

HISTORY

A GLANCE AT INDIAN (East Indian) ARRIVAL IN THE AMERICAS ON MAY 5, 1838 by Fisal Ally (May 5, 2019)

MAY 5, 1838 IS INDIAN ARRIVAL DAY TO THE AMERICAS IN BRITISH GUIANA (GUYANA), SOUTH AMERICA

Reference: The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden by Fisal Ally (2006); original draft in 2003, and first complete version in 2005/2006. The complete series is 4 novels and a study guide.

Further reading material: Khaman, Bibi H. and Chickrie, Raymond S (2009), -170th Anniversary of the First Hindustani Muslims from India to British Guiana,' Journal of Minority Affairs, 29.2, 195 - 222

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i) The abolishment of the slave trade was in 1807

The slave trade ended in 1807, meaning that ships were not allow to traffic captured people from Africa and enslaving in the Americas or else where.

ii) The abolishment of the slave trade did not stop slavery from continuing

The end of the slave trade did not mean that slavery was abolished in any way, form or shape, as slavery had continued for decades after this abolishment. Slavetry was not abolished, and an internal slave trade had continued within the Americas in places like Guyana (British Guiana) in South America, Barbados and America.

iii) The abolishment of the slavery in Guyana (British Guiana) and the rest of the British Empire took place in 1838

In the British Empire, slavery was abolished on August 1, 1834. But the enslaved people

were still not free, they were placed on an apprentice program that would end in 1838 for some and others in 1840; during this period, they had to work 40.5 hours free, and had the choice to work up to 13.5 hours a week for wages. However, this apprenticeship program would end for all of the enslaved laborers in 1838.

Portuguese and other laborers

In 1835, the Guiana planters began bringing the Portuguese to work as indentured laborers. Plantation work was difficult for them, many died. Many of the Portuguese had become sick and died and they would also leave the plantations once their first contract was up to open up stores. Many of the Maltese laborers from Malta had ended up in the Colonial hospital in Georgetown.

iv) The Indian laborers (East Indian laborers) already working for the Mauritius Plantations (Mauritius is an Island located south east of Africa were doing a good job

The Mauritius planters were already receiving thousands of laborers from India to labor on their plantations. Not anyone from India were required by the Mauritius planters; the skilled Indian agricultural laborers were in demand. The agricultural laborers from the hills were required over the laborers from the lower lands.

Dhangurs (Hill-coolies) from the hills northwest of Calcutta

The laborers from the hills were already trained and working in agriculture in India and were very hardworking - they were known as the Dhangurs, although there were other tribes such as the Boonahs. There were also laborers from the lower lands also doing agricultural work. They were given the name 'coolie.' The agricultural laborers from the hills were given the name 'Hill-coolies' but were also just called 'coolies.' The Mauritian planters did not want the coolies from the lower lands that did agricultural work because they were not as hardworking as the laborers from the hills.

v) Mauritius planters would send back laborers to India that were not fit to do the agriculture plantation work in Mauritius

The recruiters in India would also send the wrong class of laborers to Mauritius and the Mauritius planters would often ship them back to India because they were useless for plantation work. Mauritius was not that far from India and it was not that expensive to ship the unskilled laborers back to India, and the voyage was a month or less.

The Mauritius plantation owners wanted the best laborers and the Dhangurs would be able to match the labor of the Creole Negroes.

vi) John Gladstone wrote to the Calcutta agency for laborers and the recruiters would do their best to ship the Dhangurs (Hill-coolies) to Guiana

In British Guiana (Guyana), many of the Africans were beginning to idle, and would be leaving the plantations once the apprentice program was up, not wanting to work for the bosses that have robbed them of their labor and that had enslaved them.

On January 4, 1836, John Gladstone wrote to the shipping agent, Messrs. Gillanders, Arbuthnot & Company of Calcutta and a section stated:

You will probably be aware that we are very particularly situated with our Negro apprentices in the West Indies, and that it is a matter of doubt and uncertainty how far they may be induced to continue their services on the plantations after their apprenticeship expires in 1840.

Ref: The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden, Book 1, p.468.

Below is the reply from the shipping agent to John Gladstone

Dear Sir,

The tribe that is found to suit best in the Mauritius is from the hills to the north of Calcutta, and the men of which are well limbed and active, without prejudices of any kind and hardly any ideas beyond those of supplying the wants of nature...**The Hill tribes known by the name of the Dhangurs** are looked down upon by the more cunning natives...

Ref: The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden, Book 1, p.468. original references of quotes are listed in this novel.

In 1838, the plantation owners of British Guiana (Guyana) in South America were expecting the skilled agricultural laborers from the hills northwest of Kolkata, known as the Dhangurs and were labeled as Hill Coolies or simply Coolies for short similar to the 'coolies' being sent to Mauritius to cultivate their South American sugar plantations. British planters like John Gladstone owned plantations in Jamaica and Guyana, and had never seen his plantations in Guyana.

Did the Guiana planters received the class of laborers they were promised to work in their Guiana plantations? In other words did they receive the Hill-Coolies (Dhangurs)?

vii) Did the Guiana planters received the laborers

Below is a section of what Sheriff Whinfield of British Guiana had stated in his report addressed to Governor Light of British Guiana, dated March 29, 1840:

"I desire to avail myself of the present opportunity to set right the general misconceived opinion that these East India laborers are hill coolies. It is quite a mistake, for there is not a hill coolie in British Guiana; these people are chiefly from the following places: Agra, Allahabad, Benares, Dacca, Delhi, Ingormauth, Lucknow, Naypoor, Ptna."

Sources for the quotes above: The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden, Book 1: India to the Americas by Faisal Ally, Chapter 22, p. 387 – Note: Chapter and page numbers will change depending on the formatting on the book)



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In the excerpt above the Sheriff of British Guiana made it clear that the class of laborers that arrived in Guiana were not Hill coolies (coolie for short) meaning that the coolies fit for agricultural work were not shipped to British Guiana and that the ones shipped were not the class of laborers that the planters were expecting to cultivate their plantation in Guiana. Many of the Indians working on the plantations in Guiana were becoming sick and many died within a short time because they could not cope with the harsh work conditions and diseases. Many were also escaping from the plantation.

Due to this failure, the planters wanted to cancel the contracts and ship the Indians back to India, but it was costly, and they had needed the Indians to work on the plantations in Guiana, even if the Indians were dying out. There was an immediate ban in 1838 and no ships with Indian laborers were allowed to leave India for Guiana and the Caribbean.

Coolie (culi) - the common term for coolie refers to a class of people that carried out tedious unskilled labor for the settled communities and others in India, where some were baggage carriers, porters, doorkeepers, cleaners etc... The author of the novel, *Faisal Ally*, realized that when the term coolie was used for laborers emigrating from India to work in the colonies in agricultural, the term 'coolie' was only referring to the skilled agricultural laborers, and not baggage carriers or laborers that did unskilled labor. Often, the planters were requesting the hardy race of agricultural laborers known as the Dhangurs...to

cultivate the sugarcane plantations; this hardy race was labeled as the hill-coolies, meaning the coolies from the hills of the Chota Nagpur plateau, or simply as coolies.

Quote above is from The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden, Book 1; p. 460 slightly modified.

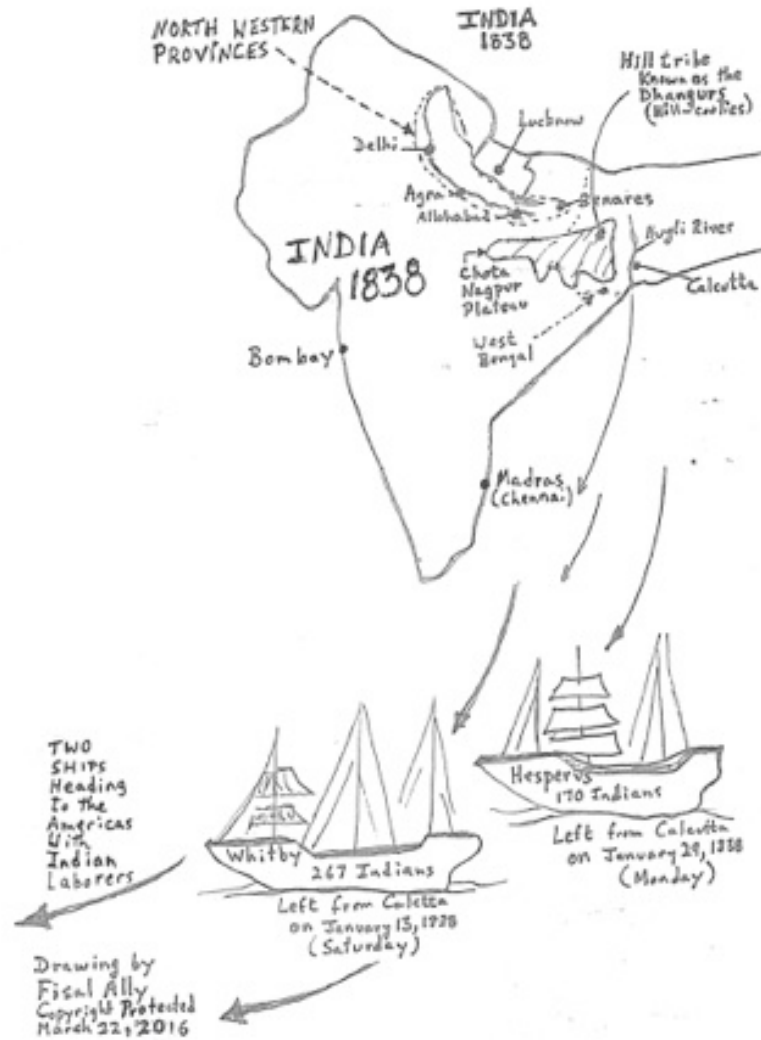
Note: As mentioned above, when the Mauritius planters did not receive the right class of laborers to cultivate their plantation, they would ship them back to India, which means that when dealing with agricultural laborers to cultivate the sugar plantations the planters were requesting the coolies that are skilled in agricultural labor and not any coolies that does menial unskilled labor, such as porters. Note, not everybody in India are coolies. There are people of many classes in India.

Indians of various classes were shipped to Guiana, and not the Hill-coolies (coolies) known as the Dhangurs.

In 1845 emigration from India began in Guiana again, and also in Jamaica and Trinidad. The Indians were of various classes; they were not the hill-coolies (coolies). Another ban took place from 1848 to 1851, and from here on Indian emigration continued into the 1900s.

viii) Diagrams

DIAGRAM - SHOWS WHERE THE FIRST GROUPS OF INDIANS CAME FROM THAT ARRIVED IN GUIANA IN 1838. It was January 1838 and two ships, the *Whitby* and *Hesperus*, left India from the Port of Kolkata with 437 Indians, heading towards Mauritius in the Indian Ocean and stopped at the Cape of Good Hope for refueling (loading water and provisions) at the southern tip of Africa for restocking, and then began its journey towards South America for British Guiana (Guyana).



There was a big famine in northern India (in 1837) and many were migrating and looking for work, so instead of the Hill Coolies (coolie class of laborers), the recruiters grabbed people of all classes such as cooks, clerks, beggars, ex-sepoys and tricked them into boarding the ships, often telling them that they were going on a one day voyage up the river and then they would work for six months and then return home to their families. The Indians on the two ships were not from the coolie class, they were from many classes - they were Indians of various classes.

THE WORD, COOLIE, IS A MISNOMER AND IS USED INCORRECTLY IN GUYANA. IN CUBA THE CHINESE WERE CALLED COOLIES, BUT NOT IN GUYANA. LIKE RACISM TODAY, DEROGATORY NAMES ARE GIVEN TO KEEP THE PEOPLE DIVIDED. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT TO CHANGE THESE FALSE BELIEFS AND TO STOP THESE DEROGATORY NAME CALLING.

DIAGRAM - THE INDIANS ARRIVED IN GUIANA ON MAY 5, 1838



Indians of various classes (in 1838) were on the two ships. They were not the skilled agricultural laborers known as The Hill Coolies or Coolies for short, which the Planters in Guiana were expecting. If these various classes of Indians that arrived in Guiana had arrived in Mauritius, the Mauritius planters would have shipped them back to India because they were not the Hill Coolies trained for agriculture work. The Indians were stuck across two great oceans and it would be too expensive for the planters to ship them back. Many died in the fields and many were escaping. They were going to be shipped back. Thus a ban was placed from India stopping all immigration to Guiana. Immigration will start back in 1845. The label coolie became deep-rooted in the culture because people thought that the Hill-Coolies had arrived. ***Read more in Debunked The Use Of The Label Coolie In Guyana by Faisal Ally, and also in 4 original novels by Faisal Ally, The Trilogy of Savitri's Garden, where the first version was published in 2005/2006.***