soni and Bhugwanjee Jessa; Secretary—Soni Damjee Nathoobhai; Asst. Secretary—Narandas Vallabhdas; and Treasurer—Soni Popat Chugan.

The Association has recently drawn up plans for a modern hall and social centre, which plans include offices and suites to be let for income purposes.

For over thirty years, then, the Kathiawad Pattani Soni Association has progressed steadily without a break, until today it can rightly claim to be one of the happiest societies in the Indian community preserving its group culture while entering the modern world.

SAURASHTRA HINDU ASSOCIATION

This association of the Kathiawad people was established somewhere about 1927 or 1928. Fairly recent as it is, however, it has proved difficult to obtain a detailed account of its activities. It was a parallel institution to the Kathiawad Arya Mandal, and its aims and objects seem to have been very much the same, concentrating on welcome and farewell receptions.

One such reception is well remembered. That in 1936, taking the form of a beautiful garden party on a very big scale, and given in honour of the visit of Mr. Nanji Kalidas Mehta, the famous industrialist and philanthropist of Porbander and East Africa. It was held at the "Mayville Castle."

Then, in 1940, a welcome reception was held under its auspices in honour of Dr. N. P. Desai, on his return from England at the end of his medical studies.

Earlier, in 1937, during the Diwali Festival a special tea-party was arranged at the "Mayville Castle" in honour of Pandit Rishiram and Sri Ramdas Mohandas Gandhi who were then in Natal on a visit.

The members who occupied positions as Chairmen during the course of its existence were, Mr. Devchand

Harakchand Soni and Mr. Raghavjee Devji Parekh. The Secretaries were Messrs. Virji Damodar Mehta, C. T. Poonatar and J. N. Padia.

When the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj was established in 1943, this association had a credit balance of £140 which it very generously gave to the Samaj.

SRI GIRNANA SONI HITVARDHIK MANDAL

The Soni community is divided into two sections here in South Africa. One is Patani, the other Girnara. Though vocationally they are one, they do not intermarry.

This organisation was established in 1932, with Soni Vasram Muljee as Chairman; M. K. Lodhia and Soni Hirjee Valjee as Vice-Chairmen; Soni Muljee Hirjee and Soni Keshavji Bhoora as Joint Secretaries; and Soni Gordhan Poonja as Treasurer.

The English rendering of its title gives an idea of its aims and objects: "The Society of Girnara Soni for the Advancement of Social Welfare."

The society as a body and its members as individuals have done an enormous amount of work and given abundantly of the charity to the welfare of the whole Indian community, here and in India. Twenty-five years ago, for example, when the pound sterling was more valuable than it is today, the society contributed £500 for the erection of a building in Porbander as headquarters of the community there.

Some eight years ago, Mr. M. K. Lodhia, a leading member of this section of the Kathiawad people, established the "M. K. Lodhia Educa-

tional and Scholarship Trust" of £5000. From this Trust many hundreds of pounds have been spent on education in India, and many bursaries awarded to students in Durban for study at Sastri College and the Indian Girls' High School.

More distant from us, in Junagadh, India, there is an institution known as Vidyarthi Bhavan, which serves as a hostel for students. The land on which it is built was given by Mr. M. K. Lodhia, while the Trust contributed generously to the cost of the building, as well as to its annual expenses for its three initial years.

Then in Rajkot, India, there is an institution, the Kala Bhavan, a technical school teaching the arts of engraving and ornamentation of jewellery. The foundation stone of this school was laid in 1948 by Soni Muljee Hirjee who had contributed Rupees 5001 to its cost.

The Girnara people are scattered widely, appearing in large numbers in Fiji Islands, Kenya, Uganda, and a few families in Portuguese East Africa. In Natal they are especially notable as successful commercial men.

It is unusual to find among Indians, except in student circles, any attempt made to compile records of any sort. One member of this society, Soni Muljee Hirjee, is an exception. A most energetic member of the group, he has very painstakingly compiled a census of his people in South Africa and East Africa and, with the help of his fellow members, has had this published in book form, beautifully printed and produced.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN VANIK ASSOCIATION

Established on the 20th November, 1934, this organisation was typical of the common practice all over the world for people of the same interests to come together in closer association. In our case, the common interest in the past were the bonds of caste, and all caste organisations had and have the same aims, to promote goodwill and closer relationships among their members.

It will be noticed that among all sections of our people, as among all Indians, the selectivity of employment lies at the heart of our social and political order. In an earlier day this served to meet the needs of Hindu society. Today this old order is fast disappearing, even in India, and it is not to be supposed it will continue long here in Natal.

The Vanik community have a long record in India of sagacity in trade and commerce. Many of them have risen to great heights as Chief Ministers of State. Mahatma Gandhi came from such forbears.

The inaugural meeting of this association was held on the premises of Messrs. Gandhi & Co. at 112 Victoria Street, Durban, at which meeting Messrs. P. G. Desai, C. T. Poonatar, Mohanlal Padamsi Sangh-avee, S. J. Mehta, and C. J. Mehta were present. Mr. P. G. Desai was elected President, and Chiminlal J. Mehta and Shantilal P. Desai as Joint Secretaries.

The South African character of the title of the association suggests wider

purposes and implications than in fact existed. In practice, the activities of the group did not extend beyond Natal.

At one stage the society changed its name to the Vanik Mahajan Association, but later reverted to the original.

Its last meeting was held on the 24th October, 1937. Mr. P. G. Desai was its President throughout its existence. In its time it performed much good work, the records of which were well kept. In the three years of its life ten public functions were held, and two election meetings.

The first function was to offer the good wishes of the association and friends to Mr. Gadhvi of Jamnagar and to Mr. Ramanlal A. Goshalia, the latter on the point of going to India to be married.

Their biggest function, however, was a feast at the Verulam Temple on the 29th November, 1936, which was intended to be the first of an annual festival.

Then, in the same year, a reception was held in honour of Dr. N. P. Desai, who was about to leave for England to pursue his medical studies, and Mr. A. N. Goshalia, who was leaving for Japan on a business trip. Following these occasions, Sri Nanjibhai Kalidas Mehta, the East African industrialist was entertained on the 20th December, 1936, and many will remember the reception given to the three globe-trotting cyclists on the 20th November, 1937.

In addition to these, the celebrations of Gandhi Jayanti and Diwali were regularly organised.

The second set of office-bearers were: President—Mr. P. G. Desai, Vice-Presidents—Raghavji Rugnath, Raghavji Devji Parekh, Abhechand Amritlal Gandhi, Somchand P. Vather, and Manilal M. Gandhi, Joint Secretaries—C. J. Mehta and R. A. Goshalia, Treasurer—Shantilal P. Desai.

The third set were: President—P. G. Desai. Vice-Presidents—as above. Joint Secretaries—Vrajlal R. Parekh and Shantilal J. Mehta, Treasurer—C. J. Mehta, Auditor—Nautamlal V. Mehta.

THE PATTANI SOCIAL CLUB

Founded in 1941, the membership of this club is confined to Pattani youth, its objects being to organise on a proper basis the Navaratri Festivals (Garbi). The club also enjoys sporting activities, table tennis being the most popular. Here, Ashwin Damjee Valjee deserves praise as the national champion.

Special mention must be made of the excellent manner in which the club has undertaken the organisation of the Navaratri Festivals. This nine-day religious occasion, so full of traditional beauty and magnificence, has taken on a new and vital meaning since the club was formed, and much praise is due to the club's officials and members for the inspiration which now permeates the large congregations that assemble at the chosen place, 214 Umgeni Road.

In this work alone the club has proved its worth, and long may it continue to have its noble influence on so many at these religious festivals.

*Our Old Veterans
whom we
revere*



T. P. DEVSHI



SONI KARA DEVRAJ



VIRJEEBHAI D. MEHTA



SONI NATHOOBHAI
DEVJEE



SAMJEE DEVSHI

Some Personalities

SRI MOTILAL MADHAVJI DIVAN

He came to Natal from Porbandar about 1894 or 1895, at a time when the presence of any public-spirited man knowing the English language was something of a God-send.

Men find ways of service in the most curious needs. One of the most serious problems of the earliest days of our people in the colony was the proper and seemly disposal of the dead. Suitable transport was non-existent, as were facilities for cremation. It was to these things that Sri M. M. Divan gave his attention. The cremation place was somewhere in the vicinity of what is now the lagoon at the mouth of the Umgeni. Sri Divan had a hearse made for the proper transport of the dead, and erected a small pier as a waiting place for the mourners.

Later, about 1904, he established the Hindu Crematorium which was known as the Hindu Smashan Fund.

In other ways he has left his name to be remembered by following generations.

AMBARAM MAHARAJ

Popularly known as Ambaram Maharaj, Sri Ambaram Mangalji Thakar of Latipur in Kathiawad was best known for sincere religious devotion and his deep knowledge of the

Hindu religion. He was a disciple of the renowned Yogi Philosopher and Writer of Saurashtra, Sri Nathuram Sharma.

Sri Ambaram was a versifier in his own right and there are many of his poems that speak his religious fervour and have their place in the homes of his friends. Many will recall the important part he played in the spread of Hindu religion, his piety, the care he gave to the proper performance of religious rituals, and his close friendship with Mahatma Gandhi.

SRI THAKARSI JETHALAL SANGHAVEE

One of the wisest and most polished men of his time, Sri Sanghavee had a most commanding presence. Always dressed correctly, his demeanour was faultless.

But addition he gained the respect of Indians and Europeans alike for the wisdom he brought to bear on any situation.

In India he was a resident of Jamnagar. A devoutly religious man, he and his splendid wife were looked upon as the Uncle and Aunt of the Gujaratis in South Africa. They had the aristocratic manner, both in character and looks, possessing all the qualities of leadership that attract others.

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H. K. GOKAL
(Johannesburg)



J. V. GOKAL
(Johannesburg)



HARJIWAN, H. DHUFELIA



J. B. MEHTA



SONI PREMJI JETHA

SRI JAYASHANKAR BHAICHAND MEHTA

Born in Morvi in Kathiawad he came to Natal in about 1896.

A most remarkable man, with characteristics all his own. He was a model of cleanliness, and thought nothing of cleaning his house himself, his wife being in India. His home shone with his care of it.

Early to bed, early to rise, he was always up with the sun, cleaning and polishing before he prepared his breakfast.

He was well educated too and wrote Gujarati well. He gathered together a good library, which his friends used with pleasure and gratitude.

Such men make loyal friends, and Gandhi, who brought him to Natal, thought of him as such. Indeed, the whole Mehta family, a large one in India, were the close associates and benefactors of Gandhiji, acting as host to him whenever he was in Bombay.

Sri Mehta's work here in Durban will always be remembered, especially that in connection with the crematorium in co-operation with Motilal Madhavji Divan.

THAKARSI DAMODAR

Thakersi Damodar came from Gondal in Saurashtra in about 1895, and shortly after his arrival he established a business in Umgeni Road, Durban.

At that time there were no restrictions on immigration, and he was one of the many who came to South Africa. Those following him found in

his home a welcome to a strange land, and he helped them with hospitality and friendship until they settled down. In this way he became a well respected member of the Indian community, and as such is remembered today by the older people among us. He died in 1911.

THAKAR PARSHOTTAMDAS DEVSHI

Sri T. P. Devshi was born at Khambhodar near Porbandar, a place to which he has donated many charities since he came to South Africa.

In his day he wielded considerable influence in the community, being of a jovial temperament. His house was constantly made use of as a meeting place for all and sundry, for the enjoyment of his company and for advice and help. He was a man of generous hospitality, offering entertainment to visitors from far and wide, so that his name was a household word as the perfect host. As such he entertained Sri Nanji Kalidas when that eminent gentleman visited South Africa, and arranged the functions in his honour.

In addition Sri Devshi was extremely well connected, associating in India with men of high standing, especially with his friend, the Rana Sahib, the ex-ruler of Porbandar.

All told, he played a most successful role as businessman in the affairs of the people.

SRI MADANJIT

Sri Madanjit was an inhabitant of Junagadh.

Coming to Durban, he became the proprietor of the International Print-

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SONI VALABDAS KATHAD



SONI KANJI DOSSA



CHHABILDAS B. MEHTA



KABABHAI A. MEHTA



SONI RAGHAVJI MAMIYA



SONI VALJEE NATHOO

ing Press, somewhere about 1902, and it was he who first conceived the idea of starting "Indian Opinion," seeking the advice of Mr. M. K. Gandhi.

"Indian Opinion" first saw the light of day in 1904, with Sri Mansukhlal as its first Editor.

Madanjit was fired with the zeal for service. Hence his launching of "Indian Opinion."

On one occasion he was in Johannesburg at the time of the outbreak of plague among Indians in the location there. He took the initiative to call in the aid of Mr. Gandhi who later wrote of him :

"Madanjit was a remarkably fearless man. His heart wept to see these victims of the scourge and asked me immediately to be present on the spot."

Later Madanjit handed over the control of the Press and the Periodical to Mr. Gandhi and left for India.

ABHECHAND AMRITLAL GANDHI

Sri Abhechand Amritlal Gandhi, born in Porbandar, the nephew of Mahatma Gandhi, came to Natal in 1896, after spending some time in the Transvaal, settling in Tongaat. He was a man of singularly high character and probity in business, extremely hardworking even by Indian standards. Combined with this, was a disposition of the most pleasing kind, a keen sense of responsibility for his fellows, and a religious devotion of remarkable intensity. He was particularly fond of Ramayana, and there is no doubt it had a tremendous influence in his life.

Among his many benefactions those to the Vishwaroop Temple and the Tongaat High School will be best remembered. He had, however, other claims to gratitude. He was one of those men who are to be found in all societies and communities, who, through their character and experience, become unofficial advisers to whom all men look for wise decisions. Countless people sought him out as an arbitrator in business affairs and domestic disputes, knowing his keen sense of rightness and impartiality, relying upon him to resolve difficulties and solve problems.

SRI HARJIVAN HANSRAJ DHUPELIA

Educated at the Alfred High School, Rajkot, Sri Harjivan Hansraj Dhupelia came to Natal in 1905, and first found employment as a book-keeper. In 1924 he established a business, Messrs. Dhupelia & Son, and quickly raised it to one of the most important commercial enterprises in the city.

His business ability combined with his pleasing personality won him a dominant place in the community, and as the founder of the family and business bearing his name, he was responsible for the many benefactions that have flowed to the community ever since.

In public work he was the Secretary of the Kathiawad Arya Mandal and a member of the Committee of the Natal Indian Congress when it was the only Indian political body in the Province. When Mahatma Gandhi launched the Tilak Swaraj Fund in India in 1921 for the Free-

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THAKARSHI DAMODAR



PRAGJIBHAI VASANJI



GOKALDAS P. GANDHI



MATHURADAS VASANJI



VASANJI DEVSHI

dom Movement, Mr. Dhupelia took an active part here in Natal.

There are in Durban several buildings erected under his supervision, and the name Dhupelia has become a household word, notable for charity and good works, the members of his family carrying on his noble example. He passed away in 1947 leaving behind him a glorious name.

SRI AMULAKHRAI N. GOSHALIA

Sri A. N. Goshalia was a resident of Gondal, a dominant personality, who will be best remembered for the zeal he displayed in popularising Hindustani music.

In this field he was a real pioneer, of the Northern School of Music in Natal, being an adept in the art of classical music and an expert performer on the harmonium. He was therefore an excellent teacher, playing a variety of musical instruments.

Before coming here he travelled extensively in India and went to Japan, where he advanced his commercial interests and gained much experience. He mixed with people easily, was a good conversationalist, and he was a great reader of Gujarati fiction.

Apart from his interests in music he will be remembered for the role he played in running a Gujarati school several years. The school was known as the Goshalia Private School. In it he was an able teacher and many grown-ups among us today remember their training under him.

These characteristics made him an excellent organiser of functions and his entertainment value was widely acknowledged. He was the first person who celebrated Gandhi Jayanti

on a grand scale, a birthday celebration of Mahatma Gandhi for which great credit is due to him.

Being such a musician he was always in demand, and generously gave his services for the propagation of that art.

SRI PURSHOTTAMDAS GIRDHARDAS DESAI

Among the early arrivals in Natal few Indians were educated men. Among the few was Sri Purshottamdas Girdhardas Desai. He was a resident of Porbandar, a very close relative of Mahatma Gandhi. As a young man he matriculated in 1890 in Bombay, when he was twenty years of age.

Arriving in Natal in 1904, he started a business career at Tongaat, but quickly found that his heart lay in cultural and literary fields. He was more of a literary man than a commercial man, a prolific reader and writer, contributing to "Indian Opinion" for many years, and editing the Gujarati section of that paper, bringing to it a powerful pen. He possessed a wide knowledge of the Gujarati language and literature combined with a comprehensive appreciation of English letters.

He was one of the men who joined Mahatma Gandhi at Phoenix, courting imprisonment in the passive resistance movement.

For some time he was the Chairman of the Bombay Presidency Association, and for a short period of the Kathiawad Arya Mandal and S.A. Vanik Association.

His scholarship extended to a deep knowledge of the Upanishads, the

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JETHA NARAN



HEMRAJ MOOLJEE
LAKHANI



RAGHAVJI RAGNATH



POPATLAL KARA



SONI VIRJEE NATHOO



NIMCHAND D. MODY

Bhagawad Gita, and other religious literature, a knowledge he brought to his lectures and talks to young and old.

He possessed the characteristics of the true teacher, an aptitude for attracting the attention of his hearers with vivid anecdotes and illustrations.

As a writer he was the author of two books, one on *Gita*, and the other on *Mahatma Gandhi*, published as small booklets by the Bhagini Samaj of Bombay in 1918.

Mahatma Gandhi had a high regard for him, and Mr. Desai had in his possession as many as five hundred letters written by Gandhiji, on the subjects of life, religion and politics.

The Indian community of Durban did him the signal honour in 1948, on the first anniversary of the independence of India, of asking him to unfurl the flag of Free India on the beach front. On this occasion he addressed thousands of people who gathered for the ceremony.

Few men served their fellows with greater devotion, and at his passing on the 25th January, 1952, he was mourned by all, as indeed he is remembered by all for his good and noble life.

SRI VIRJIBHAI DAMODAR MEHTA

The humblest of men was Virjibhai Damodar Mehta, and the kindest of heart and mind, who never missed an opportunity of helping those around him.

He was one of those who left all to follow Mahatma Gandhi to Phoenix, and there to share the philo-

sophy and way of life that eventually emerged as the greatest influence in the world. Eventually he left Phoenix and returned to the world of business, finding a hundred ways of expressing the ideals of Phoenix in the day-to-day life of the Gujarati people.

He was ideally suited to the work of committees and made the perfect secretary, so that almost every organisation sought him out and assigned to him the tasks of keeping records and of ensuring the proper ordering of routine and procedure. During his long stay in Durban his name became a household word of service and sacrifice.

SRI KESHAVJI NANJI GOR

Sri Keshavji Nanji Gor was a Saraswat Brahmin, a resident of Rana Kandorna near Porbandar, arriving in Durban in 1895.

He was a priest of the Soni community, and as such performed all manner of ceremonies, weddings, Havan and Katha. The Navaratri Festivals (Garbi) owed much to him, culminating in the great Havan Ash-tami, when the religious fervour of the people was at its height. The celebration of this festival is continued today, and it is to Sri Keshavji Nanji Gor that we owe gratitude for having organised them in the early days.

He is remembered also for his humanitarian deeds. A man of deep compassion — the small income derived from his priesthood was spent in helping others. Poor families everywhere found in him the help and friendship they so much needed. His passing away in 1938 was a great loss to the community.

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A. N. GOSHALIA



RATANJI M. LAKHANI



SONI JETHA KARA



KARSANBHAI B. RANIGA



AMBARAM M. THAKAR



SONI HIRJEE VALJEE
(Ladysmith)

SRI GOKALDAS PARMANANDDAS GANDHI

Popularly known as "Kalabhai," Sri G. P. Gandhi was a nephew of Mahatma Gandhi. He came to this country in 1897.

He was the first President of the Kathiawad Arya Mandal. After a short stay in Durban he settled down in Tongaat and started a business in which he was not successful.

He led a batch of Passive Resisters from the Tongaat district in the final stages of the Satyagraha movement and served a short term of imprisonment.

He had a good practical knowledge of the Ayurvedic Medicine, the Indian system of the healing art. He used to treat the sick free of charge and for over a decade his presence in the district was a great blessing to the poor as well as the rich.

He left for India in 1915 and settled in Porbandar, his home town. There also he resumed the practice of treating the sick free of charge for over twenty years.

He was good natured and kind-hearted.

Rule the Soul!

Rule, India, rule!

*Not the waves, not the earth, nor the skies—rule the soul.
I care not if you give them money or fame—give
them peace alone*

Rule, India, rule the soul!

*They may ride the thunderbolt, and saddle the
crashing and gushing streams — suffice it
for you to control the passions that consume men.
When the world groans under the iron-heels of war
and the combatants cry, "Disarmaments,"
India, watch the game.*

*For they shall disarm to fight again.
And if they want Peace—permanent peace—they
must needs accept your message—the message
of the soul.*

Rule, India rule the soul!

*No Democracy will bring peace if an inch of earth
is slave;*

*No League will abolish wars if colour-bar exists;
They defile the sanctity of human rights.
The one thing universal is the soul—
Rule, India, rule the soul!*

—G. R. SWAMI.

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revere*



VALLABHJEE
HARAKHCHAND



SONI DEVSHI ODHAVJEE
(Dundee)



RACHAVJEE D. PAREKH



D. K. SONI (P.M. Burg)



SONI VISHRAM MOOLJEE

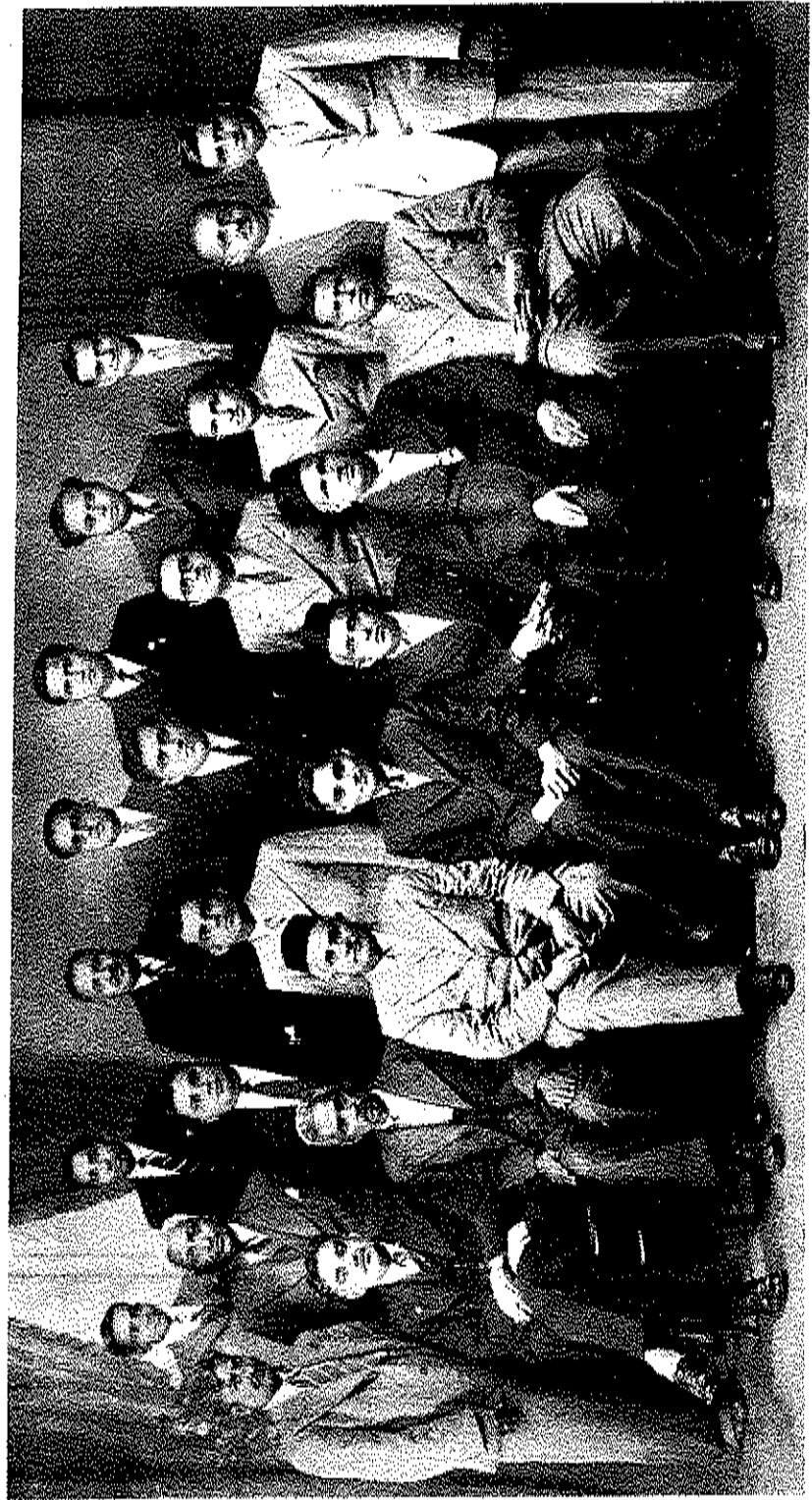


DEVCHAND HARAKHCHA



Religious Ceremony at Curries Fountain

THE FIRST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE -- 1944



Sitting (1st Row) : V. P. Desai, Soni J. Kara, M. K. Lodhia, Dr. N. P. Desai, T. Manjee, H. A. Thaker, V. R. Parekh
Standing (2nd Row) : Soni J. Premjee, P. H. Dhurpelia, T. N. Lakhani, V. Vasanjee, Nathalal S. Devshi, V. J. Thacker, M. D. Mistry, Govind Harilal, H. N. Narani
Standing (3rd Row) : S. J. Mehta, C. J. Mehta, Soni M. Hirjee, R. P. Soni, N. V. Mehta, O. M. Soni, P. H. Joshi

First Management Committee of the Samaj

The following were elected as Officials and Members of the Management Committee at the inaugural meeting of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj (Natal), held on Sunday, 26th December, 1943, at the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Hall, Carlisle Street, Durban.

President :

Dr. Nagindas P. Desai

Vice-Presidents :

Harilal N. Naran, Harilal A. Thakar, Odhavji M. Soni

Jt. Hon. Secretaries :

Nautamlal V. Mehta, Himmatlal H. Dhupelia

Jt. Hon. Treasurers :

Vallabhadas VasANJI, Govind Harilal Soni

Hon. Auditor :

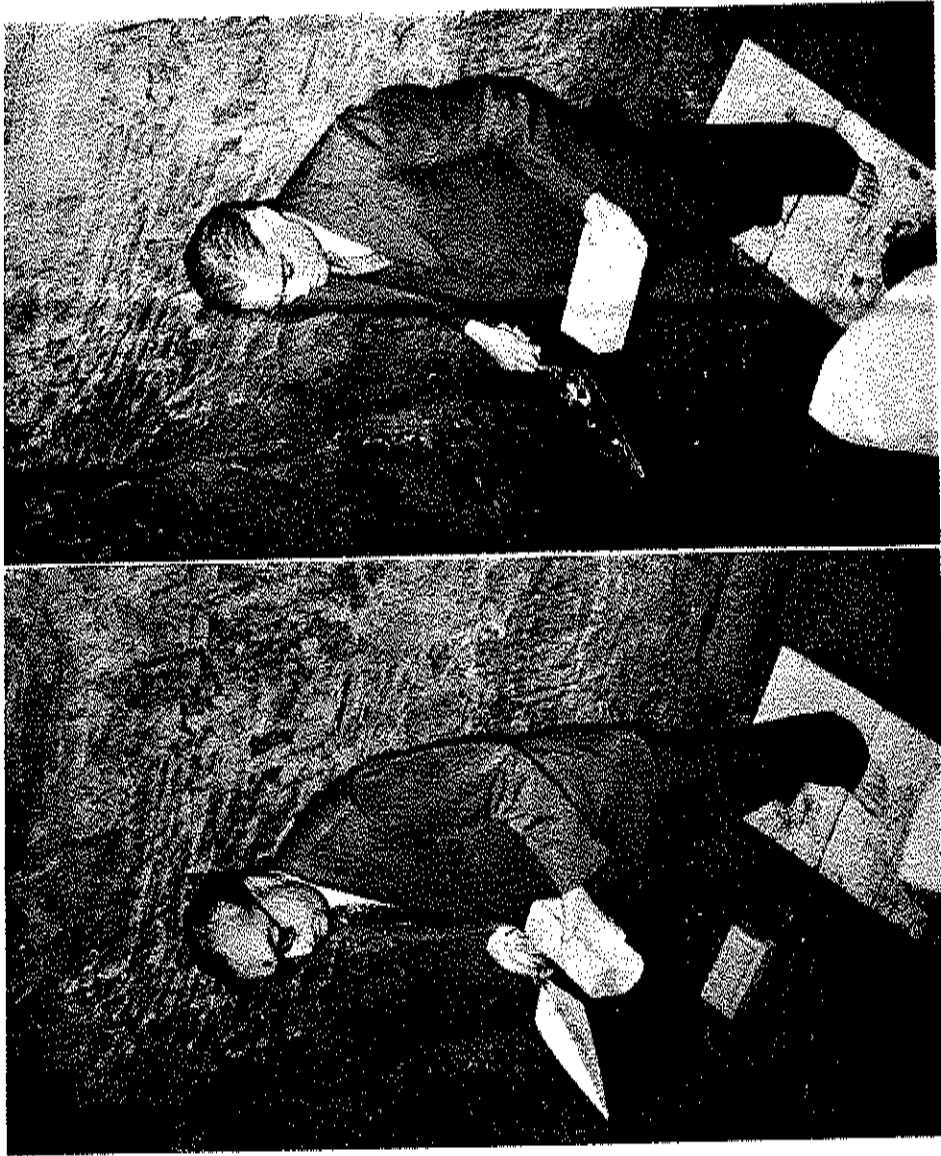
Varjivandas P. Desai

Trustees :

Thaker Manjee Odhavji, Pranal H. Dhupelia, Mohanlal K. Lodhia,
Vrajlal R. Parekh, Jetha Kara Soni

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Vrajlal J. Thucker, Thakarsi N. Lakhani, Mohanlal Raghavji Soni,
Shantilal J. Mehta, Manilal Mohandas Gandhi, Mooljee Hirjee Soni,
Jeram Premjee Soni, Mohanlal D. Mistry, Nathalal S. Devshi, Chiman-
lal J. Mehta, Ratanji P. Soni, Premshanker H. Joshi



Sri H. H. Dhupelia and Dr. N. P. Desai laying the brick (20th July, 1956)

THE KATHIAWAD HINDU SEVA SAMAJ

WE have seen in the foregoing chapters something of the attempts at organisation within the small communities which make up the Kathiawadi people in Durban and Natal.

Those organisations could only be very small. They were expressions of a desire, well known throughout the world, of people of like interests in religion, in occupations, and in thought, coming together for special purposes. In our case the special purposes were almost invariably religious, the holding of festivals and of receptions to those leaving and to those arriving.

At first sight these appear to be very simple things, but to those taking part they were very real occasions, touching the mainsprings of our peoples' lives. Hindu religious festivals are numerous, but all of them have a symbolic and vital meaning.

The environment in which our people found themselves in Natal and in South Africa did not permit them much opportunity to learn a wider responsibility in such things as social welfare and local government. In the past they knew very little English. Moreover they were very small in numbers, and even today they number no more than fifty or sixty families. It was natural then for the

sub-groups among them to cherish their traditions, their language, and their religion.

Virtues and Values

The very basis of their caste system prevented them in the past from taking part in wider opportunities. There is no doubt that their small groups possessed many virtues, and each of them performed very real service, particularly in keeping before young and old the values and the virtues of the Hindu religion and of their home language.

Recently, however, great changes have taken place. The caste system is fast disappearing, and today amongst us there has grown up a new recognition of our part in a larger community.

This ideal of seeking the unity of the Kathiawadi peoples, the bringing together of the small groups, has gradually taken shape throughout the years, until in 1943, the idea was given expression in the formation of a single body, the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj.

The Samaj sought to unite the several sub-groups of the Kathiawadi people into one organisation. Its purpose was to project the desire to enlarge the interests of our people in all possible ways, but particularly in two

ways: one to encourage and preserve our home language and culture, Gujarati; and two, to equip our people to play their part in a larger community consisting of the rest of the Indian community, the European order, and the African peoples.

The Samaj was inspired by a desire to serve. It had at its first inspiration Doctor N. P. Desai, who had but recently returned to Durban having completed his medical studies.

He with many friends, too numerous to mention, and after long and careful thought, brought about this new organisation.

The School at Lorne Street

Very naturally the first concern of the Samaj was with its own people the Kathiawadis. Among them there was a very real danger of their children growing up having no more than the rudiments of their own language and culture, ignorant of the great heritage to which they were heirs, and of the past virtues of their homeland.

Our first anxiety then, in the absence of suitable schools, was to provide an education for our children. Out of this anxiety rose the school in Lorne Street, and the Mahatma Gandhi Hall built in 1946.

The foundation stone of both these institutions was laid by Mr. R. M. Deshmukh, who was then the High Commissioner for India in the Union, and who, in his address, spoke of the school symbolising the education on which all future foundations must be built.

The English School opened in January, 1947, and has since proved its value in innumerable ways.

In all departments it has gained a distinction for its outstanding successes, and particularly in its examination results, the praise for which goes to its Principal, Mr. R. P. Soni, Mr. A. K. Naidu, the Standard VI teacher, and to Mr. S. M. Pather and Mr. V. S. Pillay, as well as to all those who have taught the children from their earliest years. Though it is invidious to single out individuals, for the school owes a debt of gratitude to so many, mention must be made of Mr. Paruman, the Vice-Principal of the School, whose devotion to the School's interests is an example to all.

At its inception the Lorne Street School took children up to Standard II, and it was not until 1952 that the first batch of candidates was entered for the Standard VI examination, when as many as 31 entered and successfully passed, all of them gaining the continuation certificate, except one.

This good start gave the school a tremendous impetus, so that up to the present year, 233 pupils have written the examination and only eleven have failed, a record which has gained the praise of the Education Department's inspectors, and one of which we are all very proud.

Many of our children, leaving the Lorne Street School have continued their education at the High Schools, at Sastri College, the Durban Indian Girls' High School, and at the M. L. Sultan Technical College, at all of which accommodation is becoming more difficult, and especially at Sastri.

A school must never be judged solely on its examination results, important as these are.

The aim of the Samaj was an institution where children would grow in those qualities and virtues that make for good citizenship, that give to man and woman the character and nobility of the true life. Education is a many-sided process, a creative experience, raising man to the highest expression of his abilities.

Many extra-curricular activities, therefore, find a place in the school, games where they are possible in the limited playing space, athletics, football and cricket for the boys, tennis, quoits for the girls, all designed for happy participation whether in competition with other schools or among themselves.

Our Two Worlds

In a very real sense, like so many other Indians in South Africa, we Kathiawadis live in two worlds, the world of our home, our home language, Gujarati, our religion of Hinduism and the world outside, where our very existence depends on knowledge of the world of trade and industry and of the context of English.

Our Lorne Street School, therefore, serves two purposes. Mention then must be made of the Gujarati School. Here, at periods suitable to the English secular curriculum, teaching is given in the Gujarati language.

This has not been easy. For one thing we have lacked trained teachers in this country, and it has not always been possible to import suitable teachers from India. We have had to depend, therefore, on the devoted services of those among us who have the qualifications and the love that is required to impart the necessary teaching to our children. And in this

connection our thanks and gratitude go out to Dr. N. P. Desai, himself a Gujarati scholar, to his wife, Mrs. Bhadrakumari Desai, and their daughter, Miss Sarojini Desai, all of whom have dedicated themselves to the task of teaching, often at considerable sacrifice to their own interests of family and friends.

Mention, too, must be made of the of the manner in which Mrs. Sharda Liladhar Lakhani who, a few years ago, gave of her valuable time as a teacher without remuneration or reward. We remember also how greatly we are indebted to Mr. Premshanker H. Joshi, whose profound knowledge of Hindu religion, and of the Gujarati language, came to the aid of the Samaj and the school at a time when it was most needed.

In this way we have been able to do much to combat the danger, an ever present danger, that our young people would lose touch with the mainsprings of their mother tongue by neglect and by the impress of western civilisation, and at the same time ensure for them an abiding appreciation of the beauties of their religion and their language.

It was this, and all that flows from it in the building of character, in respect of oneself and respect for others, in growth in grace and true Holiness, that lay at the root of our concern to make the Samaj an instrument of culture and education. What success has attended these efforts can only be measured as our children grow to adult life and reveal in their special ways what we are now trying to impart, the true dignity of man, the love of all creation, and the service of humanity.

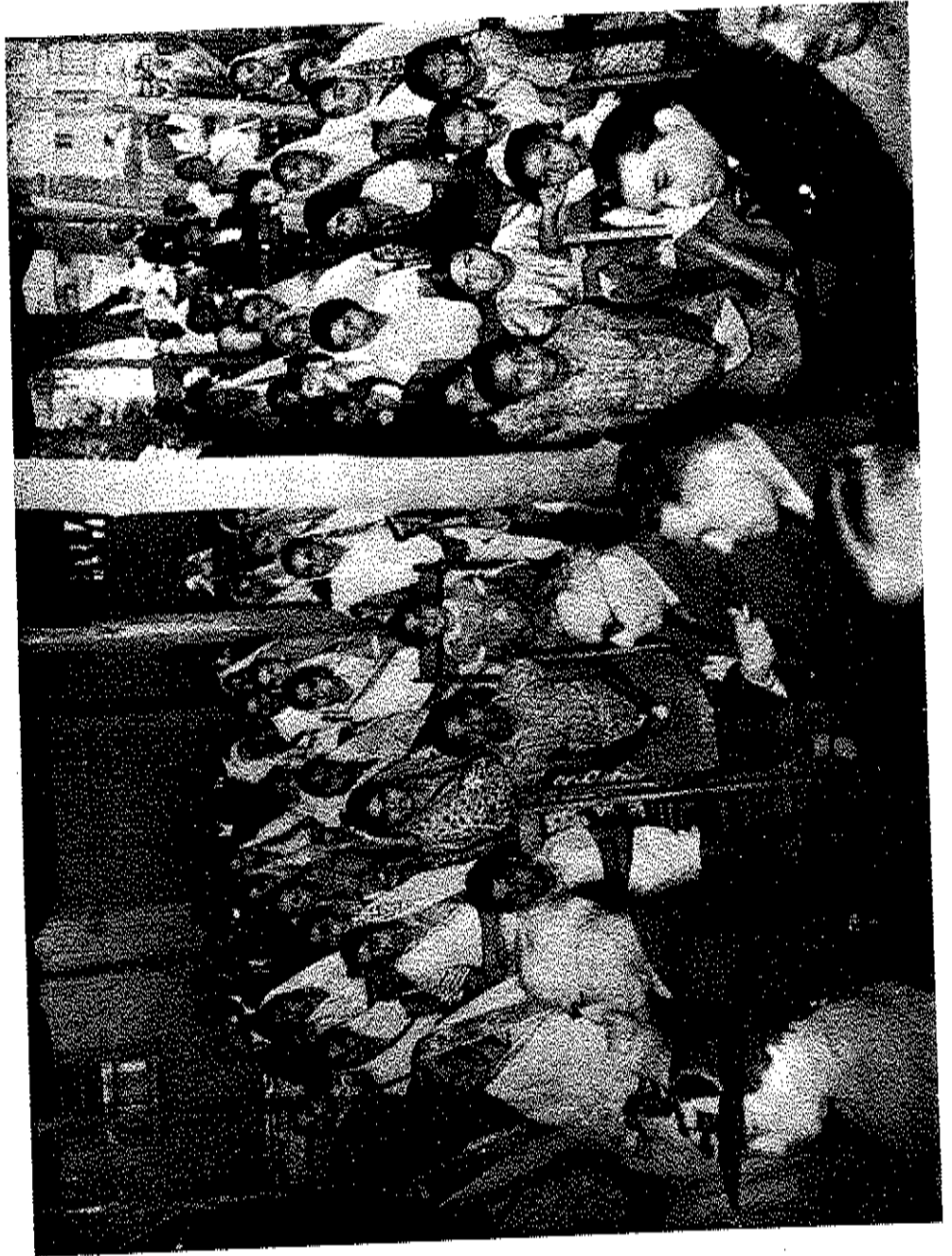
THE KATHIAWAD HINDU GOVT. AIDED INDIAN SCHOOL & MAHATMA GANDHI HALL



The Laying of the Foundation Stone -- Mr. R. M. Deshmukh, the High Commissioner for India in the Union, is seen laying the first brick -- 31st October, 1945



The Carlanding -- Dr. Desai honouring Mr. R. M. Deshmukh in the presence of His Worship
the Mayor of Durban, Councillor Sidney Smith



A part of the audience



The President's Address of Welcome — Dr. N. P. Desai

LIST OF DONORS

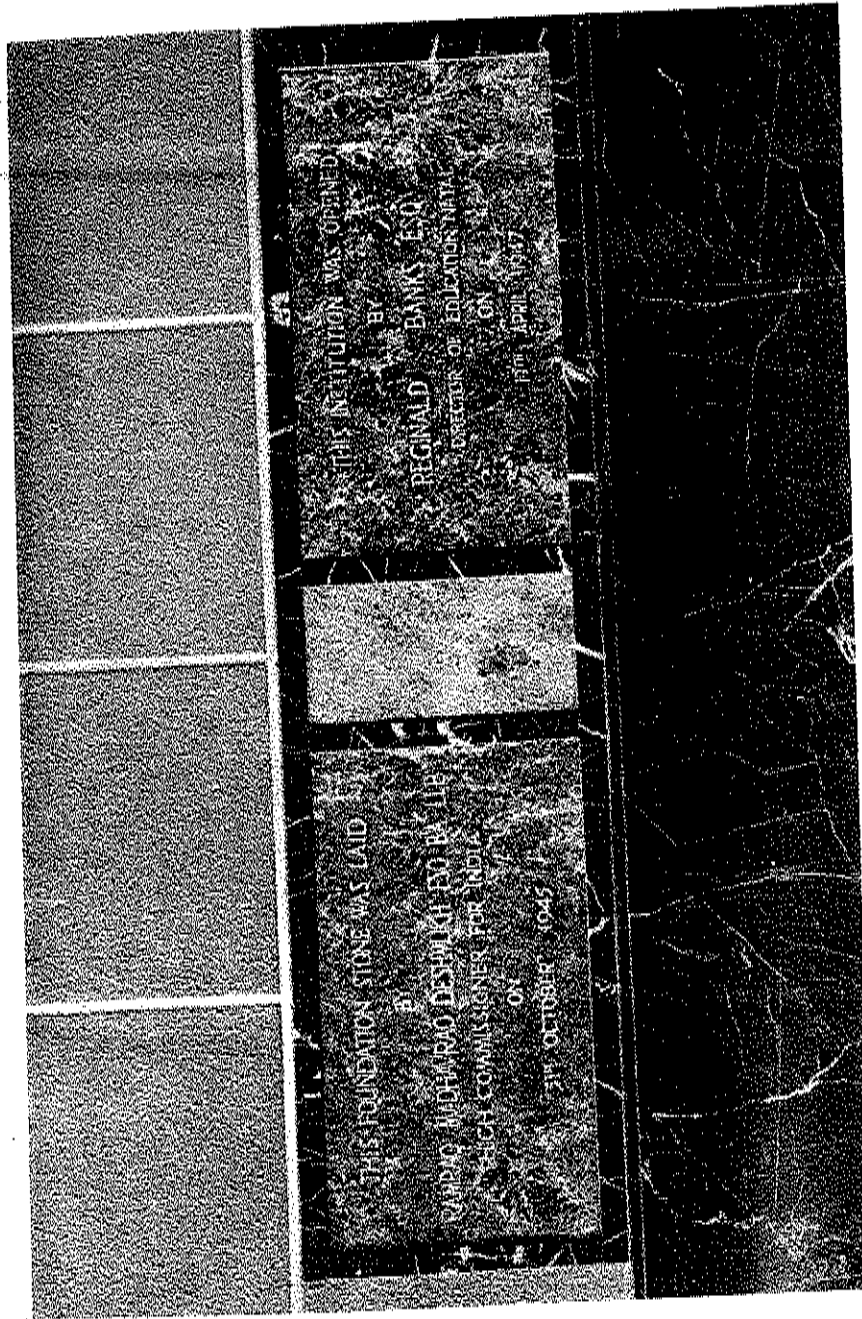
Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj (Natal)

Lorne Street School and Mahatma Gandhi Hall

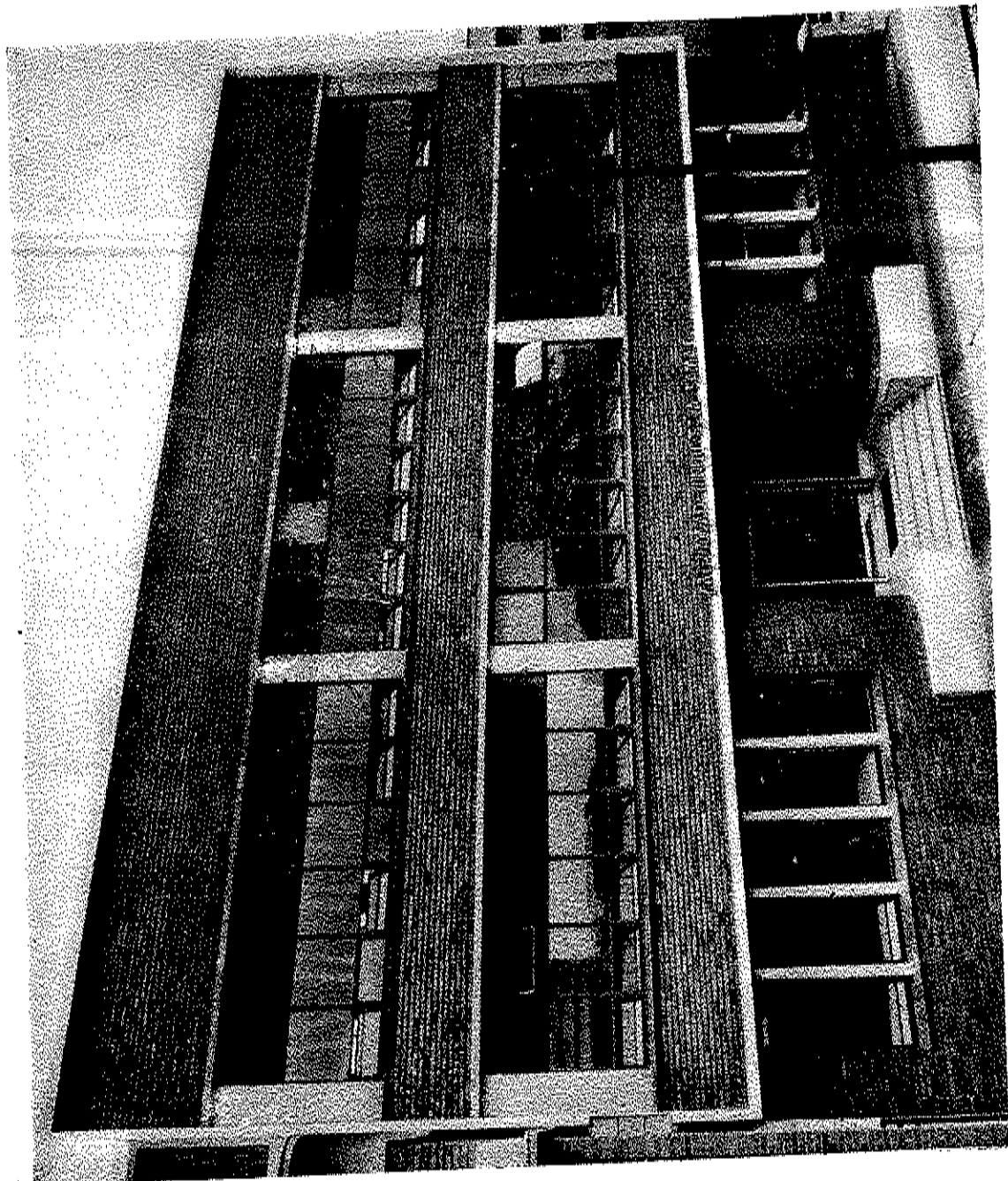
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The Commemoration Plaques – The Foundation Stone & Opening Ceremony



Kathawad Hindu Coyt. Aided Indian School and Mahatma Gandhi Hall.

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The Mahatma Gandhi Hall

Perhaps the greatest need of any community, once a sense of community arises, is a central place, headquarters, to which all can look to express their interests.

The Mahatma Gandhi Hall was erected for this purpose.

Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were brought to Durban for immersion in the Umgeni River in 1948. They were placed in the Samaj Hall in Lorne Street for the public to pay homage. Since that day this Hall has been named the "Mahatma Gandhi Hall."

It is quite impossible to describe the value of this Hall in the life of the community, not only as the headquarters of the Samaj, but in the life of the Indian population of Durban generally.

It is in this Hall that we hold our religious festivals, marked as they are with colourful decorations, and imbued as they so often are with unalloyed joy and happiness. It is here too that we hold our weddings, our receptions of welcome and farewell, where we hold our meetings, and where, indeed, we find ourselves growing in friendship and fellowship in a hundred different ways.

But of all the ways it is proving so useful, a special word must be devoted to the importance it is playing among our young people between the ages of the school-leavers and full maturity. In the past not sufficient

attention was paid to this group and even now much remains to be done to help them help themselves in the better things of life.

One of the greatest needs of any age group is the feeling of "belonging," the feeling of being needed and appreciated. Without this feeling of "belonging," no man, and particularly no young man, can be happy. Without it, he tends to drift into ways of life he would be ashamed of in his best moments.

The Samaj is doing all it can to offer young people through the facilities of the Mahatma Gandhi Hall opportunities of happiness and service, opportunities they are eager to take and enjoy in richer life for others.

One Community

In providing in its several ways, schools, social and welfare centre, a headquarters for its activities, the Samaj seeks to encourage the unity of all the Kathiawadi groups, and there are indeed among us who do not know and acknowledge in our own lives the new and strong sense of community that has grown up since the Samaj was established.

Our aim is not to stop at our own unity. The Samaj seeks and values the fellowship of other Indian groups.

Knowing the value of co-operation and the one-ness we have attained

between the sub-groups of our own people, we have learned the need to become members of even larger groups, and in this way to take our place and play our part in the greater whole.

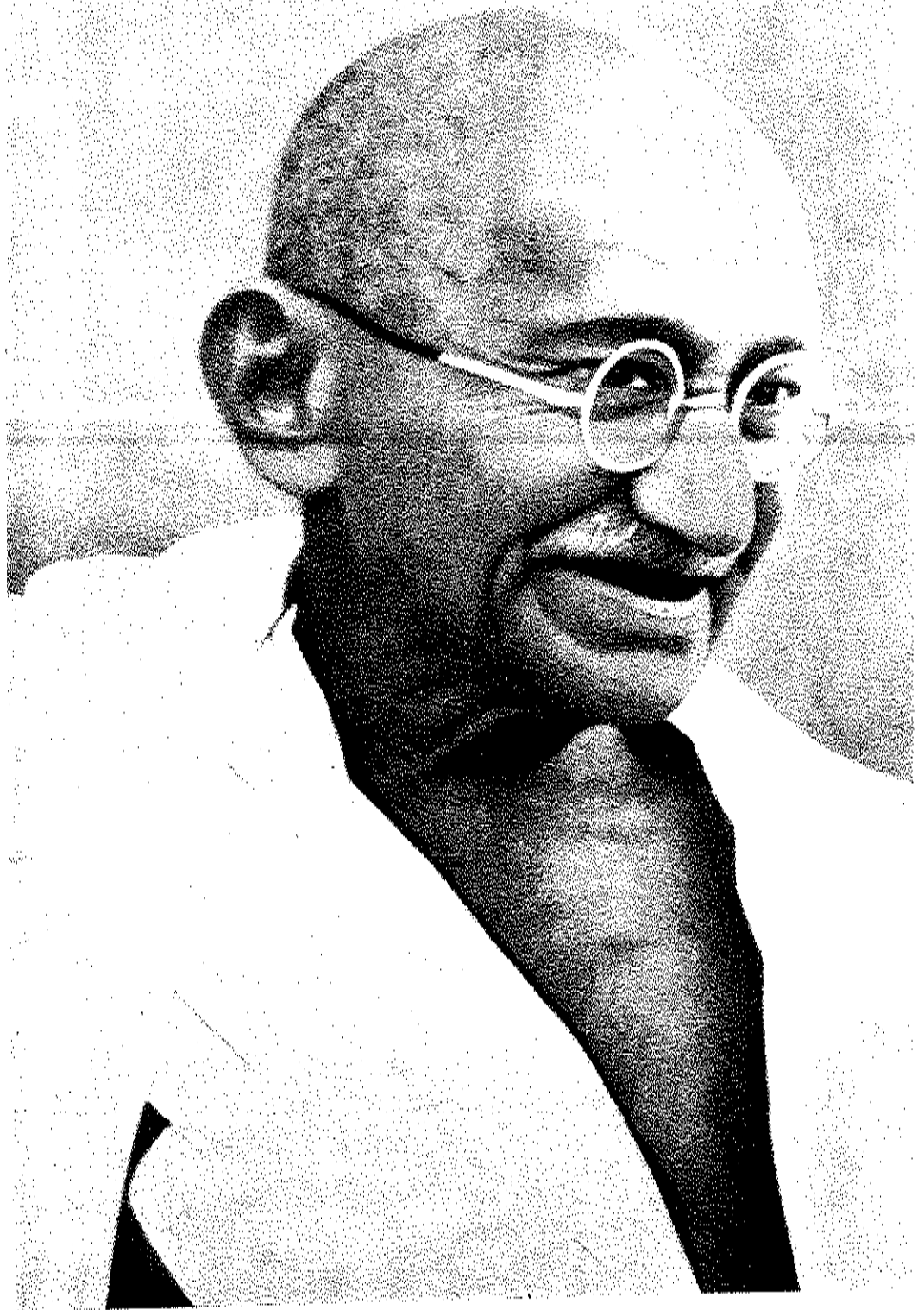
It is not surprising, then, though many of us remain surprised and even astonished, that our small community has gone forward in faith and confidence towards the great enterprise of building a High School and a Primary School at Curries Fountain, an enterprise which a few years ago would not have been contemplated.

It is not surprising because what was started in 1943 answered the need of so many of our people, offered an opportunity all were crying for, to shew the quickening sense of service in the common good, the rich man with his financial aid in public benefactions, the talented man in service freely given, the poor man with his pence, and all with their love and devotion for a noble cause.

With so much to be grateful for, let us walk into the future hand in hand, and let us put those hands to the service of one another, to the glory of our Creator, and to the gladness of all those who come after us.



Republic of India Day Celebrations at the Mahatma Gandhi Hall



... *The Noblest Kathiawadi of them all*

MAHATMA GANDHI

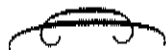
By Pandit JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

He was like a powerful current of fresh air that made us stretch ourselves and take deep breaths, like a beam of light that pierced the darkness and removed the scales from our eyes, like a whirlwind that upset many things but most of all the working of people's minds. He did not descend from the top; he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling condition. Get off the backs of these peasants and workers, he told us, all you who live by their exploitation: get rid of the system that produces this poverty and misery.

The essence of his teaching was fearlessness and truth, and action allied to these, always keeping the welfare of the masses in view. The greatest gift for an individual or nation, so we had been told in our ancient books, was *abhaya*, fearlessness, not merely bodily courage but the absence of fear from the mind.

It was against this all-pervading fear that Gandhiji's quiet and determined voice was raised. So, suddenly as it were, that black pall of fear was lifted from the people's shoulders to an amazing degree.

As fear is close companion to falsehood, so truth follows fearlessness.



Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth.

—DR. ALBERT EINSTEIN

The First Patrons of the Samaj

The following were elected as Patrons of the Samaj at the inaugural meeting of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj (Natal), held on Sunday, 26th December, 1943, at the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha Hall, Carlisle Street, Durban.

Thakker Purshottam Devshi, Harjivandas H. Dhupelia, Purshotamdas Girdhardas Desai, Abhechand Amritlal Gandhi, Raghavji Devji Parekh, Soni Raghavji Mamaiya, Girjashanker H. Bhatt, Amulakhrai N. Goshalia, Jethalal Naran, Soni Nathoo Devji, Chhaganlal T. Poonatar, Somchand P. Vather, Soni Harilal Nathoo, Ranchhoddas Naran, Soni Mohanlal Valjee, Ratanjee Makanjee Lakhani, Revashanker H. Bhatt, Khetsi Haribhai, Soni Chhagan Trikam, Purshottam N. Soni.



OUT OF CONTROL

You can't control the length of your life, but you can control its width and depth.

You can't control the contour of your countenance, but you can control its expression.

You can't control the other fellows opportunities, but you can grasp your own.

You can't control the weather, but you can control the moral atmosphere which surrounds you.

*Why worry about things you can't control?
Get busy controlling things that depend on you.*

TRUSTEES OF THE SAMAJ

We have been fortunate in having well known and proud Kathiawadis as our Trustees.

In the early days of the Samaj we well remember the interest of Mr. V. R. Parekh whose unbounded zeal was a source of great inspiration to the pioneers of which he was one.

The late Mr. Jetha Kara, too, was indispensable as he knew many men of all walks of life whose co-operation we needed. His cheerful temperament and "ever ready to help" attitude was instrumental in consolidating the Samaj in the initial stages.

Sri T. Manjee gave us a great helping hand when we launched the appeal for funds to build the Lorne Street School and Hall. He took the leadership of the fund raising Committee, the spontaneous response of the people under his inspiration enabled us to complete the project as we see it today.

Sri P. H. Dhupelia, another Trustee since the Samaj's inception, is a pillar of strength to us. His co-operative nature, so characteristic of the Dhupelia family, has been immensely helpful in building the structure of our society. This family has never shirked responsibility and is first and foremost in all charitable and public work. They have so much identified with the Samaj that today their share of work has been taken for granted.

Sri Pragjee Kara, who has been a Trustee of the Samaj for a long time, is another well-respected member whose services are very valuable. The family of Soni Kara Devraj is well known in the Indian community for kind-heartedness and generosity.

Sri M. K. Lodhia has been a trustee since the inception of the Samaj. He is well known as the founder of the Lodhia Educational and Scholarship Trust.

There are many who do not hold official positions but who are indispensable to the Samaj. Among them are Sri V. J. Thucker, Soni Jeram Premjee, Soni Muljee Hirjee, Soni Damjee Nathoobhai (Treasurer), Sri T. K. Soni, Sri G. N. Joshi, Sri Mohanlal Manjee, Sri Naranadas Vallabhdas, Sri C. J. Mehta, Sri S. J. Mehta and Hirjee Trikamji Maharaj. They have given of their best in the cause of the Samaj; capable men, self-sacrificing in spirit, enriching our society in character and prestige.

TRUSTEES OF THE SAMAJ



V. R. PAREKH



P. H. DHUPELIA



T. MANJEE



SONI PRACJI KARA



M. K. LODHIA

Pillars of the Samaj

When the Samaj was first formed, a few of our members played an outstanding part.

Among them were Mr. N. V. Mehta and Mr. H. N. Naran. It was they with whom Dr. Desai first discussed the idea of forming the Samaj. They brought to the idea a ready response and ardent zeal.

Soon the Dhupelia brothers, Mr. Vrajlal R. Parekh and Mr. V. P. Desai joined the little band, and following close on them came the gallant Mr. N. S. Devshi.

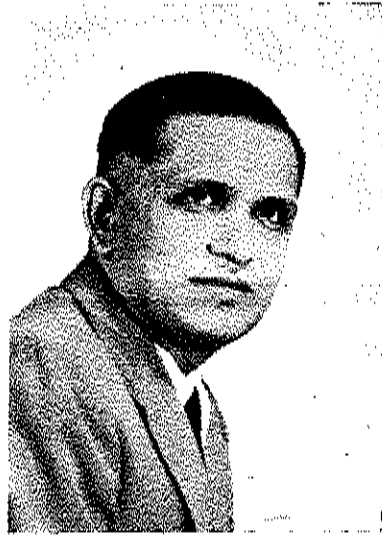
These men were the pioneers, and it is their enthusiasm and goodwill that laid the foundations of the Samaj — strong and true. For it is one thing to have an idea and a purpose, but quite another to give the idea the right direction and design.

Among these men is a fine business sense. They are efficient in organisation and prudent in managerial affairs — full of tact and acumen — and it is quite impossible to measure the benefits the Samaj has derived from them. Their names are worthy of inscription in golden letters in the records of the Samaj, and posterity will hold them in abiding gratitude both for their benefactions and for the spirit of their concern for the communities' welfare.

Each of them is an institution in himself. The administration of the Samaj has been safe and fruitful in their hands. On such foundations as they have laid, its future strength is assured.

All who know Sri Nathalal Samjee Devshi recognise him as an institution in himself. A man of commanding personality, indomitable courage, and outstanding generosity he embraces the whole of our

PILLARS OF THE SAMAJ



N. V. MEHTA



H. H. DRUPELIA



H. N. NARAN

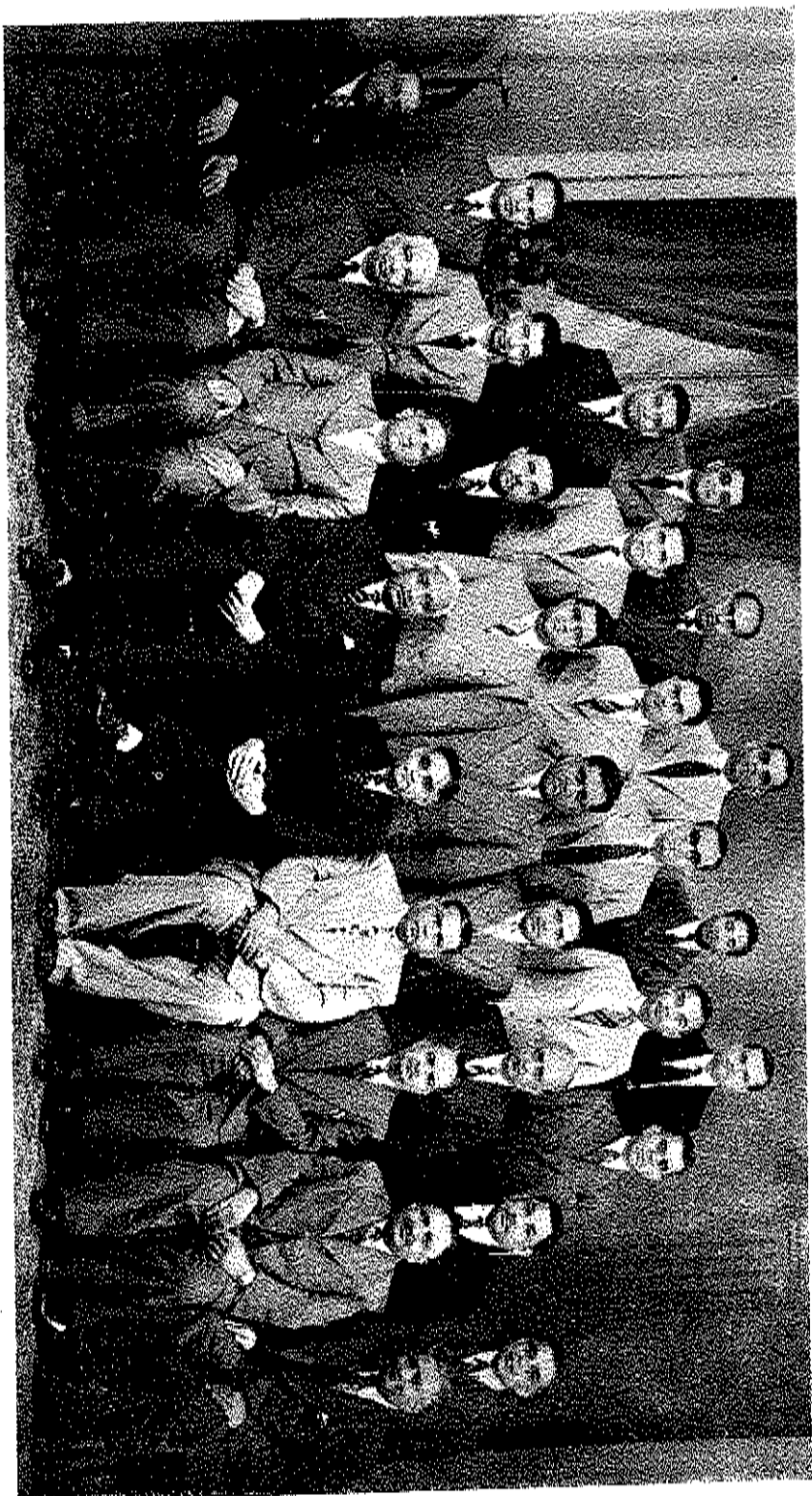


V. P. DESAI



N. S. DEVSHI

THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - 1949-1950



Seated: N. Raghavjee, C. R. Parekh, H. A. Thakkar, P. H. Dhupelia, Dr. N. P. Desai, V. R. Parekh, Soni P. Kara, S. M. Hirjee,
S. J. Premjee
Standing (First Row): H. Trkambjee, Castial R. Parekh, G. N. Joshi, Soni D. Nathoo, N. S. Devshi, N. Valabdas, M. R. Parekh,
N. Tabha, V. P. Desai.
Standing (Second Row): H. N. Naran, N. V. Mehta, V. J. Thacker, H. H. Dhupelia, K. P. Desai, T. K. Soni
Standing (Back Row): R. N. Naran, D. Valjee, V. Vasantee, C. I. Mehta, Prem H. Joshi.

AN APPRECIATION

Dr. N. P. Desai

by

NATHALAL SAMJEE DEVSHI



MANY of us felt that this souvenir brochure would be incomplete and failing in its purpose did it not contain some tribute, and some expression of the debt the Kathiawadi community owes to Dr. Nagindas Purshottamdas Desai. We know that this feeling is shared by all, and that what follows can only be a very small expression of the esteem and affection in which Dr. Desai is held in the hearts and minds of rich and poor.

He was born at Tongaat on the 31st January, 1905, the son of Shri Purshottamdas Girdhardas Desai, a close relative of Mahatma Gandhi, and one who left his business interest to join Gandhi at Phoenix, being more inclined to this way of life than to the business of making money.

Something of the father seems to have passed into the son, elements of the urge for service.

As a boy he went to school at the Indian Wesleyan School at Tongaat and came to know the firm discipline of the Head Teacher, Mr. E. J. Choonoo. For some time he lived at the Tolstoy Farm in the Transvaal, and then, in 1916, he went to India where he stayed until 1936,—twenty years— and where after a very successful school career at the Esplanade High School and the National High School crowning it as head of the school and first in public examination, he matriculated and entered the National Medical College.

Full of promise as a student, it was not surprising that he qualified as a doctor of medicine with merit. After a short period in private practice, he found himself working under the famous Dr. Rufus C. Thomas, the Chief Medical Officer in Jamnagar, who is best remembered for the trem-

endous reforms he introduced in the hospital services.

During this period, the young doctor married the daughter of Dr. Madanji Jethabhai, himself in the State Medical Services.

After a short transfer to a similar post in Rajkot, Dr. Desai returned to South Africa en route for England, he went to advance his medical studies at the University of London, spending some time in Edinburgh and Dublin also.

It was not until 1940 that he returned to South Africa and to Durban, setting up practice in Prince Edward Street.

While he was in India, Dr. Desai had participated in the struggle for independence, naturally so as a near relative of Gandhiji. When, therefore, he returned to Natal to practice, after an absence of twenty years, it was not surprising that he went through a period of personal difficulty. The political situation here was not easy. The Indian people were by no means united. Opportunities for public service were few and surrounded with difficulties, especially for a doctor, and there were moments when Dr. Desai felt that it might be wise for him to go elsewhere and seek a more congenial territory.

A sense of duty, however, decided him to stay. Very early after his return, then, he was drawn into activities for which he was peculiarly fitted. In these things he took after his father. He was imbued with a desire to serve his community, and it was he who saw the latent possibilities among the various groups of the

Kathiawadis, knowing their character and their needs.

Dr. Desai had moved in India in the highest circles of his profession and among men who were leaders of their people. In Durban he was troubled about the welfare of his people and gave to it the most earnest thought, recalling the great heritage of which it was a part and desiring to preserve this heritage here in Natal.

One of his first endeavours was to start a small bulletin, cyclostyled on foolscap, which he called "Maha Gujarat," running it for two years and distributing it among his fellows, writing every word of it himself, aiming at the enlightenment of his fellows on matters concerning their language and religion, seeking to stir them into new endeavours.

Then he was editor of another journal, "Hindu," for several years.

But in the meantime there was taking shape in his mind an idea which emerged in the foundation of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj. He talked over the idea with men like Mr. N. V. Mehta, and Mr. H. N. Naran, and seeing its possibilities, all these talked it over with others like the brothers Dhupelia and Mr. V. R. Parekh, Mr. V. P. Desai and myself.

Dr. Desai was well placed to provide the impetus, and well equipped to carry out such an idea, coming new to the scene, having as a doctor the authority of scholarship, versed in Gujarati, imbued with ideals of service. Such men are rare and precious.

Among his deepest concerns, something that touched him at the quick, was the decline in his community of the home language. Children were growing up without the anchorage of the past, with only the rudiments of Gujarati, and them bespoiled by untutored use, and without any knowledge of literature, the history of their forebears.

It was to this concern that he set his hand and mind, and in which he was assisted by the devotion of his wife and daughter.

It is true to say that in the performance of this task, Dr. Desai has impoverished himself while enriching his people. As a doctor in a territory scarce of doctors in the early forties, he might have chosen to use his acknowledged skills to enrich himself and his family. Instead he chose to sacrifice himself, and not only himself, but his family in the common good.

The doctor is the Grantee of the Lorne Street School. He is the President of the Gujarati Cultural Society. He is a Trustee of the Gandhi-Tagore Lectureship Trust, as well as of the M. C. Varman Trust. But of all the services he has rendered and continues to render, none is so big or so laudable and praiseworthy as the influence of his mind and heart on those who came into contact with him.

He is a man of quiet mien, ascetic, tall, gentle, wise, yet forceful too when occasion demands. Many of us know our lives are better for having known him.

Hundreds of people in Durban have come to know the skill of his hands as a doctor, and have reason to bless him for his care and kindness. Not only for his own people, however, has he worked so devotedly. Many of his people remember his leadership of the Hindu Maha Sabha, and know today how the Maha Sabha still relies on his wise counsel and guidance.

It was through the South African Hindu Maha Sabha, too, that Dr. Desai made one of his best contributions to the present and the future. We refer to his work regarding the introduction of a Common Prayer for all Hindus, published in the form of a handy booklet, and today used in schools and homes, giving to all Hindus a sense of unity in spiritual grace and worship.

Surely he will be honoured by all generations to come as one who has done so much for others, and so little for himself.

It has been well said that he who serves his own people, no matter how small that society, serves all humanity. But Dr. Desai has not limited himself even to his own. His work and influence have permeated the life and labour of the whole Indian community here in Natal, and beyond Natal. It can be said of him "He has served our nation."

May the Almighty spare him many more years to continue in his devoted service, and inspire us and others to emulate his example.



The Principal, Staff and Senior Pupils of the Gujarati School — 1950

Early Pioneers of the Samaj

These indispensable members who by their benefactions, ever willing help and sacrifice at all times have made the Samaj what it is today.

They have occupied official positions at different times and had adorned them with dignity and grace.



VALLABHDAS VASANJEE



SONI JERAM PREMJEE



V. J. THUCKER



SONI DAMJEE NATHOO



SONI MOOLJEE HIRJEE



Perspective of the Curries Fountain Project

Benefactors & Founders

One of the most striking features of the Indian community in general in recent years is the eager sense of responsibility which has appeared among men of wealth and substance. From time to time, at shorter and shorter intervals Indians, successful in business and endowed with wealth, have risen from ordinary standards of private generosity to public needs. Their number is increasing, and the

significance of this enlarging public spirit is increasingly being appreciated, not only by Indians but by official government authorities.

Among these benefactors we are happy to count some in our own Kathiawadi community, and at this time two especially, who are associated with our educational project at Currie's Fountain — V. Valjee and V. P. Desai Brothers.



V. VALJEE

V. VALJEE

V. Valjee is one of the oldest men among us, 86, and at the same time one of the first of those pioneers who ventured in 1889 to come to South Africa, settling, as so many others did



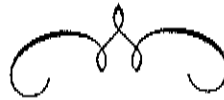
MANILAL VALJEE

in Tongaat. He now lives a retired life in Durban.

V. Valjee is an example of that fast disappearing "old school" of men, who knew the hardships of the early days, whose courage and tenacity are

an example to a younger generation. Lacking the advantages of education as we know it to-day by dint of hard work he raised himself and his family in self-respect, until to-day, in the evening of his long life, he can take pride in the progress around him, even as we can take pride in his munificence.

His gift of £10,000 towards the building of the Primary School was made in the name and memory of his son, Manilal. No better memorial could be offered than the provision of opportunity for the sons and daughters of others. We are glad to think that the Primary School will always be known as the Manilal Valjee Govt. Aided Indian School.



It has been said that a disease becomes most acutely critical when the brain is affected. For it is the brain that is constantly directing the siege against all disease forces. The spirit of selfishness is that brain disease of a people which shows itself in red eyes and clenched fists, in violence of talk and movements, all the while shattering its natural restorative powers. But the power of self-sacrifice, together with the moral faculty of sympathy and co-operation is the guiding spirit of social vitality. Its function is to maintain a beneficent relation of harmony with its surroundings. But when it begins to ignore the moral law which is universal and uses it only within the bounds of its own narrow sphere, then its strength becomes like the strength of madness which ends in self-destruction.

—TAGORE

I put my faith in the individuals all over the world who think clearly, feel nobly and act rightly, thus becoming the channels of moral truth. Our moral ideas do not work with chisels and hammers. Like trees, they spread their roots in the soil and their branches in the sky, without consulting any architect for their plans.

—TAGORE

GANDHI-DESAI MEMORIAL HALL



A. A. GANDHI

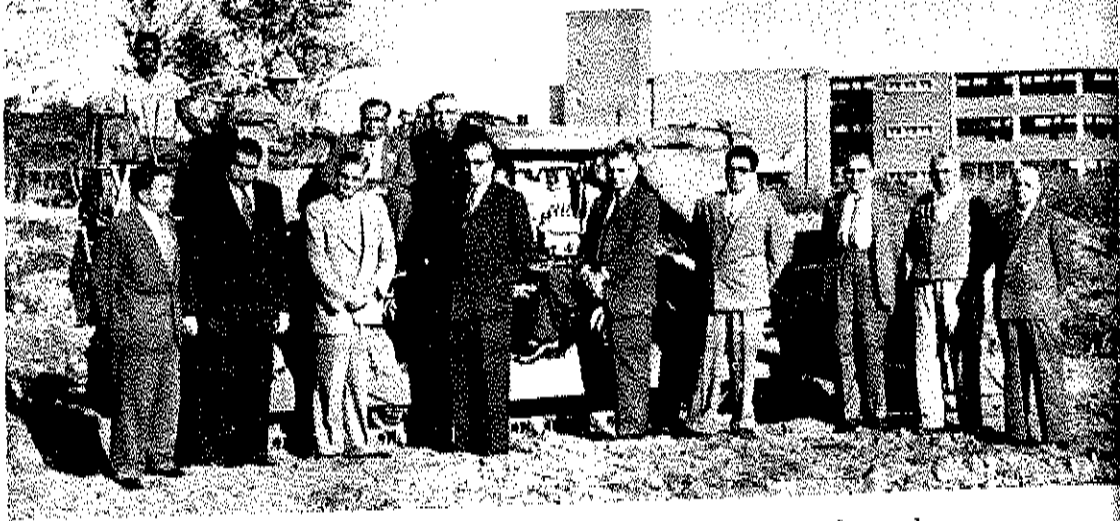


P. G. DESAI

In Whose Memory

Messrs. V. P. Desai, Krishnadas P. Desai, Shantilal P. Desai, Kantilal P. Desai and Brothers have donated on behalf of the Gandhi-Desai Family the sum of £5,000 to the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj for the Hall at Curries Fountain to be known as the "Gandhi-Desai Memorial Hall."

The Desai Brothers are well known business men playing their useful part in public affairs in Tongaat as well as in Durban.



On the Curries Fountain Site -- for the turning of the first sod



The spectators at the Religious Ceremony of Khat-vidhi, Curries Fountain

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THE CURRIES FOUNTAIN PROJECT

The Curries Fountain Project of the Kathiawad Hindu Seva Samaj will comprise the following institutions :—

1. THE MANILAL VALJEE GOVERNMENT AIDED INDIAN SCHOOL

A Primary School for boys, consisting of 16 Classrooms, Principal's and Vice-Principal's Rooms, and a Refectory, with accommodation for approximately 700 pupils.

2. THE GOVT.-AIDED INDIAN HIGH SCHOOL

A High School for boys consisting of 14 Classrooms, Principal's and Vice-Principal's Rooms, with a Science Laboratory, Lecture and Demonstration Room and a Library to accommodate 450 pupils.

3. THE GANDHI-DESAI MEMORIAL HALL

An Auditorium with accommodation for 1,000 people, fully equipped with stage and perfect accoustics.

The Samaj intends converting the present Lorne Street School into a Primary School for 400 girls.

With the completion of the Building at Curries Fountain, the educational projects of the Samaj will provide for the accommodation of some 1,500 children at a cost of approximately £140,000. 0. 0.

ARCHITECTS FOR THE CURRIES FOUNTAIN PROJECTS :

Messrs. Dirksen & Blumenfeld,
Sanlam Buildings, Smith Street, Durban

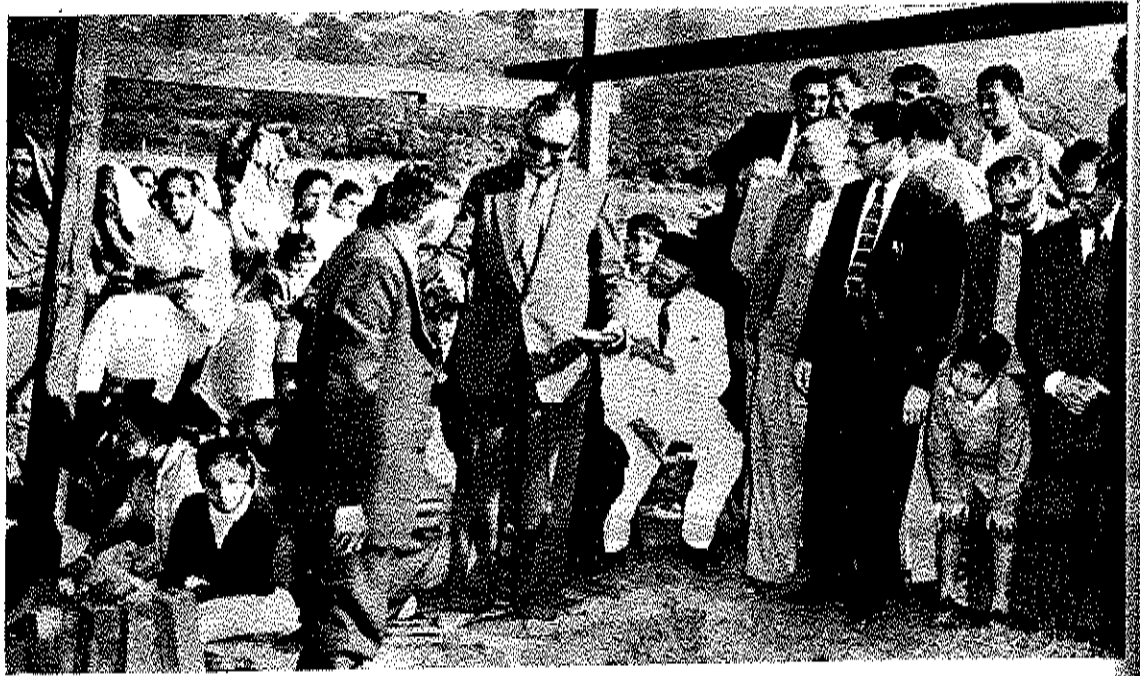
Quantity Surveyors :

Messrs. J. Walters & Simpson,
Field Street, Durban

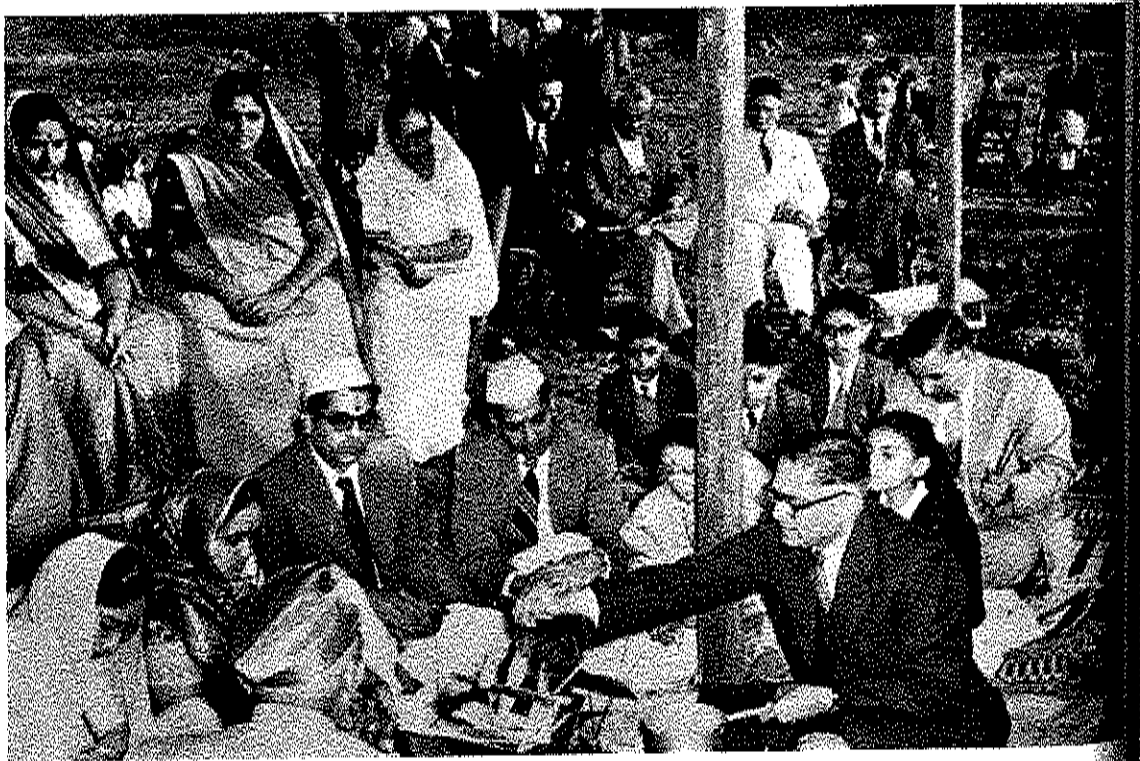
Consulting Engineers :

Messrs. Davis Michelow & Harwood,
Sanlam Buildings, Smith Street, Durban





Religious Ceremony at Curries Fountain



Religious Ceremony at Curries Fountain

DONATIONS

FOR THE CURRIES FOUNTAIN SCHOOL

This donation list is incomplete as many donations are yet to follow. For want of time it has not been possible to approach all the prospective donors.

| | | | |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------|----|---|
| Sri V. Valjee | £10,005. | 0. | 0 |
| Messrs. Gandhi Desai Family | 5,000. | 0. | 0 |
| Messrs. V. J. Thucker, N. S. Devshi & V. Vasanjee | 1,500. | 0. | 0 |
| Nathalal Naran Charitable Trust | 1,150. | 0. | 0 |
| Soni Kara Devraj & Sons | 1,050. | 0. | 0 |
| Soni Jeram Premjee | 1,050. | 0. | 0 |
| Messrs. Raghavjee Mamia & Sons | 1,050. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Jethalal Naran's Sons | 1,001. | 0. | 0 |
| Messrs. Dhupelia & Son (Pty.) Ltd. | 1,000. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Damjee Nathoo & Bros. | 625. | 0. | 0 |
| Soni Harilal Nathoo | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Soni Mooljee Hirjee | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Soni Tapoo Kheraj | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Estate D. H. Soni | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Ratilal Karsan Raniga | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Choonilal R. Parekh | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Messrs. Mistry Raghavjee Mandan & Sons | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri R. P. Soni & Bros. | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Estate Hemraj Mooljee | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Estate Mathuradas Vasanjee | 525. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Vandravan Ratanjee Lakhani | 440. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Vallabh Damjee Soni | 375. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri K. Haribhai | 375. | 0. | 0 |
| Soni Visram Mooljee | 350. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Narandas Vallabhdas | 251. | 0. | 0 |
| Soni Chhaganlal Amarshi | 105. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Ganpatram Naranshanker Joshi | 105. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri Nathoobhai Tabha | 105. | 0. | 0 |
| Sri C. J. Mehta | 31. | 5. | 0 |

