

RSA (Pre-1994): South African Indian Community 120th Anniversary

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Form: Circular

By: Pagliari / Cape Mint

Date: 1980

Ref: Laidlaw: 0764;

Variations:

Size	Metal	Mass	Value
32.7 mm	Gold (22ct)	34.3 gm	\$1,150

Edge: Plain. Stamped with hallmarks: "CM G916 22CT (springbok head) G (for 1980)". Also stamped with an issue number. The medal: "64".

Obverse: An Indian canecutter wearing turban and holding sickle in left hand amid stylized sugar cane with sun behind. Legend above: "SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN COMMUNITY" and below between stops: "1860.120TH ANNIVERSARY.1980".

Reverse: Within a beaded border round the rim, starboard broadside view of a steam-assisted sailing ship at sea. Below: "S.S. TRURO". Legend above: "SAIVA SITHANTHA SUNGUM" and below: "16TH NOVEMBER 1860".

Notes: Comes in a red case lined with white silk and red velvet. In gilt, on the outside of the lid, the SA coat of arms and on the inside "SAM".

The Indian community in South Africa had its origins in one of the world's great migrations. Between 1860 and 1911 some 160,000 Indians were transported by ship from India to Natal in South Africa to work as indentured labourers in the sugar plantations. The first ship to arrive, on 16 November 1860, was the SS Truro, a steam-assisted sailing ship, carrying 344 labourers including some women and children. Altogether there were 384 such voyages in many different ships over a period of more than 50 years. The terms of the indenture were such that the labourer could return to India after 10 years (later 5 years) but most chose to remain. Their descendants number about 1.3 million people or 2.5% of the country's inhabitants.

The colonial administration documented each arrival and these records have been computerised and can be viewed at: <http://scnc.ukzn.ac.za/doc/SHIP/shipndx.html>. The author of the website here wrote the initial version of the data capture software in the 1980s.

The Siva Sithantha Sungum is a Hindu Saivite religious movement founded in 1937 by His Holiness Bramha Sri Siva Subramonia Guruswamikal in Durban.