

THE MOHINDRA PIONEER AND HIS LEGACY by Suniti Mohindra Class of 1957 Duke of Gloucester School.

A TRIBUTE TO RALLA RAM MOHINDRA & HIS SONS VISHNU MITRA MOHINDRA & BALDEV SHAI MOHINDRA A TEACHER AT AGE 18 IN MOMBASA (Alidina Visram Secondary School & The Government Indian High School / Duke of Gloucester School (NOW) Jamhuri High School Nairobi, Kenya.)

The legacy inherited by the sons of Ralla Ram Mohindra who came to Kenya in 1896 while studying in Lahore, Punjab at a college affiliated to the Punjab University, as the Railhead Station Master he took the then called Uganda (Lunatic) Railway from the Railhead at Mazeras all the way to Kisumu. Ralla Ram, grandfather of Suniti, was in his upper teens when he came as a true adventurer, to open up the land of Kenya. He lived through the famous episodes of the Man Eaters of Tsavo, the Lions that had developed a myth of being ghosts, surviving in one instance when a fellow tent dweller, he was sharing the tent with, was taken by the Man-eater. He took the Railway all the way to Kisumu. He went back to India got married and came back in 1929(bringing his brother-in-law Dr Fakir Chand Sood who settled in Kisumu) to settle in Kenya after taking the Railway from Kisumu to Butere, Nyanza Province.He settled in Meru where he was adopted as a brother by the Meru Chief.

Baldev Shai Mohindra (Suniti's uncle) was 18 years of age when he joined the Teaching Staff at Alidina Visram High School as a Teacher in English and the first Scout Master responsible for bringing the Boy Scouts organization to the Kenya Asians, then residing in Kenya. An article in WE CAME IN DHOWS by Cynthia Salvadori, Volume 111, page 138 acknowledges this.

Mr. B.S. Mohindra was a brilliant young man he rose up the ranks of the school another photograph taken with Mr. Astley who was the second Principal of the Prince of Wales School is also shown with due acknowledgement to Mr. Steve Le Favre

A Teacher at the Alidina Visram School, he started the Boy Scout Movement for Kenya Asians in Mombasa.(Photo of Uncle B.S. Mohindra at the Alidina Visram School)



Photo taken in 1936 with Mr. Astley who went on to become the second principal of the Prince of Wales School in Nairobi photo from the web page of the OldCambrian. B.S. Mohindra is sitting second from the left in the front row a young man age 25 Born 1911.

Mr. Mohindra served as teacher in the Government India High School in the early 40's having gotten transferred from Mombasa to Nairobi. He went on to join his elder brother Vishnu Mitra Mohindra who started the first departmental type store in Kenya called Traders on Government Road in the late 30's as well as the Worldwide Agencies. The brothers had a disagreement on how to run the business resulting in the Elder Brother handing over the business to B.S.Mohindra in 1942; his elder brother left for India to start another business there. Mr. Mohindra ran this business from 1942 to 1946. In 1947 he started the business under the name of B.S.Mohindra & Co.His elder brother came back to join the business in 1954 and at Independence made a silk scarf with the photos of the first Cabinet, he later developed a set of playing cards with different photographs of the wild life of East Africa with pictures of different tribes and the front of the cards displayed the bravery of the Masai killing a lion with his spear, as a Tourism promotion item. The then Governors and later the Ministry of Tourism highly commended him for this unique way to promote Kenya. He was closely associated with the emerging National leaders during the Independence times.



1st Mombasa Scout Troop (1932-3)

Sitting: Manubhai Patel, Mr. B. S. Mohindra (Scout Master), W. N. Dolton (Inspector of Schools), Capt. F. White (Principal), Mr. Shahnivaz Khan (A. S. M.), Mohamedali Hassanali. Sitting in front: Fakhrudin Bhaijee, Vishnu Dutt Bowry, Ikram Hassan, Taherali Ganiwalla. Standing (first row): Abdul Latif, Nandlal Mistry, Chhototal Ramji, Jaffer M. Aboo, Gulamali Dadoo, Karam Chand, Mohamedhussein Essa, Mohamed K. Nurmohamed. Top Row: Hatimall Hassanali, Anant J. Pandya, Jagjivan J. Shah, Fidaali M. Heptulla, Pyarali Nurmohamed, Ali Kassamali Mohehali, Chandulal D. Shah (A. V. School "Fifty Years")

The First Boy Scout Troops In Mombasa From interviews with Gluammali Dato, Mombasa(We came in Dhows Page 138 Vol 111 by Silvia Salvadori)

Excerpts Summarized:

We boys attended the Alidina Visram School . A high School offering Junior & Senior Cambridge curriculum, examination papers originated from England. The school had its own Boy Scout troop, the first one to be formed in Mombassa, called the Alidina Troop, Gulamali Dato, was one of the first group of Scouts, he was proud to have been chosen from a long list of applicants and to be in uniform, kahki shorts and shirts with puggrees as can be seen in the picture.

Our Scoutmaster was Mr. B.S.Mohindra, a smart, handsome well dressed fellow, who also taught English at the Alidina School. Around 1930 Mr. Mohindra organized for the scouts to tour the whole of East Africa for the students to get to see the country. I was excited but nervous as this was the first time I would be going outside Mombasa, however with encouragements from my father I went. We went by rail in a third class cabin that we had all to ourselves a group totaling 25, to Nairobi and then on to Kampala from there by boat to Bukoba and then again and back to Mombasa by train to Dar-es-salaam.

Where ever we went we stayed at some school. We would make a campfire and show people the things we could do. We amazed people by talking with our hands as we had learnt the deaf and dumb sign language. It was a very enjoyable journey that cost us in total 400 shillings each.

Mr. Mohindra served Kenya and rendered services for which he was awarded the honor of O.B.E by the British as well as being nominated to the Legislative Council of Kenya. He acted as the Director of Asian Manpower during the World War 2 besides was the Chair of the Indian Chamber of Commerce and a special advisor to the then Minister of Commerce now the President of Kenya, His Excellency, the right Honorable Mwai Kibaki.

Bio of Mr. Baldev Shai Mohindra:

MOHINDRA, Baldev Sahai O.B.E; born 1911 in India. Educated Arya High School India 1917-1927; Government College Ludhiana, Punjab University 1927-1929. Teacher in Mombasa and Government Indian High School Nairobi 1929-1943. Managing Director Worldwide Agencies Ltd 1943-46 Started B.S.Mohindra & Co 1947 Managing Partner Member Legislative Council 1958- 1960

O.B.E 1957 Member Civil Service Commission 1954-55 (Source: Who is Who in Kenya 1963/1964 page 38)

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*In a listing in Who is Who in Kenya
The following appears;*

Who is Who in Kenya 1963-1964 page 38 (Bio of Mr. Baldev Shai Mohindra is provided.)



MOHINDRA, Baldev Sahai; O.B.E.; born 1911 in India; educated Arya High School, DAV High School India 1917-27; Government College Ludhiana 1927-29; Punjab University 1937; teacher in Mombasa and Indian High School Nairobi 1929-43; Managing Director Worldwide Agencies Ltd. 1943-46; started B. S. Mohindra 1947 (Managing Partner); Member Legislative Council 1958-60; O.B.E. 1957; Member Civil Service Commission 1954-55; Address P.O. Box 1832, Nairobi.