

Growing up in the Eastern Cape

by **Zadidi Augusta Mbangeni (English Translation)**

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 bathe. 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 was done 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.