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, Madhivani, 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 ginners. 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 ginnery owners he started a joint venture - M/s Narandas Rajaram & Co Ltd, owned by Sir 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.


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


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

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.


Dastur Street off Kampala Rd, present-day


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


1923: Mr Jal F Dastur (covered later)

1925: Mr Pestonji Mancherji Gazder, as manager of Sir Homi Mehta’s Uganda Commercial Co Ltd gineries. Later joined M/s Ramdas Khimji & Co, also ginners. Two nephews of Sir Homi (Jahangir and Rustom) came to Uganda for a few years.

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

1927: Minocher Rustomji Ghadially (covered later)


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 Amrolia, 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).


1934: Mr Jamshedji 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 Bhatialala, teacher for seven years.

1935: Mr Eruch Dossabhai Patel, to work for Damji Sidpra, then M/s Imperial Motor Works owned by Mr J M Moses, sold to Mr Abdel Rehman, agent for Peugeot. Four daughters with wife Khordosh: 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 Bhatialala worked as an accountant at the Post Office. Returned to India soon because of throat cancer. Khurshed Mehta joined National Bank of India. Mrs Maneck served as teacher at Indian Nursery School. Died in Kampala, Mrs Bhatialala in Bombay.

1938: Ms Veezunar, 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 Amrolia, 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 Muljiibhai 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.


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 dyeing department. After four years moved to Indonesia. Retired in Bombay.

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