

A brief biography of my maternal
grandfather Mr Rangasamy Pillay
who was a professional sienne netter
for approximately sixty years

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Topic Roots Project

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My maternal grandfather and his father,

Mr. S.E. Pillay, who only resided in my

Title and was a professional seine netter for approximately sixty years.

A brief biography of my maternal grandfather, Mr Rangasamy Pillay who was a professional seine netter for approximately sixty years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to extend my gratitude to my grandparents for their oral testimonies as well as providing me with documents; Mr Chetty from the Documentation Centre of the University of Durban Westville for his invaluable assistance and to my father, Mr S.Y.Moodley who not only assisted me in gathering and assembling data but also typing out my project.

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INTRODUCTION

Indians have been engaged in the fishing industry of Durban from about 1865 - 1870. The base of their operations was originally on Salisbury Island, situated in Durban Bay, but the date of their initial settlement on the island is uncertain. (1)

The Natal Fisheries Commission in 1883 recommended that plots of land on the Bay Beach or Salisbury Island should be let on lease for all other purposes connected with the fishing trade to any fit and proper persons. (2).

In the Report of the Indian Immigrants Commission, appointed in 1885 by Sir Henry Bulwer, to enquire into the Indian Immigration Laws and Regulations of the Colony and the general conditions of the Indian population of Natal there is a section on the fishing industry established on Salisbury Island. The section states that a very interesting industry was established on Salisbury Island and the inhabitants were free because they were ex-indentured Indians and that they were busily engaged in fishing and fish-curing. (3).

Sir Henry Binns, in a Report of the Indian Immigrants Commission (1885-1887) contained a section which stated:

"... free Indians thrive in Natal ... their industrious habits cause them to prosper in nearly every occupation in which they engage ... They show commendable industry in fishing and fish-curing; the Indian fishing settlement on Salisbury Island, in Durban Bay, has been of manifest advantage not only to the Indian but to the White inhabitants of the Colony ". (4).

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1. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal, 1961 ed. X1 , p. 71.
 2. Ibid., p. 72.
 3. Ibid., pp. 72 - 73.
 4. Ibid., p. 75.

Early Childhood

According to my grandfather his father owned a farm in Umlaas where he cultivated bananas. (12). When fishing did not render much profits my great-grandfather would take his family to the farm. When the fishing season boomed my great-grandfather would bring his family once more to Fynnland where he leased a wood and iron house. My grandfather was exposed to two completely different vocations at an early age. But when he reached the age of twelve he decided to become wholly involved in fishing. (13).

Marriage and Birth of Children

When my grandfather reached the age of twenty-one years his family decided that it was time for him to get married. The necessary arrangements were made by his maternal uncle who was a friend of my grandmother's family. My grandparents only saw each other on the wedding day. (14).

My grandfather and his wife stayed with his family for about ten years. He then moved out of the parental dwelling and built his own house in the Fynnland/Bluff area. The house was situated in 34 Kingsclere Road. My grandparents had eight children. Their eldest child Parsurman was born in 1926, Madurai 1928, Chockalingum 1930, Savithri 1932, Morga 1934, Kistamma 1936, Annammah 1938 and Pushpavathi in 1941. (15).

Usually fishing is a craft that is handed down from one generation to the next. However, my grandfather's sons engaged in occupations other than fishing with the exception of Morga who does fishing on a part-time basis. According to my eldest uncle fishing is not predictable and not stable,

12. Appendix 1.

13. Appendix 19.

14. Appendix 9.

15. Appendix 2.

therefore, they decided against becoming fishermen. (16).

Housing

Housing is an interesting aspect in regard to the Fynnland/Bluff area. The fishing community were divided into those that lived in the fishing village and those that lived in the Fynnland/Bluff area. (17).

Those that lived in the village lived on land leased from the South African Railways and Harbours Administration. My grandfather recalled that in the fishing village there were at least eleven plots of land and there were about twenty-five Indian households on it. (18;19).

My grandfather lived in the Fynnland/Bluff area which is part of Durban Borough. There were about eleven dwellings in this area. Each dwelling was situated on a quarter-acre plot.

My grandfather owned the quarter-acre site upon which his building was erected. My grandfather's house was built of brick and tile. (20). According to my mother their house was well furnished and well cared for. She also stated that their house had the luxury of a telephone. Municipal water and electricity was installed. Bucket sanitation was used, and removal was effected by the Corporation. They had to pay a total of approximately £200 per annum to the Durban Corporation.

Education

My grandfather did not have any formal education. The main reason for this was that during his childhood his family drifted throughout the year between Fynnland and Umlaas, depending on the fishing conditions. The secondary reason was that formal education was not a requirement for fishing. My grandmother also had no formal education. Educating girls

16. Appendix 20.

17. Appendix 16.

18. Appendix 19.

19. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal,
op. cit., p.97.

20. Appendix 10.

was considered to be an unnecessary waste of money.

It was interesting to note that my grandparents and most of the other fishermen, though their calling does not demand a high educational standard, considered it important to give their children schooling. (21).

Since there was no government or government aided Indian school in the area the children of the fishermen travelled to schools in the King's Rest, Wentworth, Clairwood and Rosburgh areas. All Mr Pillay's children attended schools in Clairwood.

I stumbled on the interesting fact that my father who was teaching at Clairwood at that time recognised the dire need for a school for the children of the fishing community. He was responsible for starting a platoon school at King's Rest. The school comprised ninety-six children and two teachers. (22).

Income and Expenditure

My grandfather usually earned about £25 per month. To supplement his income he engaged in shrimping. (23). My grandmother's uncle Mr Candasamy had no family of his own, so he resided with my grandparents. He contributed substantially to the family income. He worked as a steward on a ship called "ABA" for two years. Subsequently he worked as a cook for the Whaling Company in the Bluff area. (24).

Later, my grandfather's four sons started working and they contributed to the family income. Each son contributed about £3 per week.

The soil in the area was very fertile and my grandparents grew vegetables for their own consumption. They also kept poultry. So, food

21. Appendix 19.

22. Appendix 1.

23. Appendix 6.

24. Appendix 17.

expenses did not absorb too much of their income.

Expenditure included fuel, rent, clothing, transport, education, medical services, ceremonial expenses, sundries (such as tobacco and liquor) and other miscellaneous expenses.

My grandfather lived a comfortable existence with his income well over the expenditure.

Fishing Operations

It appears that fishing operations continued both inside and outside the Bay until the passing of Act 31 of 1906. My grandfather was aware of the restrictions of this Act from his father and other fishermen in the area. Until this Act came into operation, the Indian fishermen used their seine nets in Durban Bay and licences were issued for that purpose. After 1906 the Indian fishermen were permitted to fish only off the Ocean Beach and were barred from fishing with seine nets within the Bay, although line-fishing and the netting of prawns and shrimps were allowed in the harbour and "within the training wall" which is sometimes referred to as a "retaining wall". It appears to have been the remains of a wall constructed to keep the sea from encroaching upon a military camp-site. The wall now forms a portion of the South Pier. This permission has to be granted by the Fisheries Officer, with the approval of the Port Captain. The specific sanction of the Port Captain is still a necessary requirement in order to limit interference with the passage of sea-going vessels in and out of the harbour. (25;26).

When my grandfather lived in Fynnland he used to leave home about 4h00 to start fishing operations. When he moved to Chatsworth he left home about 5h00. (27). Thus skippers set out to sea in their low-draught

25. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal,
op. cit., p.80.

26. Appendix 18.

27. Appendix 19.

rowing boats. They operate close inshore, about five hundred to seven hundred yards from the beach.

The procedure in seine net fishing is to have two "spotters" stationed at dawn, one at South Pier and the other at the North Pier, and a pilot boat with a crew of five in the area. Spotters can, from a distance, see the tell-tale signs of a shoal of fish swimming below the surface. The boats used are sturdily built. They are usually constructed by the seine netters themselves. These boats are roared for approximately three miles up and down the coast from Durban, but for operations further afield they are loaded on lorries and transported to those areas. (28).

My grandfather owned one boat which he constructed himself. (29).

When immediately a shoal of fish is "spotted" one look-out man signals information regarding the direction, and speed of the shoal and the estimated size and type of the fish. The other "spotter" immediately checks the information and signals this to the pilot boat, which then makes for the group of men on the shore, where a plan of campaign is devised and the necessary gear prepared. (30).

Two surf boats, each with a one inch mesh net measuring 300 feet by 20 feet, and manned by a crew of five men (a captain and four parsmen) push off in a wide arc in the direction in which the fish are expected to move. When the shoal enters this part of the fishing ground, the net is lowered by one of the surf boats, which then moves slowly towards the other boat. When they meet, the second net is lowered and the ends tied together. Thus the two nets combine to make one large net 20 feet by 600 feet. Once the nets are laid and the fish are within the area covered by the net, one of the surf boats hurries, with the ends of the leader drag-ropes, to the shore. Two groups of fishermen comprising up

28. Fiat Lux Aug.1967, op. cit., pp. 176 - 177.

29. Appendix 14.

30. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal, op. cit., p.83.

to twenty men each, begin to draw the ropes, and at the same time the boat at sea signals (by shrill blasts of a whistle or by arm signals) the directions to the men on shore who are expected to keep in line with the gradual movement of the fish so that the nets are always under the shoal. (31).

Sometimes it is necessary for a " safety " net to be thrown to prevent any possible escape of fish from the base nets. This is usually done by another surf boat which circles the area covered by the original nets and feeds out a third net. In the meantime, the rope attached to the nets under the shoal is carefully hauled in and the surf boat comes closer to the shoal. The fish (trapped in ankle-deep water), if large eg. barracuda, are seized by the hand and thrown on the beach. At times it is necessary to stun the fish with wooden poles or gaffs to prevent damage to the nets. If the fish are small, eg. sardines and pilchards, baskets are used to take in the catch which is piled up on the beach before being carried to the fisherman's hut which is rented from the Durban Municipality. Here the fish are weighed and some of them sold to the public or to traders and hawkers. (32;33).

Types of Fish Caught and Seasons

The commonest shoals netted are a variety of mullet, shad, pilchards, sardines, Natal snoek and barracuda. Salmon and geelbek are not common. All these types of fish are seasonal and occur in shoals of varying sizes, those of shoal sardines being the largest. Shoal fish are expected at certain times and fishermen have in recent years noted a slight change in the times in which they are due. (34).

The busiest time of the year for seine netters is during the Natal's annual sardine run which usually occurs towards the end of June.

31. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal,
op. cit., p.83.

32. Ibid. , pp. 83 - 84.

33. Appendix 15.

34. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal,
op. cit., p.84.

Because of vagaries of the weather it frequently happens that rough seas keep the shoals some distance off-shore and therefore make netting operations impossible. When sardines do come close in-shore, however, very large catches are sometimes made. The netting of the sardines often occurs during the winter school vacation. (35). Shad is netted in September, October, and November and again in December and January; mullet from March to June; snoek from January to March; geelbek and salmon follow the sardines and are netted at the same time. (36).

According to my grandfather they used to net about five thousand to fifteen thousand fishes in one net. He recalls that the largest shoal he netted was twenty thousand fishes. This shoal contained a variety of fishes but contained mostly shad. My grandfather also stated that shad fetched the most money. (37).

How the Fish is Retailled

Most of the fish is sold in and around Durban. According to my grandfather, the Natal Indian Fishermen's Association, of which he was a major shareholder, had about fifteen fish "stalls" in the Victoria Street Indian Market. They paid a monthly rental of thirty shillings per "stall". (38).

But, most of the fish are sold on the beach at wholesale prices to the public and other stall holders, and the remainder is usually disposed of by the Indian fishermen's organisation at its own stalls or sold to retailers or hawkers. This stalls had to be given up when the market was reorganised. Today their catch is marketed through the wholesale trade with the aid of butchers and fishmongers.

35. Appendix 12.

36. Fiat Lux Aug.1967, op. cit., p.177.

37. Appendix 19.

38. Ibid.

Natal Indian Fisherman's Association

It is very important to note that co-operation is essential in fishing operations. Many of the problems involved in raising capital to purchase or construct surf boats, fishing gear, seine nets, the maintenance of a competent labour force and the establishment of a steady market for their product, would have been beyond the competence of individual fishermen. Instead, the fishermen pooled their resources to form a co-operative venture, and from the early 1900's until 1953, conducted their operations as the Natal Indian Fisherman's Association. (39).

The basis of the Association's establishment and operation was one of mutual trust. There was no written constitution, memorandum of agreement or articles of association, nor was it registered under the Company Act. The assets of the joint venture, contributed by the thirty-four licensed fishermen in the community, were vested in the Association which handled the income and was responsible for liabilities legitimately incurred. No membership fees or subscription were paid and the only requirement for participation was that all members of the Association should be licensed fishermen and must have contributed to the common pool. In the absence of any tangible asset, a member could contribute his services and skill to the enterprise. Profits were shared equally and not in proportion to the value of the individual contribution to the Association. (40).

Upon the death of any member, the Association continued to maintain the dependants of the deceased until his son, if any, came of age and was able to become a member. During the interval between the death of a member and the time of his son's coming of age, the Association assumed

39. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal, op. cit., p.81.

40. Ibid., pp. 81 - 82.

the role of "curator bonis" and paid to the widow the share of the proceeds of the joint venture which would have accrued to her husband. Such sums were not repayable to the Association after the son was old enough to contribute towards the earnings of the fishing community. Where there was no male issue, the widow received her husband's share until her death. (41).

The Association assumed responsibility for the payment of harbour dues, corporation water and sanitary charges, taxes, rent, licence fees and the wages of labourers and fishermen's assistance, the cost of maintaining the Association's motor truck, boats, seine nets and other equipment belonging to the fishing community. (42).

The Natal Indian Fisherman's Association was succeeded by a company registered in terms of the Companies Act, as the Natal Seine and Trawl Fisheries (pty) ltd, which assumed the functions and responsibilities of the Association. This Company was registered in 1953, the Company had an authorised capital of £1000 and retained intact the capital assets and equipment of the Association. Thirty-four licensed fishermen, who had been members of the Association automatically became shareholders in the Company and relinquished their individual licences in favour of an arrangement whereby all licences were issued in the name of the Company. (43).

The Company is engaged exclusively in inshore fishing. It is a non-profit making concern, and its gains, for income-tax purposes, appear as wages. Its total earnings from seine netting are considerable. The income is distributed among the shareholders, irrespective of the amount contributed by individual fishermen to the original pool. Discretion,

41. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal, op. cit., p.82.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid., p.122.

however, is exercised in the weekly payments to shareholders during the year. Total receipts, after the sale of any particular catch, are seldom shared out in full. Allowance is made for the estimated current expenditure of the Company, and certain amounts are set aside for reserve and for the estimated requirements of the Durban Indian Netters Benefit Account. This is a fund established by the Company for the purpose of assisting, individual shareholders who may encounter financial difficulty particularly during the slack season. Loans made from this account are recoverable over a period and may be deducted in instalments from the weekly payments due to members as their shares of the catches. Money thus borrowed is lent free of interest and is generally repayable at the borrowers' convenience. (44).

Among the main functions of the Company as a corporate body is that of protecting the interest of the Indian fishermen and making representations on their behalf when necessary. (45).

Problems Fishermen Experience

To the casual observer fishing might seem to be a peaceful and satisfying way of life, but, according to my grandfather this is not always true. Boats have to be put out to sea when conditions are not very pleasant. Added to this there are many days when the boats cannot operate or the full day's netting catches brought in are very small.

The fishermen also have to keep a sharp lookout for obstructions. Besides the known reefs and outcrops of rocks, there are the unknown hazards such as lost beach buckets and spades which when imbedded in the sand can tear great holes in the nets. (46).

The installation of shark nets in 1951, have affected the seine netters

44. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal, op. cit., pp. 122 - 123.

45. Ibid., p.125.

46. Fiat Lux Aug. 1967, op. cit., p.176.

adversely. According to the seine netters where these nets had been placed their catches have been seriously diminished. According to them the nets not only keep out the sharks, but also the dolphins which herd the shoal of fish close in-shore." The shark-netting scheme covers practically the whole area where fish netting is permitted. Shark nets have been placed between the South Beach and the mouth of the Umgeni River, parallel to the foreshore and about four hundred to five hundred yards out to sea, leaving open only a restricted area between the South Beach and the North Pier. These nets also tend to divert shoals of fish, particularly those proceeding southward, which used to turn towards the foreshore seeking spawning grounds. The only fish caught now are those which enter the restricted area open to the sea or come through or under the nets. The presence of the shark nets may thus account, to a large extent, for the reduction in the volume of fish netted. But, my grandfather was not sure of the effect the shark nets had on the shad catches. (47).

Moreover, more than one hundred and twenty ski-boats have been licensed in Durban. The Indian fishermen suggest that their operation affects fishing in the area, not only because they interfere with actual netting operation, but also because shoal fish are frightened off their course by the ski-boats fishing for barracuda and other sporting fish. (48).

Seine netters are not allowed to conduct their activities in the Durban Bay. It was only in 1955 that there were any indications that the Indian fishermen might possibly again be allowed the restricted use of seine nets in the Bay and Harbour. Fishermen, including my grandfather maintained that such permission would increase their income considerably, as large quantities of fish which are difficult to net in the open sea, can be caught fairly easily in the Bay. At present seine netting is

47. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal,
op. cit., p.85.

48. Ibid.

virtually restricted to a few miles between the harbour entrance and the Umgeni mouth, on the Ocean Beach, and inside a continuous reef running almost parallel with the foreshore. No commercial fishing thus takes place in the Bay, and harbour, where the men fish only with lines from a few rowing boats privately owned by the fishermen. (49;50).

Conclusion

The Fynnland/Bluff area had become an integral part of the lives of my grandfather, his family and other members of the fishing community. But, around 1959 it was decided that the area should become a European residential district. In March and April 1961 the Indian fishermen were removed from the Fynnland fishing village after two extensions of the time limit which had been set by the South African Railways Administration. (51). Two years later the fishermen in the Fynnland/Bluff area were asked to leave the area. The Community Development paid my grandfather four thousand and five hundred rands for his property.

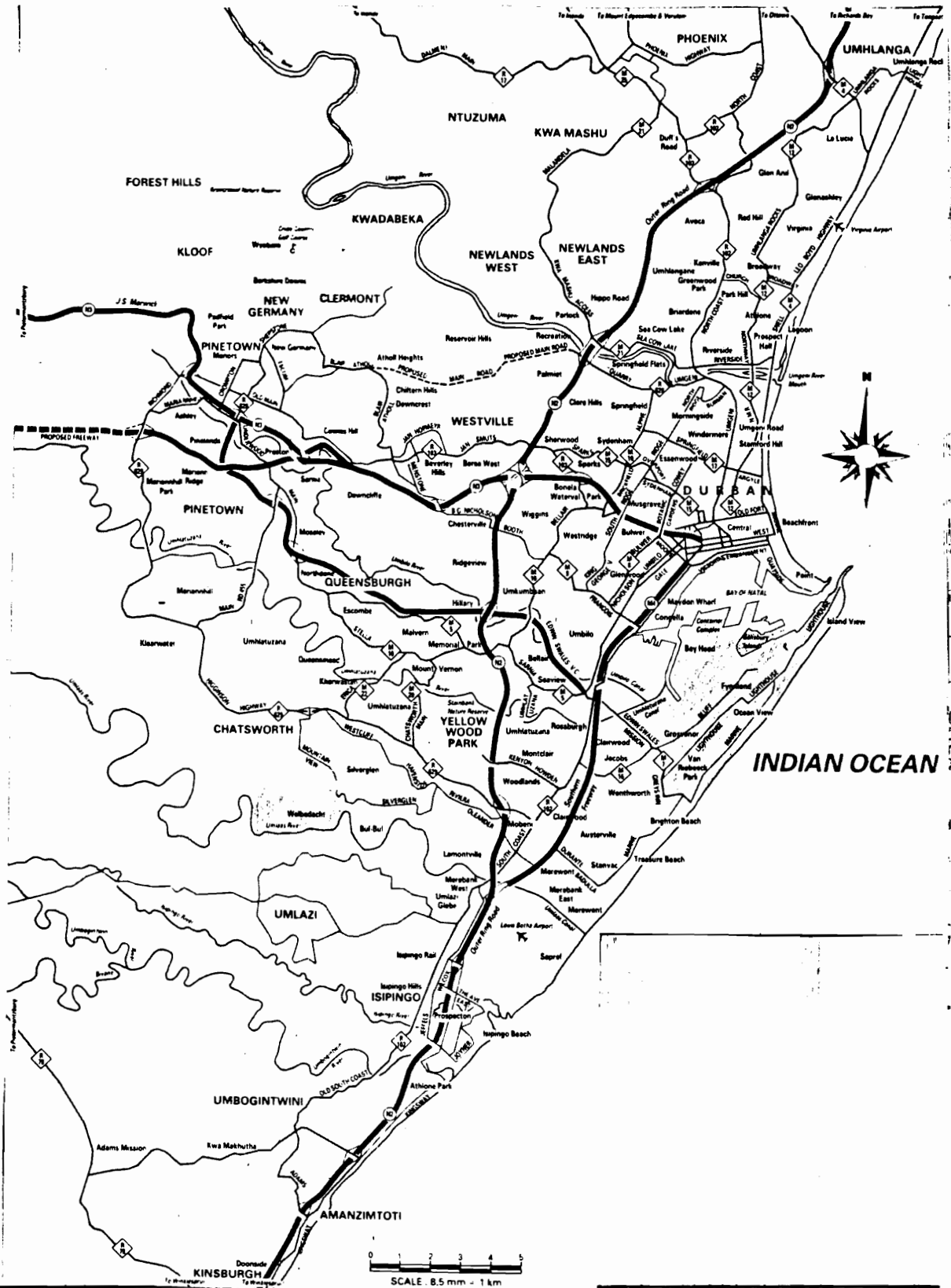
The close-knit fishing community of Fynnland was thus broken down. My grandfather was allocated a house in Havenside, Chatsworth. Many of the other fishermen also received houses in the same area. Despite the removal my grandfather continued with his fishing operations. He retired from fishing in 1975 due to age and ill-health.

Presently, my grandfather is not enjoying good health as he suffers from asthma.

49. Appendix 18.

50. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal,
op. cit., pp.80 - 81.

51. Ibid., p117.



1. Map of Durban

Rangasany and Miniamah

Children

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<u>Parsuraman</u>	<u>Madurai</u>	<u>Chockalingum</u>	<u>Savithri</u>	<u>Morga</u>	<u>Kistamma</u>	<u>Annammah</u>	<u>Pushpavathi</u>
1.Lawerance 2.Yugan 3.Kasturi 4.Ragini 5.Vasanthi	1.Priscella 2.Ranjeni 3.Asoken	1.Sundras 2.Gopaul 3.Sagie 4Logie 5.Nirmalla	1.Victor 2.Amutha 3.Morgan 4.Sinthmoney 5.Sagren	1.Shamala 2.Ronilla 3.Rajen 4.Komilla 5.Kuban	1.Salochana 2.Pravina	1.Saroj 2.Deena 3.Vishnu 4.Premie	1.Indran 2.Cookie

Grandchildren

Appendix 2

CW 12052/01.

B.M.D. 158.
(Ou Inkomste 209.)
(Old Revenue 209.)

9/69/216 A703036

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

VERKORTE GEBOORTESERTIFIKAAT.

ABRIDGED BIRTH CERTIFICATE.

Uitgereik kragtens Wet No. 81 van 1963.

Issued in terms of Act No. 81 of 1963.

Gesertifiseer 'n ware uittreksel uit die
geboorteregister van:—Certified a true extract from the birth
register of:—

Van PILLEY
Surname
Voorname RANGASAMY
First names
Geboortedatum 1903
Date of birth
Geslag MALE
Sex
Distrik van geboorte DURBAN
District of birth
Ras INDIAN
Race
Inskrywingsnommer 1.1.4528/26
Entry number

DISTRICT REGISTRAR
DURBAN
4 SEP 1969
INDIANS
BIRTHS AND DEATHS

Registateur, Assistant-registrateur, Distriks-registrateur.
Registrar, Assistant Registrar, District Registrar.

25c

Moet uitgereik word slegs ten opsigte van
persone wat voor 1/1/1960 gebore is.
To be issued only in respect of persons born
before 1/1/1960.

G.P.-S.26749—1967-68—5.000. S.

1/68/2018

18

B.M.D. 158.
(Ou Inkomste 209.)
(Old Revenue 209.)

CW12057/09.

A382120

REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA.

VERKORTE GEBOORTESERTIFIKAAT.

ABRIDGED BIRTH CERTIFICATE.

Uitgereik kragtens Wet No. 81 van 1963.

Issued in terms of Act No. 81 of 1963.

Gesertifiseer 'n ware uittreksel uit die geboorte-
register van:—

Certified a true extract from the birth
register of:—

Van _____
Surname _____
Voorname MINIAMAH
First Names _____
Geboortedatum ELEVENTH MARCH, 1907
Date of Birth _____
Geslag FEMALE
Sex _____
Distrik van geboorte PINETOWN
District of Birth _____
Ras INDIAN
Race _____
Inskrywingsnommer I. I. 688/1907
Entry Number _____

DISTRICT REGISTRAR	
DURBAN	
Plek Place	
Datum Date	17 -1- 1968
INDIANS	
BIRTHS AND DEATHS	
G.P.S. 7429156—1965-66—5,000. S.	

*Registrateur, Assistant-registrateur, Distriksregistrateur.
Registrar, Assistant Registrar, District Registrar.*

25c

Moet uitgereik word slegs ten opsigte van
persone wat voor 1/1/1960 gebore is.
To be issued only in respect of persons born
before 1/1/1960.

Appendix 4

PASS, under Act 28, 1897.

187

Magisterial Division of Gurulazi
 Name of Indian holding this Pass Armozam
 Sex Male Native of Natal
 Father's Name Besan
 Mother's Name Valliamma
 Age 41 Height 5 9 1/2
 Complexion Dark
~~Occupation~~
 Married, to whom Kurpoora Valliamma
 Status
 Residence Fynland
 Employment or means of subsistence Fisherman
 LEFT THUMB IMPRESSION.

Dated at Durban, this

8

day of

April

190



J. P. Roberts
 asst Protector of Indian Immigrants.

Death Registered 19.1.15

5. My Great-grandfather's Pass

(Signature of the holder)
 (Handwritten name can be attached here)

PROVINCE OF NATAL
PROVINSIE NATAL

REVENUE
INKOMSTE

COMMERCIAL NET LICENCE
NETLISENSIE (HANDELSDOELEINDES) N No 317

Licence Fee/Lisensiegeld: £ R20-00

(Issued under the Provisions of the Coastal Fisheries Conservation Ordinance, 1958
(Uitgereik ingevolge die Ordonnansie op die Bewaring van Kusvisserye, 1958 (Natal), en
(Natal) and subject to the regulations made thereunder.)
onderworpe aan die regulasies daarkragtens.)

NOT TRANSFERABLE—VALID UNTIL 31-12-63
NIE-OORDRAAGBAAR—GELDIG TOT

Mr./Mrs./Miss
Mnr./Mev./Mej.

of
van

is hereby authorised to operate a
word hierby gemagtig om 'n

for the capture of
vir die vang van

only in the area
slegs in die gebied

The net shall be of the dimensions provided for by regulation, and the licensee is permitted to
Die net moet van die afmetings wees wat by regulasie bepaal is, en die lisensiehouer mag sy vangs
sell his catch.
verkoop.

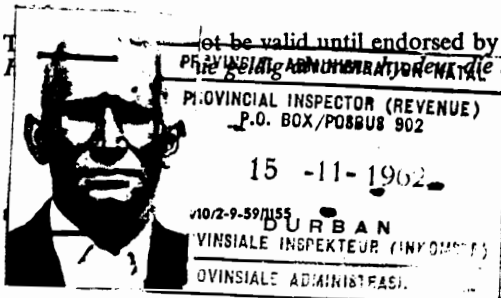
Received the sum of/Bedrag van R20-00 ontvang.

Dated at
Gedateer te

day of
dag van

this
op hede die

(Officer duly appointed/Behoorlik
aangestelde beampte)



(Signature of licence holder)
(Handtekening van lisensiehouer)



7. My grandfather making a seine net



8. My grandfather making a net, watched by his
grandsons.



9. My grandparents

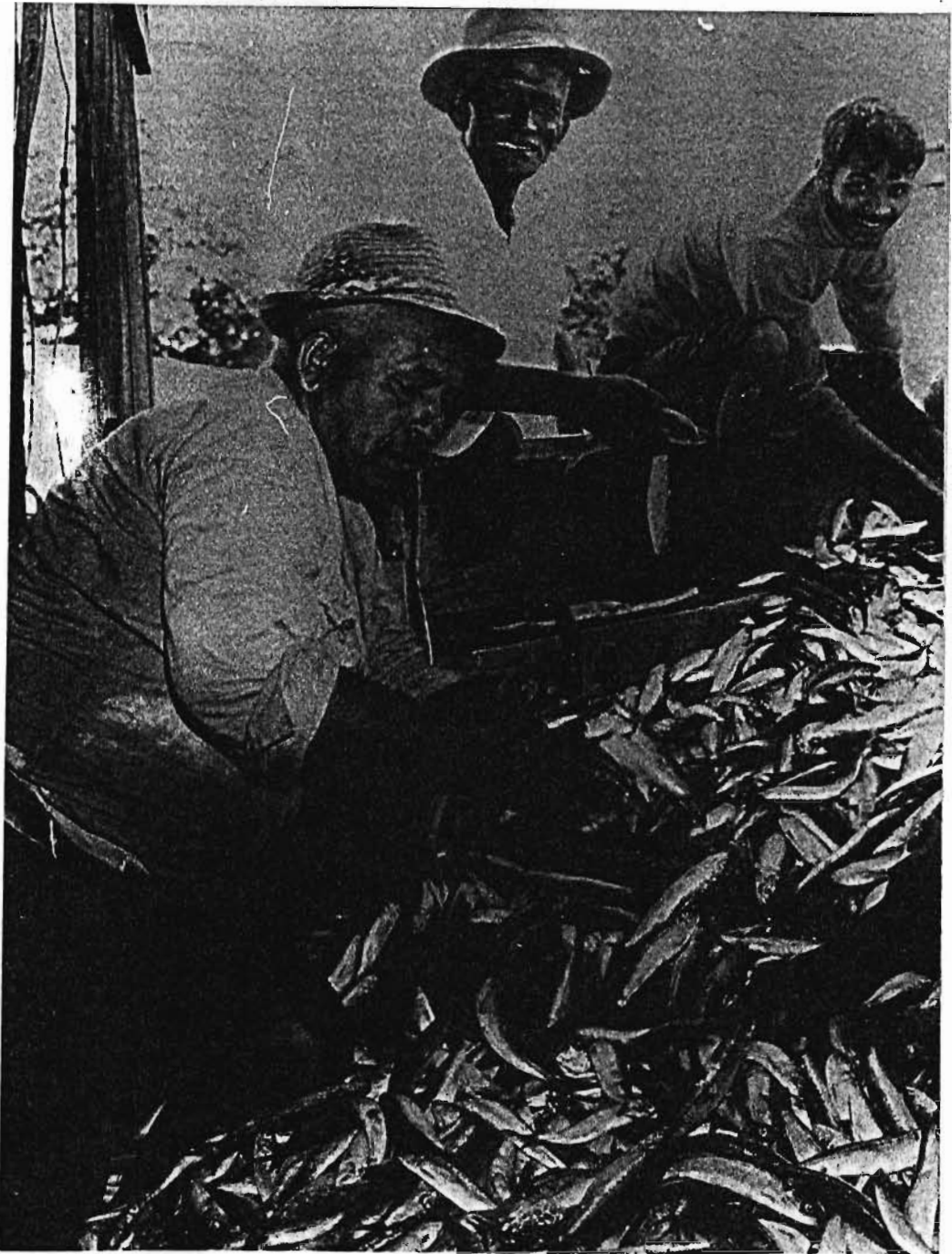
CO. THE GREATLY COMING OF THE GREAT



10. The family house at Fynnland/Bluff



11. My grandparents with the new owner of the house



12. My grandfather and other members of the Fishing Company retailing their sardine catch.
(appeared in the Natal Mercury)



13. My grandfather with his fishing colleagues



Boats making their way to the fishing grounds.

14. Fiat Lux, August 1967. My grandfather captaining his own boat

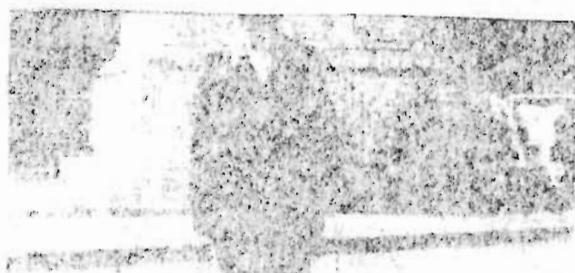


p.64 -

Part of the Pynak to Pynak village

15. Fiat Lux, Aug.1967. The fish is being emptied from the boat

Appendix 16



16. Natal Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal,
p.64.

Part of the Fynnländs fishing village

Queensland Fishery and Game Department
 Appendix 17

Act 31 of 1906 (The Game and Fisheries Act, 1906)



17. My Grandmother's Uncle

gent in Natal.

1906

Summary of Laws, Acts and Ordinances Relating to Seine Net Fishing from 1906Act 31 of 1906 (The Coast Fisheries Act, 1906)

The Act applied to all coastal fishing areas under Colonial jurisdiction and to bays, creeks, lagoons, rivers and streams on the coast or fore-shore, up to the highest point of spring tides.

It provided, inter alia, that:

- i. All applications for licences were to be made in writing and were to specify fully the type of net to be used and the place where it was proposed to use it.
- ii. No licences would be issued for seine or other nets, the use of which was confined to the open sea.
- iii. The Governor-in-Council was empowered to make and alter regulations for the proper administration of the Act.
- iv. The issue of licences was placed under the jurisdiction of the Principal Fisheries Officer, whose powers and duties were specifically defined.
- v. Penalties for contravention of the Act included fines not exceeding £20 or imprisonment for a period of three months on first conviction, or six months imprisonment on any later conviction. In addition the Harbour Board was empowered to order forfeiture of equipment to the value of £50 in cases of conviction under the Act. Half of the fines imposed continued to be paid to informers.

Ordinance 12 of 1912 and Ordinance 2 of 1913 promulgated regulations to control the pollution of streams in Natal as a means of preserving fish life.

Ordinance 4 of 1914 amended Act 31 of 1906 and provided that "No seine or other net, other than nets for the capture of shrimps and prawns shall be used in any waters other than the open sea without the special consent of the Administrator first had and obtained to the varying of this provision."

Ordinance 11 of 1916 repealed all previous enactments and constituted, essentially, re-codification of these enactments. Its application extended to (all waters of the sea, so far as Colonial jurisdiction extends and to all bays, creeks, lagoons, lakes, streams and rivers and to the foreshore and banks thereof, and to all waters in which fish may be found in the Province of Natal".

Substantial penalties were also enforceable for offences.

Q. On the same day the fishing was bad my father and I went to the beach and did not catch anything. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net.

Q. Did you go to the beach to work on the fishing net? A. Yes, I went to the beach to work on the fishing net. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net.

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18. Ibid. A. Yes, I went to the beach to work on the fishing net. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net. I went to the beach to work on the fishing net.

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Oral Transcript of Taped Interview with my Grandfather

Student: Why did you become a fisherman?

Subject: My father was a fisherman. My father also had a farm in Umlaas where we grew bananas.

Student: Did your father own the farm?

Subject: Yes. My father owned the farm. We had a wood and iron house on the farm. When fishing was bad my father, mother and brothers and sisters used to go to Umlaas to work on the farm. When fishing was good we went back to Fynnland.

Student: Did your family have a house in Fynnland as well?

Subject: Yes. We had a wood and iron house near the railway station. Farming was hard and I didn't like it. When I was nine years old my father took me three o'clock in the morning with him to do fishing. I liked fishing better than farming. So I came a fisherman.

Student: Exactly where did you live in Fynnland?

Subject: There was a village and a place on the top. In the village there was twenty-five houses. I lived on the top.

Student: Did you go to school?

Subject: No. We lived sometimes in Umlaas and sometimes in Fynnland. So, I didn't go to school. Also, for fishing we don't need schooling.

Student: Did you enjoy fishing?

Subject: Sometimes fishing too was very bad. We didn't catch lot fish. I like fishing. I am my own boss. I work for nobody.

Student: Tell me something about the seine nets? Did you make it yourself? How long did it take?

Subject: I made the nets. I watched the other people making and I learnt. The net is 300 feet. It takes a very long time to make.

Student: Does it take about two weeks?

Subject: No. It takes more than one month.

Student: How many nets did you use?

Subject: I used only one net.

Student: If the nets get torn - do you throw it away and make a new one?

Subject: No. I repair it and use it.

Student: What was the biggest shoal of fish you caught?

Subject: Sometimes I caught five thousand in a net, sometimes fifteen thousand. The biggest was twenty thousand in one net.

Student: Was it one type of fish?

Subject: No. It was mixed - mostly shad.

Student: Which fish fetched the most money?

Subject: Shad. In the sardine season I made a lot of money.

Student: How did you sell the fish?

Subject: We had stalls in the market.

Student: How many stalls did the Company own?

Subject: We owned about fifteen stalls.

Student: How much did the Company pay for each stall?

Subject: Thirty shillings.

Student: I saw a picture of you in a book called the Fiat Lux, captaining a boat. Did you own the boat?

Subject: Yes. I made my own boat. I learnt it from others. I bought plank and built it. It was number 27.

Student: What time did you leave in the morning to go fishing?

Subject: In Fynnland I left four o'clock in the morning. From here I left five o'clock.

Student: How did you travel?

Subject: We had a Company lorry.

Student: When you were at the beach and there was no fish - what did you and the other fishermen do?

Subject: We sat there and repaired the nets and the boats.

Student: In what year did you retire from fishing?

Subject: In 1975.

Student: Why did you retire?

Subject: I was getting old and sick.

Oral Transcript of Taped Interview with Mr Pillay's Eldest Son,
Mr Parsurman Pillay of Merebank.

Student: Fishing is usually a craft handed down from one generation to the next. Being the eldest son, were you in any way pressurised into following your father's occupation?

Subject: My father did not approve of me becoming a fisherman because of the uncertainty involved in fishing. Rather, he ensured that I received formal education and went into a more stable occupation.

Student: Once you married did you have any inclination to leave your parental home in Fynnland and settle elsewhere?

Subject: No. I preferred living with my parents and our existence in Fynnland was very comfortable.

Student: From what I gather Fynnland was a very beautiful area to live in. Why did you and your family leave the area?

Subject: We had no choice. The authorities asked us to move out because the area was declared a White Area.

Student: To whom did your family sell the house and what arrangements were made for subsequent settlement?

Subject: Our house was taken by the Community Development and we were paid four thousand and five hundred rands. We then decided to become independent. The rest of my family were allocated houses in Havenside, Chatsworth and I was allocated a house in Merebank.

Student: In your opinion did the income derived from fishing over the years improve?

Subject: No. It has not improved.

Student: Why do you say so?

Subject: More and more restrictions were being placed in areas for seine netting and it affected the fishermen a great deal.

Source List

Reference Works:

1. National Regional Survey: Studies of Indian Employment in Natal, Xl.
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3. Mr Rangasamy Pillay : 4 Apollo Street, Havenside, Chatsworth.
4. Mr Parsurman Pillay : 42 Baroda Road, Merebank.