

Union Vale

Among the sugar factories erected all over Mauritius, 54 of them were built in the Grand Port district. A small village known as Union Vale is located in the same historical district.

Union Vale, which was initially known as “Mare du Tabac” now forms part of the Mon Trésor Mon Desert Sugar Estate. It was incorporated in the Mon Trésor Mon Desert Estate in 1944 during the centralization process. Archival records of 1854 stated that Mr Samouilhan employed 26 indentured men, along with 7 boys, 1 woman and 2 girls. The estate was small and hence the owner did not find it necessary to have recourse to large numbers of indentured labourers.



Fig 13. Union Vale Sugar Estate (Source: Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture)

The process of engaging former indentured labourers who still lived in the estate camp at Union Vale continued till 1944. Despite the termination of sugar production, the labourers continued to stay in the barracks and work for the estate.

Today, there are several ruins in this small village, as depicted in the map below:

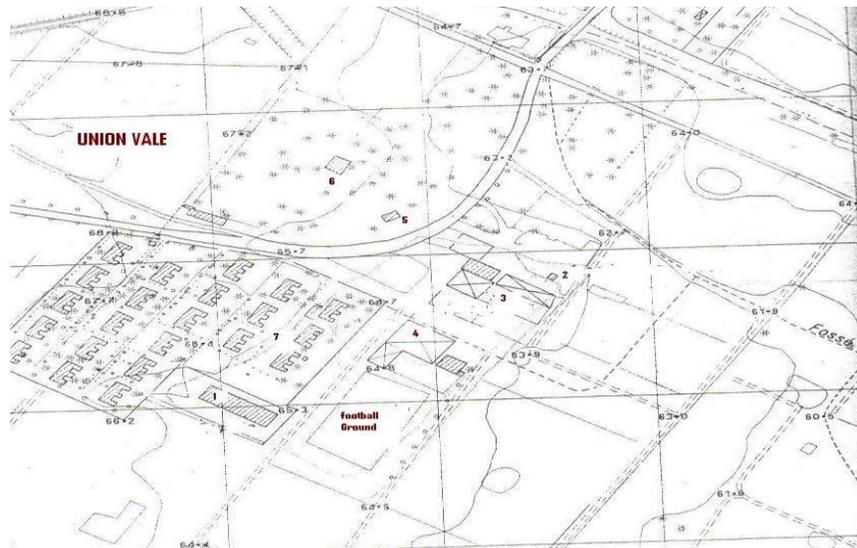


Fig 14. Map of Union Vale (Source: AGTF Collection)

A row of 12 barracks surrounded by walls, forms part of the ruins. Basalt rocks and argamasse (a special preparation of lime) which were mainly used for the construction are clearly visible.



Fig 15. Ruins of barracks at Union Vale in 2009

1. A chimney which is also part of the ruins can clearly be seen in Union Vale.

2. A stone building which is partly broken formed part of the sugar factory. It is actually found next to the chimney. The building is now being used as stores.



Fig 16. Remains of Sugar Factory in 2009



Fig 17. Bell (Source: AGTF Collection)

3. A big bell can also be found in the yard. In the old days, the bell was used to inform people about time, as long ago there was no personal clock.

4. Part of the present offices are historical structures, previously used as garage for locomotives. They have been modified but the historical façade of these structures can still be seen.



Fig 18. Ancient Garage for locomotives in 2009

5. A water canal can be seen at the edge of the camp. It was probably used when the factory was operational.