HISTORY OF SRI LANKA TOWARDS INDEPENDANCE
THE PORTUGUESE ERA

In 1505 (16th century) the Portuguese Lorenzo de Almeida arrived by ship to Colombo. At first he established a friendly relationship with the king of Kotte and began trading cinnamon and spices which was very valuable in Europe. The king of Kotte (who ruled near present day Colombo) gave a goat skin to the Portuguese in 1517 to use the skin to mark the perimeter of the area that the Portuguese will be occupying. The Portuguese cut the skin into small strips and took a lot of area and they used Portuguese prisoners to make a fort for soldiers to stay in Colombo.
PHOTOGRAPHS

THE PORTUGUESE ERA

However the Portuguese also had ideas of taking over Sri Lanka and when the Portuguese tried many times to take over the whole of Sri Lanka, in 1592 the capital of the kingdom was moved to Kandy which was easier to defend. Many Sri Lankans who decided to stay behind were killed by the Portuguese. When the Portuguese tried to attack Kandy once with canons and guns they were driven all the way back into the fort by the Sri Lankan soldiers with swords and spears but reinforcements of Portuguese soldiers by ship caused the Sri Lanka soldiers to retreat. Because all of Sri Lanka except for Kandy was ruled by the Portuguese, when the Dutch captain Joris van Spilbergen landed in 1602, Sri Wikramasingha Rajasingha 2nd (the king of Kandy at that time) appealed to him for help to get rid of the Portuguese.
THE DUTCH ERA

Rajasinghe II made a treaty with the Dutch in 1638 to get rid of the Portuguese. The main conditions of the treaty were that the Dutch should handover the coastal areas they capture to the king and the king should grant the Dutch trade on the entire island. The agreement was breached by both parties. By 1656 Colombo fell from the Portuguese clutches and in 1660 the Dutch controlled the whole island except the kingdom of Kandy. Over the 140 years of rule the Dutch tried repeated attempts to capture Kandy but failed.
COLONISATION BY THE BRITISH

During the Napoleonic Wars (France vs. Britain) Great Britain, fearing that French control of the Netherlands might deliver Sri Lanka to the French, so they occupied the coastal areas of the island with little difficulty in 1796. In 1802 the Treaty of Amiens formally gave all the Dutch concurred land in Sri Lanka to the British and it became a crown colony. In 1803 the British invaded the Kingdom of Kandy in the first Kandyan War, but were all killed. Kandy wasn’t a location that was able to be concurred by British military so they singed a treaty called the “Udarata Treaty” with the ministers of the Kandyan kingdom to give Kandy to the British and deport the king who was ruling at the time who was vicious and cruel. In 1815 Kandy was occupied in the second Kandyan War, finally ending Sri Lankan ruling. However the king was not deported till later when he was tricked into coming to a treaty and then deported. He was the last of the 181 kings who ruled Sri Lanka from the Anuradhapura to Kandy periods. After 1815 the entire nation was under British colonial rule.
Armied uprisings against the British took place in the 1818 Uva Rebellion lead by Keppetipola Disawe and the 1848 Matale Rebellion. Following the suppression of the Uva Rebellion, the Kandyan people were stripped of their lands and every one older than 18 were killed and the rice paddies were all destroyed with livestock killed. However the British found that the uplands of Sri Lanka were very suitable for coffee, tea and rubber cultivation. By the mid-19th century Ceylon tea had become a staple of the British market bringing great wealth to a small number of white tea planters. This still brings wealth to Sri Lanka today. To support this a network of roads and railways were built.
COLONISATION BY THE BRITISH

- The British also introduced democratic elements to Sri Lanka for the first time in its history. It was not until 1909 that constitutional development began, with a partly elected assembly, and not until 1920 that elected Sri Lankan and British members outnumbered official British appointees.

- (On the right is the treaty signed by the ministers of the Kandyan kingdom and the British Ministers)
**Fight for Independence in Sri Lanka**

- During WW1 The close collaboration of the D. S. Senanayake’s United National Party with the war-time British administration led to the support of Lord Louis Mountbatten. His dispatches and a telegram to the Colonial office supporting Independence for Ceylon have been cited by historians as having helped the Senanayake’s united national party to secure the independence of Sri Lanka. After world war two it was certain that Sri Lanka would receive independence since India recently received independence but Sri Lanka would receive it in a less radical, violent and low key manner.
THE VICTORY OF INDEPENDENCE

- Thanks to many great heroes including Honourable D. S. Senayaka, Ponnambalam Ramanathan, Ponnambalam Arunachalam and Siddi Lebbe Marikar “The Free Lanka Bill” was created. It was introduced in the State Council, on 19 January 1945.

- A second reading of the Free Lanka Bill was moved and passed without division on the 4th of February 1948.

- 4th of February is commemorated to be the day Sri Lanka received independence and became an independent member of the British commonwealth.
HEROES OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

- **Uva Rebellion (Rebellion of 1818):** Veera Keppetipola Dissawe,
- Wilbawe
- **Matale Rebellion (Rebellion of 1848):** Gongalegoda Banda
- Veera Puran Appu
- **Rebels:** Utuwankande Sura Saradiel
- **20th Century independence movement:** Don Stephen Senanayake
- Fredrick Richard Senanayake
- Anagarika Dharmapala
- Walisinghe Harischandra
- Ponnambalam Ramanathan
- Ponnambalam Arunachalam
- Charles Edgar Corea
- Siddi Lebbe Marikar
HEROES OF THE INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

- Victor Corea
- A. E. Goonesinha
- E. W. Perera
- D. R. Wijewardena
- James Peiris
- Henry Pedris
- C.W.W. Kannangara
- Rev S. Mahinda
- Gratien Fernando
- Colvin R. de Silva
- Mark Anthony Bracegirdle
- Gratien Fernando
- William de Silva
- Philip Gunawardena
- Pieter Keuneman
- N.M. Perera
- Sir Edwin Wijeyeratne
- Vivienne Goonewardena

This shows the unity that was involved in the creation of independence in Sri Lanka