

## 22. Uncovered Treasures

### The Birth Certificates

We received an email from Mr Govinden Vishwanaden letting us know that he had finally located birth certificates for Grampa and a girl named Jahangeerbe Peersahib. Having those in our hands along with the birth and death certificates for the boy Samson Peersahib meant that we could finally cross check the information to see how they all relate.

### Grampa's Birth Certificate

Grampa's birth certificate noted that his birth name was *Thomas Shadrach Peersahib*. He was given his mother's maiden name as his Christian name from birth. His parents were James and Esther Peersahib (with no mention of Samson or Miriam). He was born at Moka on 1 September 1859 as we had always known.

All this time we had been searching for Shadrach James Thomas Peersahib, using multiple spellings of his surname, and we were on the wrong path. He must have dropped his Muslim name Peersahib and taken his father's Christian name for his surname when he came to Australia. A lovely gesture from a young man who, according to family in both Mauritius and Australia, was very disillusioned following his father's sudden remarriage to a woman who was only seven years older than he was. Aunty Priscilla Thomas hinted at the difficulty a Muslim man would have experienced settling in Australia in that era. This probably explains why he dropped his Muslim name and took his father's more Anglo-Saxon sounding name as his surname.

We finally had proof that James and Esther were Grampa's parents. Great! What a relief.

### Samson's Birth Certificate


James and Esther Peersahib had a second son named Samson who was born two years after Grampa on 11 June 1861. His death certificate shows that he died of fever at the age of 13 in January 1875.

It is clear that James Peersahib was never called Samson. Rather, it was his second son who had that name and who lies in the grave at St Thomas Church which was always thought to be that of the father of Grampa Thomas Shadrach James.

I have no doubt that Grandfather James Peersahib and his son Samson are buried in the same grave. Our Mauritian family have always visited that grave having grown up with the knowledge that their grandfather (and ours) was buried there. They would have continually noted the headstone stating his name was Samson Peersahib. It is completely understandable that, over time, they would come to believe that Grandfather's name was Samson Peersahib.

## Jahangeerbee's Birth Certificate

The third birth certificate shows that James and his second wife Lokheea had a daughter called Jahangeerbee, born on 31 July 1880. Sydney and Arlette's great-grandmother (Grampa's half-sister) was named Ruth, and since she was the daughter of James Peersahib's second marriage, we assume that Ruth's birth name was Jahangeerbee, and that she was christened Ruth, although we have no evidence to support this theory.

 REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE		<b>Certified Extract of a Birth Entry</b> <i>(Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981)</i> Extrait Conforme du Certificat de Naissance (Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 régissant l'Etat Civil)		<b>P.L- 326871</b>
<b>Registration District</b> District de l'enregistrement	Moka	<b>Certificate Number</b> Numéro du Certificat	224	*
<b>Registration Office</b> Bureau de l'enregistrement	Moka	<b>Date of Registration</b> Date de déclaration	24/09/1859	
<b>Registered by</b> Enregistré par	Dupont L.			

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**CHILD - ENFANT**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peersahib			
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	Thomas Shadrach			
<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité		<b>Date and Time of Birth</b> Date et heure de la naissance	01/09/1859 11:30	<b>Sex</b> M-Male/Masculin Sexe
<b>Place of Birth</b> Lieu de naissance	L'Amitié			

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**FATHER - PERE**

<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peersahib			
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	James			


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**MOTHER - MERE**

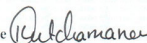
<b>Maiden Name</b> Nom de jeune fille	Thomas			
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	Esther			

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**ANNOTATION(S) - MENTION(S)**




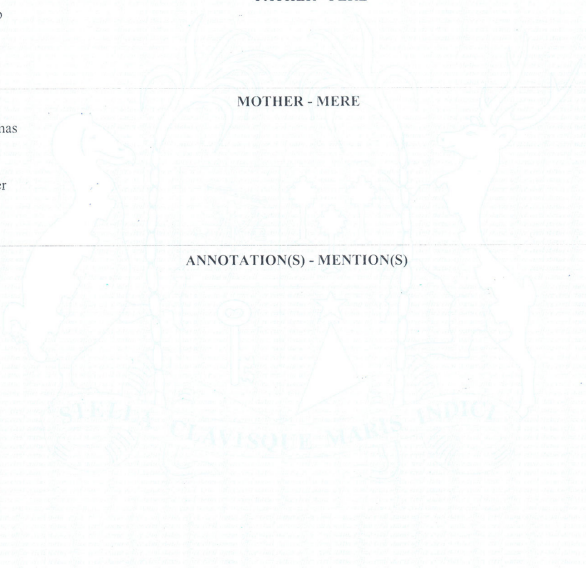
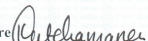
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<b>Name of Civil Status Officer</b> Nom de l'Officier de l'Etat Civil	Lutchamanen Kamala Devi	
<b>Civil Status Office</b> Bureau de l'Etat Civil	Central Civil Status Office	
<b>Date of Issue</b> Date d'émission	27/08/2012	<b>Signature</b> 

**Thomas Shadrach Peersahib birth certificate.**


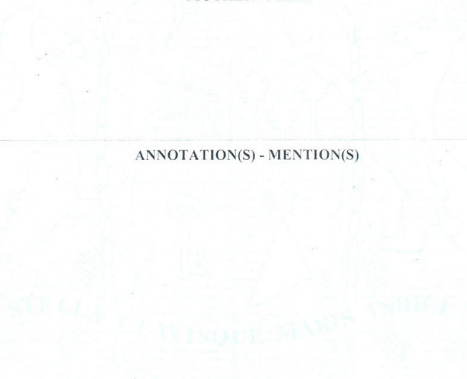
Source: Civil Status Office, Mauritius.

Dharmalan Dana

 REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE	<b>Certified Extract of a Birth Entry</b> (Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981) <i>Extrait Conforme du Certificat de Naissance</i> (Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 régissant l'Etat Civil)	<b>P.L- 326870</b>
<b>Registration District</b> District de l'enregistrement	Plaines Wilhems	<b>Certificate Number</b> 411 *
<b>Registration Office</b> Bureau de l'enregistrement	Rose Hill	<b>Date of Registration</b> 09/07/1861
<b>Registered by</b> Enregistré par	Ganachaud E.	Date de déclaration
<b>CHILD - ENFANT</b>		
<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peersahib	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	Samson	
<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité	<b>Date and Time of Birth</b> 11/06/1861 03:30 Date et heure de la naissance	<b>Sex</b> M-Male/Masculin Sexe
<b>Place of Birth</b> Lieu de naissance	Cascavel	
<b>FATHER - PERE</b>		
<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peersahib	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	James	
<b>MOTHER - MERE</b>		
<b>Maiden Name</b> Nom de jeune fille	Thomas	
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	Esther	
<b>ANNOTATION(S) - MENTION(S)</b>		
		
<b>Name of Civil Status Officer</b> Nom de l'Officier de l'Etat Civil	Lutchamanan Kamala Devi	
<b>Civil Status Office</b> Bureau de l'Etat Civil	Central Civil Status Office	
<b>Date of Issue</b> Date d'impression	27/08/2012	<b>Signature</b> 

**Samson Peersahib birth certificate.**

Source: Civil Status Office, Mauritius.

 <b>Certified Extract of a Birth Entry</b> <i>(Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981)</i>		<i>Extrait Conforme du Certificat de Naissance</i> <i>(Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 régissant l'Etat Civil)</i>		<b>P.L- 326869</b>	
<b>Registration District</b> District de l'enregistrement	Plaines Wilhems	<b>Certificate Number</b> Numéro du Certificat	742	*	
<b>Registration Office</b> Bureau de l'enregistrement	Rose Hill	<b>Date of Registration</b> Date de déclaration	31/08/1880		
<b>Registered by</b> Enregistré par	De Fondaumier H				
<b>CHILD - ENFANT</b>					
<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peersahib				
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	Jahangeerbee				
<b>NID Number</b> No. de carte nationale d'identité		<b>Date and Time of Birth</b> Date et heure de la naissance	31/07/1880	13:00	<b>Sex</b> F-Female/Féminin Sexe
<b>Place of Birth</b> Lieu de naissance	Rose Hill				
<b>FATHER - PERE</b>					
<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peersahib				
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	James				
<b>MOTHER - MERE</b>					
<b>Maiden Name</b> Nom de jeune fille	Luckheea				
<b>Names</b> Prénoms					
<b>ANNOTATION(S) - MENTION(S)</b>					
					
<b>Name of Civil Status Officer</b> Nom de l'Officier de l'Etat Civil	Lutchamanen Kamala Devi				
<b>Civil Status Office</b> Bureau de l'Etat Civil	Central Civil Status Office				

**Jahangeerbee Peersahib birth certificate.**

Source: Civil Status Office, Mauritius.



# Esther and Family

## The Arrival

The marriage certificate issued to Grandmother Esther’s parents when they left Madras in India to travel to Mauritius with their children, on 14 July 1857, by the ship *Beernah*, showed that her mother, Elizabeth, was 35 years old. Her father’s name was simply noted as Thomas, however no christian name was mentioned -- his age was given as forty years. They had travelled with their five children: Marian (Miriam) aged 21, Yoster (Esther) aged 14, Yogabeth (Josapet) aged ten, Eyravale (Israel) aged six, and Marravalee (Manuel) aged three. Esther’s father passed away two years later on the 24 June 1859, just ten weeks before Grampa was born. The family were listed as Christians on their arrival record.

**MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE.**

Roll of *Manand his family* proceeding to Mauritius per Ship *Beernah*  
Said day of *July* 1857

Regis- d No.	Name.	Father's Name.	Sex.	Caste.	Age.	Place of Nativity.
162	Thomas	Anthony	Male	Christian	40	Madras
163	Elizabeth	Pascal	Female	Q	35	Q
164	Marian	Thomas	Q	Q	21	Q
165	Yoster	Q	Q	Q	14	Q
166	Yogabeth	Q	Q	Q	5	Q
167	Eyravale	Q	Male	Q	6	Q
168	Marravalee	Q	Q	Q	3	Q

Certified that the above described Indians whose signatures are herunto attached have this day come before me and each of them separately and also in the presence of the two witnesses who have also signed this Certificate that they are legally married to each other according to the Forms and Ceremonies of their Religion at the lawful issue of such Marriage.

*Thomas*  
*Elizabeth*

Protector

We the above described Indians hereby declare that we have been married to each other according to the  
and that the Children abovenamed are the lawful issues of such Marriage.

Confirmed before me this *Sixth* day of *August*

**Marriage certificate issued to Grandmother Esther’s parents to enable the family to travel from India to Mauritius in 1857.**

Source: Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Mauritius.

*Robynne: This takes me back to the Cyclone of 1868 mentioned in Chapter 21 when Miriam, a bible woman, was noted as being seriously injured. I now suggest that this could be Grandmother Esther’s poor older sister.*

*Hence why the family confusion over Grandmother's name beng Miriam Esther. In reality, the two oldest children of Elizabeth and Thomas were Miram AND Esther.*

We also found further information about Uncle Manuel Thomas, his wife Estelle and their family by locating all their children's birth certificates. at the Civil Status Office in Mauritius. Their children, listed oldest to youngest, were: Mercy, Gamaliel 'Gami', Abishegam 'Abi', Cyrus, Ebenezer, William Paranesam 'Nesam' and Quisana, some of whom we have written about earlier.




Aunt Priscilla Thomas referred to the Thomas family as Tamil however we have recently confirmed that they were Tamil Christians. As you know the Thomas family was highly involved in the Anglican Church and Christian Missionary Society. So it is quite conceivable that a Muslim man such as James Peersahib, newly converted to Christianity, would meet a Tamil Christian such as Esther Thomas, through their common interest in the Christian Missionary Society and Indian Christian Association. You can certainly see how their paths would have crossed.

## The Marriage

According to their marriage certificate, Grampa's parents – Esther Thomas and James Peersahib – were married at Rose Hill in Mauritius on 23 October 1858. He was 24 and she was fifteen. As previously mentioned, he officially started working as an Interpreter in February 1859, probably because he has just married, and his wife was pregnant with their first child, just as we had surmised earlier. In September 1859 their first child Thomas Shadrach Peersahib was born.

It is touching to see that Grampa and Granny Ada named their first child Miriam Esther after Grampa's mother and her oldest sister.

Dharmalan Dana

 REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE		<b>Certified Extract of a Marriage Entry</b> (Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981) <i>Extrait Certifié d'Acte de Mariage</i> (Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 régissant l'Etat Civil)	
<b>Registration District</b> District de l'enregistrement	Plaines Wilhems	<b>Certificate Number</b> Numéro du Certificat	45
<b>Registration Office</b> Bureau de l'enregistrement	Rose Hill	<b>Date of Celebration</b> Date de la Célébration	23/10/1858
<b>Registered by Civil Status Officer</b> Enregistré par Officier de l'Etat Civil		<b>Ganachaud E.</b>	
<b>Date &amp; Time of Marriage</b> 23/10/1858 Date & Heure du Mariage			
<b>Place of Marriage</b> Plaines Wilhems Lieu du Mariage			
<b>Marriage Type</b> Civil Marriage Type de Mariage Mariage Civil			
<b>HUSBAND-EPOUX</b>			
<b>Surname</b> Nom	Peersaib No 132, 719		
<b>Names</b> Prénoms			
<b>Occupation</b> Profession	Interpreter Interprete	<b>NID Number</b> No.de la carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Address</b> Adresse	Plaines Wilhems		
<b>Religion</b> Religion	Protestant Protestant	<b>Age</b> Age	24 Years/Ans
<b>Place of Birth</b> Lieu de naissance	India		
<b>Marital Status</b> Situation Familiale	Single Célibataire		
<b>WIFE-EPOUSE</b>			
<b>Surname</b> Nom	Thomas		
<b>Names</b> Prénoms	Esther		
<b>Occupation</b> Profession	No Calling Sans Profession	<b>NID Number</b> No.de la carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Address</b> Adresse	Plaines Wilhems		
<b>Religion</b> Religion	Protestant Protestant	<b>Age</b> Age	15 Years/Ans
<b>Place of Birth</b> Lieu de naissance	India		
<b>Marital Status</b> Situation Familiale	Single Célibataire		
<b>Matrimonial Regime</b> Régime Matrimonial	Not Applicable Non Applicable		
<b>ANNOTATION (S) -MENTION(S)</b>			
<b>Name of Civil Status Officer</b> Lalloo Abdool Wahid Nom de l'Officier de l'Etat Civil			
<b>Civil Status Office</b> Moka Bureau de l'Etat Civil			
			
			

**Marriage certificate for Esther Thomas and James Peersahib.**

Source: Civil Status Office, Mauritius.



## A Short Life

Sadly Grandmother Esther passed away on 11 February 1877 at Plaines Wilhems at the age of 34. Her surname was spelt incorrectly on her death certificate (Esther Pursahib).

*Robynne: It has certainly been a challenge finding records with the Peersahib name spelt in so many different ways.*

James Peersahib married his second wife Lokheea on 16 March 1878, just 13 months after Grandmother Esther's death. Let's take a moment to think about the impact of this on Grampa:

- he lost his little brother in 1875;
- he lost his mother in 1877;
- he 'lost' his father to a new wife in 1878.

It's not hard to understand why this was so traumatic for Grampa; he had experienced the loss of his brother, mother and, in a way, his father, in such a short space of time.

Many family members had told us that Grampa felt his father's remarriage came too soon after his mother's death, therefore dishonouring his mother. He couldn't stand by and watch his father starting a new life with a new woman, so he left.

## The Child Protégé

At this point I would like to backtrack for a minute and remind you about Auntie Priscilla's stories about Grampa. She stated that: 'Shadrach was a really brilliant student; he was not only brilliant, his English was perfect and he did very good work'.

Knowing that Grampa's father Grandfather James Peersahib was a school monitor (teaching assistant) in Madras in a Christian school; also one of the first catechists for the first Bishop of Mauritius, Bishop Ryan; and then went on to establish an Indian Christian school in Mauritius as noted by Bishop Ryan in his Journals -- it makes perfect sense then, that Grampa might go on to help his father in a teaching assistant role in the Christian school. It's easy to see how Grampa got such a strong foundation for education and religious instruction, and possibly the principle of empowering those who were oppressed by the British colonisers.

Teaching in the Christian Missionary Society and Indian Missionary Association involved education and religious instruction: this certainly fits the approach,

personality, skills and ways of Grampa once he arrived at Maloga and started to do the same with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children at Maloga and Cummeragunga Missions.

It's also interesting to see that Grampa's own children became his teaching assistants (school monitors) at Cummeragunga so many years later, just as he may well have done under the guidance of his own father.

It seems that Grampa's 'calling' here in Australia mirrored that of his father on his arrival in Mauritius. Both started with nothing, and chose a life of education and preaching the gospel to people who had been disempowered by British colonisers.

## Property Ownership


As previously mentioned, our family in Mauritius has advised us that Grandfather James Peersahib and Grandmother Esther owned several properties in Mauritius. Following a great deal of effort by Govinden Vishwanaden and other Mauritius based researchers, we uncovered the following information about the properties held in James Peersahib's name between 1865 and 1903. These are as follows:

1. A land property at Plaines Wilhems with an area of 48 toises on 6 March 1865.
2. A land property at Plaines Wilhems with an area of 100 toises on 3 March 1875.
3. A land property at Plaines Wilhems with an area of 100 toises on 17 October 1903.

N.B: One hundred toises are roughly three hundred and eighty metres squared.

At the time of his death, James was living at 15 Queen Victoria Street, Rose Hill, which is also believed to be one of his properties.

Our Mauritian family have clearly stated that there were seven properties and we have no doubt that the records shall be there once our researchers have time to complete their search. We also believe we can eventually find evidence of who 'acquired' those properties following Grandfather James Peersahib's death. This may well confirm the family story about the Notary who tricked Grandfather's widow Lokheea into signing the properties over to him.

 REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE		<b>Certified Extract of a Death Entry</b> <i>(Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981)</i>  <i>Extrait Conforme du Certificat de Décès</i> <i>(Conformément aux dispositions de la loi de 1981 régissant l'Etat Civil)</i>	
<b>Registration District</b>	Plaines Wilhems	<b>Certificate Number</b>	92
District de l'enregistrement		Numéro du Certificat	
<b>Registration Office</b>	Rose Hill	<b>Date of Registration</b>	11/02/1877
Bureau de l'enregistrement		Date de déclaration	
<b>Registered by</b>	Dhundoo J.		
Enregistré par			

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**DECEASED - DEFUNT(E)**

<b>Surname</b>	Esther		
Nom			
<b>Names</b>			
Prénoms			
<b>Occupation</b>	No Calling	<b>NID Number</b>	
Profession	Sans Profession	No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Address</b>	Rose Hill		
Adresse			
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	<b>Date and Time of death</b>	10/02/1877 04:30
Situation familiale	Mariée	Date et heure du décès	
<b>Religion</b>	Protestant	<b>Sex</b>	F - Female/Féminin
Religion	Protestant	Sexe	
<b>Place of Birth</b>	India	<b>Age</b>	34 Year(s)/An(s)
Lieu de naissance		Age	
<b>Place of Death</b>	Rose Hill		
Lieu de décès			
<b>Place of Burial/Cremation</b>			
Lieu d'inhumation/d'incinération			

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**SPOUSE - CONJOINT(E)**

<b>Surname</b>	Pursahib	<b>NID Number</b>	
Nom		No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b>	James		
Prénoms			

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**FATHER - PERE**

<b>Surname</b>	Thomas	<b>NID Number</b>	
Nom		No. de carte nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b>			
Prénoms			

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**MOTHER - MERE**

<b>Surname</b>	Elizabeth	<b>NID Number</b>	
Nom		No. de ca.e nationale d'identité	
<b>Names</b>			
Prénoms			

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**ANNOTATION(S) - MENTION(S)**

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<b>Name of Civil Status Officer</b>	Lalloo Abdool Wahid	 Signature	
Nom de l'officier de l'Etat Civil			
<b>Civil Status Office</b>	Moka		
Bureau de l'Etat Civil			
<b>Date of Issue</b>	04/04/2013		

**Esther Peersahib (spelt Pursahib) death certificate.**

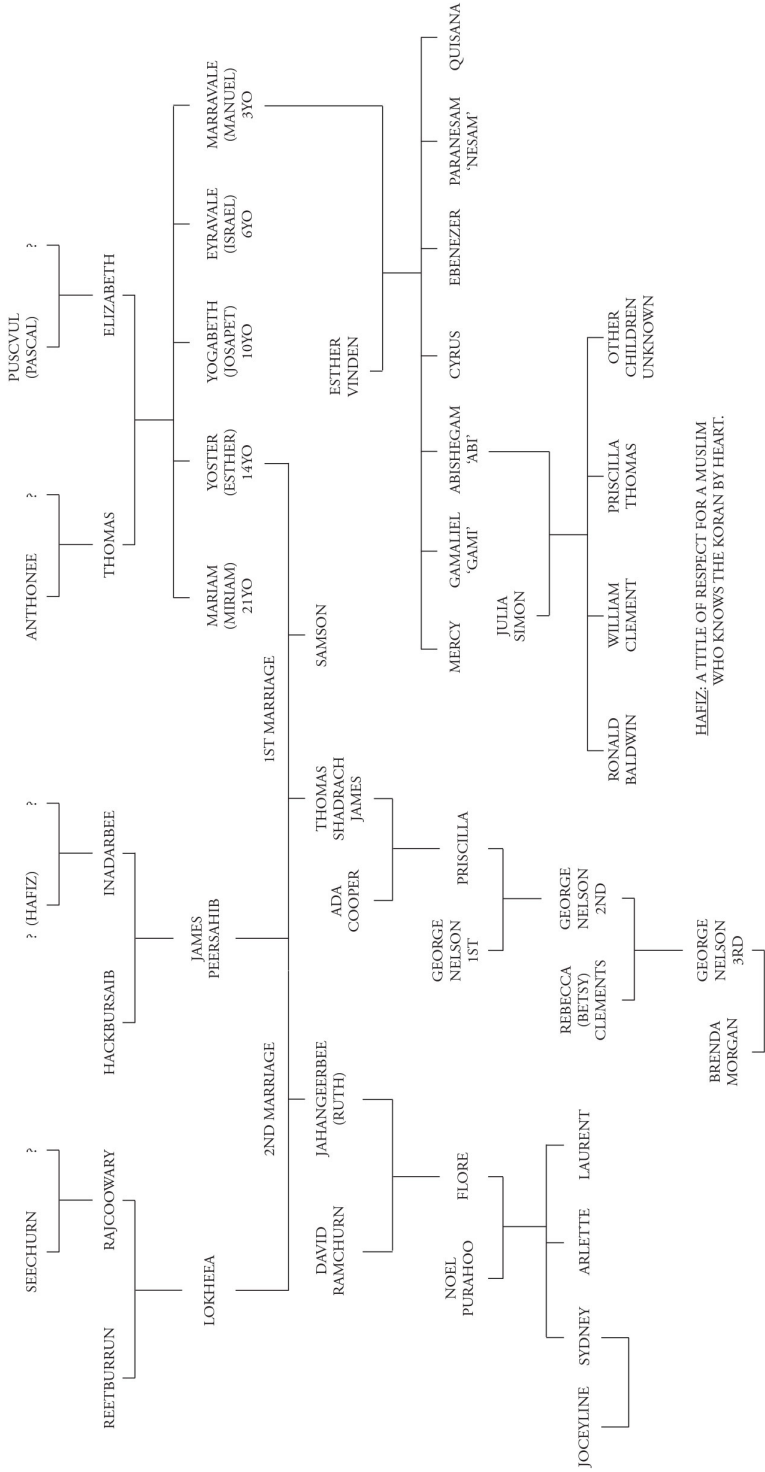
Source: Civil Status Office, Mauritius.

 REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS REPUBLIQUE DE MAURICE		Certified Extract of a Death Entry (Pursuant to the Civil Status Act 1981)	
Registration District District de l'enregistrement		Certificate Number Numéro du Certificat	
Plaines Wilhems		236	
Registration Office Bureau de l'enregistrement	Rose Hill	Date of Registration Date de déclaration	04/03/1905
Registered by Enregistré par	De Fondaumier H		
<b>DECEASED - DEFUNT(E)</b>			
Surname Nom	Peersaib No 132719		
Names Prénoms			
Occupation Profession	Government Pensioner Pensionné du Gouvernement	NID Number No. de carte nationale d'identité	
Address Adresse			
Marital Status Situation familiale	Married Mariée	Date and Time of death Date et heure du décès	03/03/1905 22:30
Religion Religion	Church of England Eglise Anglicane	Sex Sexe	M - Male/Masculin
Place of Birth Lieu de naissance	Madras, India	Age Age	72 Year(s)/An(s)
Place of Death Lieu de décès	No 15 Queen Victoria Street, Rose Hill		
Place of Burial/Cremation Lieu d'inhumation/d'incinération			
<b>SPOUSE - CONJOINT(E)</b>			
Surname Nom	Lokheea No 159681	NID Number No. de carte nationale d'identité	
Names Prénoms			
<b>FATHER - PERE</b>			
Surname Nom	Hack Peersaib	NID Number No. de carte nationale d'identité	
Names Prénoms			
<b>MOTHER - MERE</b>			
Surname Nom	Inadarbee	NID Number No. de carte nationale d'identité	
Names Prénoms			
<b>ANNOTATION(S) - MENTION(S)</b>			
Name of Civil Status Officer Nom de l'officier de l'Etat Civil Civil Status Office Bureau de l'Etat Civil Lalloo Abdool Wahid Moka			

## James Peersahib death certificate.

Source: Civil Status Office, Mauritius.

FAMILY TREE: PEERSAHIB/THOMAS



HAFIZ: A TITLE OF RESPECT FOR A MUSLIM WHO KNOWS THE KORAN BY HEART.

Peersahib/Thomas family tree © George and Robynne Nelson

Source: GBRN Collection. Illustrator: Ian Faulkner.