



KOWIE STREET

- A Walk Down Silent Street -



- HOME
- BRIEF HISTORY
- RESISTANCE
- BUSINESS
- COMMUNITY
- THE TEMPLE
- CONTACT AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

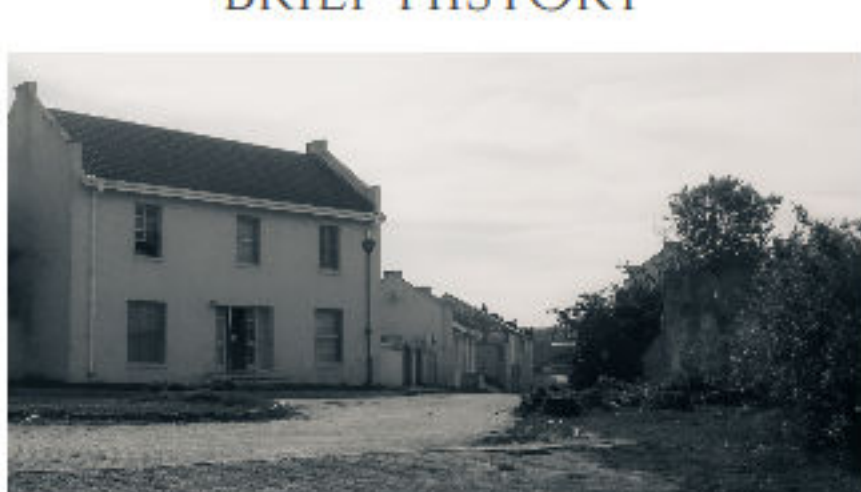
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MISSION STATEMENT

Typically when the Group Areas Act is studied in South Africa, focus is placed on major city hubs such as District 6 and Sophiatown, as well as the affects mostly on people classified as 'black'. This project aims to explore the history of the Group Areas act in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, and to shed light on the largely forgotten history of the Indian and Coloured South Africans living there. It will look specifically at the Kowie Street area, below Fingo Village, and the Indian residents who were affected by such policies, in order to exhibit their experiences, which have largely been untouched and unheard of to date. This project will examine resistance; business and community in relation to the ways residents were affected by the Apartheid era legislation, and continue to be affected today. The project aims to make use of both new visual and archival documents in order to frame the differences between Kowie Street during the Apartheid era and Kowie Street in 2017. Our objective is to put forth this history by collaborating with community members who have experiences of the time in question to construct an authentic narrative that is elegant and provides deep historical reflective analysis and veracity to the public. The project is also a way of socialising, or rather, interacting with various community members so that we as young historians can engage with narratives of public history on a personal level. We shall rekindle the voices of those who were previously silenced and furthermore conceptualize the previously marginalised identities of the people of Kowie Street (who were affected by the GAA) in the present day.

- BRIEF HISTORY -



- By Heather Dixon The Harjeven family moved to Grahamstown from Gujarat in 1905 and have lived here ever since. Many Gujarati people came to Grahamstown in the late 1890s, including the family that owns the still operational 'Harry's Laundry'. Indians in South Africa are typically thought of as having come out as part of... Continue reading

- "ALL FOR NOTHING" - A SPEECH BY MR. HARRY RAMA -

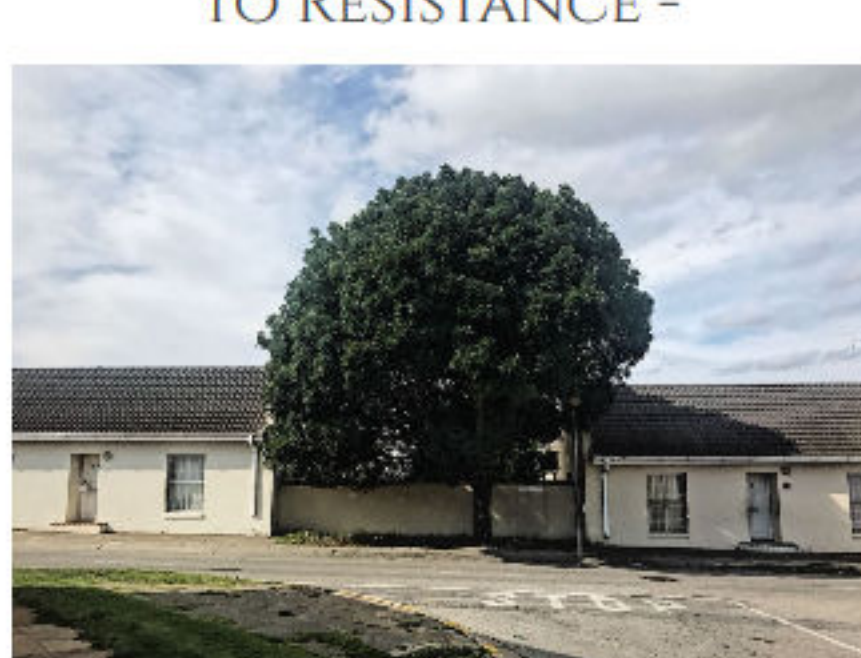
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- COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS: AN AVENUE TO RESISTANCE -



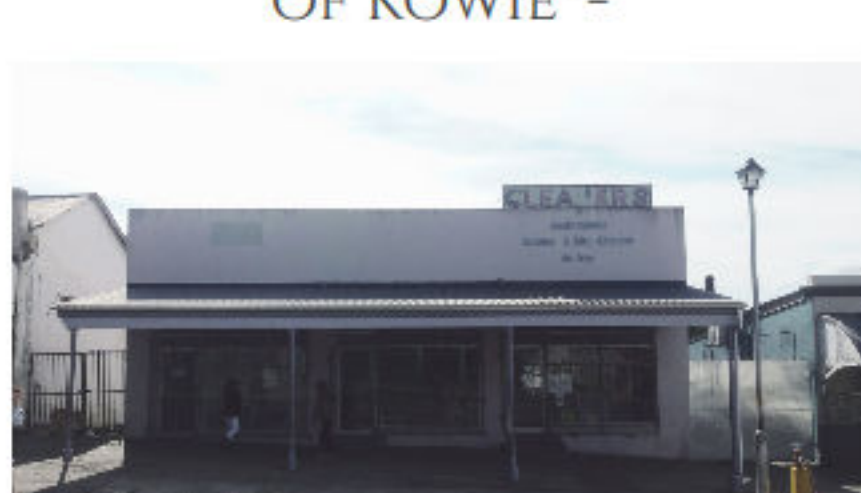
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BRIEF HISTORY

- By Heather Dixon

The Harjeven family moved to Grahamstown from Gujarat in 1905 and have lived here ever since. Many Gujarati people came to Grahamstown in the late 1890s, including the family that owns the still operational 'Harry's Laundry'. Indians in South Africa are typically thought of as having come out as part of the Indentured Labour system – a form of glorified slavery in most cases that was introduced by the British so that they would have labour in the sugar cane plantations. Mr Harjeven highlights however, that most of the indentured labourers were Southern Indians. However many Indians from Gujarat, 200km north of Bombay saw South Africa as an adventure, or way to escape poverty. Chiman Harjeven highlights, "word was going around that Africa has potential! So the adventurous ones said "let's go and do something with our lives", and my great-grandfather was one of them". Although coming into an already segregated colony, with Apartheid to follow on shortly might have seemed gloomy for Indian families – not recognised as equal to white citizens, however Mr Chiman Harjeven highlights how due to the caste system in India, South Africa seemed the land of opportunity and ironically – greater freedom. "In our family, in our village we couldn't go and use the temple. We had to only draw from the well at a certain time, we couldn't just go and get water", notes Mr Harjeven – whose family, being shoemakers, were of a lower caste in India. Although Mr Harjeven's grandfather, could not open his shoe shop in many areas of Grahamstown, and Mr Harjeven as a child could not go to the cinema despite it being right across his house – many were happy to leave.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF

Kowie Street



1812

Grahamstown is founded as a military base by Lieutenant Colonel John Graham.

1828

Grahamstown becomes the administrative centre for the 'Eastern Districts'.

1890'S

Indians settle mainly around Fort England Hospital, slowly extending to New and High streets.

1910

The Union of South Africa is created, unifying the various self-governing provinces (The Orange Free State, Transvaal, Natal and the Cape) into one state.

1924

The NP becomes the governing party of South Africa.

1935

Members of the North Indian and South Indian communities in Grahamstown unite and construct the Temple in Kowie street.

1950

Group Areas Act passed by the National Party across South Africa.

1961

Indians are finally granted permanent residency and citizenship in South Africa. Now that they are 'South African', they are racially classified and subject to the Group Areas Act.

1972

Area bounded by Raglan road, Matthew street, Market street east, and the railway, proclaimed an Indian area.

1975

Indian community expresses their wishes not to be forced to move and gain support from the Town Council.

1981

Hindu Temple on the corner of Kowie and Queen is demolished. Government paid the Indian community only R4500 in compensation.

1820'S

Many of the 1820 Settlers move into Grahamstown.

1870'S

Indian men start to arrive in Grahamstown in search of new opportunities. Indian businesses include laundromats, green grocers and general dealers.

1904

Rhodes University is established.

1914-1915

The ultra conservative National Party (NP) emerges, founded by staunch Afrikaner nationalists.

1926

The Grahamstown British Indian Association is formed.

1948

The NP once again gains total control of governance in South Africa. They harshly start to enforce strict Apartheid policies of racial segregation.

1955

First zoning proposals put forward by the Grahamstown Council.

1970 (MARCH)

Various Group Areas were officially proclaimed in Grahamstown.

1970 (SEPTEMBER)

An announcement is made that all Indians will be moved to an area near Fingo village.

1975

Proposal announced to make Fingo Village a coloured area.

1980

Fingo Village re-proclaimed as a black area.

1983

Fingo Village re-proclaimed as a black area.

1994

New Temple Officially Opened





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BUSINESS

COMMUNITY

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CATEGORY: RESISTANCE



RESISTANCE

COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS: AN AVENUE TO RESISTANCE

October 17, 2017

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RESISTANCE

NO LONGER SAFE

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- By Simon Wormald Grahamstown fell victim to the Group Areas Act, a programme that encouraged further segregation under an all-white apartheid government. The community spirit was not lost amongst the Grahamstown residents as the majority of them decided show their support for the non-white people who fell victim to the Group Areas Act. The... Continue reading

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In an interview regarding the Group Areas Act in Grahamstown, Mr Jayanti Rama commented that it was “very difficult to have any resistance [to the system] because those chaps (law enforcement agents) were very brutal... they would just throw you in prison, or take you away.” On an individual basis, resistance to Apartheid policies was not only daunting, but often a foregone conclusion. The only voice for many communities was through bureaucratic networks: community organisations, and petitions. Neela Dullabh argues that, following the implementation of the Group Areas Act, Indian community organisations became “a link between the municipality and the Indian community.” Essential to our understanding of the impact of the Group Areas is an understanding of the modes of resistance certain communities had against them. For the Indian families living in the Kowie street area, this was the Grahamstown Indian Association (GIA). This still extant organisation became a mouthpiece for the Indian community throughout the Apartheid era.

Community organisations, like the GIA, largely played consultative and advisory roles between the community and the municipality. These organisations also worked to convey community sentiment to the municipality regarding proposed Group Areas. This was seen in the role the GIA played in negotiating a residential area fit for the Indian community. In 1972, following application by the Indian community, the area bounded by “Raglan road, Market street east, Matthews [sic] street and the railway line” was declared an Indian group area so that a growing Indian population would have space to settle, given that the Kowie street area was a “frozen zone”, ie. settlement or further development was halted until the area was proclaimed a specific group’s area. However, later, the Indian community rejected this area when it became clear that this portion of land, which was part of Fingo Village, would have to be cleared of all Black families who would be moved to Committee’s Drift, 45km outside of Grahamstown.

This thereafter led to a series of negotiations between the Grahamstown Indian Association and the municipality regarding a suitable area for the Indian community to settle. The areas proposed were Currie park or Cradock Heights both on the opposite side of Grahamstown.



Herald Grahamstown Supplement, 1970. Photo Sourced by Kelsey Lemon

It is important to note here that as a result of the Group Areas Amendment Act of 1962, the creation of Consultative committees, or Management Committees was ensured, hence, organisations like the Grahamstown Indian Association. These committees were established “to advise white municipal councils about the provision of municipal services in Indian areas.” In letters between the GIA and the City Council, this relationship is evidenced. It was through the GIA that the Indian community negotiated to settle the Oatlands North suburb, on the condition that “the land which is presently the property of a private development company, is acquired and made available to the Indian community at a cost/plot charge which is less than or comparable to that prevailing for Cradock Heights.” Cradock Heights being the preferred area for settlement. As can be seen, the Indian community was able to negotiate, and therefore, project its own voice and the wants of the community, through organisational representation.

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The Sonne family were amongst the people that were evicted from their houses for not being white. At first, they showed little resistance but this does not mean they were not active members in supporting the movement for a democratic South Africa. Often any form of resistance was met with violence from the local authorities, whereby a protest would be dispersed with the use of mace, flash grenades, smoke grenades, tear gas and rubber bullets. The Sonne family recounted a version of violence in which they had no choice but to watch as the events often took place on their front lawn! They lived in Osmond Street, "a street that became the boundary of the town and the location." Bullet holes were often found in the sofa and around the house as the street was riddled with army or military vehicles that would open fire at the sniff of a riot. Mr Sonne's son remembers people scrambling through their hedge, "ducking and diving" to avoid getting hit by the bullets. One time, he was even obligated to go and help a woman who had been shot in the head. This without a doubt leaves a small child traumatised as he would have been watching men armed to the teeth open fire on crowds that probably only held onto to a small rock or stick.

The rioting did however come in different forms, through protesting, writing letters, and blocking off roads as a way to try and get the attention of the Government, to show them the horrendous conditions people had to live through on a daily basis. Protesting took place outside the **police station** as it was the brutality and ill-treatment of the non-white community in Grahamstown that really upset a normally passive group of people.

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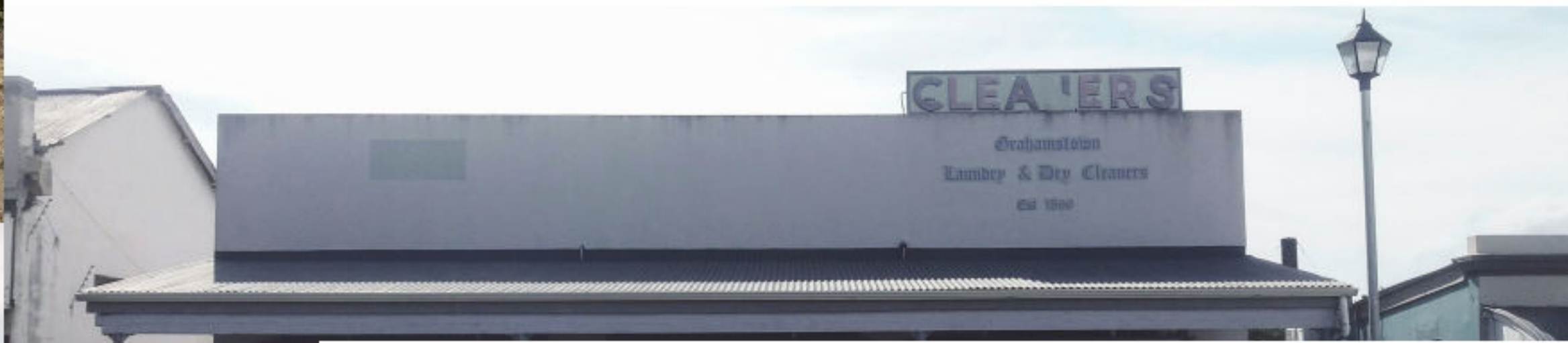
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CATEGORY: BUSINESS



BUSINESS

'MAKING A LIVING AS THE INDIAN COMMUNITY OF KOWIE'

October 17, 2017
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As Mr Harjeven walks through the Kowie Street area he points to buildings and houses, explaining what used to be there...

... *Harry's Laundry, that family has always been there, since the late 1890s*

A Malay Tailor, Mr Lagardien working at Birchs' as a chief tailor, used to own a beautiful home in the Kowie Street area...

Where Plumblink is now used to be a 'General Dealer'...

Where the Department of Labour is now, used to be a bakery owned by Roy Dicks...

Because of the Group Areas Act, Indians lived outside the 'circle' of prime space that was restricted for whites. Indian shops thus existed on the periphery. Mr Harjeven notes how his father started his shoe business in a shop along lower high street, with other Indian families being allowed to operate around Bathurst and Hill streets as well.

One of the proposals put forward by the Group Areas Act for Indian business would have disrupted these businesspeople immensely. There was a proposal for an Indian Shopping Complex along Raglan Road. Mr Harjeven rejected this proposal; *"Altogether! In one little shopping complex. And you know it doesn't work like that, we all have different trades, different clientele"*.

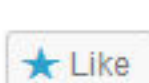
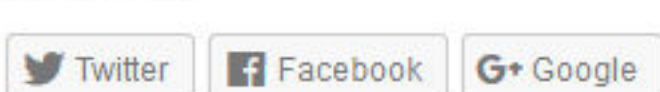
However, even once the Raglan Road complex idea had been dismissed permit difficulties persisted. Mr Harjeven himself remembers how despite having bought the space for his shoe shop, he still couldn't technically own it.

"You couldn't just open a shop anywhere. There were rings around the town. So I would never be able to open this shop, this shop here. When I was younger and I bought this property, this is prime white area. So I wasn't allowed to buy the property, so I... I bought the business from the man but they wouldn't give me transfer. So for two years I had to pay him rent, although we'd signed a sale agreement. So it was my place but I couldn't put it in my name."

It was only in 1987, after multiple appeals, that Mr C. Harjeven could finally put his name on his own business.



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“ALL FOR NOTHING” – A SPEECH BY MR. HARRY RAMA

October 19, 2017
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COMMUNITY

THE CURRY TREE AND THE WATERSLIDE: ONE FAMILY’S LIFE AFTER FORCED REMOVALS

October 17, 2017
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- By Kathryn Cleary What do a curry tree and a waterslide have in common? They both share the Harjeven family’s beautiful back garden. “My mother loved to garden”, Mr Chiman Harjeven said while tending to a flowering bush. “The garden was really her thing”. Harjeven’s mother passed away four years ago, but his father... Continue reading

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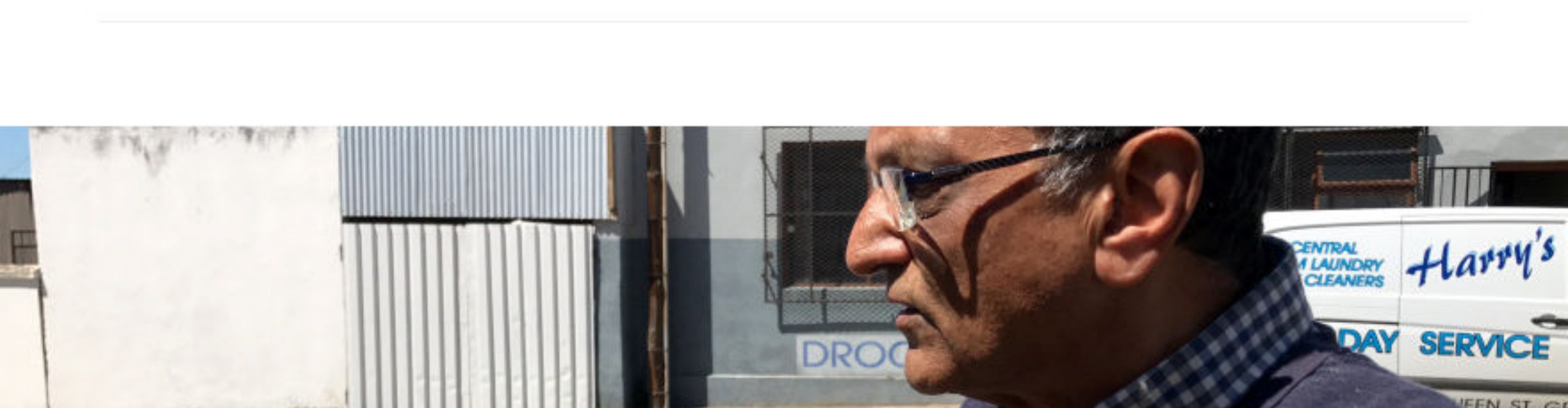
COMMUNITY

THE LOSS OF A FAMILY’S LIVELIHOOD

October 11, 2017
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- By Simoné Smith During Apartheid-era South Africa, many people of colour were uprooted from their homes and relocated to new areas where they would be forced to rebuild their lives. Despite this fact, the historical narrative has focused primarily on the suffering of black South Africans and neglecting the minority groups that were affected... Continue reading

Tagged Community, Historical, Resistance [Leave a comment](#)



COMMUNITY

A STEADFAST COMMUNITY

September 19, 2017
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- By Richard Hanly The Group Areas Act during the apartheid regime displaced numerous non-white families here in Grahamstown. Once such family was the Sonne family, a family that had been living in in Grahamstown since 1905, who operated a steam laundry that was amongst the first in South Africa! Fast forward approximately 65/70 years... Continue reading

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ALL FOR NOTHING

“The words ‘group area’ and ‘community development’ still provoke shivers, sadness, and bitterness, but not hatred. Thank you for your interest (in this history). A few years ago the drama of the ‘Save the High Court’ movement was highlighted by strong resistance by those with the appropriate resources. When the Black Sash offices – who served the poor – were closed down, hardly a whisper was heard, and so it was with the forced removals. Those with resources could put up a fight to delay removal, and it worked for some, but for those without resources, it was hopeless.

We lived on the corner of Chapel and Queen Street. It became an area called the “frozen zone” because any kind of development was frozen so that some ‘racial cleansing’ could be done in the name of development. Our home was built by our grandfather, an indentured labourer who came from India to work in (Kwa Zulu) Natal. He trekked to Grahamstown. My father also lived there, and I was born on that site. How does one tell your children and grandchildren that it was my birthplace but not my birth right? It goes beyond explaining to my children and granddaughter that four generations of Ramas once lived there, when today all they can see is an empty plot (It was all for nothing). All that remains and reminds us of this is an avocado tree that my late Mother planted that refuses to bear fruit to this day.

The same goes for our (former) place of worship, which was just on the next block. Our Hindu Mandir or Temple was the first victim of forced removal as it was bulldozed to the ground. After this, we had to pray in various venues, one being the Market Building where Shoprite and the police station are located now. We were burgled there, and all of our brassware that we used during our prayers were stolen: irreplaceable and uninsured.

Back to the forced removal from our home – adding insult to injury. We were paid a tiny amount by the Comdev (Community Development Council), without arbitration. They would then proceed to hold onto the money, saying that we would only receive the money once we moved out, enticing us into a quick exit. We could not find any alternative safe, suitable homes, or any to at least match our existing home. We were also unwelcome in the mostly ‘white areas’. Then, the authorities said we could buy in the Raglan Road area, but the non-white residents there were unwilling to sell, as they were in the same boat as us. These residents also had historic rights (to their homes) as people from the Fingo Tribe (who were granted these rights and homes many decades before).

In the meantime, we were charged rent while staying in our own house, which was bought by the (National Party) government, although we have still never received payment. So, we ended up with no compensation. The rental was deducted from the money they held back. Indians are good at maths, but this even Einstein would battle to figure out! Mr Raman Bhana was a community man, a good politician and a peaceful negotiator, but even he told them (the government) ‘go to hell!’. However fast they tried to remove us, they still did not have a designated, separate group area for Indians. Eventually, it cost us a fortune. One loss, one transit home, and finally, one permanent home in the Indian Group Area.

There were many sad stories coming out of the Apartheid regime regarding the banning of non-white groups from being involved in various things: attending church, social interaction, access to education, sports, doing business in separate group areas as well as animal cruelty and murder. But there were also truly genuine human beings who were white, both English and Afrikaners, who I’m sure that when they meet our creator, they will be able to stand up and face him. Donations were only tax deductible if they went to a Christian institute. We were not allowed to go to the funeral of one of our white neighbour’s at the NG Kerk (a whites only church). We were not allowed to drink and dance with white people. If you danced, no booze. If you drank, then no contact, in case we broke the immorality act. We were not allowed to play organized sports (with other races), but we later broke the barrier by defying the law and played the first multiracial soccer game at Fiddler’s Green – a municipal ground. The police were there in numbers, but soon forgot their spying mission because of the excitement of the game. Mr Sid Penney, who was working for the municipality at the time, stuck his neck out to promote non-racial soccer and got us a permit, allowing us to play. Here was a white man who had colour in his blood. Our children could not attend town schools, so we opened the first non-racial nursery school with funding all the way from Norway. It was called Rivendell, located in Bartholomew Street. Patch and Don Pinnock, the current cabinet minister Gugile Nkwinti and some Rhodes academics were on the board. Brave parents who refused to have their children growing up and being educated under Group Areas policies sent their children here. Here are some chilling, heart-breaking but also heart-warming realities of apartheid.

We also had to find alternative business premises due to our forced removals. We moved to a property in number 7 Cloncore Street. When the landlady, Mrs Silvia Harty decided to sell, she kindly gave us first option to buy. We went to all the banks in town, but could not raise a bond despite Mrs Harty willing to stand surety and give us the required deposit. The banks refused us on the grounds that it was a risk to bond (a property) in an area that was on the border of the township. No insurance company was prepared to cover the risk either. But, it was all okay when it was previously owned by a white. One wonderful man, Mr Ayanda Mjekula, the only black manager of a bank in Grahamstown, the SA Perm, listened to our story. Within three days, he replied with a ‘yes’, even including the insurance for the property. Nearly thirty years later, we met again at an opening function of the Grahamstown National Arts Festival, him as the chairman of the Festival Board. Who could forget such a kind man? He was overjoyed to see me again, and to find that we survived.

During the forced removals, two incidents occurred which we will carry to our graves. My father died aged just 47 in 1966, and our Mother pleaded to a Mr Richard Coetzee – the deputy town clerk, to please give us time to stay a little longer in our home until we could find another. He was rude and showed no mercy. The next day, a bulldozer came and demolished our back walls. Our possessions were at risk and our chickens went missing. Our garden that was so lovingly cared for by our Mother was plundered. Even today, some 45 years later, that bulldozer was so uncalled for. It broke our spirit and trust in that agent of apartheid. The other incident was the killing of our pet monkey. The local municipal traffic officer, Mr Gerard Oosthuizen went into our exposed yard, took our beloved pet of many years, put her in a jute bag, and shot her in front of my siblings. We were absolutely horrified at her death. Mr Oosthuizen said he had received complaints (about the monkey), which was hard to believe as our peaceful, loving animal had a large cage with a leash that allowed her the freedom to sit on the roof and watch the world go by. Strangely, another neighbour, a friend of ours, also had a pet monkey, but it survived. We think that this cruel killing was the municipality’s way of telling us to go. Our mixed neighbours (whites, coloureds etc.) would not betray us. The words ‘race hate’ were born on that day. We lost our pet, our dignity and our faith in white people in power. But, being of the Hindu faith, non-violence was drummed into us by our Mom.

But hardships in life teach us lessons, to learn, to forgive, to forget, to rise from the ashes. Some consolation was that whenever the whites-only government knocked us down in so many ways, there was another white human being picking us up. A door opens for every door that is shut. We are not sad that apartheid happened, we cannot forget, but all of our religions teach us not to be bitter, but to be ever-loving and serve all of God’s creation. After the birth of our Rainbow Nation we continued to serve all our communities and vocations. We are not looking for any ‘Brownie Points’, instead we are humbled by serving the local SPCA for over 42 years; by my becoming the first ‘black’ Chairman of the MBA (Master Building Association) and the first ‘black’ president of the Rotary Club of Grahamstown, despite the fact that we were not allowed membership before 1994 due to the race laws, and, we are now allowed to buy properties anywhere we choose.

If the race laws did not exist, imagine the possibilities that could have been!”

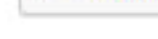
Mr Rama added some further detail afterwards. When asked: how he and his family managed to overcome the trauma and hardship, he replied: ‘we gained extensive support from the community, from our neighbours. We also gained a lot of strength through our religion and its various teachings, especially those that encourage love and peace. At the end of the day, we achieved our strong desires to improve our lives and provide our children with good education.’

He ended off with a quote: ‘If you succeed in surviving, you will survive to succeed!’



Mr Harry Rama adds a note to an interactive map project at the Community gathering. Photo taken by Heather Dixon

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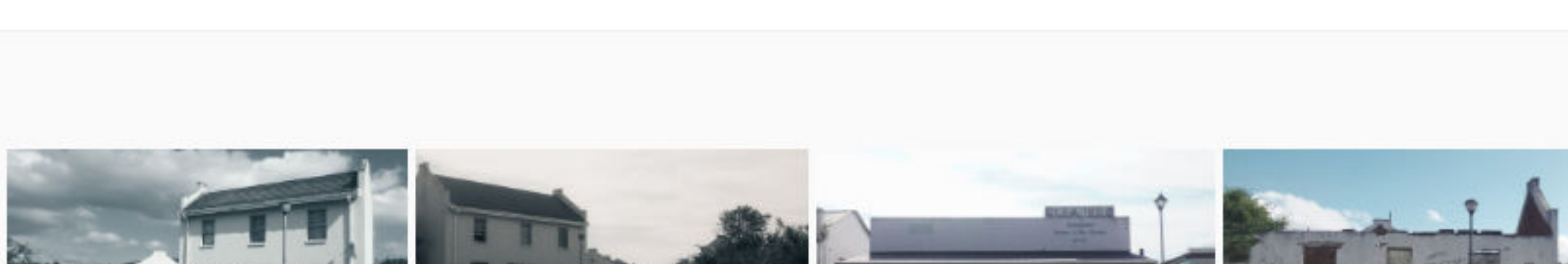


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COMMUNITY

A STEADFAST COMMUNITY

September 19, 2017

kowiestreet

- By Richard Hanly

The Group Areas Act during the apartheid regime displaced numerous non-white families here in Grahamstown. Once such family was the Sonne family, a family that had been living in in Grahamstown since 1905, who operated a steam laundry that was amongst the first in South Africa! Fast forward approximately 65/70 years and this well-established family' in the Grahamstown community, was being evicted out of their house as they lived in one of the designated 'white areas'. They were 'asked' to uproot and forget about their home in Cobden Street and they moved to a more 'racially suitable' Indian area. The moving shocked the community as many of them had been living in their respective house for decades, however, with this in mind, one might expect a violent or volatile response to the evictions but according to Mr Sonne there was no violent reaction and even if there was the potential for violence, they "didn't even know who to fight". Many have argued that the Group Areas Act was not necessary as people of colour and whites all lived together in harmony. According to the Sonne family, who we interviewed, they used to get along with their white neighbours and some of whom they made very good friends with. with all these families being forced out of their homes, it took its toll on the children as well as they could no longer just walk down the street and meet up with their friends anymore, they were now forced to make alternative plans, abide by various rules such as the curfew and staying off 'white only' benches for example. Failure to adhere to these rules often resulted in a beating from the local authorities.

The Group Areas Act also rocked the Indian community when it was decided that their sacred Temple in Kowie Street was to be demolished, to make way for white housing projects. The demolition of the temple forced the Indian community to go searching far and wide, journeying across the country to try and fundraise as the compensation they received from the government amounted to nothing more than just pittance. The community did however stay strong as this test in resilience, friendship and spirit did little to the relationships formed between each other. Mr Sonne and his family argued that it made their families and the community much stronger as they came together in a time of need.

Tagged Community, Historical

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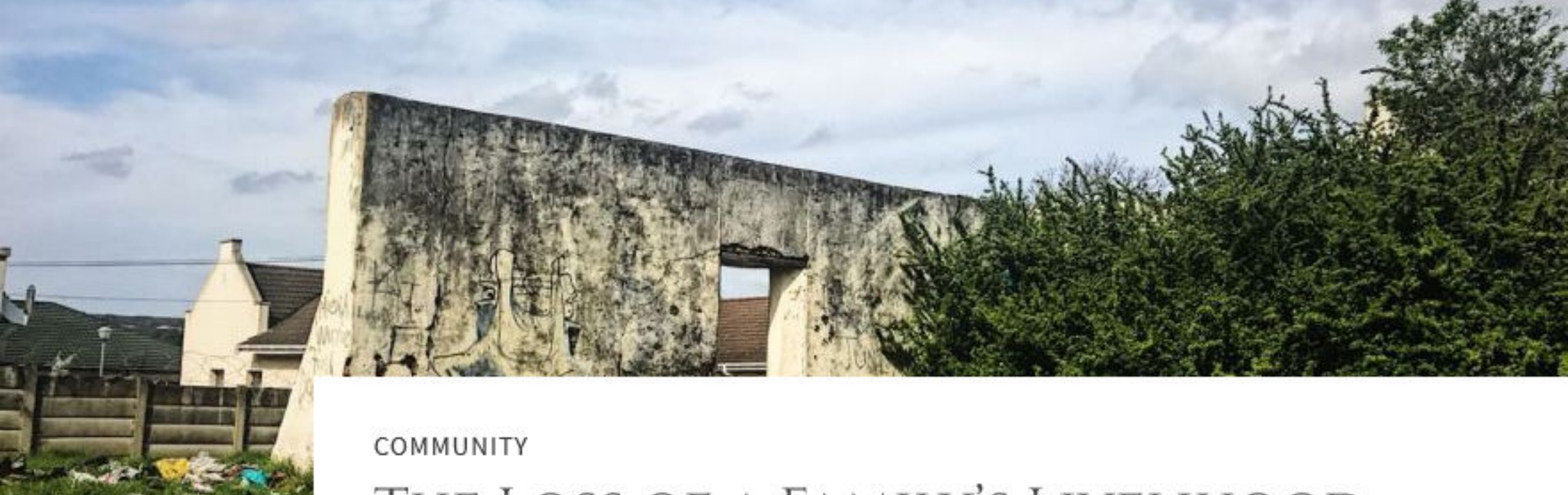


KOWIE STREET

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COMMUNITY

THE LOSS OF A FAMILY'S LIVELIHOOD

October 11, 2017

kowiestreet

- By Simoné Smith

During Apartheid-era South Africa, many people of colour were uprooted from their homes and relocated to new areas where they would be forced to rebuild their lives. Despite this fact, the historical narrative has focused primarily on the suffering of black South Africans and neglecting the minority groups that were affected. This project aims to shed light on the largely forgotten history of Indian and Coloured South Africans living in Grahamstown. The focus of this story will be on the Gopal family of Harry's Laundromat located on Kowie-Street.

On the 27th of April 1950, the Group Areas Act was introduced nationally and by the 1980s businesses in Grahamstown were being affected. According to Mr. Gopal, the majority of the people living on Kowie Street lived together in peace and harmony despite the fact that the community was a mixture of different races which would have been seen as unusual at the time. This, Mr. Gopal has attributed to the fact that Grahamstown is such a small town so it is virtually impossible not to run into someone of another race or to be far from the city centre. To put this into context, Harry's Laundromat is approximately a 10 minute walk to the Central Business District.

Many residents were forcibly removed and businesses were under threat. Harry's Laundromat was no exception as the family was told that they would have to vacate their premises. Mr. Gopal fought for his business by filing various complaints with the city council and even involving his lawyer. Despite this struggle, he was pressured into selling the family business after the interim period. In addition to this, the family experienced their electricity and water supply being cut off, making it impossible to run the business.

According to Mr. Gopal, "So I was left with not a cent. It carried on, carried on and eventually, beside paying the rental, they got the capital plus surplus and it carried on and carried on to such time that I could not find a suitable premises that was big enough for me."

Despite losing his business, Mr. Gopal was adamant that he would get it back but this was no easy journey. Mr. Gopal eventually came into contact with Mr. Chris Ellis who was the minister of the community at the time and expressed his desire to get his business back. After being told that he did not stand a very good chance of getting his business back because of the Group Areas Legislation, there was some light at the end of the tunnel. Mr. Gopal was informed that he would be able to get his business back but he would have to re-purchase it.

Sadly for Mr. Gopal, there was a spike in real estate at the time so he had to purchase his business back at an inflated price. In addition to this, the money he had previously been paid out had gone back to the state via rent making the possibility of purchasing the Laundromat back seem impossible. Eventually, Mr. Gopal and Mr. Ellis were able to come to a compromise but despite this, Mr. Gopal was forced to make changes to the business. According to Mr. Gopal: "They went right across and they tried to check the steam generators I was using coal, and tried to make me fit in a diesel turbine, try to change to steam generators. Plus, I had to re-wire my whole factory, re-wire the whole thing and I mean you know what it costs and even at that time it was quite steep. I must still say I thank the lord upstairs I got my piece of bread back. This was my main livelihood."

While Mr. Gopal's story ends on a happy note in the sense that he and his family were reunited with their business that spans over 4 generations, many people were not so lucky to get their lives back. When asked if there was any support from fellow community members, Mr. Gopal further expressed just how difficult things were at the time for all business-owners in the sense that: "They tried to help but they had their own problems. There were lots of others in the Indian community that had a similar shoe. I mean if you're in the same shoe, how can you help one another?"

The Aftermath:

One of the other topics that came up during this interview was how life has improved and worsened since the end of Apartheid. Mr. Gopal has stated that after Nelson Mandela became president of the newly-democratic South Africa: "You could do what you like, it's changed so there is a big improvement as far as that goes. But uh, the damage has been done at that time. You know what I'm saying? And the people that are mostly hurt, that were in the position, like myself. All the evidence as you see now, it's all there. It's in black and white, it is proof."

The Gopals' also expressed their concern over the fact that in some ways, the Indian and Coloured communities have been left out with regards to transformation. This is evident when one considers the general lack of history regarding how minority groups were affected by Apartheid. Further evidence also suggests that there seems to be a lack of economic transformation that places any focus on the growth of minority groups' business ventures

In addition to this, it is also the born-frees of this generation that are suffering. Mr. Gopal Jr. expressed this with reference to his son who obtained an 84% average but was rejected by medical schools in South Africa, not because he was not good enough but because he does not fall within the "right" redress category.

One need only look at a UCT prospectus to see this discrimination within the redress category, for example, a black student wanting to study medicine (MBChB) needs 420 APS points whereas someone who is Coloured needs 450 APS points.[1] Indian students need 500 APS points which is the exact same amount that the "open category" which would be comprised of white and international students would need to gain admission.[2] That is, redress seems to benefit black, coloured and Chinese students the most which creates the impression that people from the Indian community are not "black enough" to have their suffering and disadvantage recognised and they are also not "white enough" to benefit from inherent privilege. It is for this reason, Mr. Gopal Junior's son has to attend medical school in Mauritius so that he can fulfil his dream of becoming a doctor.

If anything, I would argue that although for the most part, the Gopals' story had a happy ending in the sense that they were able to regain control over their Laundromat. There are current systems in place that still make it difficult for people belonging to the Indian community to advance in terms of education, the growth of a business and in terms of having their history acknowledged.

[1] 'Eligibility & Process | Faculty Of Health Sciences' (Health.uct.ac.za, 2017) <<http://www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/undergrad/admissions-process>> accessed 11 October 2017.

[2] 'Eligibility & Process | Faculty Of Health Sciences' (Health.uct.ac.za, 2017) <<http://www.health.uct.ac.za/fhs/undergrad/admissions-process>> accessed 11 October 2017.

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COMMUNITY

THE CURRY TREE AND THE WATERSLIDE: ONE FAMILY'S LIFE AFTER FORCED REMOVALS

October 17, 2017
kowiastreet

- By Kathryn Cleary

What do a curry tree and a waterslide have in common? They both share the Harjeven family's beautiful back garden.

"My mother loved to garden", Mr Chiman Harjeven said while tending to a flowering bush. "The garden was really her thing". Harjeven's mother passed away four years ago, but his father of 92 years still lives next door. "He's quite an amazing man, a self made man." The Harjeven family was relocated from their old home on the corner of Campbell and Queen Street as a result of the Group Areas Act in the 1970s. When the day came for the Indians to select and purchase plots of land in the new group area, the Harjeven family lucked out with two beautiful plots on what is now called Templeton Drive, just opposite Graeme College.

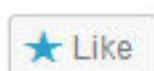
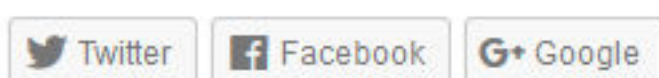
At the time of the relocation, the Templeton area was vacant, untouched land, and the relocated families had to start completely from scratch. This was the first time members of the Indian community could legally own their own homes, without any attachment to the government. "We bought the piece of land just, you were in the right area you were in the Group Area, the Indian group area, you're fine. You met all the conditions. And it was nice!", Harjeven exclaimed. All of his children finally had their own bedrooms, and all of the bathrooms were conveniently located inside, a big change from their former home.

The forced removal of the Harjeven family was anything but violent and painful. The family was more than happy to say goodbye to their old home, and take hold of a new opportunity for a brighter future. The Harjeven family successfully own two business in Grahamstown, Knight's Shoes on High Street and The Mustard Seed in Peppergrove Mall. Knight's Shoes is managed by both Mr Harjeven and his son, while The Mustard Seed is managed by other family members.

The Harjeven's back garden is flooded with beautiful trees, bushes, flowers and grass. There is even a pool with a small waterslide! In the corner of the garden is a large curry leaf tree, the leaves from which are collected and offered from free to customers at The Mustard Seed. In other shops in Grahamstown, curry leaves are sold at a competitive price, yet the Harjeven's see no issue with giving away these fragrant tokens for free. This small special gift is but one example of the Harjeven family spirit. A family dedicated to working hard, and spending time with each other and their community.

The forced removals that occurred as a result of the Group Areas Act in Grahamstown were not all tragedies, but at times the start of a new and happier life. "I don't hold onto baggage", Mr Harjeven stated. "The past is the past". From living side by side ten other people in a small settler home on Queen Street, to becoming the proud owner of a spacious and beautiful house in a sought after residential area, the Harjeven's had luck on their side.

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COMMUNITY

A SOCIO-HISTORICAL INJUSTICE

October 17, 2017
kowiestreet

- By Gerald Carlton Kihara Muchiri

The Group Areas act had the particular effect of weaponizing socio-economic segregation that would institutionalize racial oppression at the hands of a white minority. This had widespread effects from major cities such as Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town to smaller metropoli like Grahamstown.

As Simone and I strolled through Kowie Street and Downtown Grahamstown, we couldn't help but notice the way in which the architechural designs of the buildings had remained in unchanged over the years which implicitly evinced and hinted at the lack of rapid socio-economic transformation in light of the post-apartheid political transformation, that is, while things may have gotten better they certainly hadn't gotten improved as quickly as was expected.

The interview commenced quite well as Simone and I were warmly welcomed by our hosts. They began with a short introduction with the way in which the Group Areas Act senselessly uprooted people from their homes without their input whatsoever. Indeed the owner(Mr Gopal) had attempted to write to the authorities several times but his efforts were in vain as there was nothing much he could at that point in time as the Group Areas was a national act that was steamed rolled over the population by the National Party who had the legitimate monopoly on violence at that point in time.

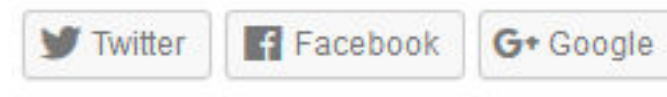
He then talked about the way in which the forced evictions had pushed them towards industrial land which saw them caught between a rock and a hard place at that point in time as they had no where else to go and the whites there thought that they would start encroaching and building shacks there. This evidently hints at the way in which he National Government did not have any other plans to accommodate people from other racial backgrounds with the exception of the white minority elite.

He also talked about the way in which he had to buy back the land in which he had been evicted from which I felt was personally quite disheartening and unjust. This was also evidenced that the rule of law had experienced a tumultuous upheaval which had resulted in a situational dystopic theatre of the absurd.

Mr Gopal's son weighed and gave his two cents adding that the new post-Apartheid socio-politico-economic dispensation had brought about about racial cohesion within the space of Grahamstown and that this could be seen from the way in which the town's residents liberally co-existed in harmony with each other.

All in all, it would be a great disrespect to the discourse of historicity by saying that 'All's well, ends well, because even though Apartheid no longer exists, The Group Areas resulted in socio-historical injustice whose full damage is yet to be analysed and whose scars still continue to be felt today among the littany of the descendants of the victims who bore and were subjected to the full brunt of it.

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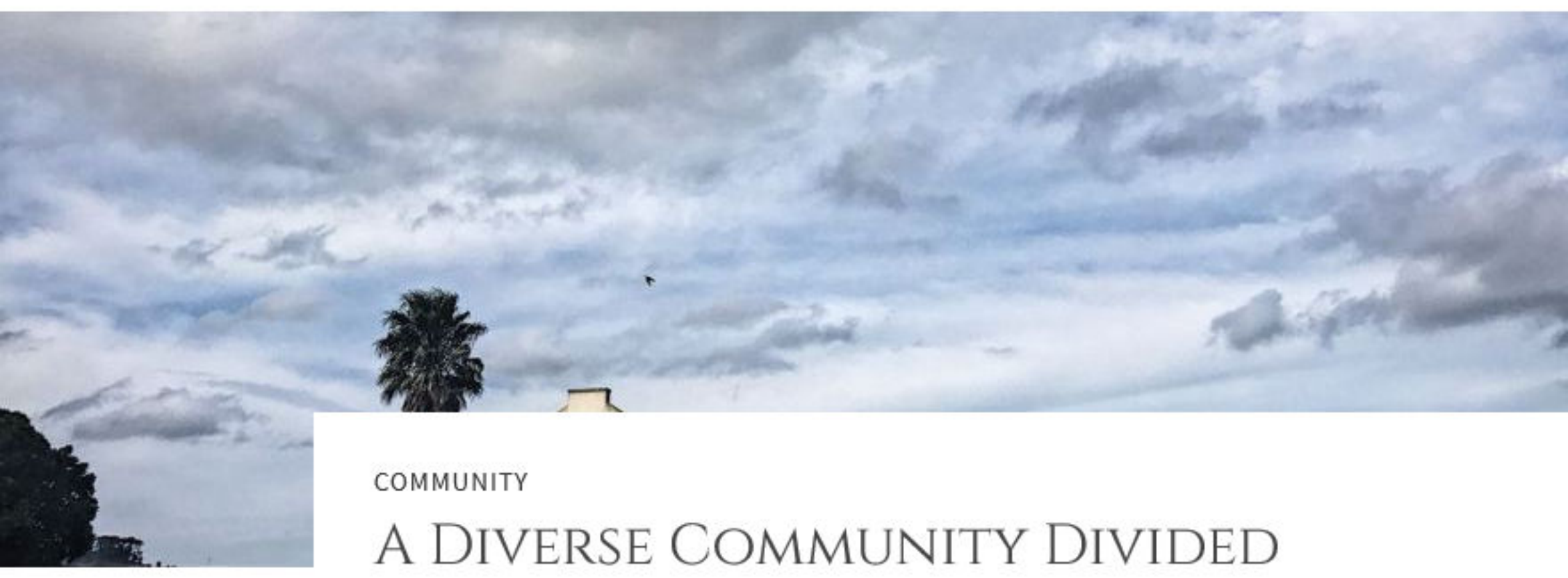


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COMMUNITY

A DIVERSE COMMUNITY DIVIDED

October 17, 2017
kowiastreet

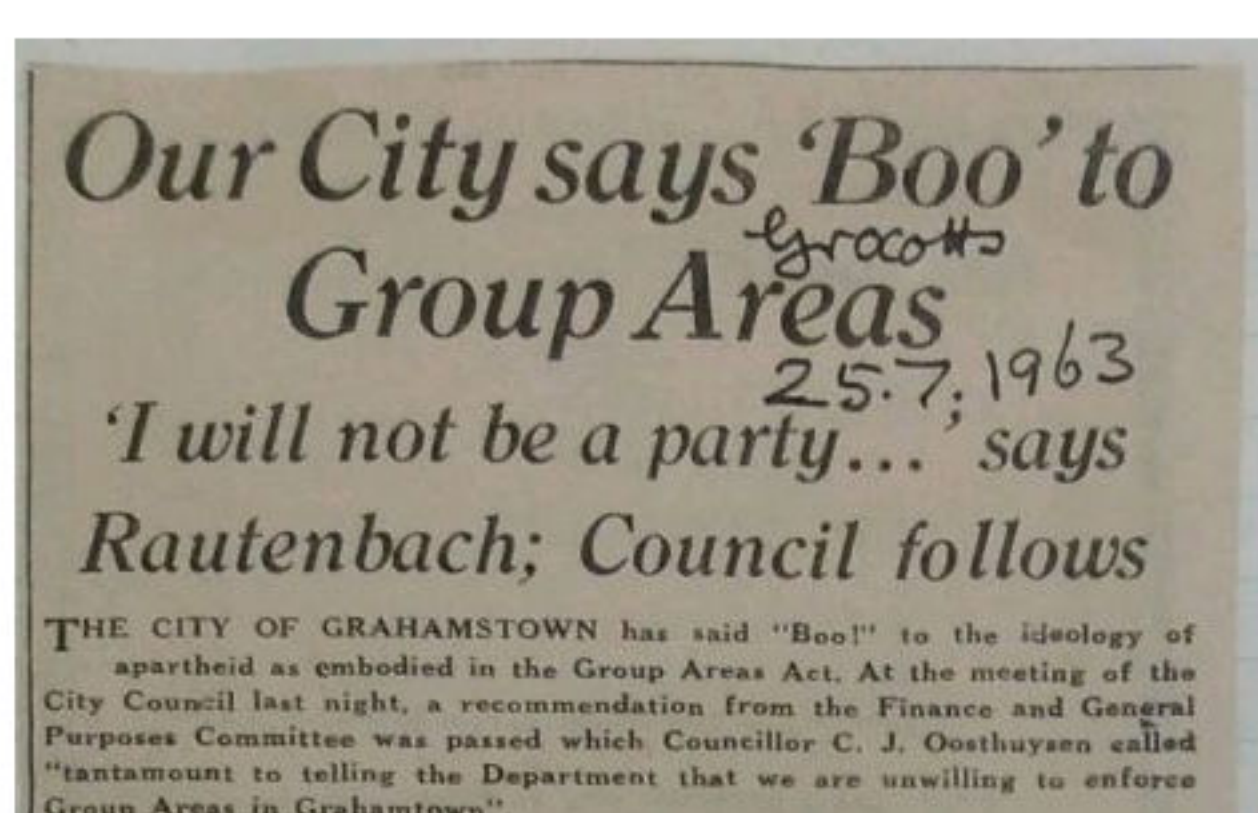
- By Kelsey Lemon

"We were all friends there; like one family." Mr Rama, a resident of Queen street (an adjacent street to Kowie and intimately tied to the Kowie street area.) reflected in an interview. Mr Rama notes the neighbourly nature of the Kowie community prior to the proclamation of an Indian Group Area in 1972, "They would come and visit us, we would go and visit them. It was Mrs so, and Mrs so-and-so... It was like that. Like a neighbour, neighbourly. Very very mixed. And it was so nice." Central to our understanding of the Group Areas Act is an understanding of the motivation behind such an act and the applicability of that motivation to specific communities.

The Kowie community, as Mr Rama noted, was a mixed community prior to Group Areas, "There were white people there. Indians. Coloured people. One or two African families... but not many. Mostly Coloured and Indians and Whites... it was a mix." Mr Rama notes that the community had a vibrant neighbourly atmosphere and former members, according to Mr Rama, maintain connections with one another to this day, "we still keep ties. When we meet each other we say, 'yeah, those good old days.'"

In light of this, it is interesting to locate policy within reality - to understanding where, how and *if* the National Party's basis for policies, such as the Group Areas Act, had any reflection in the reality of these communities.

The Group Areas Act as a government policy, was founded on the notion of separate development. People of different races were fundamentally different from one another and would thence prosper were they to live in completely racially homogenous communities. These communities would be geographically separated by industrial areas and so-called buffer zones so that racial mixing at the social level was entirely obliterated. The Group Areas Act enabled the government to completely control the settlement of people based on their racial classification, which was determined by the government as a result of the Population Registration Act of 1950. This, as Mr Rama notes, "wasn't valid at all." The Kowie community and the wider Grahamstown community for many years rejected the Group Areas, and were made to propose group areas primarily because the Land Tenure Advisory Board forced their hand, according to Neela Dullabh. Zoning in Grahamstown was seen as unnecessary and uneconomic. It is clear that the application of Group Areas in Grahamstown was both administratively difficult because of the relative size of the different groups and their scattering throughout various areas and it was also, thoroughly, socially rejected: people simply did not feel that Grahamstown required zoning. A headline from the Grocott's Daily Mail of 1963 reads, "Our City says 'Boo' to Group Areas."



Grocott's Daily Mail, 1963. Photo Sourced by Kelsey Lemon

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FROM HOMELESS TO HOPEFUL: THE STORY OF GRAHAMSTOWN'S HINDU TEMPLE

- By Kathryn Cleary

Mr Chiman Harjeven was born and raised in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Despite not having to make the migratory journey from Gujarat, India, like his parents, Harjeven's life in Grahamstown came with its own set of ventures.

He grew up in an old settler home on the corner of Campbell and Queen Street, an area just off of lower High Street. Before the Group Areas Act took hold on Grahamstown in the 1970s, Harjeven's neighbourhood was relatively mixed. There were Indian, Coloured and White families all living on the same street in relative harmony. As Harjeven grew up, the old settler home quickly filled with his wife and three children, alongside his parents and siblings. There was little to no privacy, and toilets were to be found outside in the back garden. It is safe to say, the old settler house was not exactly an ideal place to call "home".

There was one place in the neighbourhood however, that was home for the Harjevens and other Indian families in Grahamstown. The British Indian Association Hall, located near the corner of Kowie and Queen Street, was used as a Hindu temple for the community. The temple was a place that brought the Indian community together; a place to pray, to talk about business and politics, and to support their children and one another. In 1978, the Apartheid government had other plans for the Indian community's beloved "home", and after a quick exchange of just R4,500, the temple was demolished. "Urban renewal", Harjeven remarked sarcastically. The land was to be made into houses for service-delivery and other infrastructural workers in Grahamstown. "I was still a youngster at the time and I had to respect my elders, and two...three...of the elders gave into the men and let them do that", he said. "I still feel we should have fought." "They gave us R4,500, but you can't buy anything with that, so suddenly we were homeless as a community".

Part of the above quote from Harjeven has been intentionally left out, and is as follows: "But in the end everything works out for the best." In 1994, after more than ten years of small-scale community fundraising, lots of planning and lots of prayers, a beautiful brand-new temple was opened on what is now called Kettlewell Drive, just behind Templeton Drive across the way from Graeme College. Harjeven, along with a Mr Ranchod and Mr Naidu (RU and UPE) spearheaded the building of the temple, coordinating with one of the chief builders for Rhodes University, Mr Jan van Heerden. "He kept it very simple, we didn't want anything very ornate, we wanted straight simple lines, [and] that's what we ended up with."

So as Mr Harjeven happily stated, in the end, everything did indeed work out for the best. As the doors to Apartheid slammed shut, the doors to a new home for Grahamstown's Indian community eagerly opened. Through years of hardwork and determination, Harjeven and the Indian community went from "homeless" to hopeful, and their new home serves as a powerful reminder of what can occur when a community truly works together. The temple is still active to date, and hosts prayer services in Gujarati and Sanskrit over the weekends.



Photo taken by Heather Dixon



Final ceremony of the old Mandir before its demolition. Photo Supplied by Mr Chiman Harjeven

Built in 1934, by the community and used as a hall and prayer venue.
Demolished by the Group Area's in 1981(compensation R4 500.00), for Urban Renewl.
From there we were homeless for 5 years, until the new Mandir was built.
During that time we variously used a room in the old Market, premises of the Naran family, St. Clement's Hall and meeting at each other's homes.

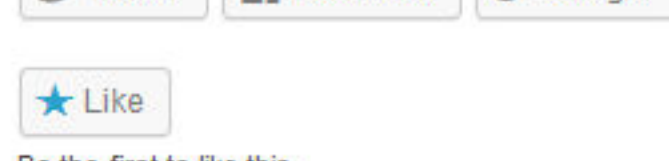


Photo supplied by Mr Chiman Harjeven

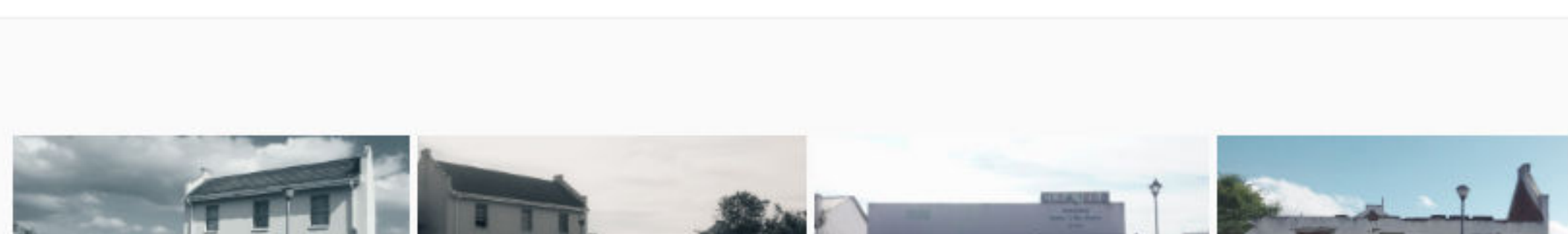


Construction of the new Mandir. Photo supplied by Mr Chiman Harjeven

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Mrs H. Rama, 4 October 2017.

Mrs M. Narshai, 4 October 2017.





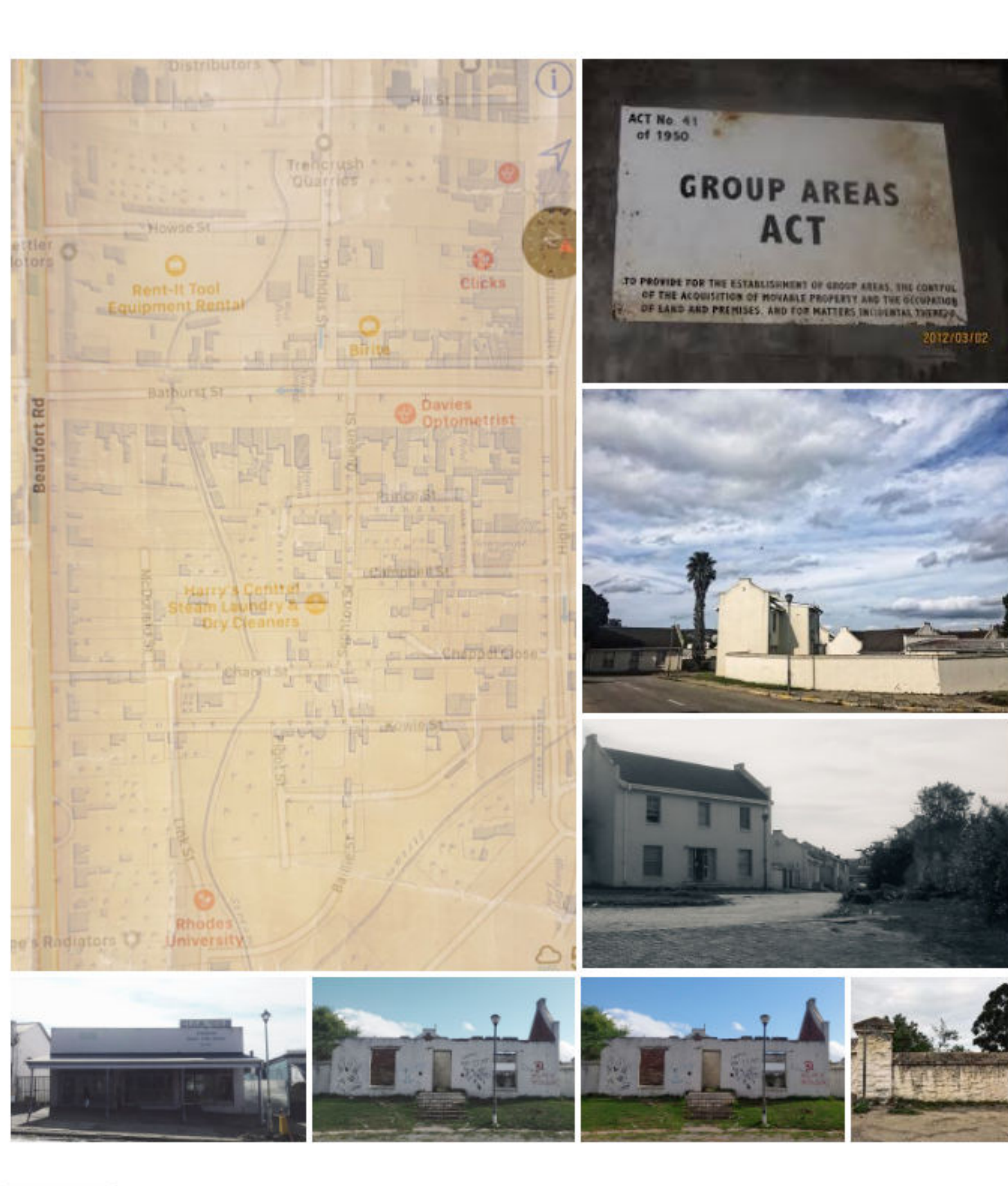
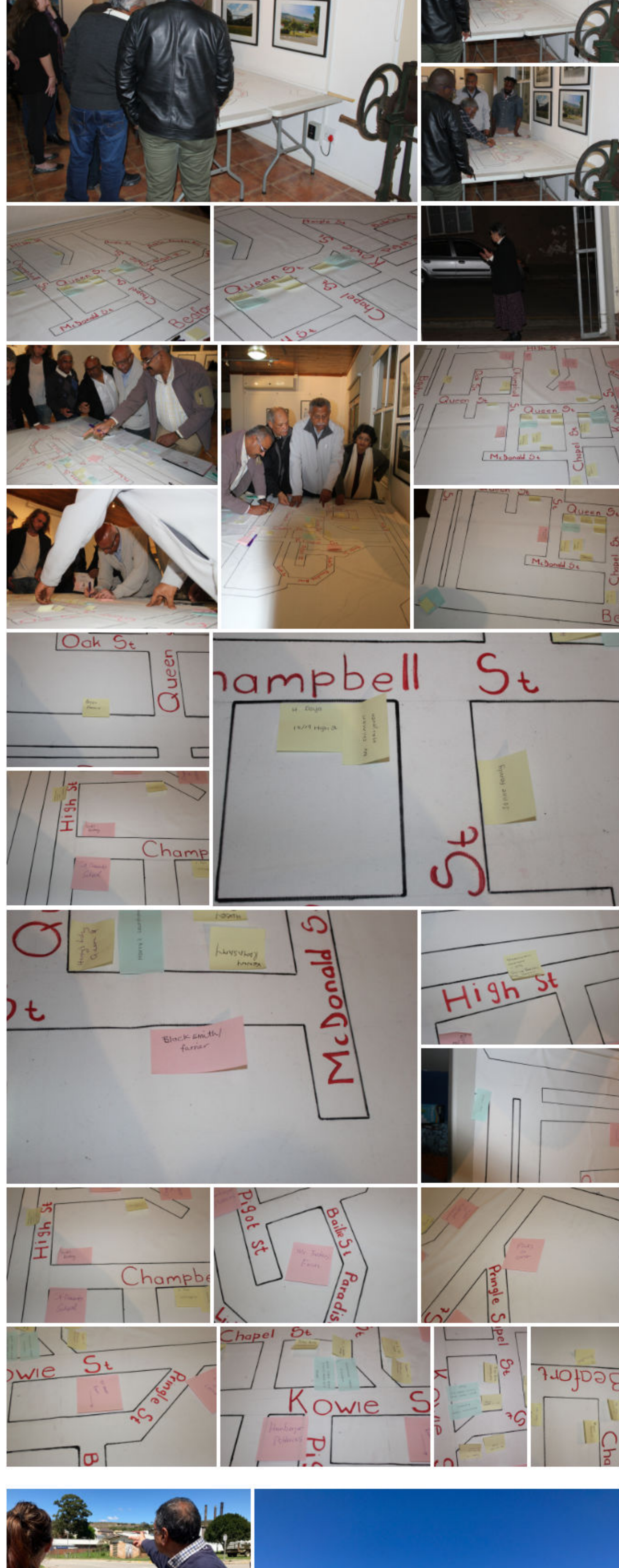
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