

HISTORY OF LOWER TUGELA PRIMARY SCHOOL (1932 - 2007)

BY H. TULSEE

INTRODUCTION

This year, 2007, marks seventy-five years of teaching and learning at Lower Tugela Primary School. At this significant milestone in the history of the school, it is fitting to examine the long journey the school has made from its humble beginnings on 8 August 1932, when the school opened its doors to teaching and learning to 48 learners. Back in the 1930s and in earlier years education was a luxury beyond the means and indeed the imagination of most people. Like most communities, the Indian community of Tugela was not provided with any schooling facilities by the State. The difficulties in paying "school fund" forced many parents to keep their children at home or to engage them in some work to supplement the family income. The community, mainly impoverished farm workers, realized the need for education. This article is about the determination, hope, courage and resilience of a community willing to provide educational facilities to its children, despite the difficulties of the time.

EARLY SETTLEMENT IN TUGELA

There was a sizeable settlement in Tugela by the 1920s. The UBA Sugar Company, a pioneer in sugarcane cultivation in Tugela at the time, was forced to close down as a result of recession in the economy. Employees from the UBA Company and others purchased land from the Company and engaged in sugarcane or tobacco farming. Others engaged in business, giving rise to a trading centre in the form of the Tugela Village. Most of the people were illiterate. However, they saw the need for and importance of education for their children.

PRIVATE SCHOOL

The first private school was opened in a tobacco shed in 1926 with thirty learners. It was situated below Ebrahim Vally's shop, on the turn-off to Dr. K. S. Singh's former house. Mr. G. H. Polton was the teacher and he was paid four shillings per month.

THE TUGELA INDIAN SCHOOL SOCIETY AND THE FIRST TRUSTEES

The Tugela Indian School Society was formed to extend schooling to a larger number of children. According to its constitution, signed on 6 June 1931, the first trustees were Messrs Kajee Sadrodeen, Sesham John and Nasib Sing. The main objective of this Society was to open and manage a school at Tugela "for the education of Indian children through the medium of the English Language." The other trustees over the years were Messrs Ebrahim Ismail Lokhat, Pranbali Singh, Harrysing Bodasing, Dr. M. S. Naicker, Dr. K. S. Singh and Mr K.M. Lalbahadur. Mr. A. L. Moosa served as the treasurer of the Tugela Indian School Society from 1941 to 1979.

SOME OF THE TRUSTEES



Mr Sesham John



Mr Nasib Rangji Sing



Mr Pranbali Rangji Sing



Mr Harrysing Bodasing



Dr M.S. Naicker



Mr S.V. Naicker
Ex-Grantee, Ex-Chairman
of the Tugela Indian School Society
& Chairman of the Education Committee

DONATION OF LAND

In terms of the deed of transfer, signed on 29 July 1931, Mr. Pranbali Rangi Singh donated a one-acre piece of land on behalf of the Rangi Singh family to the Tugela Indian School Society for the purposes of building a school.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE FIRST SCHOOL

Construction of the first school commenced in 1931 and was completed in 1932. The pioneers of the school construction project, amongst others, were Messrs Pranbali Rangi Singh, Nasib Rangi Singh, Sesham John, Kajee Sadrodeen, Ebrahim Ismail Lokath, C. Chengalroyan and Chinna Kuppen. The building consisted of three classrooms, an office and two storerooms.

GOVERNMENT AIDED- STATUS

Mr. S.K. Maharaj, the first principal of the school wrote in the school's log book as follows: "I started this school as a private institution on 8th August 1932." The school received Government -Aided Status on 1 November 1932.

LEARNER ENROLMENT IN THE EARLY YEARS

The first three learners in the school admission book were Mungal Mahabeer, Kanthamma John and Devanamma John. The enrolment in 1932 was 48 learners. Mr. N.R. Naidoo, an ex-learner, ex-educator and ex-principal of the school recalls the principal and elders of the community making home visits to persuade parents to send their children to school as only two of the three classrooms were utilized. He adds that girls especially were not sent to school. This may be attributed to the view held by people in those times that boys and not girls should be educated for the workforce.

STAFF IN THE EARLY YEARS

Mr. D.G. Subban the school's first assistant teacher was appointed on 9 March 1933. Other educators who served in the years 1932 to 1947 were messrs J.D. Subban, C.S. John, J.S. John, V.P. Naidoo (Principal), D. Gengai, J. Gengai, K. Ramduth, K. Ranjathen, H. Ramduth, J. Augustine and Miss D.S. John.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Mr. Sesham John was the first school manager and he served from 23 January 1933 to 16 November 1939. Mr. Nasib Rangi Singh, the second school manager, served from 18 November 1939 to 30 November 1944.

In later years the term-school manager was replaced by grantee. Mr. Chinna Kuppen served as grantee from 1 December 1944 to 21 February 1956, Dr. M. S. Naicker from 22 February 1956 to 1 July 1969, and Mr. S. V. Naicker served from 1 July 1969 until the take-over of the school by the state on 1 January 1971. The grantee received a small grant based on learner attendance per day for maintenance and minor repairs.

The Education Committee members in 1968 were messrs M. C. Hassim, R. Ramnundan, A. L. Moosa, M. C. Munien, A. A. Vally, E. H. Mehtar and S. V. Naicker (chairman). Mr. M. Moosa served on the Education Committee for several years. It was the joint effort of the staff and the Education Committee that saw the successful completion of the tennis court in 1982 to commemorate the school's Golden Jubilee.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) members in 1991 were Mr. G. Govinden (Principal), Educator Representatives - Mrs. M. Gounden (Secretary), Messrs P. Ramgathi, J. H. Maharaj and Parent Representatives - Miss. T. Q. Gumede, Messrs R. R. Singh (Chairman), Z. Mathonsi, R. Prumdeen, B. F. Mhlongo, T. Naicker, R. Dho and G. M. Gounden. Mr. R. R. Singh served as chairman of the PTA from 1991 to 1993.

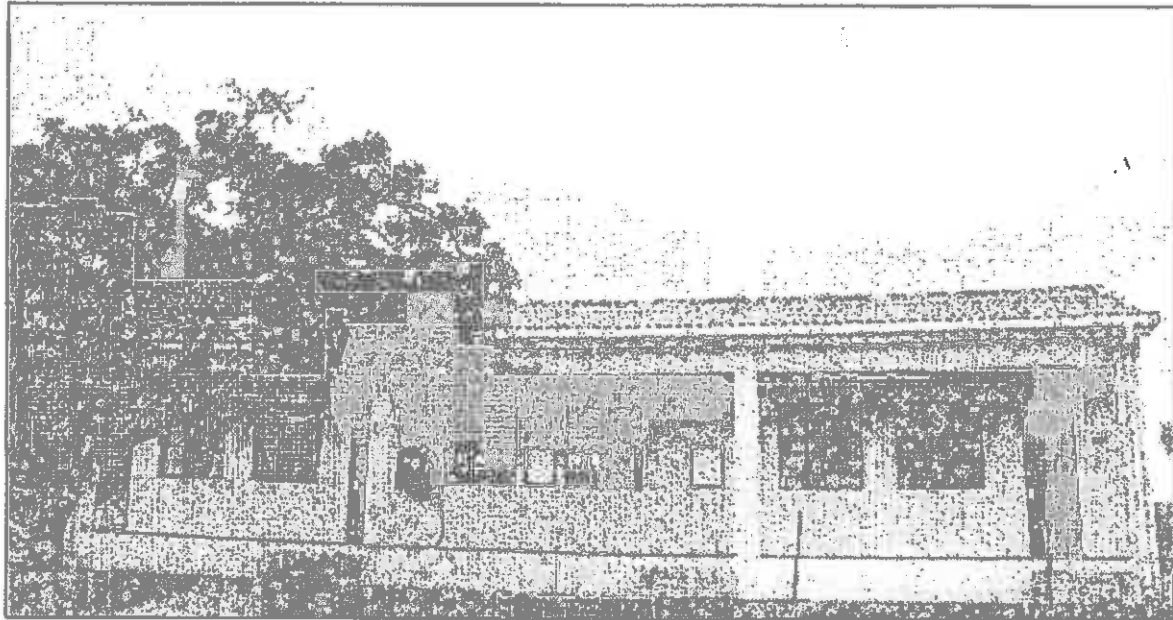
The current School Governing Body members are Messrs G. Naicker (Chairman), P. Munsamy (Vice Chairman), J.V. Masikane, R. Rajkumar (Treasurer) and Mrs. F. Larregle. The educator component members are Mrs. K. Naidu and Mr. N.A.E. Mohamed. The school principal, Mr. H. Tulsee is an ex-officio member.



*One of the school grantees
Mr Chinna Kuppen*

CONSTRUCTION OF THREE ADDITIONAL CLASSROOMS

The school enrolment was about 100 until 1951. Phenomenal change took place in 1952 with the establishment of SAPPI at Mandeni on the north bank of the Tugela River. Consequently, there was an influx of learners seeking admission, and the three existing classrooms were inadequate. The site on which the existing school was built was unsuitable for further development. Thus the Tugela Indian School Society purchased the adjoining three acres of land (lot 77) from Mr. Meersingh and built three additional classrooms under the able leadership of Dr. M.S. Naicker, the chairman of the Education Committee. The present school stands on this property. One classroom was opened on 27 September 1954, and another two classrooms were opened on 08 August 1955.



Second school building of three classrooms built by the community

The enrolment in 1955 was 250. Platoon classes commenced on 24 July 1956 and continued for 19 years. The establishment of a school by SAPPI in 1958 did not ease the problem as most of the employees lived on the south of the Tugela River. A commitment was made to discontinue platoon classes under the able leadership of the school grantee and Education Committee Chairman, Mr. S.V Naicker. Plans were drawn to build eight classrooms, a staff room, an office block, a soup kitchen and caretaker's quarters.

Negotiations with SAPPI were held. Mr. S. V. Naicker facilitated a meeting with the Department of Education and the management of SAPPI in Durban. SAPPI was represented by Mr. Ron Day and Mrs Stratten, and the school was represented by Mr. Harrysing Bodasing, Mr. Lalbahadur Moon Ramlakan and Mr. S. V. Naicker. SAPPI committed to pay fifty percent of the cost of additional classrooms, provided the Department paid the remaining fifty percent.

The declaration of Tugela as an Indian Group Area in 1969, under the Group Areas Act, brought this project to a halt. The declaration meant that the onus was on the State to build a school.



A Platoon Class

The late 1960s saw a mass exodus of Indian people from Zululand as a result of the then Government policy of phasing out Indians from Zululand. Consequently, Tugela became a dormitory area for those working in Zululand.

HANDING-OVER OF THE SCHOOL TO THE STATE

The community, under the leadership of the grantee and the Education Committee Chairman, Mr. S.V Naicker and the trustees Mr. Harrysing Bodasing, Dr. M. S. Naicker and Dr. K. S. Singh agreed to donate the school on lot 77 to the State. The first three classrooms (on lot 62) were retained by the trustees for community use.

The letter dated 11 December 1970 from the Department of Indian Affairs entitled "TAKE-OVER OF LOWER TUGELA STATE-AIDED INDIAN SCHOOL" reads as follows:

I have to bring to your notice that the Lower Tugela State Aided Indian school will be taken over by this Department and conducted as a state school under the control of the Department of Indian Affairs with effect from 1st January 1971 ...

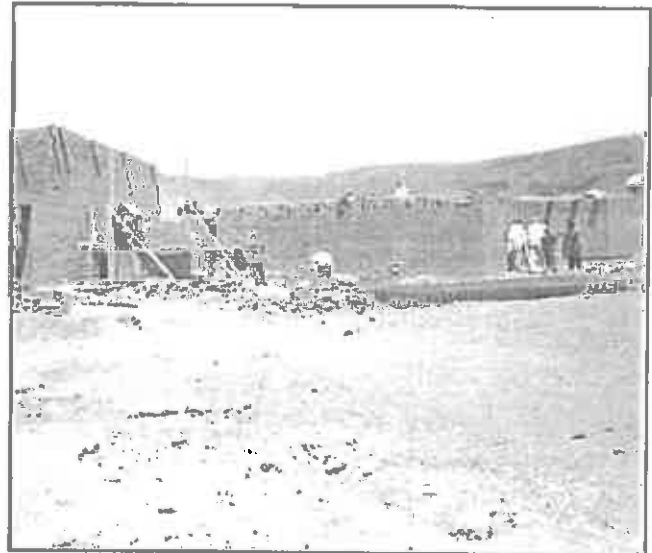
The name of the school changed to Lower Tugela State Indian Primary School on 1st January 1971.

BUILDING OF THE "NEW" SCHOOL BY THE STATE AND THE CLOSURE OF THE PLATOON SCHOOL

On 30 May 1972, Mr. S.V Naicker, the chairman of the Education Committee, held talks with the planners and found that the school building project was placed on a five-year plan. Many representations were made, often single-handedly by Mr. S.V Naicker, to fast track the building of the new school by the State. As a result of delays in the construction of the new State school, the community under the leadership of Mr. S.V Naicker got plans passed by the local authority to build a hall on the property retained by the Tugela Indian School Society, lot 62. This hall was to be used by the community and as classrooms through partitioning. The announcement by the Department to commence building led the "hall project" to be abandoned.

According to ex- principal of the school, Mr. N.R Naidoo, the R260 000, 00 building comprising ten classrooms, three specialist rooms, a library and administration block commenced in September 1974.

The Department of Public Works handed the new State school over on 5 June 1975. The new building was occupied on 10 June 1975 and the platoon system was terminated. The old school building on lot 62 was rented by the Department as an annex.



State School under construction



CAR VALET **PANELBEATERS AND AUTO REPAIRS**

34 Copper Drive
EMPANGENI RAIL

24 Hr Tow-In Service

TEL: 035-787-1924/27

FAX: 035-787-1934



CLIVE

083-417-0131



E-Mail: cpanel@telkomsa.net

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE "NEW" STATE SCHOOL

The "new" State school buildings were officially opened by the then Deputy Director of Indian Education, Mr. S.P van den Heever



Left:

Official Opening of State School. The then Deputy Director of Indian Education, Mr S.P. Van den Heever cuts the ribbon to the main entrance of the school. Mr N.R. Naidoo (School Principal) and Mr S.V. Naicker (Education Committee Chairman) look on.

Below:

Opening of the State School. The Deputy Director of Education Mr S.P. Van den Heever planting a tree. From left to right : Mr R. Ramraj (ex - Principal), Mr S.P. Van den Heever (Deputy Director), Mr S.V. Naicker (Education Committee Chairman), Mr N.R. Naidoo (Principal), Mr N.D. Maharaj (Circuit Inspector), Mr P.D. Arthur. The first school opened in 1932 is in the background.



on 6 December 1975. He wrote in the school's log book, " Mine was the privilege of today officially opening the extensive additions to the Lower Tugela School."

NEW SCHOOL GROUNDS

The construction of the "new" State school took much of the school ground space resulting in a small playground. The steadfast commitment and unwavering determination of Mr. S.V Naicker and Mr. R. Ramnundan led to the building of Tugela Secondary School. Together with the negotiations for the building of the secondary school, an expansive play field was secured for Lower Tugela Primary. Keys to the "new" Tugela Secondary School and the primary school change room were handed to the principal, Mr.

L. Naidoo on 15 September 1987 at 15H00, at the Tugela Secondary School. According to Mr. L Naidoo's entry in the school log book, classes commenced at the secondary school for Grades 7 to 9 on 6 October 1987

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Lower Tugela Primary, historically an Indian school, began desegregating from 1990. In 1996 further extensions to the school building were made to the value of R1, 2 million. A block of seven classrooms was built above the junior primary block, a double-storey block below the junior primary block - comprising four additional junior primary classrooms, two specialist rooms, a science laboratory, an office block above the staff room and modifications to the existing building. According to the school's log-book by the principal, Mr. M Rajcoomar, on 4 November 1996 parts of the new extensions (seven classrooms and administration block) were officially handed over on 4 November 1996, and learners from Grades one, three and seven occupied the seven new classrooms.

The school now has 21 classrooms, 3 specialist rooms, a library, a science laboratory, the three-classroom block opened in 1955, a cleaner's quarters, an administration block and staff room. The present learner enrolment is 980 and the staff complement is 28.

CONCLUSION

Lower Tugela Primary School, through its seventy-five years of teaching and learning has added quality to the generations of children passing through its doors, and through its learners has made a significant difference through their contributions, both locally and internationally. Our learners have pursued a wide range of careers such as medicine, engineering, actuarial science, education and business.

It is fervently hoped that Lower Tugela Primary will continue to gather momentum as it progresses to its centenary and beyond in providing quality, relevant education to our children, and that it will encounter future challenges with unyielding grit and determination as characterized and demonstrated by the pioneers, the community, the community leaders, the staff and learners over the seventy five years of its journey. May the indomitable spirit of the early pioneers and the community of the 1930s, in providing education amidst tremendous odds, continue to inspire us and the future generations.

EXCLUSIVELY AT ZAFFS

FACTORY SHOP

How full with new stock:
Lounge sofas, Sleeper
Sechies, Corner Units +
new range of tapestry
chairs


ZAFFS

2 Croton Place,
Stanger Industrial Park,
Old New Guelderland Road,
Stanger (ex-Design 3 bldg,
opposite Jacksons)
Tel/Fax: 032-5511470


INNOVATION
WITH STYLE & COMFORT

Made from Syrian Jacquard fabrics,
high density seat foam and fibre
filled cushions + chrome legs

Front
view



Back
view




Available in
wide range of
mix/match
jacquards.
HURRY! Place
your orders.
Delivery within 1-2 weeks.

This concept ideal for a small khaya,
bachelor flat, duplex where a 3-
4 piece lounge suite can't fit.

KIDDIES CARTOON
CHARACTER ITEMS

CARTOON THEMES



PERSONALISED THEMES

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

MOMENT

FROM GRANDMA

DELIVERY WITHIN 1-2 WEEKS.

"at your place or ours" ONE YEAR WARRANTY