

Norfolk Record Office Information Leaflet 61

Ancestors from the Indian sub-continent

1. Beginning

Firstly, refer to our leaflet called *Uncovering Immigrant Ancestry*. Once you have got to the stage of needing to research resources relating specifically to the Indian sub-continent, this leaflet contains pointers and links.

2. When and from where did your ancestors come and why did they come to Britain?

Hopefully, oral family history will have told you where in the Indian sub-continent your ancestors came from, and when and why they moved to Britain. It is useful to know why they came, because certain groups of people have particular records associated with them. These include:

- People to whom the British Colonies gave permission to live and work in Britain
- Those who came to Britain because they were employed by British people, who had lived in the Subcontinent, but returned to Britain.
- Those who came to Britain on business or for specific jobs such as diplomats, politicians, merchants, employees of the East India Company, students, teachers or doctors.
- People taking the Indian Civil Service exam.
- Seamen known as the Lascars, who worked for the British Merchant Navy.

However, the majority of immigrants from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal have arrived in the years since partition, in 1947.

3. Records Held at the India Office, at the British Library

Useful records include:

- Passport records.
- Records of Indian Civil Service applicants.
- Records from the National Indian Association, which was concerned with the welfare of Indian students in the UK.
- Gazetteers, one of which, the Imperial Gazetteer of India, is available online at <<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/gazetteer>>.
- Copies of baptisms, marriages, burials, memorial inscriptions and wills of the Anglo-Indian and European communities living in India.
- Many useful printed works.

4. Records held at the National Archives, at Kew

Useful records include:

- Registers of workers in the Indian Civil Service.
- Indian Seamen (Lascars) service records and the Special Certificate of Nationality given to them. Pedlars' Certificates which were granted to many Lascars when they deserted.
- Some annual reports from Strangers' Home, a lodging house in London where many Asian seamen stayed. Notes were made of men who converted to Christianity and those who were unfit for work and were sent to Fulham workhouse.
- Records relating to indentured labourers. Following the abolition of slavery, there was a shortage of workers on sugar plantations, in the Caribbean, and so many indentured labourers from India were sent to work there.
- Copies of the *Medical Register*, 1895-1973, which has details of all doctors working in Britain.
- Many Indian nationals and people of Indian descent, who were born in this country, served in the wars and their records can be found at the national archives. Some are searchable by name on their online catalogue:
- <<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documentsonline/>>.
- Many useful printed works.

5. Other Useful Records

- Many Indian students came to study at universities such as Oxford and Cambridge and so will be mentioned in J. and J.A. Venn, *Alumni Cantabrigienses* (10 vols., Cambridge, 1922-54) and J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses* (8 vols., Oxford, 1888-91).
- *The Medical Directory*, which lists the names and addresses of doctors, from 1845 onwards.

6. Useful Websites

- **Moving Here** - This is an excellent website put together by the national archives which has many useful pointers and links:
<www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/roots/asian/countries/countries.htm>.
- **BBC** – The BBC family history pages have another useful guide:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/familyhistory/next_steps/researchpeople_01.shtml>.

7. Religion

There has been a lot of migration into and within the Indian subcontinent. It is important to know where your family originated from, and religion and names are important in establishing this. The following is a website which identifies whether a name is Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist or Jain: <www.indiaexpress.com/special/babynames> and Muslim names can be found at <www.muslim-names.co.uk>. A useful book for understanding naming

patterns is V. Hallan, *Asian Names: Guide to Assist Understanding of the Naming Systems of People from the Indian Subcontinent* (Walsall, 1993).

8. LDS Family History Centres

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints has filmed some of the following relevant genealogical sources:

- Baptisms, marriages and burials from Christian churches throughout the subcontinent.
- Records of some Hindu pilgrimages from Haridwar, Kurukshetra, Pehowa, Chintpurni, Jawalapur and Jawalamukhi.
- Records of Muslim marriages for Meerut (Uttar Pradesh), Qazi-Muslim marriage records (1881-1982) and Bulandshahr (Uttar Pradesh) and Qazi-Muslim marriage records (1921-1955).

Some of these records can be found online at <www.familysearch.org>, while others can be ordered to view at their local family history centres.

9. Indian National Archives

The following records can be found at the Indian National Archives:

- Records created by Indian local rulers.
- Hindu temple records.
- Records from Islamic shrines.
- Records from sikh gurdwaras.
- Waqf authority records.
- Census details 1871-1923.
- Indian army personnel records.
- Copies of LDS films.

A digitisation project is underway, but the best chance you have of finding records relevant to your family history is to employ a local researcher. Apart from the records held at the national archives, there are others in local libraries and museums and a local researcher will have good knowledge of where to find the appropriate records.

The National Archives can be found at the following addresses:

Record Centre, Janpath
National Archives of India
Janpath
New Delhi-110001, India
Tel No: 00 91 23383436
Fax No: 00 91 3384127
Email: archives@.nic.in
<http://nationalarchives.nic.in>

Record Centre, Pondicherry
National Archives of India
Jeevanandapuram Lawspet
Pondicherry - 605 008, India
Fax: 0413 2253104

Record Centre, Jaipur
National Archives of India
10-A, Jhalana Institutional Area
Jhalana Doongr
Jaipur - 302 004, India
Tel: 0141 2707499
Fax: 0141 2701815

Regional Office of Bhopal
National Archives of India
Civil Lines (near Hamidia College)
Bhopal – 462001, India
Tel: 0755 2660173
Fax: 0755 2660117

Record Centre, Bhubaneswar
National Archives of India
1078/3355
Shatabdi Nagar
P.O. Baramunda Colony Unit-8
Bhubaneswar - 751 003, India
Fax: 674 2471327

10. Other Useful Records:

- Each Indian state has a regional passport office which holds passport records.
- Births and deaths registers are held by the Districts Registrar's Office (although deaths are only registered in circumstances where there is a legal case, where land or money is left, where there is a pension to be claimed, or where the death was in unusual circumstances).
- Local register offices hold some wills.
- Local Marriage Registration Offices hold records of legal marriages.
- Churches hold records of Anglo-Indian and Goan marriages.
- Mosques hold records of Muslim marriages, but survival of these records is patchy.
- Some Hindu temples hold records of Hindu marriages, but again survival is patchy.
- Wealthy families usually announce marriages and deaths in local or national newspapers. The Hindu has had an obituary column since 1878.
- Post 1947 censuses are held at:
- The Central Secretariat Library (CSL)
Indian Official Document Collection
G, Wing, Shastri Bhavan
New Delhi, 110001
INDIA

11. Anglo-Indian or European Ancestors

If your family were British, European or Anglo-Indian, living in India, then there are quite a lot of resources available to help you trace your family history. The following websites are particularly useful and should be able to help you make a good start:

- www.movinghere.org.uk/galleries/roots/asian/angloindians/angloindians.htm
- www.bl.uk/collections/oiofamilyhistory/family.html
- www.indiaman.com
- www.fibis.org

The India Office in the British Library holds many useful records, their digital catalogue can be found at <<http://dsal.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/oioc.py>>. The Society of Genealogists holds copies of many baptisms, marriages, burials, monumental inscriptions and wills of the British in India. Their website can be found at <www.sog.org.uk>.

12. Bangladesh

Registering of births, marriages and deaths is not compulsory in Bangladesh, but some records are in existence. During partition, many records were transferred between East and West Bengal, however attempts to get records from Pakistan have not been so successful.

For advice on tracing family history in Bangladesh contact:

Bangladesh National Library and Archives
32 Justice Sayed Mahbub Murshed Sarani
Sher-e-Bangla Nagar (Agargaon)
Dhaka 1207
Bangladesh
Tel: 0088-02-91999
Fax: 0088-02-9118704
E-mail: nabdirector@gmail.com

A Bangladesh genealogy forum can be found at <www.rootsweb.com/~bgdwgw>.

13. Pakistan

Registration is not compulsory in Pakistan and, unfortunately, a fire in 1948 destroyed most of the records for the Karachi area. For advice on tracing family history in Pakistan, contact:

National Archives of Pakistan
Administrative Block
Area Block N
Pakistan Secretariat
Islamabad
Pakistan
Tel 0092 51 9202044
Fax 0092 51 9206349

A Pakistan Genealogy Forum can be found at: <<http://genforum.genealogy.com/pakistan>>.

14. Sri Lanka

There is a good set of records in existence for people researching family history in Sri Lanka. For advice on tracing family history in Sri Lanka contact:

National Archives of Sri Lanka
P.O. Box 1414
7 Reid Avenue
Colombo 7
Sri Lanka
E-mail: narchive@slt.lk
Tel: 0094 1 694523, 94 1 696917
Fax: 0094 1 694419

For information about census records contact:

Information Unit
Department of Census & Statistics
P.O.Box 563, Colombo
Sri Lanka
Tel: 0094 1 675297
E-mail: dcensus@lanka.ccom.lk

Useful websites for Sri Lankan Genealogy are:

- www.rootsweb.com/~lkawgw/index2.html
- <http://genforum.genealogy.com/srilanka>
- <http://ceylontamils.com/home.php>



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