

## SATHGUDH—THE HOME OF SATHGUDI ORANGES

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**Introduction.** SATHGUDH (Sath=seven, Gudh=hillocks with forts) the place after which one of the best varieties of South Indian oranges is named, is now a hamlet of Pernambut Village, in Gudiyattam Taluk, North Arcot District. The remains of the seven hill fortresses are still seen on the tops of hills surrounding the village, the village proper being situated in the centre of a valley. Sathgudh, now generally known as Satghur, is on the Pernambut-Synagunta forest road, a mile from Pernambut and the nearest railway station Mailpatti, on the Madras-Bangalore line, is eight miles away from the place.

Originally it was the head quarters of the taluk of the same name, but now it has been reduced to the position of a hamlet due to adverse circumstances which will be described in the course of this note.

**Historical Importance.** The place is interesting on account of its celebrated forts. The Jagir worth three lakhs of rupees was originally granted by the Emperor Muhammed Shah to one Hirasut Khan, who after the assassination of Safder Ali at Vellore, acted as *naiib* of the minor Muhammed Ali. When the latter was assassinated at Arcot, Anwar-ud-din sent Hirasut Khan back to his Jagir. He was succeeded by his son and grandson, but Nawab Ammer-ul-Hind Wallajah usurped the Jagir and established himself as the Jagirdar. When Nawab Ameer-ul-Hind Wallajah died issueless, the British Government sold the free-hold right of the estate by public auction to Meer Oomaja Bahadur, a then member of the Madras Collectorate on the 4th May 1862 for a sum of Rs. 44,035. But owing to excessive debts contracted by his son Syed Muhammed Khan Bahadur, the estate was managed by the Court of Wards for some time and in 1924 it was finally auctioned. Sowcar Janab C. Abdul Hakim Sahib Bahadur, an influential merchant of Madras purchased it for a sum of Rs. 1,64,000. The property is still in his possession. A portion of the village belongs to Government.

The highest of the fortified peaks rises to a height of 2367 feet above the sea level, the other six being some what lower. The style of construction is attributed to the Maharattas and the existence of some Hindu temples and mantapams together with the style of the fortresses themselves, show that they were not Muhammadan structures, though signs of Muhammadan improvements are apparent. It was during the Muhammadan period that fruit trees were planted for the first time in the Village. Oranges, mangoes and other minor fruit trees viz. custard apple, wood-apple, guavas, were largely cultivated.

**Agricultural importance.** According to the sale deed executed by Colonel Dale in favour of Meer Oomaja Bahadur on 4th May

1862, the total area of the estate is about 6050 acres. Of this total area, about 75 acres are classified under wet, 2000 acres under dry lands and the rest under forest, river and channel beds, house sites and roads.

The soil in this village varies from light loamy soils along the river beds to deep red soils with soft rock underlying at the foot of the hills. The soil is fertile generally.

The main sources of water for the village were:—

(a) Kannar (hill stream) which flowed in the middle of the Village during rainy season from the surrounding hills.

(b) Kasams. (perennial springs) There were four in the village itself and another passed through the Village from Rengambatta, a neighbouring village. These kasams were supplying water to the whole of the village throughout the year, and water table was so high that there was no need to lift water to irrigate the fields.

But now, owing to inadequate and unevenly distributed rainfall, water supply has become very scarce in the Kannar and Kasams. A number of wells, have therefore been dug in different places in the village for irrigation purposes. Even in the wells, which now number about eighty, the water-level has gone down beyond fifty feet.

During the period of the Muhammadan rulers the Royal family evinced much interest in cultivation, especially in fruit growing. The Nawabs took up extensive lands and planted large acres of fruit trees viz. oranges, mangoes, custard apple, and guavas. Even now remnants of these plantations except that of oranges are seen in the village. Fruit gardens were planted in memory of a few important persons e. g. Dhadi Bagh, Oomaja Bagh, Ali Bagh, Beghum Bagh and Kanni Koul and they exist even now, though in a neglected condition.

The present generation have not seen orange gardens in the village, but very old people still surviving say that they had seen about 70 acres of orange gardens, belonging to the Royal family. One "Thatha Malgoa tree" seen in an old garden is more than 100 years old and represents the best variety of the locality. With the decline of the Muhammadan dynasty, the interest in fruit cultivation ceased. The lands passed into the hands of absentee land lords. None of them took any interest in fruit cultivation, and the famous Sathugudi orange gardens disappeared from their original home.

During the Muhammadan dynasty this was the best known village and large number of ryots came and settled in it. It is said that there were as many as eight streets with more than two thousand houses in the village; but as the lands passed into the hands of absentee land lords, who did not properly look after the lands and the tenants and as the supply of water in the village got scarce, most of the ryots who were residents of the Village migrated and settled down in more

flourishing villages in the neighbourhood; and there are at present only three streets with three hundred houses. The people are too poor to take any interest in cultivation and much less in fruit growing.

It is but natural that when a Royal family shows some interest in any particular occupation, the people also take interest in it; such was the state of affairs in Sathgudh during the period of The Muhammadan rulers.

It is however gratifying to note that one ryot has planted a small area of about an acre under orange in the village last year. It is hoped that this will be a forerunner to many others who may renew the old reputation of the place by extending the area and that it may again be the chief centre of producing good fruits.

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## FRUIT FLIES AND THEIR ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE IN S. INDIA \*

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In a tract like South India where the benefits of a liberal use of fruits in the daily dietary of our households has not yet been sufficiently appreciated as in many western countries, neither the cultivation of fruit crops nor the study of the diseases and pests they are subject to has received that serious attention which such problems deserve. It is needless to add that fruit trees are as much subject to the attentions of insect pests as are many of our staple food and other cultivated crops and if one takes some little trouble to estimate the loss caused by insect pests to our fruit trees, it will be found proportionately as substantial as is the loss caused by pests of paddy, cotton and other field crops. Among the various insect pests attacking fruit trees those popularly known as "Fruit flies" occupy a very important status in all the fruit growing areas of the world. In this province, though we find different kinds of these fruit flies attacking various fruits and damage to crops is generally realised, we have hardly any previous records on the biological or economic aspects of South Indian fruit flies excepting a few references of a taxonomic nature. In these days of quick and easy transportation facilities between different parts of the world, insect pests of different kinds have more frequent and easier opportunities of getting dispersed from place to place and, in many cases, undesirable insects get admission into areas where they

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