

The American depression in the early twenties, caused economic upheavals all over the world and as India was part of the British Empire with close links to America at that time, it also suffered. Our family Creditors had panicked and were after us to return the money, the matter was handed over to the courts, and it was decided that our properties and coffee estates had to be auctioned.

Even though the British had promulgated the Partnership Act in 1932, our family still continued as Sole Proprietors, and as a result, judgement was passed accordingly. All members of the family were liable for the debts. My father who did not participate in the management of the estates, was the worst hit, as he had five children, and I was the youngest, a baby. His brothers and sisters were well settled, and were less affected. It was a bad year for my parents, and I was born one week before Christmas, on 18th of December.

Moving out of the ancestral home

My father and mother had moved out of the Balmatta house, after the auction, to my maternal grandfather's house in the Catholic Bank, The Balmatta House is now the Nazareth Convent in Balmatta, Mangalore,

It is said, that some old furniture from the Balmatta house was sent to my mother's house on a bullock cart, as my father's share, which my father did not want to accept, but my mother's father's advice prevailed, and he accepted them. The older brother and sister took the better things.

My father had done the teacher's training, and was employed by the (British) Government. In those days, the Government Board of Education ran schools, in different parts of every district. Our district was called South Kanara. It was one of the 26 districts of the Madras Presidency. To the north of the presidency was Goa, a Portuguese colony. Further to its north was the Bombay Presidency, which covered a large part of modern day Gujarat, and Maharashtra.

During the last years of the British Empire, South Kanara district which was the 26th district of the Madras Presidency. It was divided into 6 talukas. From the north to south, they were Coondapur, Udipi, Mangalore, Karkal, Puttur and Kasargod. Karkal was, to the east of Udipi and to its South was Puttur. To the east of the district of South Kanara was the Coorg district, where the coffee estates were. They were in the [Western Ghats](#) .

My father had served in Karkal, Puttur, Mangalore, and Kasargod. My father used to rent accommodation in places where he was transferred to. Thus after the collapse of our coffee estates, from 1936 to 1937 he was stationed in Karkal. From 1938 to 1939 he was stationed in Puttur. Gratian Farias, later to be the husband of my sister Minna, lived in Puttur at that time. His mother, Helen was the first cousin of my father, being the daughter of his father's sister Regina.