

## TWO STORIES FROM THE BOOK “ COJ SENIOR CITIZENS WRITE”

A COLLECTION OF TRUE SHORT STORIES WRITTEN BY SENIOR CITIZENS (PENSIONERS FROM THE DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAM)

### STORY 1

Growing up in the Eastern Cape (English Translation) by Zadidi Augusta Mbangeni

Hello everyone. My name is Zadidi, I was born in the Eastern Cape.

I would like to share stories about my upbringing, which I loved. I grew up living with my grandmother. My chores were to herd the cows, sheep, and goats. I would wake up early in the morning to go fetch water from the fountain, then boil it using fire to make my grandmother's tea, pour some for the calf to drink, and use some to bath. After getting dressed I would take a sling, a rope to tie the cow's legs, and a rod to chase away the calves to milk without disturbances.

Once I am done with milking the cows with my grandmother, we preserved the milk by storing it in containers to make sour milk (Amasi), I would milk some straight to my mouth as a way of rewarding myself for the hard work. After all that, I would herd the cows to pastures where I would leave them to graze while the calves remained at home. On my return home I would eat Amasi and after finishing I would put on my uniform and go to school. During our times it was delightful because of the respect that prevailed, as we respected adults. When an elder would send you somewhere you would go without expecting any reward or compensation. If it happens that you're seen by an elder with a boy, we used to run quickly to hide so that our faces could not be seen because if it was, it only meant trouble. At school, we were beaten with sticks. No schoolchild would fight with the teacher. There was respect among students and teachers. When school was out, I would go straight home. Then, I did all the housework to help my grandmother. I would again go to the fountain to fetch water and store it in the kitchen and my grandmother would cook for us. I loved eating sour milk (Amasi).

After eating, I would go to the veld to collect our livestock. In the veld, we would meet many other children both girls and boys. We used to play games that we took from the Bible stories, such as the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ and the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ. On other days the boys would teach us

interesting games played by boys such as fighting with sticks, how we hit the other opponent, and also how we can protect ourselves from being beaten. It used to be nice playing with the boys because girls were treated with care and love, no boy would touch any girl without an agreement. When it was time to go back home we would gather all the livestock and herd them all together, when we get closer to home, each of us takes theirs to its kraal.

On Saturdays, we - as all the girls would wake up to go collect firewood. The boy from next door used to help with the cows when I came back from fetching the firewood, and I would continue with the household chores while the boy next door would milk the cows. We used to have a respectful and loving community because we used to assist each other with what we could; it was indeed a great place to grow up and live in.

## STORY 2

I was arrested by the Apartheid Police

by Gladys Mkhobo. (English translation)

I remember in 1982 when I was arrested and sent to a whites-owned shop.

I felt hands grab me and throw me up. I was just in shock and I cried out loud.

But then I felt myself falling over on top of people in a room full of males and females. I was crammed into a cell and locked up at the police station. It was a Friday and the whites I worked for, came to get me out but the authorities refused.

I had to go and meet the magistrate on Monday. There were many of us sleeping on the floor. There were no blankets. The toilet was right in front of us. Food was brought in a metal tray, just pushed towards us with pap, and water only. We did not eat until Monday. We were extremely dirty by then. And we were led to another room where the police were carrying guns.

If we dared to look at them, they would shout, asking why are we looking at them and they would swear at us. My name was called, and I was told to go into the box stand and raise my hand for swearing so "Help me, God."

They told me my Permit was not right. I replied and they said 'Shut up! Now you will be sentenced to five years or leave Joburg completely and don't sleep here at all, OR pay five hundred pounds." The white people that I worked for, paid that money and that is how I escaped from imprisonment in Bedfordview. After that incident, I fear Johannesburg, I stayed indoors and never left the house. But it was wonderful when Tata Mandela was released from jail and he said the "dompass" rule must end and everyone must have an ID document. Things started to change for the better and we went where we wanted. It was a Johannesburg of freedom.

Nowadays, it's fun because we even bought a house, and I am now a citizen of Johannesburg. I have houses and I thank the Lord for His grace. There is no one like Him. My trust is in Him. In my heart, I am filled with great joy. Jesus shines in me. He takes me and puts me in his arms. I am happy.

I didn't know that I would ever touch a computer but now I'm writing with it

Thank you, my heart is pounding. I love you, you are filled with love. Teacher Jeffrey and Ms. Edith Khuzwayo both have a lot of love.