

# Parsis in Uganda, 1908-1972

compiled by Piroj Amrolia (born Dastur) from notes of her late father Jal F Dastur

Given to me at Vancouver in July 2010. I have reproduced the full list here for several reasons:

- It's history.
- It shows loving care by the patriarch of the Parsee family (and his daughter).
- It shows several traits of the Parsee community: Their mobility, concentration in banking, teaching and accounts, easy facility for working in European firms, many returns to India, many admissions to Canada.
- It shows the big Indian firms they came to work for - Narandas Rajaram, Madhvani, Mehta, Jamal Walji and Jamal Ramji, Odeon Cinema, etc. The ubiquitous Allidina Cotton & Ginning Factory Ltd is there. Note the distinctive Parsee spelling of names and the Walla surname to signify occupations. There's a Darukhanwalla (spirits; spirited!), a Driver, and even a Shevalier.

**1908: Mr Pesi F Dastur** came to Uganda to replace the head clerk of government treasury. He started his own business of hand-driven carts and graduated to purchasing cotton from farmers for sale to ginneries. Later he dealt in piece goods from India (from *Ambalal Sarabhai Co*), Shell Petrol, and vehicle repairs. In 1914 taking advantage of an ordinance that confined the purchase of raw cotton to ginneries owners he started a joint venture company under the name of *Allidina Cotton and Ginning Factory Ltd* and purchased a plot in Old Kampala on a street still named Ginnery Lane. He sold all the ginned cotton to M/s Narandas Rajaram & Co Ltd, owned by Sir Purshottam Thakordas. He died at the young age of 33 years after a surgery in India. A prominent street in downtown Kampala is (still) named after him.

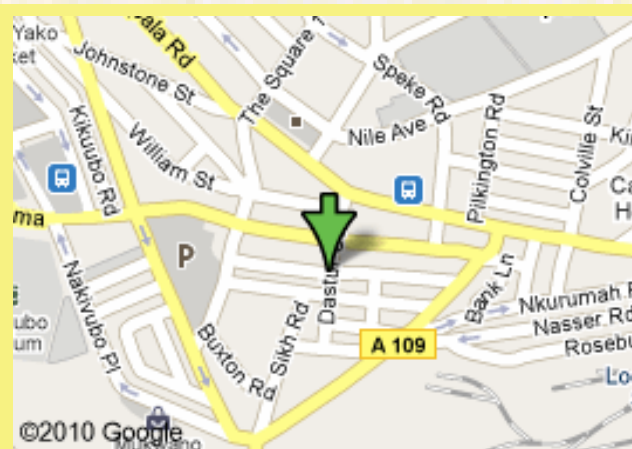
**1910: Kaki R Wadia** as head clerk of *National Bank*. Married Khorshed in Kampala – the first Parsee marriage there. Sons: Nani, Sarosh, Sam (account in the book under cricket). Served on Kampala Municipal Council, Indian

Association, etc.

**1912: Mr Faramroz Mothwala**, the second Parsee to work in government treasury (after Pesi Dastur).

**1913: Mr Dinshaw Nekoo**, born in Navsari, India. Head clerk with M/s *Charles Joseph and Ralli Bros* (cotton lint). Died in India at 89 years. Wife Mrs Bacchamai worked at Government Indian Secondary School, Old Kampala. Fondly remembered by past students. Died in England at 98.

**1913/1915: Mr Bejonji Dhunjibhai Mehta** worked in the treasury department; **Mr Daruwalla** worked in government; **Mr Keki Pundole** joined M/s Menkwa Kabusai Kaisa Ltd.



Dastur Street off Kampala Rd, present-day

**1914: Mr Faramroze Golwala** worked in the High Court, promoted to Registrar. Married in 1929, had four daughters and one son. Died in Poona, India.

**1915: Mr Fakirji Nassarwanji Kapadia** of Broach, India, first worked with Mr Pesi Dastur and joined *Standard Bank of South Africa* in 1919 on Mr Dastur's death. After leaving Uganda settled with his family in St Catherine, Ontario. Died in 1973. **Mrs Kapadia** worked as a teacher in Aga Khan School and then for 28 years in Government Primary School. Four sons: **Noshir**, teacher in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Died 1993. Wife Freny and three daughters still reside in Alberta. **Parvez**, dentist in London, England. One daughter. **Kersi**, teacher in St Catherine, Ontario. Wife Thirty and two daughters. **Nani**, teacher, also in St Catherine. Wife Roshan and two sons.

**1916: Mr Pershotan Pithawalla** joined M/s *Whiteway Ladlow* as cashier. Two sons and three daughters.

**1916: Mr Jahangirji Pardiwalla** worked for *Narandas Rajaram & Co*. Enjoyed public life – President of Indian Association; Jinja Municipal Council; Board of *East African Railways and Harbours*. Joined *Nanji Kalidas Mehta* as partner in cotton department.

**1919: Mr Jameshedji Merwanji Pardiwalla** (cousin of the above) joined the services of Mr Morarji Bhatia's cotton business. Started his own transport company. Joined auctioneer *Mr Cameron* which morphed into *Whelpdale & Moody* and then *Moody & Tilbrook*. On closure of this company Mr Pardiwalla took up stamp business. Passed away in Bombay in 1977. Wife **Khorshed** died in 1993 in Toronto. Three girls and two boys; two daughters passed away.

**1920: Mr Merwanji Navroji Nakra** with *Mengo Planters Ltd* and then *Uganda Co*. **Mr Jahangirji Faramroz Tadiwalla**, *Narandas Rajaram & Co* as engineer and *Nanji Kalidas Mehta & Co* as ginneries manager. Two sons continued to work for *NK Mehta*. Wife and daughter returned to India after his death in Uganda.

**1922: Mr Nariman Kawasji Wrighter**, head clerk of newly opened *Barclays Bank*. **Mr Hormasji Dhanjishaw Mehta**, *National Bank*. **Mr Kaikhusru R Nekoo**, *National*

## UGANDA ASIANS

Navjot ceremony: The Parsi priest Jal Dastur of Kampala performs Zoroastrian rites during the Navjot, Zoroastrian baptism, of Kersi Rustomji.

Both photos: Dali Rustomji. Colour tint: Kersi Rustomji.



Navjot Color Procession: Mrs Thrity Dastur wife of Mr Jal Dastur of Kampala leading Kersi Rustomji in blue shawl to his Navjot, Zoroastrian baptism ceremony. Boy in brown shirt on left is Nanu Dastur, behind him & left is his sister Piroj in green dress and the eldest daughter Roda is in green sari, one of the platter bearers.



*Bank.* One daughter and two sons. Died in London, England.

**1923: Mr Jal F Dastur** (covered later)

**1925: Mr Pestonji Mancherji Gazder**, as manager of Sir Homi Mehta's *Uganda Commercial Co Ltd* ginneries. Later joined *M/s Ramdas Khimji & Co*, also ginneries. Two nephews of **Sir Homi** (Jahangir and Rustom) came to

Uganda for a few years.

**1927. Minocher Rustomji Ghadialli** (covered later)

**1926: Three Anklesaria brothers** – Ardeshir (posted to Jinja), Keki (Kawempe), Phirojshaw (Vakula). Keki died in Uganda; the other two brothers left in 1935.

**1928: Mr Homi Sorabjee Chinoy**, with *Japan Cotton Trading Co*. Married Piroja, sister of Jal Dastur, died Uganda. After wife's death worked for *Jamal Ramji & Co*.

**1930: Mr Sorabjee Vapiwala** (watch repairs) and wife Shirin (midwifery); moved to Kenya.

**1932: Mr Jahangir Jamshedji Tantra** for a very short time.

**1932: Mr Minocher Edulji Amroliya**, as chief cashier with *National Bank of India*. Two daughters and one son. Eldest daughter Homai teacher at Government Indian Secondary School, Old Kampala, younger at Aga Khan School. Son Faredoon (see later).

**1932: Mr Faredoon Gazder**, *Ralli Bros*. Wife and sons Khurshed and Sam joined him later. Khurshed worked for *Bell Breweries*. He stayed behind after 1972, but left for Toronto. Sam, wife Dhun and three sons went to Toronto in 1972.

**1934: Mr Jamsedji Bharucha**, *Public Works Department* and shop in Kalule. Was repatriated to India in poor health on community funds. **Ms Freny Meherwanji** (covered elsewhere). **Ms Mani Batliwala**, teacher for seven years.

**1935: Mr Eruch Dossabhai Patel**, to work for *Damji Sidpra*, then *M/s Imperial Motor Works* owned by Mr H M Moses, sold to Mr Abdel Rehman, agent for *Peugeot*. Four daughters with wife Khorshed: Amy teacher in Uganda (Aga Khan School), Hong Kong, Nairobi and Vancouver; Roxy, teacher at Shimoni School; Mehroo in Mumbai; Shenu in Nairobi. Mr Patel had suffered a stroke in Kampala. Died in India.

**1936: Mr Batliwalla** worked as an accountant at the *Post Office*. Returned to India soon because of throat cancer. **Khurshid Mehta** joined *National Bank of India*. **Mrs Manek** Served as teacher at *Indian Nursery School*. Died in Kampala, Mrs Batliwalla in Bombay.

**1938: Mr Dara** s/o Hormasji Mehta worked in government, returned to Calcutta after six years.

**1938: Mr Sethna** for Mr Damji Sidpra; returned to India after four years. **Mr Ratan Deboo**, **Mr Vesuna**, **Mr Doctor**, **Mr Makujina** came and went. Banks.

**1947: Mr Faredoon** s/o Minocher Amroliya, born in Kenya and educated in India, came to Kampala in 1947

and joined the colonial *Immigration Department*, rising to the level of Immigration Officer. Retired from government service on Uganda's independence and started own business in insurance and travel agency. Married **Piroj d/o Jal Dastur** in 1957. Three children – daughter Armin, son Zubin, and daughter Sharon, all now residents of Vancouver, Canada. Piroj worked in *Laurentide Co* for 10 years as an accountant, next four years joined *National Bank of India*. In British Columbia worked with *Walwyn Stodgel* as money market trader, next two years at *Granville Hotel* in accounts. Since last 23 years (as of 2012) works as a realtor. She served in various capacities in the Zoroastrian Society of British Columbia.

**1947: Mr Godrej Darukhanwala**, customs officer on Uganda/Congo border.

**1948: Mr Adi Bharucha and wife Bepsi** worked for *East African Airways* at Entebbe. **Ms Mani Dastur** and **Ms Aloo Ankelsari** were recruited by Mr Jimmy Verjee as teachers at Aga Khan School. Ms Dastur settled in Edmonton, Ms Ankelsari in Toronto.

**1949: Mr Nariman Bharucha**, electrical engineer, returned to India to work for *Tata's*.

**1952: Mr Eruch Darukhanwala**, recruited from *Godrej & Boyce Soap Factory* to take over *Velji Popat's* soap works. Stayed for a year. **Mr Earch Mahawa** for *National Bank of India*. Settled in Toronto and worked in a bank till his retirement.

**1953: Mr Siavax Zaiker** for *British India Insurance Co*. Went to London in 1955 for further studies. **Mr Pali Markar** as manager of *Odeon Cinema*, settled in London. **Mr Behram Gandhi**, wife and children, came as manager of *Muljibhai Madhvani's* sweets factory.

**1956: Mr Nariman Tantra** came from *British India Insurance Co* head office to work with Mr Jal Dastur, sole agent for the same. Returned to India after three

years. **Mr Homi Driver** and wife Banoo came to work as manager of *Odeon Cinema*. **Ms Sheroo Tawadia** came to work at *Nile Nursing Home*. Returned to India in 1968.

**1957: Mr Sheryar Irani** joined *National Bank*. Settled in England in 1969. **Mr Dinshaw Mistry** also for *National Bank*. Wife **Gool** worked as a teacher. Settled in Toronto in 1972. **Mr Shevalier** and sister Freny came to teach at Makerere. Returned to India within a few years.

**1958: Mr Bakhto Vacha** came to work in *HM Customs*. Wife **Nergis** and two daughters settled in Toronto. **Mr Firoz Warden** (nephew of Mr Kapadia) and wife **Behroz** came to work as teachers. Settled in Toronto with two children. **Dr Sorabji Ankelsaria** (with wife **Gool**) came to work as doctor with *Mehta Group*. After retiring he continued in private practice, often serving his local patients for free. His charitable work continued in India after 1972. **Mr Minoo Gatta** came to work in the bus transport business of *AHS Patel & Co*. With wife Mani and three children settled in Niagara on the Lakes.

**1959: Mr Pesi Kaka** came as a Spinning and Weaving Master at *Madhvani Group Mulco Textile Factory*. Left for Nigeria in 1966. **Mr Jahangir Tadiwalla** and his two sons worked for the *Mehta Group* at Lugazi and Sambatia ginnery.

**1964: Mr Homi Mistry** came to manage the auto department at *Mehta Group's* Lugazi estate.

**1966: Mr Kersi Khambatta and wife Dolly** (niece of Mr Dastur) came to join *Mulco Textile's* bleaching and dying department. After four years moved to Indonesia. Retired in Bombay.

**1968: Mr Phiroz Bajina** worked for East African Airways duty-free shop.