

# My Gasparillo

1940s - 1960s

Kamalo Deen



KAMALO DEEN

My Gasparillo 1940s-1960s - 2nd  
Edition



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*Second edition*

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*This book is lovingly dedicated to the people of my hometown of  
Gasparillo  
and everyone who had influenced us or were influenced by us.*



“Often I dream of my hometown

And of my life when I was young

I think of the paths that I had walked

And of the songs that I had sung....”

Kamalo Deen





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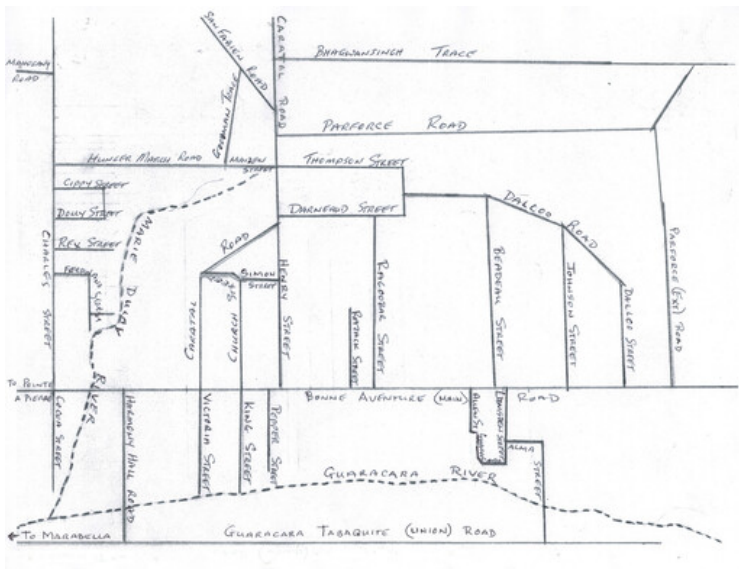
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# Foreword

***The streets of Gasparillo that I had roamed as a youth.***



***Streets of "My Gasparillo 1940s to 1960s".***

## Preface

Because it was not unusual in those days for a wife to visit her mother's home to give birth, I was born in my mother's home-village of Preysal in 1944 but I grew up in my father's home-village of Gasparillo. This is where I lived until I left for the USA in 1966.

Most of my childhood and youthful escapades were set in the locales and environs of Gasparillo. I'd wandered its streets, tracks and traces and swam in its rivers and climbed its numerous mango, chennette and coconut trees during my growing-up years. I'd played football and cricket with my brothers, cousins and friends in her many fields, attended and taught school, been a scout and a scoutmaster, been groomed by and later on presided over youth groups, and had fallen in love, eloped and became a father in my village.

After migrating, I'd never lost touch with "de Rillo", visiting very regularly over the years. I've seen the development and the changes that had taken place since I'd left. Some I like and some I don't. But despite the changes, Gasparillo has always remained close to my heart as my beloved hometown.

My family's connection to Gasparillo dates back to 1858 when my ancestor John Munradin arrived at the Harmony Hall Estate as

an indentured laborer from India. His future wife Jahnoo arrived at the same Harmony Hall Estate with her sister Sookwaroo, niece Zahuran and nephew LaulKhan in 1861. John Munradin and Jahnoo were married and had their first child at the Estate. Upon Sookwaroo's death Jahnoo assumed responsibility of her niece and nephew. After Indentureship the family moved to San Fernando where John became a shopkeeper on Coffee Street.

In 1873 John Munradin bought 2 parcels of land in Gasparillo. He moved his family, which now included his wife Jahnoo, his baby son Abdool, his wife's niece Zahuran and nephew LaulKhan, from San Fernando to their own home in Gasparillo. Here the family thrived and the tentacles of these original members are spread throughout the village and beyond.

I don't profess to know all the many details or every fact about all the people who made Gasparillo their home during my time there, so in an effort to include the participation of others, I'd created a Facebook page in March 2020 where I and others who were interested, could express some of our memories of life in our village. During the lock-down of the Covid 19 Pandemic I believed that a time of reminiscing would ease the stress that was visiting all of us.

To achieve this goal I'd written a brief account of what I could recall of each of the families with whom I had some interaction or who I merely observed. Everyone was invited to correct me and to add their knowledge as they saw fit. This project has been undertaken out of love and respect for Gasparillo and its residents, past and present. I hope that it can act as a reminder of our roots and as a springboard for further studies into the



history of our beloved hometown.

**NOTE:** I'm not a historian nor do I claim to be one. Therefore all my accounts are based solely on my memory. This is the reason I'd invited everyone to correct me or to express their knowledge of all incidents mentioned here. My only requirement was that I would entertain only positive comments about our people.

I've tried in every way I know to gather pictures for this publication. I've made requests and appeals to families and searched all printed and internet avenues. Since my intention for the book was always meant to be a gift to Gasparillo, I used the Fair Use regulations to extract pictures from all published sources. Although I'm not an artist and never claimed to be one, and in the absence of pictures, I'd decided to reach back into my memory and try to sketch some of the buildings as I remember them. I hope they reflect a fair enough reality of what they really looked like.

This book is meant to be read first for enjoyment, secondly for nostalgia of what our life was like, thirdly to gain some knowledge of the people who made up our past and fourthly as an encouragement to preserve the pictures, documents etc. of our families and relate their significance to our later generations.

Gasparillo has always been a unique place, most representative of a complete Trinidad & Tobago community. May we always struggle to keep it that way.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mr. Kamalo Deen you taught me at Vos Government School. I think it was Std 4.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *I love what you are doing. My grandchildren love to hear our memories of Gasparillo.*

**Fayad Ali...** *I was born and raised in Gasparillo, so too my father and his father born in 1901.*

**Nazira Fyzoudeen-Hasmath (Zira)...** *Hello Malo! When I read about your history of Gasparillo, it reminds me of my golden childhood days, which makes me feel warm and fuzzy inside.*

**Shamshu Deen...** *When I think of my village of Gasparillo, I remember an interview I had, which my friends from another area in Trinidad heard, and the first thing one said was, “Boy you could lie yes!” I didn’t reply but I will tell you that we learned to swim in Marie Dulay then graduated to the Guaracara (Warraca) where we built rafts of bamboo, bacando or banana trunks, and sailed down the river, swinging across the flooded river on real Tarzan type vines first and then cables we ‘borrowed’ from Texaco; The Gasparillo Park and Vos Park where we played football in the mud and rain and probably introduced underhand cricket to the world; Where we also “borrowed” coconuts from Texaco and experiment cane from Caroni. I have roots in La Fortune, Williamsville, Charlieville and Preysal. But Gasparillo was where I grew up and I can’t remove*

*those memories.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Warraca (Guaracara), where legends were born.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Though born in de Rillo, I lived on High Street, San Fernando until around age 11, then moved back to de Rillo in the late 60s. I remember spending school holidays by my grandparents, the Ramsawaks, on Gasparillo Main Road mostly with my aunts. In those days Gasparillo was just a small village. Every elder was either an uncle or auntie, chacha or chachie.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *I remember on mornings, men on their bicycles heading to work at Texaco. More bike traffic than vehicles. And of course, hearing the Texaco siren at scheduled times.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *Mr Ben Dickson with the Belmont taxi. We used to plant corn and peas together in the same hole. Both grew up same time but the corn was reaped first and then the peas.*

**Faize Mohammed...** *On Gasparillo junction there was an old wooden two story building, with a rumshop, run by Miss Arman. She was the granddaughter of Willie Munradin.*

**Natalie Wild Catzz...** *I don't live in Gasparillo anymore. I was born there, under Baggaloo house on Bonne*

*Adventure Road. It's Tiki Hardware now. I think the midwife who delivered me lived in Lumsden Street. My parents rented there. After I was born we moved to Lightborne Road where my father and his family lived. When I was 5 we moved to Semper Street. I lived there till I was 16. Then again when I was 20 till 22. Every time I pass Gasparillo, I still feel as if my navel string is buried there.*

**Naseem Ali...** *I remember all the stories we were told as children by our father. I remember my grandfather had a friend from Harmony Hall who used to come by on a Friday for Jumaah prayers at the mosque. He used to tell us stories as well. I can't remember his name.*

**Kathleen Wandel...** *I used to be a Roopchand. I'm now Kathleen Wandel living in England, I went to school with Kamalo.*

**Dennis Rogers...** *Quite a few Doctors, Lawyers, Engineers and Scientists are in the Rogers family. My brother Linus was a former M.P. under the last Manning Administration. I spent 4 years on stage with Jim Greaves and Freddie Kissoon back in the day. I worked with your brother Nurul at the P-A-P. Police Department in my early days before transferring to the Refinery Lab.*

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Greetings

This is to grant permission to Kamalo Deen of PEMPALAH PRODUCTIONS to use a reproduction of my painting of Old Gasparillo Government School (Shown Below) as a cover design for his ebook gift to the people of Gasparillo.



Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ato Osei". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ato Osei – NERUKHI

***Book Layout by Ishmael Deen.***

1

## The Pointe A Pierre Barrier



*Pointe A Pierre Barrier*

The Barrier was a wooden watchman's hut with a steel up & down barrier gate which was located at the corner of Bonne Aventure (main) Road and Charles Street. This was the Gaspar-

illo entrance to the Oil refinery lands which before my time were the lands of the Concord and Bon Accord Sugar Estates. It was always manned by one oilfield policeman. My late brother Nurul, who was an oilfield policeman was often stationed there. Among others who were stationed there at that time were Officers Jardine, Greaves, Tuitt, Arno & Blackburn.

We lived on Cocoa Street which today is officially named South Charles Street. I remember my father driving us through Pointe a Pierre on a regular basis because he worked at the Transport Department and was known by all the oilfield policemen. He also had his son. my brother Nurul, who was their co-worker. I remember him calling out, "Hello Chiefie!" as he drove up to the barrier and they would just open the gate for him.

Behind the watchman's hut was a pasture which comprised of the area which now includes the Presbyterian Church, Vos Government School and the Gasparillo Park. Mr Taynee's cattle roamed freely throughout this pasture. It was covered with guava, coconut and some mango trees and a large dongs tree which was at the back of the watchman's hut. This area provided a vast adventure-land for me, my brothers and our "down the road" friends.

One particular incident that remains in my memory was one day while on the tree picking dongs Mr Taynee's huge red "mad" bull came over and sat down under the tree. I had to sit up on the tree for about two hours before he got up and wandered away.

After the Solomon Hochoy Highway was built, the hut and the barrier were moved to their present location on the western side



of the highway.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember the horse-watchmen patrolling the fence between Gasparillo and the refinery.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *We were always looking out for the horse-watchman whenever we crawled through holes in the wire to go for long mangoes and dry coconuts. I still have a scar from the barbed wire when I was diving one day through a hole when we saw the horse-watchman coming.*

2

## The Texaco Pipe



*Texaco Pipe*

4

Although there was a government standpipe about 50 yards into Charles Street, there was always a shortage of water when pressure was low. In those days many people depended on public pipe-drawn water for their homes. Although some homes had water connections, the pressure was mostly slow or often cut off. The Texaco compound had their own plentiful water supply so they never had water shortage problems.

Being so close to Gasparillo, the company decided to help the village by installing a public standpipe for us. It was located on Charles Street at the corner of Bonne Aventure (main) Road and just on the north-eastern side of the watchman's barrier. This gift ensured that there was always a full water supply from the oil company. There were always long lines of people at the pipe filling their cans and buckets whenever water in the Government pipes was slow or cut off. People came from all over the village to fill their drums and buckets.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *There were two taps.*

**Gail Rambaran...** *Our great grandmother (Dose Dardee) was given the honor of opening this standpipe! She lived on the north-east corner of Charles Street and Bonne Aventure Road!*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *We walked from Henry Street to that standpipe with two buckets in our hands.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *There were many quarrels and conflicts*

*about place in line by women at the standpipe.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I can still picture people's boxcars with their buckets of water.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Hindu people in Charles Street used to go there for their lawah when they had weddings.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *I remember those strong women from upper Charles Street with large containers on their heads, cushioned by a piece of cloth, walking long distances without spilling a drop.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *During water shortages, we came from Allen Street to full water there. Public government standpipes in that area were one in front of Jhalia's house, one by Chandulal's shop, one further up in the Mahogany and one by the entrance to Gasparillo Park. In those days most people collected rain water in barrels and coppers or they filled-up from these standpipes. They became true watering holes, where locals would meet not only to full buckets and barrels but to gossip. It amazes me whenever I reflect on the racial harmony that existed in the entire village. No one passed without some sort of greeting, and people were willing to "lend ah hand". We were truly brothers and sisters then.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Some guys used to bathe and brush their teeth at the standpipes, mostly late at night or early in the morning.*

3

## Marie Dulay River



*Marie Dulay River*

The Marie Dulay River has its source somewhere in upper Caratal

and flows down to join the Guaracara River near the end of Cocoa Street. During the rainy season in those days, whenever there was heavy rainfall, the 150 foot stretch of the river, as it approaches the bridge at Bonne Aventure Main Road, would flow very fast and the water was clean. I learned to swim in that stretch. We called the stretch “Lilly”. That was the name of the old lady who lived near its bank. Her house is still there. It’s the small well-kept board house next door to Nandlal’s Inn.

The area from under the bridge to about 30 yards further downstream was about 20 yards wide and paved with concrete. It was always clean in those days and we used to catch mamataters there. One year when the river was very low my aunt Zahina (Puphoo) took all the children to catch wahbeens from the muddy water beyond the concrete. Fish was jumping in the mud all around us. We collected two pitch-oil tins full. I was about 7 years old at the time. I remember times, in the rainy season, when the river would rise so high that some of the young men would dive from the bridge. There was a lot of swimming in the river then. We had many boyhood adventures in Marie Dulay River.

The “Chineeman”, who had suddenly appeared in Gasparillo and would just wander quietly along the streets, used to sleep under the bridge at nights. He was a mysterious man who never bothered anyone. His clothes were made of scraps of canvas. When he begged, he would accept only pennies. If you gave him more he would drop it on the ground and walk away as if insulted. Nobody knew anything about him. Some guessed that he was left back from a cargo ship in Port of Spain and walked about until he ended up in Gasparillo. Some said that the Chinese

Association had tried to help him but he'd refused their help.

**Nazira Fyzoudeen-Hasmath (Zira)...** *Swinging over the river on vines, learning to swim, walking on the pipeline over the river, watching the river overflow its bank with the variety of things floating in the muddy waters. These were wonderful experiences.*

**Derek Kenosha Ali...** *I traversed that river when I was a kid especially behind my grandfather's (Mr. Toon Ali's) home. I would fish with my bamboo pole, some string and a hook made from a safety pin. There was a giant soap seed tree at the back of my grandparents' goat pen. At one time I was told that there was a cemetery across the river on my grandparents' property. One strange thing I always remember, whenever I ventured around a particular calabash tree that was on the river bank, my grandfather would appear, telling me to get back over here right now. I don't know what was going on there, but he never let me go there by myself.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *The amount of licks I get for playing by the river.*

**Gail Rambaran...** *I can relate. It was so dangerous because none of us knew how to swim!*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *I remember my grandmother (Cry Cry, the village midwife) warning my brothers that when they*

*drown, don't come and tell her nothing (joke). She would know when they went to swim in the river because their skin would be dry and whitish.*

**Dennis Rogers...** *During one or two of the very bad dry seasons, water was very hard to come by and much of it was needed to maintain our animals. To address the problem, Daddy spent almost the entire day digging a deep hole in the dry bed of the Marie Dulay River and out sprang water. He said that he remembered that when he was a child there used to a spring in that area and the adults used to get water by digging deep enough in the river bed so that clear water would spring up out of the ground and fill the well so that every morning the neighborhood would have clear water for household needs. Perhaps that's how Spring Land got its name.*



4

## The Munradin House



*Willie Munradin & his son Rex*

The Munradin House was located on the spot where King's Cafe now stands at the corner of the Bonne Aventure Road and Cocoa (South Charles) Street. It was a two level unpainted board house where Mr Munradin's son Willie Munradin lived with his wife.

John Munradin and his wife Jahnoo had bought the property and the adjacent lands in Cocoa Street and a plot across the road in Charles Street in 1873. They moved there from San Fernando with their family. John had four sons, Abdool, Willie, Samoo & Baboo and one daughter, Zainab. His wife had a nephew LaulKhan and a niece Zahuran. Both of whom also lived as family members at the house. Several of today's Gasparillo residents are descended from these people. John Munradin's story is documented in the movie "JAHAJI FAMILY".

Willie inherited the house which has since been passed down through his descendents. His son was Rex Razack Ali. Rex Street in Charles Street and Razack Street further up the road are named for him. Rex had four children: Fatty, King, Farida & Cadra. Fatty died as a young man. I remember him especially as a good kite flyer. King died a few years ago. Willie's great grand-daughter (King's daughter) Shalimar lives there with her family and owns Kings Café at this location. Her two elder sisters Halima & Kareema live in the USA. Willie's granddaughters Farida & Cadra used to run a kindergarten on this site for some time until a few years ago. They are usually at King's Cafe everyday.

**Sally Umul...** *After many moves Papa (Mr Zool Deen) decided to settle back in Gasparillo, in the big house next to the Marie Dulay River, where he was born. I have lots of memories of that house. I remember my Darda (Mr Jhoom Allaudeen) and Dardee telling us stories about it.*

5

## The Carat House



*Carat House*

This house stood on Bonne Aventure (Main) Road where Mario's is today, between Kings Café and the Marie Dulay River. The house was divided down the middle to create two apartments.

For a time when I was a child we had lived in one of those apartments. At that time our family comprised of my parents & eight children (my last sister was not born yet). I can still remember rats running through the carat in the ceiling above our heads.

I recall two families who at different times lived in the apartment next to us. One of the families was very light-skinned people. The lady had cat eyes (green). Her son was named Breds. They eventually moved to Iere Village, next door to the mosque. After we moved from the Carat house, Hydar (the tassaman) and his wife Baby lived there for a short while. I don't remember how long we'd lived there before we moved to Cocoa Street.

**Milton Zaiffdeen...** *Great memories. I cannot remember you guys living there but I can remember two families: (1) Gobin who worked at PAP as a “sprayer” to keep weeds down, with wife and two or more kids—Vijay and Bassantie. Vijay lives in the Houston area now. (2) Farouk and Iqbal (two wonderful and sharp kids who attended QRC or St.Mary’s in POS) lived there with their parents and then the whole family moved to Siparia and opened a “cookshop” or small restaurant just at the back of the Plaza Cinema.*

6

## Mr. Cippy's House



*Mr Cippy's house*

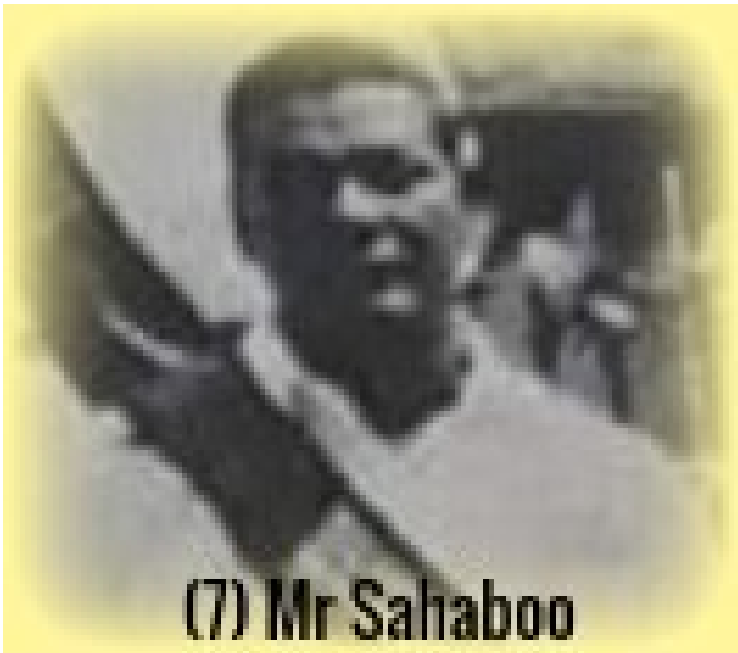
This house stood on the western bank of the Marie Dulay River and the southern side of the Bonne Aventure Road. Now there is an auto repair garage in that location. Cippy Street in Charles Street is named for him. Mr Cippy's wife Boodah was one of LaulKhan's daughters. Some of their children were Gaze, Dick, Chum, Carlo, Batch, Beti & Veena. Some migrated to Canada and some remained in Trinidad.

Chum & Batch had distinguished themselves as cricketers in south Trinidad. Gaze was a popular taxi driver between Gasparillo and San Fernando. Dick was affected by polio as a child when an epidemic of this disease had attacked several families in Gasparillo but this did not hinder his progress in life. Carlo worked in Pointe a Pierre. Beti & Veena were married to two brothers, Boy & Pitty Roopchand, from Charles Street.

**Vijay Mohip...** *Batch and Chum on a few occasions played cricket for Sports Club, in Charles Street.*

7

Mr Sahaboo



*Mr Sahaboo*



Mr. Sahaboo was one of LaulKhan's sons and a brother of Boodah (Mrs Cippy) from next door. His nick-name was Major. His shop was the next building after Mr Cippy. He and his family lived upstairs of the house and had a rumshop downstairs where Pone's Inn is now. His wife ran a parlor adjoining the Cippy side of the shop.

He had a contract to gather copra from the oilfield lands in Pointe a Pierre. There was always copra laid out on bags for drying on the road at the front of his shop. This was sold to the Coconut Growers Association (CGA). He also was a renowned barman who ran the bars at the Texaco Sports Club, Pointe a Pierre and at the Royal Hotel, San Fernando.

Their children were Toby, Pone, Hazra, Tannin, Rommel, Eddie, Nazmoon & Zorina. Hazra had won the Miss Gasparillo Beauty pageant during the early 1960s. A few years ago, Pone, who had inherited the family's property, was murdered by bandits during a hold-up at his business place.



*Mr Sahaboo's Shop*

**Yasmin Lynch...** Hazra & Zorina live in England now. The eldest Shamma is 84 and lives in La Romaine. Nazmoon lives in Orange County, California, USA and was Orange County's Business Woman of the year a few years ago. There are only four survivors now: Zorina and Ladeira (Nazmoon), Eddie and Salima (Shamma). I am the eldest grandchild and Shamma's daughter. Shamma, the eldest child left school at 13 to take care of her siblings while the parents worked the copra. I stayed with my grandparents sometimes. I always heard the name "Lalkau" while growing up. I am glad to know the correct name Laulkhan. Never knew that Papa Maje (Mr Sahaboo) was related to the Munraddin family. I was born in that house. My navel string bury there. The happiest days of my life were in the Rillo.

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *I remember buying sahena from Madam Sahaboo on the way home from Vos (Gov't School).*

**Nadir Ali...** *My father worked for Sahaboo gathering copra and he was also later a barman at Pointe a Pierre staff club. Everyone called him Tex.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Pone Khan was one of the major contributors and donators of prizes and trophies for sports in the community.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Pone was the the place for cricketers after a Sunday game.*

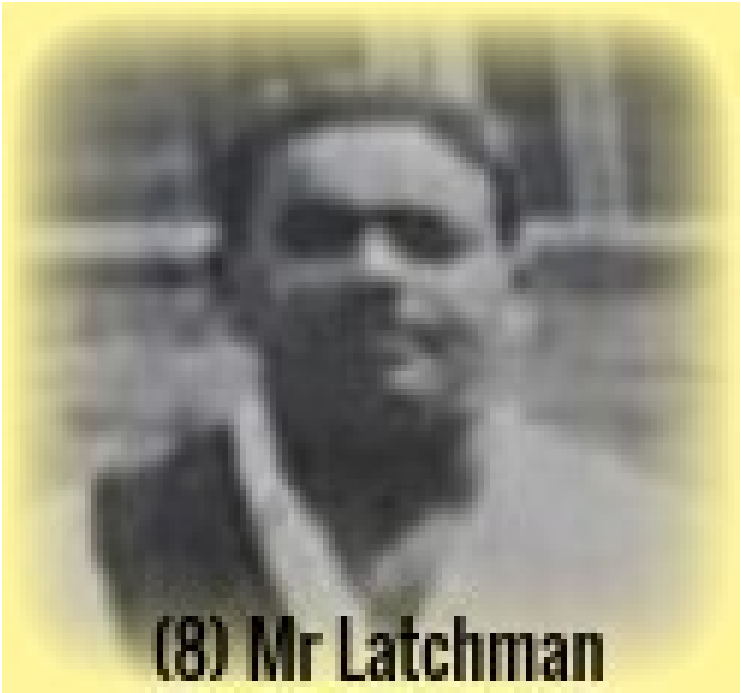
**Pamela Witcombe...** *I remember Mr and Mrs Sahaboo. I used to buy things from the parlor. I remember Hazra winning the beauty contest. She lives over here (England) now.*

8

## Mr. Parsan's House



*Mr Parsan's home*



*Mr Parsan's son....Latchman*

Mr Parsan's house was a wooden two story building with a small parlor downstairs. It was located between the Sahaboo Shop and the Zenith Cinema. When I was a child Mr. Parsan always had dhan laid out and drying on rice bags on the street at the front of his house. He had a number of children.

One of his sons was Mr. Latchman who was a taxi driver. Another son was named Reinzi. Some of the daughters who I remember were Sonah, Tanman, June and Meera. Sonah was married to

Sluggy (Toyah), a taxi driver, who was the son of Abass, the son of LaulKhan. Two of Sluggy's sons, Bobby and Shane, were my students at Vos Government School.

Mr Parsan was a well-known neighborhood whey-whey player who was reputed for going around Gasparillo everyday asking about people's dreams.

9

## Zenith Cinema



*Zenith Cinema*

The theater (Zenith Cinema) was our central liming spot in Gasparillo. It was built in 1945 and first owned by Mr Buddy Ramsawak. Afterwards Mr Bhagwan Singh became the owner. He was well-remembered for his flamboyant speeches to the audience before each show. After he passed away, his son Sonny took over the running of the theater. Sonny was my friend during this time. He also had a contract to pick up goods in Port of Spain and deliver to the San Fernando General Hospital.



Mr. Subrattie Khan, commonly called “Theater Khan”, was the theater’s projectionist. He was the father of Omar Khan, who in later years distinguished himself as the Manager of the West Indies Cricket Team. Jake, Mex & Janallee were the persons who collected tickets and made sure that everyone behaved properly during showtimes.

Several courtships started at the theater. Some of these, including my wife and me, led to marriage. Indian movies were shown on Wednesday & Saturday night. All other days were for English movies. There was only one show per day except on Sunday when there was a 4:30 pm matinee & a night show. On Public Holidays there was usually a 1:30 pm matinee for children.

Like most cinemas there were three sections; a pit, a house and a balcony. There was a parlor attached to the theater which was run by Sonny’s cousin Harry Sookbirsingh & his brother Ramdath. All the posters for coming shows were pasted on a large concrete wall at the side of the compound next to the parlor and on a huge wooden billboard at the junction. When I was a child a van would drive around announcing the shows on a public microphone system. They would throw out flyers. We used to run behind the van, trying to collect as many flyers as we could.

I saw my first movie at the Zenith Cinema when I was about 5 years old. On rare occasions the Theater hosted stage shows. I remember in the early 1950s an entertainer from British Guiana named Sam Dokie and his troupe staging shows there. In the 1960s I’d staged a successful Rock n Roll show at the Community Center and at the Zenith Cinema. The show’s title was “A Pound of Heartbeats”. All our singers, dancers & musicians were local

residents of Gasparillo.

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *The only time we went to cinema was for a school show. It was like an excursion.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *I saw my first Indian movie there. The back of the cinema was the back of our home. We would sometimes be able to hear the movies from home.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *As a young boy my mother would walk me and my sister at night to see Indian movies. I remember a joke about Uncle Sonny. A fella from Reform came late and paid 10 cents to go in pit. It was dark and the coin fell down. Sonny lit up a dollar looking for it.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *I saw many movies at Zenith. I was an artiste at the "Pound of Heartbeats" show singing "who do u love". I've always been proud of that show and about what a great job you did.*

**Phillip Allen...** *Sonny would let me do a check for him and then I was allowed to go in free. My father was his friend. He used to call me SM.*

**Donna Lee Ling...** *My parents would often tell me of their experiences after having watched movies there. My grandmother too would often go with her friends to view Indian movies.*

**Lochai Roopchand...** *Mex also used to carry home people's goods from Nandlal and Eric groceries.*

10

## The Quanning Shop



*Quanning Shop*

Where Gil's is now located used to be the site of the Quanning

shop. It was a two-storey concrete building. The family lived upstairs while the shop was downstairs. This is where our family bought most of our goods in those days. Like with most other shops and their customers, a “trust book” was set up for us. Everything we bought was entered in it and my eldest brother Boyie would pay it off when Papa got paid every fortnight.

I remember when I was very young we had Government Ration Cards for rice and some other products. This was a leftover from World War 2. I remember Mr & Mrs Quanning and their children Albert, James, Mary and about two other daughters. Mr Quanning loved to fly mad bull kites from the front of the theater. Albert was a teacher at Gasparillo Government School and was a very good artist.

My brother Boyie was especially close to the Quannings and maintained contact with James in Canada. After their family migrated, Papa and Mama started buying most of our goods at SN Ali in San Fernando.

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *One daughter was Ursula, I remember going to Vos with her.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *One of the Quanning daughters was called Joyce and the other was Ursula.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *The Quannings moved to St Thomas. They were good friends with my mom Irma Ramjohn (who lived across the road from them). She*

*visited and spent some time with them there.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *The Quanning Shop was taken over by Eric. He ran the grocery and was then joined by Susan & her children Gilman, Francis & Margaret who were all parts of the workforce. All 3 went to Vos. Their father was an older man named Ping Ham. Eric's wife was brought from China. Her name was Quimoy. She took the English name Linda. Back then Eric offered delivery service. They would go all the way up to Bonne Aventure and even to Reform. I know this because Margaret and I were close friends and we couldn't wait for Friday and Saturday to go on the back of the van to do deliveries.*

## The Chin Kee Hee Shop



*Chin Kee Hee Shop*

Joseph Chin Kee Hee lived with his wife and two sons Tony & Wayne in a shop opposite Kings Café on Bonne Aventure Road at the corner of Charles Street. A new 3 storey building now occupies that spot. He'd rented the shop from Dose Dardee and her daughter Heema who lived upstairs. Joseph and his wife were quiet people and the boys mixed well with us and the other boys from the area. Joseph was a Chinese gentleman and his

wife was a mixed Negro/Spanish lady.

On one occasion my brother Suge decided to give Tony a haircut. Well that was the only time I ever saw Mr. Chin Kee Hee get real vex and start quarreling. He brought Tony to our home to complain to Papa. Tony was wearing a hat at the time. When Mr. Chin Kee Hee took off the hat, I swear I never saw so many zogs on a head before. Suge got some real blows for that and Tony had to wear a hat for a few weeks afterwards while his hair grew back.

Wayne had drowned while the brothers were playing down by the Guaracara River. According to Vijay Mohip: "My first indelible memory of the Guaracara was the drowning of my schoolmate Wayne Chinkeehee. A truly tragic memory of my childhood. Wayne and his brother Tony had crossed the river on some dry branches behind Gasparillo Park. They went to pick bananas by a patch on the next side of the river. On returning the branch across the river broke and Wayne drowned. The year was around 1962."

**Larry Abrams...** *When I was growing up my parents used to tell us about that drowning.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I remember Tony and Wayne very well. Wayne's funeral was so very sad.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *The story I heard was that they went across the river to steal sugar cane. My brother*



*Milton and friends were playing soccer in the field by the river. Tony passed them and never said anything. He went home and didn't tell his father until later that evening. The day before, my great grandmother Dose Dardee had all the kids including Tony and Wayne empty her copper and we had a fish fry with the fish from the copper.*

## Dose Dardee



*Dose Dardee's Parlor*

Dose Dardee and one of her daughters Heema, lived upstairs to Mr. Chin Kee Hee's shop. Another daughter, Hahnnoo, owned a house next door on Charles Street. These were on lands

originally bought by John Munradin and inherited by his son Baboo. Dose Dardee was Baboo's wife. They had a parlor at the edge of the property next to the Marie Dulay River.

I remember that they had two very tall chenette trees at the back of their house. The trees used to be loaded with very sweet chenettes during the season. My younger brother Sham used to climb the trees to pick their chenettes for them to sell in the parlor. Sham claimed that much of his desire to trace family roots emerged from stories he had heard from Dose Dardee.

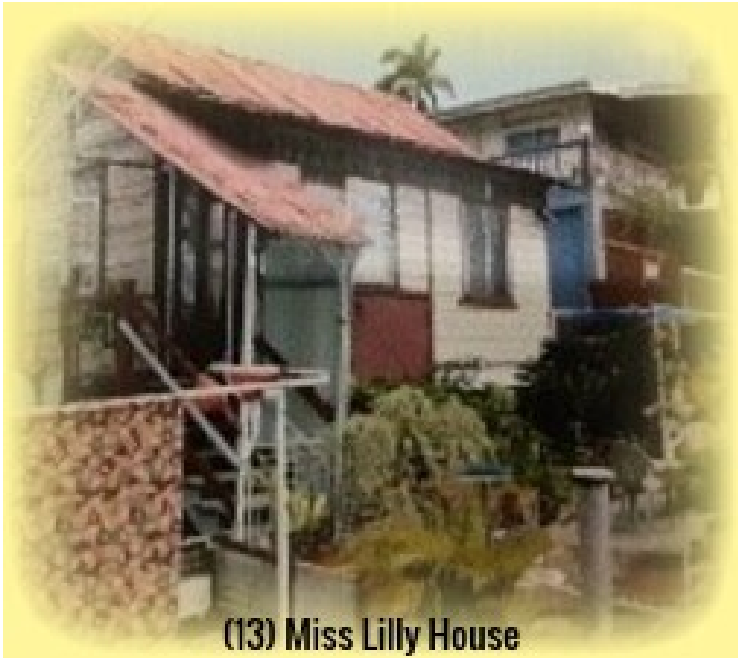
Before my time, the first official mosque in Gasparillo was built on the location of Dose Dardee's parlor. Later on it was moved to the land it now occupies, further up the Bonne Aventure Main Road. Baboo was named the first Imam of the original Gasparillo Jamaat. He was commonly known as "Baboo Tailor" because he was a tailor by trade. I have heard that the water from the Marie Dulay River was so clean back then that the Muslims used to use it to perform Wudu (cleaning themselves for prayer).

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Thanks for educating us. I never knew this history.*

**Marilyn Alexis...** *Having seen the movie "Jahaji Family", I feel more connected with Gasparillo now.*

13

## Miss Lilly ' s House



**(13) Miss Lilly House**

*Miss Lilly House*

The small wooden board house just before Nandlal's (Bobby's) Inn has been there as far back as I can remember. I'm glad to see that it has been well-kept over the years. In those days it was the home of Miss Lilly and Mr. Jash. They were a nice quiet older couple. I remember a younger boy who lived with them in the early 1960s. He was one of my students at Vos Government School. I remember his home name was Bredo.

The stretch of the Marie Dulay River which ran alongside this site, for about one hundred and fifty feet to the bridge, was called "Lilly" by all the boys who used to swim there. In later years the contractor Bagaloo's son Ganess, built a concrete house in the land between Miss Lilly's house and the Marie Dulay River. The lower level of this house is flooded several times every year during the rainy season whenever Marie Dulay overflows its banks.

**Yasmin Lynch...** *Miss Lilly had two sons Boboy and Scotty. Madame Scotty now lives in the house. The young man, Bredo, who lived with them was no relation to the family. His mother was employed and needed someone to take care of her son.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *The boy's real name was Conrad, he's somewhere in the USA. I remember getting a little axe from my step grandfather and chopping a log by the Marie Dulay River. He put his hand on the log and I accidentally chopped his fingers. Luckily my father took him to the hospital and he was fine.*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *Mr Jash worked in the abbatoir and brought home a lot of pork meat. My mom and her sibilings use to go over by Miss Lilly to eat the pork. Mr Jash use to pound in the ends of the condensed milk tins and this was the container used to hold the pork. Miss Lilly was a great cook. My mom and the crew could not take the pork home because they were Muslims so it was their secret. Their nanee called them "Harami" because they ate pork.*

14

The Nandlals



*Mr & Mrs Nandlal*

Mr. & Mrs. Nandlal had first lived “up the road” next to the Community Center site. From there they moved first to the location of Buddy Ramsawak’s shop then to directly across the road from Sahaboo’s shop where they opened their own popular business. Mr Nandlal was known to everyone as “Lord”. Their



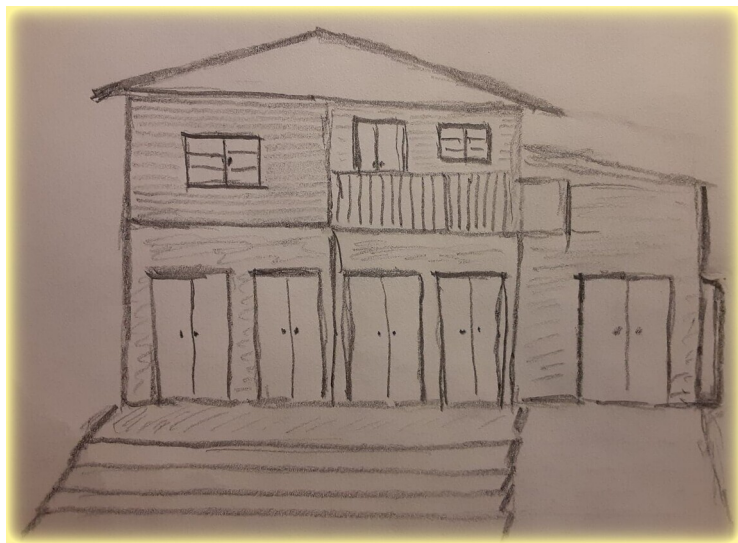
children were Sonny, Boysie, Bobby, Beulah, Cynthia and Radica.

Sonny built a car parts store at the family's original home, near the Community Center. Boysie was married to my sister Hafsa. They'd bought me a white longsleeved teryline shirt to wear on my first day of teaching at Vos Government School. They now live in Canada with their children & grandchildren. Beulah still lives in Trinidad. Her husband Joe worked in Pointe a Pierre. Bobby inherited the family home and business which he developed into a very successful Inn before passing away a few years ago. He was a very good friend of my brother Suge. He was married to Iona. Cynthia & I were classmates at Gasparillo Government School and also for a short while at St. Johns College in San Fernando. She is married to Kenrick Brooker of Caratal Road. Radica lives in Canada.

The building has been renovated or rebuilt from how it was in the old days. During my time in Gasparillo, the front of the old building had three or four long concrete steps which ran the length of the shop. You had to climb those steps to get up to the shop. I remember a time when we used to play windball cricket on the main road between the Nandlal and Sahaboo shops. There was almost no traffic to worry about. There are so many stories I can tell about the characters and incidents involving the Nandlal shop.

One such incident was when Mahal, a well-known and much-feared character throughout Trinidad, who drove an imaginary bus wherever he went, stopped by the shop to drink. At 4:00 pm workers began riding their bikes out of Pointe a Pierre after work. A few who stopped by the shop parked their bikes on Mahal's

(imaginary) bus not knowing that he was parked there. Well, you can just imagine the commotion when Mahal came outside and saw a number of bikes parked “on top of his bus”. He just went crazy and began cussing and tossing bicycles across the road and down by the river. And no one could say anything because he was loaded with bottles and stones stuffed in his shirt-front and in his pants pockets. They knew that any complaint would result in a hail of dangerous flying missiles.

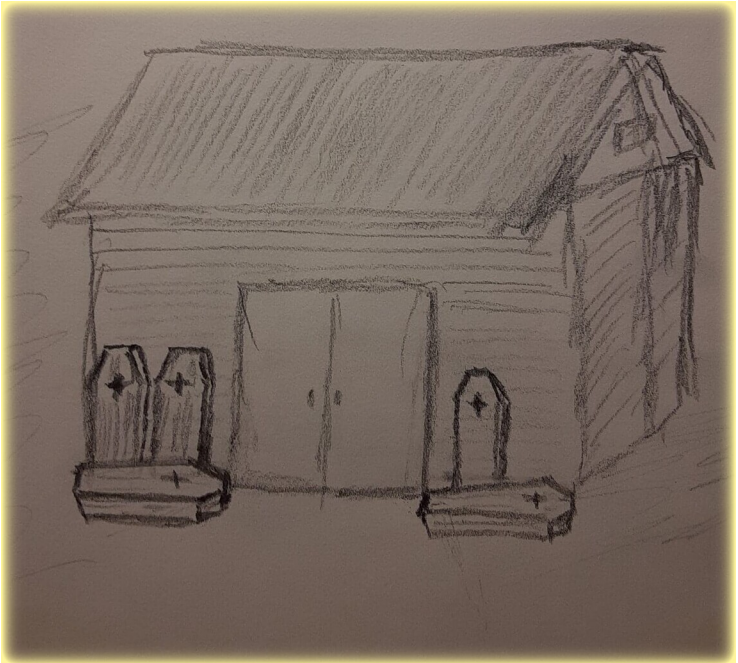


*The Nandlal Shop*

**Vijay Mohip...** *The official name today for Nandlal's (Bobby's) Shop is Sports Restaurant and Bar.*

15

## Pilgrim, The Coffin Maker



*Pilgrim's Coffin Shop*

On the Bonne Aventure Main Road after Nandlal's shop and across the street from the Zenith Cinema's parlor, there used to be a small wooden shack where coffins were made and sold. Mr Pilgrim, the old Negro coffin maker was a master at his craft. He was a small, dark complexioned man who wore glasses.

I remember seeing him at the shack with beautifully built, varnished and shining coffins on display. I don't remember ever seeing any customers or how long his business was there. It may have been during the late 1940s to early 1950s.

**Laurel Shiwratan...** *Wow that was before my time.  
Everyday I learn something new about my hometown.*

## The Bhagaloo House



*Left: Venice Henry; Right: Venice Henry at front of Zenith Cinema*



*Left: Nicolasas Sosa; Right: Irma*

Across the road from the Quanning shop, which today is Gils, used to be what I knew as the Bhagaloo (not the contractor) home. Today it's the location of Pang's Platinum Club. I remember that it was a wooden house with a high hedge. I believe that Irma Bhagaloo (later Irma Ramjohn) lived there with her mother's family.

After Irma married Manny Ramjohn, they lived there occasionally with their children. I remember only seeing the ladies irregularly because of the high hedge and because they were very private.

The two ladies, who I was aware of living there during my time, were Irma's aunts Venice Henry and Nicolasas Sosa (her mother's sisters).

Ms Venice Henry was born in 1911 and died in 1978. She worked at #1 Mess in Pointe a Pierre.

Ms Nicolasas Sosa was born in 1913. She was a train worker at the wharf. She had worked on the last train to San Fernando.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember the house and its occupants.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *There was a barber shop in a small wooden building opposite the Quannings but slightly more towards the junction. I remember this one really well because I knew the barber. He was called Zamba and he lived up Reform way. I can clearly remember that I was hanging out with Zamba at his shop when the news came on the radio that President Kennedy was killed.*

17

The Isaac Ramsinghs



THE ISAAC RAMSINGHS



*Isaac Ramsingh in 1943*



*Mr & Mrs Isaac Ramsingh*

Next door to where Pang's Club Platinum is today was the Ramsingh's home. I remember Mr & Mrs Isaac Ramsingh and their children. Two of the daughters were Nalini & Sarojini. I don't remember if there were other children. They were a

well-groomed family although I seem to recall Mr Ramsingh who worked at Texaco, mostly wearing short pants. Nalini was one of my students at Vos. Mr Ramsingh was a brother of Mr Solomon Ramsingh who lived in Allen Street. I know the family had eventually migrated to Canada. I don't remember if they left Gasparillo before me.

Mr Buddy Ramsawak had opened a grocery store there afterwards. Somebody was killed at this new business place later on.

**Nalini C A Ramsingh...** *We left in 1967 and moved to Toronto. My Dad is still alive at 99. I just took him to Trinidad for a family reunion. My Uncle Solo lived in Allen Street.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Mr. Isaac Ramsingh still resides in the Etobicoke area in Toronto, near to us. Mr Ramsingh was campaign manager for Buddy Ramsawak's County Council campaign.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *The Ramsingh family consists of 8 children: Nalini, Surojani, Indra, Carol, Patty, Brian, Ricky & Arvin.*

**Robin Nagir...** *The guy who was killed at that location was Isaac Narine's brother from Reform Village.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *Nalini was once married to Val*

*Ramsingh (son of scoutmaster SK Ramsingh).*

18

## The Old Presbyterian Church



*The old Presbyterian Church*

Before the new Presbyterian Church was built in Cocoa Street (South Charles Street), the old church stood on the Gasparillo Junction where Royal Castle now stands. It was a one story wooden building standing about 50 feet from the road with its front doors facing Harmony Hall Road. I believe the move took place during the early 1960s.

Many of our families' friends were members of the Presbyterian Church. Some of our parents from the different religions were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Some of our fathers worked together in Pointe a Pierre and most of us children were friends and school mates. It was never unusual for people of Gasparillo to attend one another's religious functions at one another's home or place of worship. I remember attending harvest festivals sometimes at the old Church grounds. It used to be like a bazaar.

At the roadside, about 50 feet to the front of the Church facing Harmony Hall Road, was the large Zenith Cinema billboard where posters for the coming week's shows were pasted.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I used to attend Sunday school at the old church. The Minister was Xavier Mootoo. Sunday school teacher was Roslyn Roopchand. The elders were Mr JN Ramsahai, Mr Solomon Ramsingh, Mr Chester Madhosingh Snr, Mr John Mohammed, Mr Ramdewar and Mr John Edo. When the old church was demolished lots of church activities took place at our home. The Christian Endeavor group held meetings there.*

*Some of the members were Cynthia Nandlal, Jai Jagessar, the Harrysingh boys (Jang and Kello), Dr J Manohar and many others.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *That Church played a great part in my overall spiritual development. I was a secretary of the CE in our days. We attended Sunday school and Christmas parties at your home (Chester Madhosingh) too!*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *I spent most of my growing up going to that church at the junction. At one time I was the secretary of the youth group and then the treasurer. I very much enjoyed those days, the Bazaar & going from house to house singing Christmas carols.*

**Nalini C A Ramsingh...** *We lived next door to the Old Church. Rev Mootoo preached there.*

**Sally Umul...** *I walked past the church every day to school.*

# 12 decades of dedication

ONE of my fond memories of attending Naparima College, a Presbyterian institution, in the 1960's was that at no time during my six and a half years there, did I as a Muslim feel pressured to convert. Nor did I ever feel that my religion was ever insulted or humiliated in any form. We did have healthy arguments. I remember well in my Sixth Form years when I would express my religious views in Rev James F. Seunarine's Ethics classes, but those sessions never left me bitter or angry. In fact it made me realise one crucial element, that we must respect and appreciate each other's beliefs.

Also, too, growing up in Gasparillo, there was always a deep sense of appreciation for each other's beliefs — among Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Among the races, too, the Lords, Rafaeels, Lalis, Mohips, Nandials, Lee Wings and Quanings were as close to us as the Alis, Mohammeds and Bakshes. Though we were no utopia as a village, we were closely so and described for great harmony by noted social scientist, Dr J.D.Elder.

All of the foregoing should make it clear to you that when I heard, just two hours before the ceremony was due to start, that the Gasparillo Presbyterian Church would be celebrating its 120th anniversary that I hastened to attend. I knew that the kind of information imparted would be priceless for those of us who are fascinated by local history.

With the start of the Canadian Mission Presbyterian movement by Rev John Morton in Iere Village in 1868, the church sought ways and means of gathering converts, primarily among children of the indentured Indians. It was not surprising that it spread its wings to neighbouring estates and villages. And so it was in 1880, that in the Harmony Hill estate, Gasparillo, a Tent Ministry began.

This eventually would spread to an old wooden shed on the property of shopkeeper and business entrepreneur extraordinaire, Mahabir Maharaj. Several references were made to this gentleman in stories of the old timers. Cab driver, Willie Munraden, my great uncle, was in his steady employment bringing



SHAMSHU DEEN

goods from Kings Wharf in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Period newspapers at the National Archives such as the *Trinidad Royal Gazette* made mention of Mahabir Maharaj.

Two early events marked the Gasparillo Presbyterian Community as it sought to gain its stamp of approval. On 23rd June, 1880, Rev KJ Grant performed the first baptism, that of Eliza Gopie. And by 1894, a parcel of land consisting of one lot was purchased from Edward Tuline for \$30. This was done by the Incorporated Trustees of the Presbyterian Church as Deed # 538/1895. Another tent was erected and would serve the fledgling parish for 15 years.

By 1909, another 1 1/2 lots were purchased, this time on the Gasparillo Junction. Again, with the generosity of Mahabir Maharaj, a wooden structure was this time established. Though the Canadians continued to give much service to the church, through Revs. Kemp, McDonald and Coffin, there was now the introduction of its first local minister in Rev James Rameshwar. Some of the baptisms during this period are stalwart names not only in the church, but in the wider community, and included John Nagir, Moses Ramdewar, Cyril Dookie, John Mohammed, Solomon Ramsingh, Florence Ramjattan, Benjamin Roopial, Dolly Kathleen Bahadur, Pamela Ramsahai and Joseph Kalideen. Rev. Rameshwar was ably assisted by Mr. Peter Ramjattan, who managed the church with the illness and resignation of the pastor.

By 1942, another important change took place. The church was rebuilt with material from the renovated Harmony Hill Presbyterian School, an institution mentioned by Rev Morton in a letter to Canada dated as far back as Feb 25th 1878.

In the late 1950's and early

60's rumours were flying around Gasparillo that not only was a new highway coming, but that it was going to pass through the area occupied by the Presbyterian Church. Whether this influenced the church's decision or not, the congregation now sought a new location. And so it was that a spot was chosen just opposite my family (and ancestral) home at Cocoon Street, and next door to Vos Government School. This was the area of my childhood, where we tied our goats and cattle, where we swung from trees of guava, mangoes and coconuts. But we were glad to see it was to be occupied by the church whose members we knew so well. By February, 1964, the sod was turned for the start of the new Trinity Presbyterian Church of Gasparillo. Now the congregation included such families as Sookermannies, Zalfdeens, Dicksons, Sankersingshs, Ramsawsaks, Madhoosingsh, Jagessara, Ramsingh, Dohsons, Ragoomath and Roopchandans.

The quality of the church was mirrored on the quality of its people. Mr J.N. Ramsahai, as building manager would perform his sworn service. But that was not at all alien to his personality. Apart from his church activities, he was a leading figure in the scouting movement, in T&T building friendships all over the world and having personally met with Lord Baden Powell. He also served as President of the East Indian Dryness Society for over 20 years. These achievements and so many others saw him a recipient in 1961 of a national award. Other sterling contributions came from Mr. S. K. Ramsingh, Mr. Claude Rampersad and Mr. Ronnie Salamah.

With the sale of the Gasparillo Junction site to Mr. Mooma Mootooingh, for \$5000 in 1964 and the concerted efforts of the congregation, no other assistance was sought from the Synod or the Southern Presbytery in the building of the new church. Soon after the completion Rev. Muttoo was given the honour of laying the dedication tablet in recognition for all he had done. At a special Thanksgiving Service, Mr Mc Naughton Jones of Texaco Trinidad Inc. participated in a tree planting ceremony, and was asked to convey special thanks and gratitude of the Gasparillo Presbyterian Church to his company.

The church was also fortunate in having the leadership from such ministers as Revs. Harold Silbahl, James Radhayskisson, Fitzroy Rachan, Cyril Beharry, Arthur Yorke, Kendrick Sooknarine and Kenneth White, as well as Deaconess Christine Chowtie and Lay Pastor, Kelvin Sookhansingh.

Over the years the congregation has developed several groups to cater for the interests of its members. As so there have been established active Sunday School (1948), Christian Endeavour Youth Group (1952), the P.C.W. Group (1970), the Choir





THE OLD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

## John Tang's Laundry



*John Tang Laundry*

John Tang's Steam Laundry still stands at the same site it did for as far back as I can remember. Mr & Mrs Tang and their

children worked together to operate the business. They were a mixed-race family, he being Chinese while she was of a mixed Negro nationality. They had a few sons and daughters. One of the boys was Cockmin and among the girls there was Sowlin & Lynn. They fitted in well and were a part of the Gasparillo community. Every Sunday morning Mrs Tang and the children could be seen dressed up and walking to the Catholic Church on Caratal Road. One girl, Libby, who I think was a niece, was among my students at Vos Government School.

In those days they had one regular laundry helper whose nickname was "Palooka". I think he took the name from an American comic book character "Joe Palooka". He was a very popular character in Gasparillo. He liked to sing and was a local Gasparillo calypsonian named "The Mighty Guana". Once I remember him taking a few drinks and entering the stickfight gayal up by Mr. Buddy's shop. He proved to be a pretty good boisman (stickfighter).

Toy's tailor shop occupied an area of the downstairs. He was a nephew of Mr Omardeen and had opened his business after he got married.

I remember while I was still a boy some electricity workers were running wires on new metal poles in Gasparillo, one of the workers fell from the pole at the roadside between the Presbyterian Church and the John Tang laundry. I think he died. I also remember as a child going upstairs in the Tang gallery on some Carnival days to watch mas on the road downstairs.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Palooka used to do the steam pressing in the laundry.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *As a boy, seeing so much clothes hanging up, I always wondered if they made mistakes sending wrong clothes for people.... One of the sons Peter, bred some of the rarest tropical birds.*

**Arlene Francis...** *Palooka was related to Mr Tang's wife.*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *I knew Palooka. He use to drink a lot in my Uncle Pone's bar. He wrote this and was always singing it: "get away from here yuh good looking owl, yuh only thieving yuh neighbour fowl".*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *I remember Mrs Tang coming to pick us up to take us to church.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *When my daddy died Palooka was at the cemetery singing.*

**Renata Kirby...** *One of their workers was Mrs Irma Farrow. She worked there for years.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *John Tang also opened a laundry in Vista Bella and Palooka was sent there to set things up and train the workers. Our gang: Myself, Hawk (Mr Pelly's son Stalin), Tonka (Buddy Ramsawak's son) and Marbles (Hydar & Mynee's son) visited Palooka there on*

*many occasions. Stalin had cousins in Vista Bella. We also saw them at times.*

20

## Gasparillo Carnival



*Midnight Robber*

There was a time when most of our village people never even thought about leaving Gasparillo for Carnival. Our Gasparillo carnival on the junction had all the excitement we could handle.

Ever since my childhood days there were old mas characters like 'Pay de Devil' and 'One Pound to See' roaming around the village on Carnival Mondays.

I and my siblings were among the lucky ones whose parents would take us to San Fernando for J'Ouvert every year. We always went to High Street at the bottom of Penitent Street. This was a yearly occurrence ever since I was in the Infant Department at Gasparillo Government School. Papa was a San Fernando boy during much of his teenage years and loved his carnival. He would park his Hillman near Palms Club and we'd troop down St James Street to our spot, carrying a bench for Mama & the girls and a basket with snacks.

On Carnival Tuesday however we spent our time in Gasparillo on the Junction. That is where all the action took place. In the early years we used to be accompanied by my older brother Boyie and sisters Sally & Hafsa. We would spend most of our time upstairs in the gallery of the John Tang laundry building or any other building where we could get a good view of all the action in the street below. As we grew older my brothers (Nurul, Suge & Sham) and I graduated to roaming through the crowds in the streets. We'd be given some change and allowed the freedom to mix with our friends, walking up and down the Junction buying snacks from the many vendors and "looking for action".

Gasparillo had plenty mas and plenty crowds in those days. We had Jab-Jabs led by FayFay, Wild Indians, Piah-wohs, Bag Mas, Minstrels, Suume-Mayries, Midnight Robbers, Gorillas and many more. These masqueraders were all villagers who we knew from our everyday life, but on Carnival days we all got caught-



up in the excitement of their costumes and their extravagant roles and the world each player created. There used to be much excitement, with whips cracking and tamboo-bamboos thumping and drums beating and quattros & guitars strumming and robbers speeching and Wild Indians chanting all over the Junction. There'd be shouting and laughing everywhere.

Most days there would be clashes when some other group of Indians or Jab-Jabs from another village would dare to trespass through Gasparillo. At these times we would rush for cover inside one of the Junction shops as we peeped through the doors at the action taking place outside. Our fighters always won.

I remember one year when Moonlight Sonatas, our new steel-band, put out a mas band. The band's headquarters was at the Raphael home (the little red house opposite the mall... See #26). They played "Rumble on the Docks". The band's characters were based on a popular movie by the same name. They dressed in blue jeans, white jerseys and white sailor caps and jumped-up from Gasparillo to San Fernando.

For a couple of years, after we got a little older, Mama & Papa took us to see mas in San Fernando on Carnival Tuesdays. Then when I was about 12 years old they took us, for the first time, to the Savannah in Port of Spain to see the Parade of Bands on a Carnival Tuesday.

**Nishard Mohammed...** *Thanks for these snippets... I am curious... what is “one pound to see” old mas as I have never seen or heard of this?*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *You took your sister’s dolly and put it in a shoe box and demanded a fee to see it.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I remember one dollar to see “cane and a bell” in a shoebox.*

**Nishard Mohammed...** *Lol... I like this one. Thanks. How were they dressed? Did they have any special movements? Music?*

**Kamalo Deen...** *You would beat an old can and chant “One pound to see mih.....”.*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *Oh God! I asked my mom and her answer was so funny. One pound to see what a man fights for. And the masquerader had a box. When you paid he opened the box and inside was a kitten. She is 84 yrs old so she was in the heart of the bacchanal.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *For me, Mondays was one pound to see my dolly, Tuesdays pay de devil. Any change collected usually was from grandparents, uncles and aunts and was spent in the junction on phulorie, anchar or channa. A Hillaire played gorilla that scared the hell of the one pound to see my dolly mas. I remember seeking refuge under somebody’s bed. Chake was the Summe-Marie*

*man, sometimes jab jab. Zoltan was the Red Indian. I could go on and on. Carnival in the Rillo was great!*

21

Mr. Pelly's New Bull

MR. PELLY'S NEW BULL



*Mr Pelly's new bull*

Directly across the street from John Tang's laundry was a large tamarind tree which in my young days was the nucleus of the Gasparillo Junction area. Behind the tree was a track that ran for about fifty yards to Mr Pelly's home. The track ran parallel to Harmony Hall Road so Mr Pelly's home was directly behind Bachan Saladeen's parlor which was on Harmony Hall Road.

Mr Pelly had sometime in the past, lost all his fingers on one of his hands. I was fascinated by how well he manipulated that hand using only his thumb. He was a very loud person, but very friendly. During the years that I'd known him he never had a wife. He lived in his wooden shack with his children. The ones I was aware of were two sons and one daughter.

I don't remember the daughter's name but the boys were Bolo and Stalin. Bolo was more reserved and never got into much trouble. Stalin was nicknamed Hawk. He was a fearless young man who was always leading us into all kinds of adventures. He and my brother Suge were very good friends. There were two younger boys, Albert and Basdeo, who lived in the home. I'm not sure of the relationship to the family but I taught both at Vos Government School.

The family had a few animals but Mr Pelly was well known for his big, strong black and white bull. He used his bull and cart for cargo transport around the village. Everybody in Gasparillo knew of Pelly's bull. There were many stories about Pelly's bull and some even made up songs about it. But the bull was getting old so Mr Pelly bought a new young bull for use. The new bull was still untrained and had never yet been used with a cart.

One day, while his father was away in San Fernando, Stalin decided that he would surprise him by "breaking in" the new bull. He rounded up a group of us including me, my brothers Suge & Sham and friends Tobes and Smalls. He brought the new bull over and attached him to the tamarind tree. Then he pulled up the cart. It was a struggle to attach the cart to the young bull but as soon as the attachment was done we all jumped on the

cart and Stalin pulled the rope loose from the tamarind tree.

When the young bull felt the weight he went crazy. He started to jump around. Stalin grabbed the reins and screamed for us to hold on as the bull bolted out of the track. When we burst out onto the main road Stalin tried pulling on the rein but the bull wouldn't stop. Luckily there were no vehicles passing at that time.

He jerked on the reins and guided the bull up the road past the police station and racing in the direction towards Happy Hill, as we held on for our lives to the posts on the cart. The young bull trotted without stopping, all the way up the road, as Stalin guided him up through Lumsden Street onto Alma Street and to the estate bridge crossing the Guaracara River. This bridge brought us out to Reform Village. The bull never stopped as he trotted along sweating and snorting but never stopping. Stalin struggled as he kept him on the road, fighting to keep him from running into anything along the way.

After we galloped through Reform Village and passed the Scheme, we reached Norman Junction. Stalin shouted to Suge, as he guided the bull onto Harmony Hall Road, to run ahead and warn any cars coming towards the bridge, which was a one-way crossing due to construction. He knew that we wouldn't be able to stop for anything..... **Sadru (Suge) Deen:** *“What I do remember was the main bridge over the Guaracara River into Gasparillo was closed because it was being strengthened and a spring bridge was erected next to it for traffic during construction. But it was only a single track carriageway. Hawk (Stalin) entered the bridge first and the bull was galloping. A car from the other side tried to muscle*

*in but when the driver saw what was coming towards him he hit reverse and was out the way just in time.”*

When we arrived by the tamarind tree to enter the track to Mr Pelly's house, Stalin shouted to us to jump off and hold back the cart enough for him to wrap a rope around the tree. After the bull was stopped, Stalin unleashed the cart. This calmed the bull down a bit. Then we doused him with buckets of cold water and dried him down before Mr Pelly got back home in the evening. Hawk (Stalin) was lucky because his father never learned about our little adventure.

**Yasmin Lynch...** *My mother says that the young bull belonged to her mother. And Stalin spent a lot of time with Toby and Pone. It was Madame Sahaboo's bull that Stalin was trying to break in.*

**Michael Ramsawak...** *Albert still lives in Charles Street and Basdeo at Harmony Hall.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *Bolo worked for years with our dad in the newspaper circulation business.*

**Angela Jones...** *I'm Beulah Jones (Nicey Nabby) and Stalin (Hawk) Jones' daughter. Thank you for posting this because it gives a little insight into my ancestry. My father passed away 25 years ago and my mother is still alive and lives in Queens, NY. I did inherit his beautiful curls lol and so did my siblings. I love hearing these stories.*

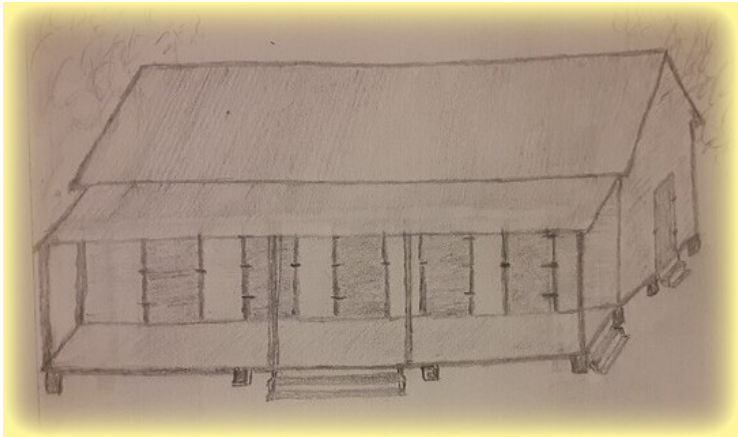


*I left Trinidad at age 5, then came back at 8, then moved to NY at age 10. So I only lived in Trinidad for about 7-8 years in total. I missed a lot of growing up in Trinidad and really knowing my family's hometown and its peeps.*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *I knew your mom and Aunt Nora very well, also your father who was friends with my brother Tonka. At one time one of my older brothers had a short romance with your aunt Nora.*

**Sadru(Suge) Deen...** *I was very close to the Pelly family. His Gasparillo children were Rita, Jean, Julien (Bolo) and Stalin (Hawk). Jean lived in Marabella but visited Gasparillo regularly. I said his Gasparillo children because there was another son. He was the oldest and was from an earlier marriage or liaison. He was called Ocean and he lived in Ben Lomond. Malo, I will never forget once when we visited you on Richmond Road in Staten Island you had secretly arranged for Hawk to drop by so we could meet. I hadn't seen him since I left Trinidad in 1964. He came with his wife Nicey.*

## Chan ' s Shop



*Chan's Shop*

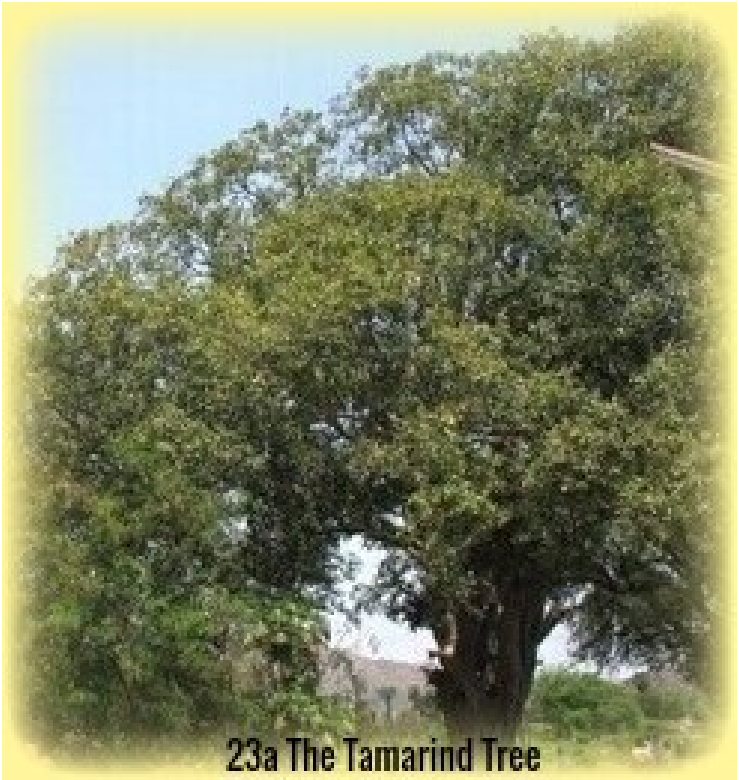
Some things about Chan's Shop used to remind me of the buildings in the old black & white Western movies which we saw at Zenith Cinema. The shop was located along the Main road just past the big tamarind tree mentioned in #21. It was a

long building with the grocery section occupying one half and the liquor section occupying the other half. This was common to most rumshops in Trinidad. Mr Chan and his wife lived there and operated the shop.

He had a helper, who was an older Chinese man named John. I don't know if John was a relative or just a worker. John was married and had a number of children. Among his children were Joyce and Chooing who converted to Islam and adopted the name Mustapha. John and his family lived in a house they'd rented from Mr Yusuff on Caratal Road. Chan's shop burned to the ground one night during my teenage years. The fire was so intense that even the tamarind tree was on fire.

23

## The Junction Tamarind Tree



**23a The Tamarind Tree**

*The Tamarind Tree*

**(23a) The Tamarind Tree....** On the western side of Mr. Chan's shop was a huge tamarind tree. The track leading to Mr. Pelly's home started by the tamarind tree. Much activity took place in the area of the Junction shaded by this tree.

I remember on carnival days, the bag-mas would position himself under the tamarind tree. He used to charge a penny to strike him with his whip. He would allow us to swing as

hard as we wanted to strike the upper part of his body which was covered with heavy sugar bags for his protection. On one occasion, Fatty Kamal paid his penny, took aim, swung the whip with all his might and struck the bag-mas on his unpadded calves. Screaming and cursing with pain, the bag-mas chased Kamal all over the junction, much to the delight of everyone.

On the night when Mr Chan's shop burned down, after the family had rushed out of the burning building, they realized that their youngest daughter, who was about 3 years old, was still inside. While everyone started screaming in panic, Mr. Pelly rushed from under the tamarind tree into the burning building and rescued the child. Shortly afterwards the tamarind tree caught fire. It was a spectacular sight. The fire brigade had to spend a lot of extra time putting out the fire in the tree.

**(23b) Jimmy's Parlor.....** Jimmy was the last son of Mr Yusuff of Caratal Road. His nickname at that time was Django. In the early 1960s he opened a parlor on the Junction between the tamarind tree and the entrance to the gambling club. It was a smart choice for a location and soon Jimmy's Parlor became a staple on the Junction. After a few years he sold the parlor to Jerry Jagger from the Scheme and migrated to Canada. Jerry's wife Feroza from Charles Street, his older brother and his sister Eldora were all my students at Vos.

**Michael Ramsawak...** *Some years ago I was in Canada and I met Jimmy. He was operating a small fruit and vegetable shop on Spadina Road (or Avenue). He was*

*doing quite well then.*

**(23c) Johnson & Brigo's Barber Shop....** Next to Jimmy's Parlor was a hut where Johnson and Brigo operated a barber shop. They were two of the best barbers in Gasparillo. In those days Johnson lived with his wife & children in Victoria Street. I believe that Brigo lived in Charles Street. I'd also heard that his (Brigo's) arm had been seriously injured in an incident with another person.

**Careen Chotalal...** *Nice story. I remember Brigo and Mr Johnson.*

**Lochai Roopchand...** *Pulchan the barber on the Gasparillo Junction was a crackshot with the scissors and comb. His father was Pabaroo from Charles Street. I am one of Pulchan's sons. I am 59 years old. He and tailor George used to trim on the Harmony Hall stretch. Later he went to Gasparillo Junction and rented from Ozzy and Johnny's father.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Ozzy & Johnny were the sons of taxidriver Harrysingh from Allen Street and grandsons of Dolly Dardee from Charles Street. She owned the property on the junction. She had inherited it from her father Abdool who was the son of John Munradin.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *In the 50's there was an Indian guy from upper Charles Street who carried his barber tools in*

*a case. He made house calls, and not only trimmed the owner and his family, but also his horse. I got haircuts from him too.*

**(23d) Mr. Paul the Shoemaker....** Mr. Paul operated his shoemaking trade from a small booth under the tamarind tree. He was a quiet man who was a master at his craft. He served the village very well. I think that his wife was the granddaughter of Mr Sayeed of Mahogany who was the son of LaulKhan.



## Miss Jackson ' s Parlor



*Miss Jackson's Parlor*

In the spot after Chan's shop, where Dr. Chen's Clinic used to be and where the oysterman and the fruit vendor are now located,

there was a two-story building when I was a boy. Downstairs was a parlor which was run by Miss Jackson. She was a middle-aged Spanish/Negro lady.

Upstairs was occupied by Mr. Ali who was married to Mr. Baychan Saladeen's daughter. They had a son named Kamal who lived mostly by Mr. Baychan's parlor. Kamal, nicknamed "Fatty Kamal", was one of our boyhood friends. He attended TML primary school in San Fernando with us. He was involved in many of our boyhood adventures in Gasparillo.

There was a large hog-plum tree at the front of the building near to Mr Chan's shop. Whenever hog-plum was in season the whole yard at the front used to be covered with ripe, yellow hog-plums that had fallen from the tree. The sweet hog-plum smell used to permeate the Junction area.

**Robin Nagir...** *On that same spot my mother's parents used to live. They sold out in the early 40s and moved to Oropouche Village.*

25

## The Brathwaite Home



*The Brathwaite's House*



*Inez Williams*

The Brathwaite home is located on the Bonne Aventure Main Road next to the site of Miss Jackson's parlor. Except for some

renovations over the years the house has remained the same. I don't remember any men ever living there. The women who lived there were quiet and always well respected. I can remember Miss Brathwaite who used to teach at Gasparillo Government School. She was a strict and well respected teacher. Many of us passed through her hands. Another lady, who may have been her mother also lived in the house.

Inez Williams also grew up there and was a student at Gasparillo Government School. After graduating from high school, Inez became a teacher at Vos Government during my time as a teacher there. After completing Teachers Training College she went on to teach at Gasparillo Government School. I believe that she eventually became the Principal there.

During the political season the Brathwaite House was a dedicated PNM location. I believe that our first Prime Minister Dr Williams and his group had spent a night there during an election campaign. I'm not sure if he was PM at the time.

**Ann Sooknanan...** *I remember Miss Williams teaching at Vos. She was a very nice person.*

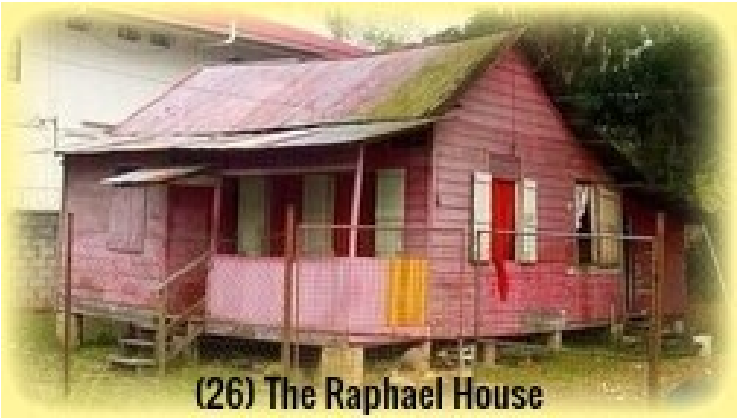
**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I am pretty sure that Dr Williams was the PM when I saw him give a speech from the gallery of this house. Hundreds of people of different political persuasions gathered on the opposite side of the road to see him and hear him speak.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *My father attended PNM meetings there. He was an original Dr Williams supporter.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I am a product of Miss Brathwaithe... .Gad, her hands stung. Excellent teacher.*

26

## The Raphael House



**(26) The Raphael House**

*The Raphael House*



*Left: Bonifacio Raphael; Right: Alice Moore*



## THE RAPHAEL HOUSE



*The Raphael children*

The Raphael House is located on the main road after the Brathwaite House. Except for the coat of red paint the house still stands almost unchanged as I remember it from my childhood years. Mr Bonifacio Raphael and his wife Ms Alice Moore had a very large family who lived in that house. Their children who I remember were Clotilda, Rawle, Will, Ray, Lynton, Kenrick,

Geoffrey, Hugh and Keith. Other children, Greta, Esmé & Akeel would also spend time at the house.

Mr Raphael had a long, interesting history as a teacher, a trade unionist (involved in the Butler riots), an elected County Councillor in Gasparillo, a general contractor for Victoria County Council, a community development organiser, a beauty queen show promoter, a cricketer and a founding member of PNM. In 1946 he started the Gasparillo Welfare & Development Council and in the 1950s they built the Gasparillo Community Center. Among his introductions to Gasparillo in the 1950s were Women's cricket, carnival competitions & a calypso tent.

His wife Ms Alice Moore was either a daughter or granddaughter of Ma Jadoo who was among the earliest residents of Gasparillo. She is portrayed in the movie "Jahaji Family". Ma Jadoo's descendents are spread out all over Gasparillo. Miss Alice was a dedicated housewife who spent her life tending to the welfare of their children. She made many sacrifices for them and focused on their education and their religious involvements in the Catholic Church.

They were well known and well liked in the Gasparillo community. I remember the boys in various sports clubs in Gasparillo. Sonatas steelband originated at their home. All of the children have brought great pride to the Raphael name. I knew them all and was a "brother" to most of them. I have had numerous shared experiences with them over the years.

**Fiat Karmally...** *My acquaintance is with Keith a high school music teacher and calypsonian.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember Miss Alice. Moonlight Sonatas was the Gasparillo Steel Band.*

**Marsha Dougan Jobity...** *As I sit here reading this to my uncle Olic Dougan he informed me that Aunty Alice was Ma Jadoo's grand-daughter.*

27

## Dentist Harry



*Dentist Harry's house*

**(27a) Dentist Harry....** Dentist Harry and his father lived upstairs in the house next to the Raphaels. I don't know if he was a qualified dentist or who were the other members of his family. I just remember seeing them on occasion. After a while they moved to somewhere in Union.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Harry served the people of Gasparillo well.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *He wasn't a degreed dentist.*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *I think he was a dentist assistant before he practiced in Gasparillo. He did the work like a regular dentist. My brother Kenneth (Charlie) was his friend.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *Charlie used to talk about him. I think he did dentures too!*

**Michael Ramsawak...** *That was Carlton who did dentures. He used to move around in a lab coat and a briefcase full of dental associated "tools".*

**(27b) Mr & Mrs Boodoo....** At one time Mr & Mrs Boodoo lived in a small house on the same lot as Dentist Harry. Mrs Boodoo operated a roti stall downstairs to Dentist Harry's home. Sometime later they moved the roti stall a little further down the road to near the entrance to Mr Chester's home.

**Nadir Ali...** *They made the best dhalpuri on a coal pot!!!!  
I can still taste the sweetness.*



*Mr & Mrs Boodoo*

**(27c) The Barracks House....** There was an old wooden barrack house which stood where the poultry shop is now. I remember that there was a breadfruit tree in the front yard. Archie and his family lived there for a while. Policeman Sargent Lee also known as “Bag a Lion” and his family moved in later.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I think he was Jappy’s godfather.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *You mean the guy who said you can call me “Bag” or “Lion” but never “Bag of Lion”. They lived opposite Zamma’s store. He was a police sergeant. Diana Lee was a very nice person.*

**Phillip Allen...** *He was a dread one. Last I saw him he was the security at DS Maharaj in Marabella.*



## Miss Phillippa Phipps



*Miss Phillippa Phipps House*

To almost everyone who was born in the Gasparillo area during the 1940s - 1960s, the name Phillipa Phipps was written on their Birth Certificate. Miss Phipps was the official Registrar of Births, Baptisms and Deaths for Gasparillo. She lived and operated from upstairs of the building next to John Tang Laundry and the

opposite side of the road from Chan's Shop. I remember her as a tall, dark, Negro lady who had a gentle disposition, very suitable to her duties.

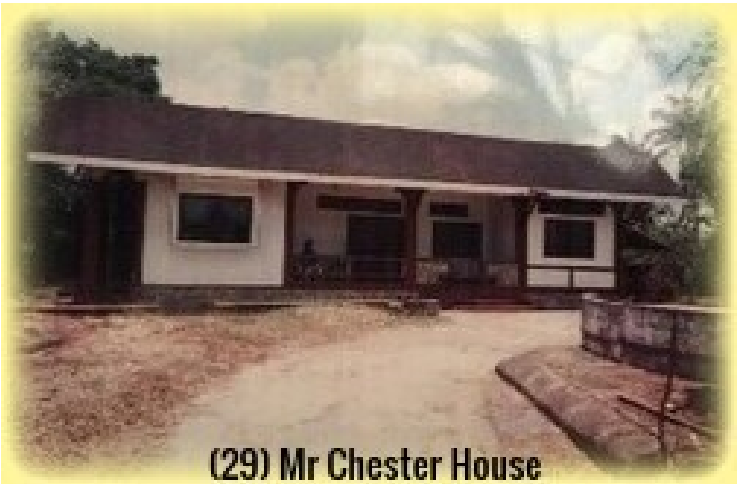
There was another apartment upstairs next to her which for a time was rented by taxi driver Baytal and his wife Agee. Baytal worked his taxi on the North/South route between Port of Spain and San Fernando.

Downstairs of this building was a shop occupied by the Lee Wings. They were a hardworking family who moved eventually to a larger, newer shop further up the road. Among their children were Kelvin, Alvin & Maureen. The children were very successful at school and mixed well in the community. Their son Alvin (known in Gasparillo as Sap) was heavily involved in village sports especially football. Eventually the family moved to Canada. Alvin did not adapt well in Canada and returned alone to Gasparillo. Although he was doing well at first, he eventually began to grow detached. He did not fit in well after his return.

Attached to the downstairs of Miss Phipps building, was also a barber shop run for a while by Brigo from Charles Street. Boodoo & his wife had also moved their roti stand from by Dentist Harry to this site.

29

## Mr Chester ' s House



**(29) Mr Chester House**

*Mr Chester's House*

Mr Chester Madhosingh's house was a flat concrete house which stood about 150 feet off the main road. The roadway leading

to his house was across the Bonne Aventure Road from Miss Jackson's parlor. I remember him and his wife being involved with the East Indian Friendly Society. They had about four children. They made sure that their children were involved in the Presbyterian Church activities and receive a proper education. Their youngest son Mackey (Chester Jr) was one of my students at Vos Government School. He was a well-disciplined and intelligent student. They were a liked and respected family in Gasparillo. They owned a few properties in the area and ran a lumber business near their home.

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *My parents were their good friends. I remember playing in their yard as a kid.*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *We lived next door to Mr Chester for many years and he and his wife treated us very well. Whenever we went to them we were treated to whatever goodies she made that day. Once when Mackey was quite young he decided to hide and his parents were in despair when they couldn't find him so the police was called. He was actually hiding in the house.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *They had three children, Florence, Joyce and Chester (aka Mackey).*

**Wendy Modeste...** *I remember Joyce (Ms. Kawal), a wonderful lady. I was her student at Vos.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Joyce lives next door to the*

*Mosque. She taught at Vos Government School. Students will know her as Mrs Kawal. She and I worked together for many years.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *My wife belongs to the Madhosingh clan. She lived in that house in her young years.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *Behind Mr Chesters' house was his citrus field by the Marie Dulay River. We had to be very careful when we crossed the river to steal his fruits. It was an open secret that he owned a shotgun.*

**Michael Ramsawak...** *One highlight of that place was the "roundabout", a circular bench made of concrete blocks and shaded by a large almond tree. It was a favorite meeting spot for our Rillo Boys sports club. Mr Chester also had a brother, Vernon, who lived on the Harmony Hall road.*

**Judy Kawal...** *His cherry tree hung over the fence. The lady next door was renting from grandpa. One day when my friends and I were picking cherries that hung over she chased us quarrelling whats over the fence is hers. Well she was just letting them fall to the ground and rot. So grandpa got the gardener to cut off the branches that hung over. We got so many ripe cherries. Grandpa was a good prankster as well.*

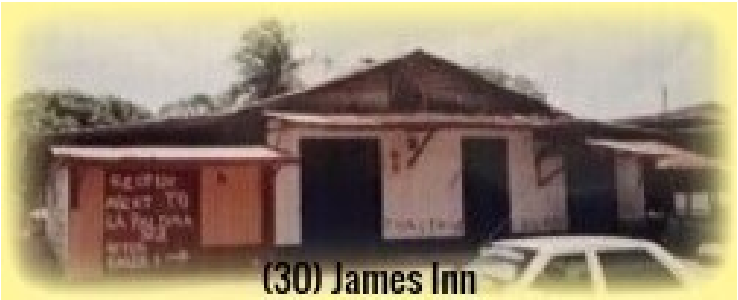
**Catherine Andrews...** *Mackey taught at Piparo Presbyterian School. He was a father to all the children in Piparo.*

*He was loved by all.*

**Sally Umul...** *Mr Chester had two brothers who taught at Vista Bella CM School when I attended there. I remember the younger of the brothers. He had two daughters Madge and Bebe.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *You are referring to Israel Madhosingh father of Madge and Bebe. The other brother was Kenneth Madhosingh. They were two of be my uncle's.*

## James Inn



*James Inn*

The property immediately after the roadway leading to Mr Chester's House was James Inn. The building was owned by the Chester Madhosingh family. My sister Hafsa & her husband Boysie had rented there and ran a pick-up & delivery laundry business for a while in the early 1960s. Eventually it was rented by James Ahing who opened an inn. I can recall Harold (Figgy) working there. After James left, the inn was taken over by Harold

& his wife Chandra. Today it's where the mall is located.

**Fiat Karmally...** *People used to line up for his pork.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *But yuh know, I never remember him smiling.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *He had that look. The close and personal time I was there I found him to be nice and upright. He would give me good advice.*

**Alisha Ali...** *Khan's on Caratal Junction used to be there before the mall was built.*

**Nalini Ramkissoon...** *Before that it was Madame Ali's roti shop. There was a bar next door.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Wonderful Chinese man, I remember him well.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *James had the best roast pork. My uncle Langa (Pooge) was the roaster. It was done in an outdoor brick oven.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *James (Ahing) was my grandfather's (Mr Akai's) brother.*

**Alisha Ali...** *Pappy's friend Uncle Harold worked there. After James left, he took over the business.*



**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Yes. Harold took over from James. Before that I think he was the bartender.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *Harold used to also work at the Texaco Club in Point a Pierre as a bartender.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Langa was lovingly called Pooge. Some of the Ramsawak children and grandchildren practically grew up with Pooge. He worked with us. Wicked sense of humor, very shy and lovingly kind.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *I worked with Harold (Figgy) when he bought the shop. James still lived on the premises though he was retired. He taught me the art of shopkeeping. Langa (Pooge) was a character, always cheerful. I worked long hours in that shop until my friends nicknamed me "slave".*

**Vishnu Ramdeen..** *Pooge was a great guy. Diabetes took him. I hope he is in a better place.*

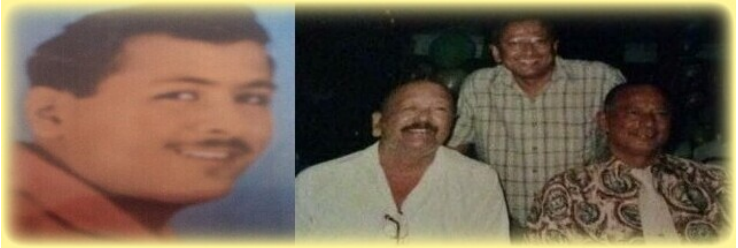
31

Mr. Buddy 's Shop



*Mr & Mrs Buddy Ramsawak*

MR. BUDDY ' S SHOP



*The Ramsawak sons*



*The Ramsawak daughters*



*Some of Ramsawak's Children*

The building after James Inn was Mr. Buddy's Shop. He and his wife had several children. The ones who I remember were Kenneth, Robin, Pamela, Premchand, Seeta, Maureen, June, Sandra, Anand, Helen and Judy. I remember when Mr Buddy ran for elections in Gasparillo. His advertising pamphlet read: "Vote Buddy Ramsawak-Maharaj". He was very active in the East Indian Friendly Society and supported several other local groups. I have a number of interesting memories of Mr. Buddy's Shop during my growing-up years. At that time it was the center of the Hosay and stickfight activities in Gasparillo.

The Tajdah for the Hosay Festival was built by local Gasparillo men and displayed in the empty lot next to the shop. Leading up to the Hosay Day, there used to be a period of Gadkah which was the name for Indian stick-fighting. The fighters used a short stick and a small padded shield.

On the Hosay Day a large number of people used to gather for the celebration. After the whole afternoon of Tassa drumming and Gadkah fighting, the people would follow along in a procession led by the drummers. Loud chanting and singing of special sad religious songs accompanied the Tajdah as it was paraded like a funeral to the Guaracara River Bridge on the Harmony Hall Road. Here, after another ritual, the Tajdah would be “drowned” in the river. I remember that some of the braver boys like Stalin & Batch & Suge used to dive in right afterwards trying to collect some of the decorations as the Tajdah broke up in the water. I think however that they used to really be trying to show-off for the crowds of people.

Regular stick-fighting also used to take place at Mr Buddy's shop grounds during the last few weekends before carnival. Gasparillo had several popular stick-fighters during those years. There was Hamid the taxi driver, Dean from near Norman junction, Ram from Reform and Arno the Pointe a Pierre watchman among others.

There were so many memorable incidents that I witnessed at the Gayal in those days that I may need a separate book to narrate them. I developed a liking for stick-fighting at this Gasparillo Gayal and later on I would attend Gayals in several areas around the country. In later years, because of my movie “Bacchanal

Time” which is about stick-fighting, I got to know many of the boismen throughout Trinidad.

Mr. Buddy and his sons also had the contract to deliver newspapers to vendors throughout most of south Trinidad. Mr. Buddy’s Shop caught fire one night and was burnt to the ground. He opened his shop temporarily on the junction until his new shop was rebuilt.

**Yasmin Lynch...** *Judy went to Naps the same time I attended school. Sandra and Maureen had a double wedding. Maureen was married to Chanker. Sandra moved to Miami.*

**Faize Mohammed...** *Yes, Sandra married my cousin Kamal Arman. Judy married another cousin of mine Fazal Karim. I didn’t know Helen. I know the rest of them.*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *Yes I remember Kamal. His eldest daughter is married in my village and attends my church. I taught her two sons. They are now residing in Florida.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *Mr. Buddy was my grandfather. His first son Kenneth was my dad.*

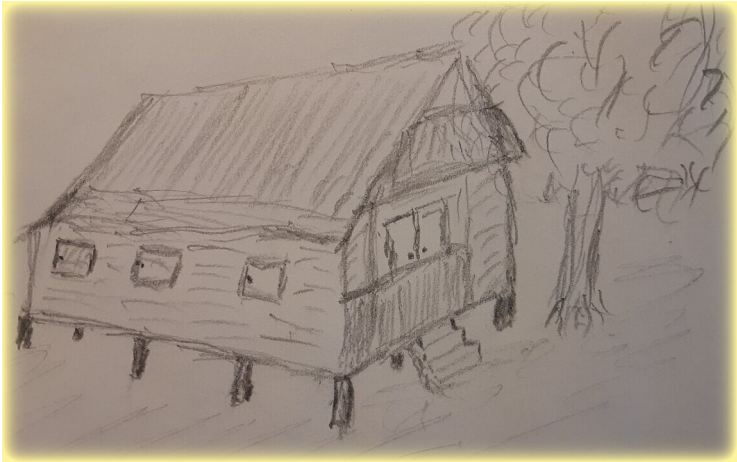
**Pamela Witcombe...** *They had altogether 14 children, three of whom died as infants. The remaining eleven were Kenneth, Robin, Pamela, Maureen, Tonka (Premchand), Seeta, Sandra, June, Judy and Helen. Pamela and Tonka*

*migrated to England and Seeta, Sandra, June and Helen migrated to America. Our house was always open to everyone. Such good times.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *For elections Mr Buddy had a legendary slogan: "VOTE BUDDY OR NOBODY"*

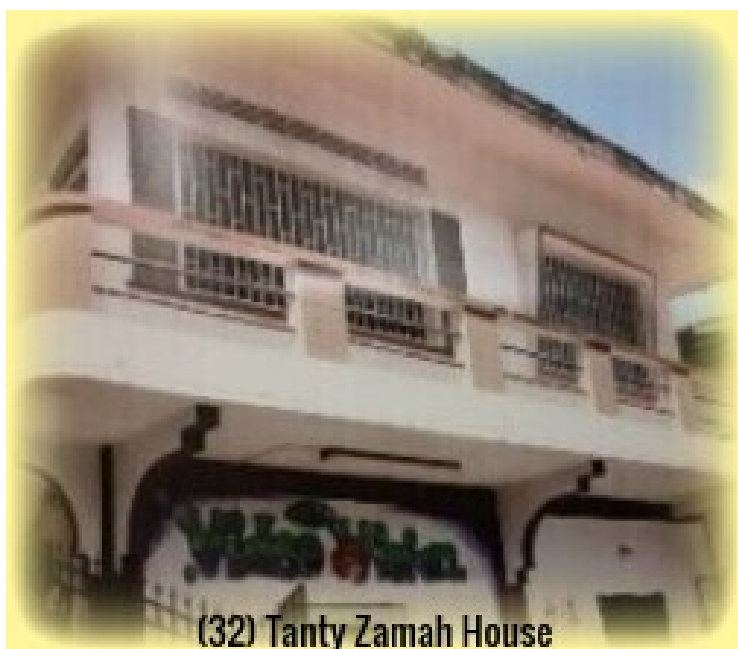
**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *The Ramsawak family played a big part in my teenage years in Gasparillo. I knew everyone in the family and I was always welcome in their home. Tonka (Premchand) and I were very, very good friends as we were growing up. And we still are here in the UK. We visit each other and are house guests at each other's homes regularly.*

## Tanty Zama's Home



*Tanty Zama's original house*





*Tanty Zamah's House*

Opposite Dentist Harry's home on the main road was a small, flat, wooden house where Tanty Zamah lived along with her family. As far as I can remember they were: Her brothers Lal, Haniff & Mr. Barbay with his wife Shirley & their sons Ashik & Shannie, nephews Roy & Baby and niece Neelehz, Lal's friend Rajo and her son Boysie. The heads of the house were Mr Barbay & his wife Shirley.

Mr. Barbay was the Muezzin at the mosque. He was a small man with a distinctive high-pitched voice that was heard in the surrounding area as he called Muslims to prayer. I remember

him traveling by bus to his job in San Fernando every morning. In those days smoking was permitted on the bus. As a boy I enjoyed sitting behind him so that I could smell the second-hand smoke whenever he lit his cigarette. I liked it so much that it contributed to a smoking habit which lasted well into my 50s.

Lal was a tailor. He worked in the front gallery of the house. Tragedy struck the family when Lal was killed in an accident in central Trinidad. The car in which he was a passenger struck the back of a truck carrying long metal poles. Haniff worked at an office in San Fernando. He married Pickin Ramdeen from Charles Street. Ashik & Shannie were active in the mosque. They were founding members of the Gasparillo Islamic Group and teachers in the Sunday school. Ashik became a schoolteacher and then migrated to Canada. Shannie married Joan. I remember attending their wedding in Princes Town. He stayed in Gasparillo and raised a family. Roy worked in San Fernando. Baby was a popular taxi driver on the Gasparillo/San Fernando route. Neelehz became a school teacher and was married in San Fernando. She and her husband migrated to Canada. Rajo built a house in Razack Street and moved there with her sons.

The family's old house was replaced in the 1950s by a two-storey concrete house with a store downstairs. Tanty Zamah who never married was an active member of the Gasparillo Mosque. She was well liked by everyone who knew her, especially the children.

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Tanty Zama was also a seamstress. Shanni had a poultry shop there.*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *Aunty Zama taught people to sew. She was very good at baking and icing cakes. Before the poultry shop they'd sold a variety of things.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *Tanty Zama could tell great jokes.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Tanty Zama was everyone's mother and friend. She had a gift of knowing how to talk to the old and young. She carried an infectious smile and had a tone which made you feel relaxed.*

**Nalini Ramkissoon...** *I was a little girl but I knew Aunty Zama. She was always pleasant. Aunty Joan now lives there. There use to be a big mango tree to the back but now Miss Nadia's home is there.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *As a boy my mother used to send me there to buy chicken.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Tanty Zama was a sweet lady who was loved by all. I could still hear her laugh.*

**Nadir Ali...** *There was a story of a house break-in at Tanty Zama's home but she never said who it was. The older folks talked about it. I think my father told it to me.*

**Naseem Ali...** *Never heard of that story.*

## Mr. Rasool' s House



*Mr Rasool's House*

On the main road after Tanty Zamah's home there was an empty lot before reaching Mr. Rasool's house. Mr & Mrs Rasool's children who I remember were: Bolo, Fazool, Mamin, Moonoon and Zoyee. Mr & Mrs Rasool were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society.

Theirs was a two-storey building. The family lived upstairs and there were three businesses downstairs. Mrs Rasool ran a parlor in one section. Bolo's sister-in-law Aishuun ran a fabric store in another section. Mr Rasool & Fazool ran the abattoir at the back section of the downstairs. They butchered and sectionized cattle in an area at the back of the house and sold beef from the back section of the downstairs. Fazool had a green pick-up van which was used for the beef business. Bolo drove a closed van to rural districts selling fabric and other store items to countryside residents.

Mamin was married to Mr Poui from Charles Street and lived there with her family. Bolo was married to Pollin and lived next door. Fazool was married to Michin and lived in Henry Street. Moonoon married John from Mayaro. They lived at the house and raised their children there. Zoyee was married in New Grant. The family eventually joined the ASJA Jamaat in Beadeau Street.

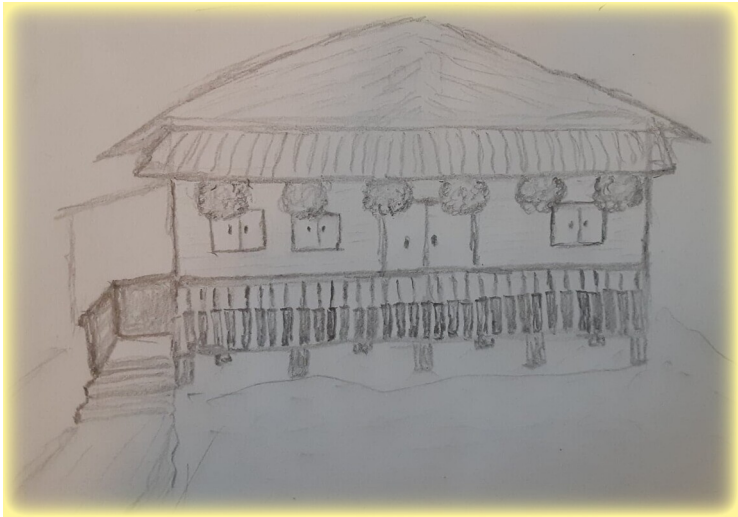
**Sharlene Ali...** *Brother John was an inspirational man who I had great respect for.*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *I remember we got our beef from Mr Rasool.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *John had a motor bike nicknamed Put Put. We used to wonder if he'd make it to Mayaro in that thing. His daughter Nariman used to ride to school with him. John also had a poultry depot at the house.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *John Ali visited us every Christmas Eve to dispatch our goat, while we kids sat watching and crying for our pet.*

## Bolo ' s House



*Bolo's House*

Bolo's House stood where his son Zameed's store is now. Their original house sat on a hilltop at the same spot. I remember its



front had a colored canvas awning and flower plants hanging in wire baskets along the gallery. The house was eventually broken down, the land graded to street level and the present house & store built.

Bolo and his wife Pollin, lived there with their children Kashmir, Ameer & Zameed. Pollin's sisters Aishuun, Rosey & Girlsie lived with them. The store operated next door by Aishuun was moved to the garage at the new house.

Aishuun later was married to Afraz Baksh a teacher and Member of Parliament. Rosey and Girlsie both migrated to England. Kashmir migrated to Canada. Ameer migrated to the USA. Zameed remained at home and inherited the property.

Both Ameer & Zameed were my students at Vos Government School. They used to mind a few sheep.

**Sharlene Ali...** *Paulin Bhabi and Uncle Bolo were wonderful people from the Gasparillo Jamaat. I worked with him for a little while. Although most people thought he was a serious man and some thought he wasn't friendly, he and I got along well. I remember Paulin Bhabi crossing over the little river in the back by Baytal and calling from there for one of us to meet her.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *They adopted a boy named Reynold who lived with them. Afraz Baksh was originally from Siparia Road, where I was from.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Reynold was Took Took's nephew. He was Sylvie's son. She was Took Took's sister. Afraz Baksh was a teacher at San Fernando TML School where my brother Boyie and sister Hafsa also taught. My other brothers and I were students there at that time. My father's mother was also from Siparia Road as was my mother-in-law Mrs Toon Ali.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Our cousin Fazal (Killers) worked for Bolo on his fabric van for a long time.*

**Denise Sookrali...** *My mom bought cloths, zips, thread & plastic etc at the back store.*

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Mr. Gafrool' s House



*Gafrool & Soognie's House*

Mr. Gafrool & his wife Soognie lived in a small wooden house next to Bolo's house. Their son was Baytal who drove a north/south taxi. Their grandsons, Haroun and Bull, lived with them. Mr. Gafrool was a son of LaulKhan. Bull migrated to the USA. I don't know where Haroun is. The house was removed a long time ago when the land was graded for Bolo's new house. Madat Street, next door to Zameed is where that house was located.

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Sometimes there was a merry-go-round where the grocery (Dollar Valu) is now. I used to sell bottles when the bottle man passing, to get money to pay for rides.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *We used to play cricket on that site.*

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## The Dougans



*Vincent & Olga Dougan*

THE DOUGANS



*Left: Lenora Lord; Middle: Ermine; Right: Monty*



*Left: Ashwin; Middle: Barbara; Right: Olric*

Where the grocery (after Zameed's store) stands today there was a very large tamarind tree. On the side of this tree stood Mr Dougan's house. It was a small wooden house where Mr Dougan lived with his wife and children. Among their children were Ena, Lenora, Ralph, Olric, Monty, Ashwin, Barbara and Ermine. I also remember a girl named Kaymlee. I'm not sure of her relationship.

Lenora became a teacher at Gasparillo Government School while I was still a child. I remember her as the music teacher there. Years later we taught together at Vos Government School. She also proved to be a very good actress in our movie “Bacchanal Time” in which she played Miss May.

I also remember that Ralph used to play the trumpet and that he wrote songs. Mr Clark sometimes stayed in a shack next to this house. He had one hand. I remember also that there was someone who did blacksmith work at this shack at one time. My friend Randolph Hiliare (Count Robin the calypsonian), as a boy, stayed there sometimes.

For several years, after the land and the house were cleared and before the grocery came, the chair plane used to visit this spot. It provided much entertainment, during holiday periods over several years, to the people of the village.

**Donna Lee Ling...** *When I attended Vos many years ago, Mrs Lenora Lord was our Vice Principal.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *When we moved to Victoria Street, Miss Lord was a frequent visitor to our neighbors Mr Lawerence and Mrs Ena, who lived across the street.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Miss Ena’s daughter was May. She was an avid horticulturalist.*

**Phillip Allen...** *May was her relative, not her daughter.*



*She was my family.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *She was a pretty, fair-skin girl and well-mannered too. The Dougan family eventually lived on Government School hill in a concrete house.*

**Marsha Dougan Jobity...** *Ena was the first child of Mammy Gar. They were in order: Ena, Ralph, Barbara, Olic (Nello), Ashwin, Lenora, Monty and Ermine. Yes that's my family. I still live on Gasparillo Government School hill in the concete house. The old house where the Chinese restaurant is now, next to Stewart Street opposite the Government School, was also my great great grand mother's house. We the Dougans, the Rogers and the Raphaels are all one family of Ma-Jadoo. Monty has two kids Wayne and Wendy. And she also took care of me from one week old until her death. Lenora Dougan Lord had two daughters Collen and Ann Marie. It was a pleasure for us to take part in whatever you brought to the table. I starred on the cover of your book "For All Our Children".*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I was at Monty's wake at the concrete house behind the school. Your ancestors are characters in our movie "JAHAJI FAMILY". Monty and my eldest sister Sally were classmates at Gasparillo Government School.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Ms Lord was the Vos netball teacher. Later she moved to Victoria Street.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *After writing common en-*

*trance we were placed in Miss Lord's class. Two boys Alphus John and Henry Chance were annoyed when Miss Lord, who was pregnant, called me to write the work on the blackboard. They put an open pen for me to sit. I went straight to Mr Omardeen's office. He silenced the school and gave them a good whooping....school days eh.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mrs Lord was a patron of Rillo Boys. Her sons were Ricky, Arnott & Dayton.*

**Joel Rahim...** *She was my teacher and I played football with her sons.*

## The Sookbir Shop



*Sookbir's Shop*

The Sookbir Shop was at the corner of Bonne Aventure & Caratal Roads. It was owned by the Lilladharsingh family. I don't remember ever knowing Mr Lilladharsingh. I remember his

wife and most of the children. I knew Dox, Pick, Harry, Eileen, Dalip, Ramdath & Ramesh. Gaindah, the eldest son, was married and living near Bonne Aventure when I knew of him. I didn't know the older daughters personally but one was married to Mr. Chilo who owned a hardware. I taught their children Geeta & Raj at Vos Government School.

I remember that the shop had a row of pennies nailed to the floor at the entrances. There were two concrete steps leading up to each of the shop's entrances. As a child I used to empty a match box from the kitchen at home and pass by the Sookbir shop on my way to school. There I'd trap a few bees from the huge sugar bags in the shop, leaving a tiny crack in the box for them to get air. They would buzz and hum all day in the box. I'd hold the box to my ears and listen. That was my transistor radio in those old days. After school I'd open the box and set them free.

Our dog Bruno was descended from their dog Rex. Pick had given him, as a newborn puppy, to my brother Boyie. Bruno was the most favorite dog we ever owned. He was so popular with us that for several years after he died all the new dogs in our home were named Bruno.

I remember that Dox & Eileen worked mostly in the shop. Pick worked in Port of Spain. Dalip & Ramesh played football for Black Dragons. Ramesh was the goalie. Harry and Ramdath ran the parlor by the Zenith cinema.

**Michael Ramsawak...** *That premise has been upgraded many times. It was the site of the famous Bata Shoe Store. There are a couple of businesses located there now. One of them is run by Dox's wife. Dalip now resides at Happy Hill, just before Parforce Road.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I still wonder why they nailed those pennies to the floor in each doorway.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Would we know Bruno? I think I remember a dog named Bruno by Mama.*

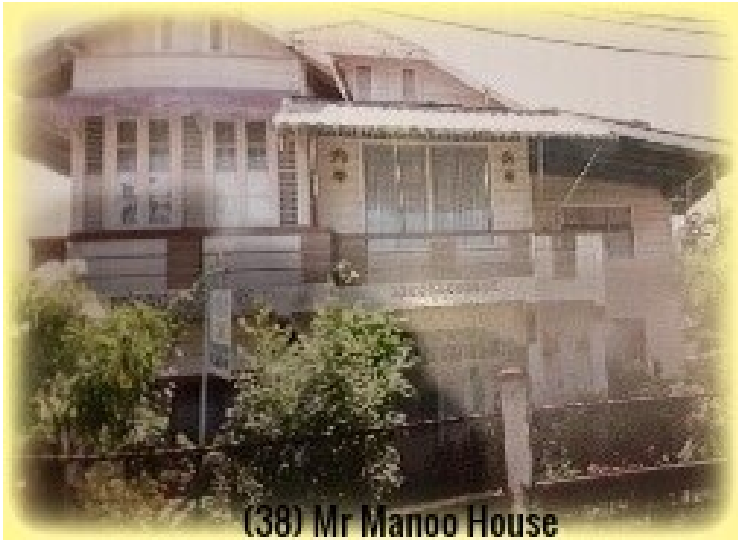
**Takeya Deen Hosein...** *I think we had a few Brunos after that first one.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *Bruno was the only name we knew for a dog!*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Bruno was fully grown when I left for England and I could remember always asking Mama in my letters about him. When Boyie and Bebe came back to England after their 1st holiday I remember them telling me that Bruno had died. I just broke down and cried. I do have a photo of Bruno with you, Sham, Terry, Bruno and me.*

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## Mr Manoo ' s House



**(38) Mr Manoo House**

*Mr Manoo's House*



*Mr Manoo's House 1940's*

Directly opposite the Rasool house on the Bonne Aventure Main Road was Mr Manoo's house. His real name was Mr. Rahaman Ali. Mr & Mrs Manoo lived at this spot from my earliest memories. They owned a very large block of land which ran from their home to the Guaracara River. It contained a wide variety of fruit trees.

They donated the lot of land next to their home for the Mosque to be moved from near the Marie Dulay River to its present location. They were very active in the Gasparillo Jamaat. Mr. Manoo was the Lecturer at the Mosque. He was also one of the first Adult Leaders of the Gasparillo Islamic Group. I remember riding to school in San Fernando in his car on a few occasions. It was a left hand drive Chrysler. The number was P 5025. He was a special

driver on call at the San Fernando taxi stand. Mrs Manoo was part of a tight-knit group of lady friends from the Mosque which included Mrs Toon, Mrs Mana & Tanty Zama.

The Ali's children were Jennifer, Usman, Raffick, Rafiat, Imran & Yasmin. Jennifer was a founding member of the Gasparillo Islamic Group. I remember the GIG's farewell party for her when she left for England. She became an eye doctor and lived and practiced in Port of Spain. Usman was a founding member of BP Club. He married Yuklan Akai and moved to Canada. Raffick was also a member of BP Club. He was a very good footballer. I remember him playing for Naparima College. He migrated to England. Rafiat migrated to Boston, USA. Imran migrated to Canada. Yasmin became a High School teacher in San Fernando.

Our families were very close during my growing up years. Rafiat & Imran went to our estate in Tableland on a few occasions with us. I remember their house from the old days when it was an upstairs house with awnings. The downstairs was open with tall iron posts. Babu, an old man from India who lived with them for a while, helped to take care of the mosque.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Manoo basay, a favorite Warraca swimming hole, is located behind his house.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *My mother bought a lot of land in Victoria Street from Mr Manoo.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *As a little girl I found their home*



quite fascinating. From Pappy's stories, Manoo Dada had the first car in Gasparillo.

**Kamalo Deen...** *The first may have been Hydar Ali (Pess) who lived in what became Marajin's house.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I raided his orange field with Errol one day after school. Saw him coming and ran off but forgot my book bag under the tree. He brought it home later that evening. He had to beg for me so I would not get a good cut tail.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *I used to go everyday to the mosque to break fast with Mr. Manoo. He would bring his famous orange drink everyday.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *I remember he always walked across to the mosque to break fast with a plate even when there was no iftar. I remember his sermons. As a child they seemed boring.*

**Nigel Ishmael...** *I lived upstairs with Usman and Yuklan for a few years when I first moved to The Rillo. Raised goats and sheep. Planted a lot of garden. Then we moved to my grandmother's (Mrs Akai) shop.*

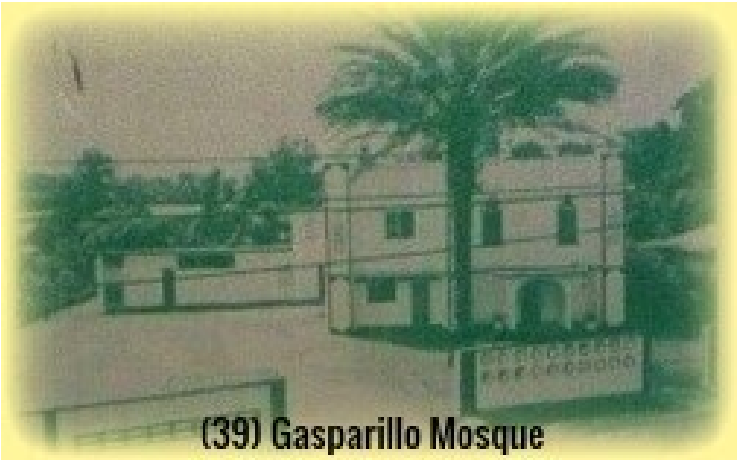
**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Manoo Chachee had so many Mills and Boons books.*

**Nadir Ali...** *'The Zork' (one of his nicknames) and his*

*manner of speech. That I would never forget.*

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## The Gasparillo Mosque



**(39) Gasparillo Mosque**

*Gasparillo Mosque*



*GIG & Sunday School*

Originally the mosque was located near the Marie Dulay River opposite where Mario's is today. In the early 1940s the old structure was demolished and this present mosque was built on a lot of land donated by Mr Rahaman (Manoo) Ali. I was involved in our mosque for as far back as I can remember.

My grandfather Joom Allaudeen was the first Imam that I knew. I have fond memories of his time as Imam. He was a dedicated teacher of the Maktab where as children we learned the basics of our religion. I remember going caroling with the older children under his leadership. We sang Islamic songs in the yards of Muslim homes. In my mind I can still hear his distinctive voice leading the songs. After his death his son, my father Zool Deen, was voted-in as the new Imam.

Papa proved to be a well-loved & respected leader. Under his stewardship of our Jamaat, the Mosque Board, the Women's Association, the youth group (Gasparillo Islamic Group) and the Sunday School all flourished. Our annual bazaar was well-supported by the community and our Three Day Quranic Reading

was attended by Muslims from across the country.

Along with religious observances, there were very many activities by all the groups. These attracted members to the mosque. Among them were excursions, cooking competitions, married men/bachelors cricket & football games, parcel evenings and visiting & hosting other jamaats. Several marriages took place among our members and also between our members and members of other jamaats. The month of Ramadan was a special time for our Jamaat as were all the Islamic holidays.

As a teacher at Vos Government School, my Principal Mr Omardeen had made it possible for me to take Muslim students to our Mosque for Jummah Namaaz every Friday. Papa was granted permission from his job in PAP to come to the mosque to conduct Friday Jummah Namaaz. Most times he rode a company motor scooter from his job to Jummah on Fridays.

Some of my special memories include the turbatt (burial box), the tall papaw tree outside the window in the muezzin's land next door, the lecturer's old car and the copper in the backyard, the sago-palms at the front, the kymit trees, the brass goblets and cooking shed at the back.

During the 1950s ASJA decided to build a mosque in Beadeau Street to promote their ideology. Some of our members left to join their Jamaat. There were so many people and families who were active members of our Jamaat over the years that I can't mention all. Everyone played important parts in my development.

**Fiat Karmally...** *There was a huge kymit tree by the copper.*

**Phillip Allen...** *I think there was a green kymit and a purple kymit tree.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *That copper was right behind our house in Victoria Street. Besides the kymit trees there were a lot of mango trees (Julie, Rose, Long, and Graham), Chinese tambran, mammy sepote, governor cherry, oranges, grapefruits & plums.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *I used to go to mosque with Kamalo on a Friday from school. I remember when they had bazaar, my mother (Black Mammie), Mrs Toon, Baboonie Tanty, Mrs Mana, Mrs Moses and others use to make the bara and chana, and they use to sell out.*

**Naseem Ali...** *Our mosque days were well spent. My sister Nadia and I married people in our jamaat.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *My memories of growing up in the Gasparillo Masjid will forever be a part of me.*

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...** *My memories as a child were the summer camps which started from Friday and ended on Sunday with lunch. The adults used to cook for us. The boys used to sleep over. There used to be story telling, drawing competitions, games etc.*

**Alisha Ali...** *My generation went to a camp on Easter weekend at Seepersad beach houses in Mayaro. Our mosque was a place of worship for generations of our family; beloved no matter how far we are from it. I remember the burial box used to be in the area behind the stage.*

**Kriscia Jenna Ramkissoo...** *Summer camp was really the best. I'll always remember the members of this mosque who taught and guided me as a child.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Your dad (Imam Zool Deen) married me and I remember being afraid of Mr Manoo. He was so serious. The Gasparillo Islamic Group flourished then...totally enjoyed those days.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *So many memories of our childhood in the Mosque. Some of the young boys at that time were known for some real wickedness, like hiding Br Barbay's shoes inside Br Toon's. Of course those who knew those gentlemen would understand how funny that would have been.*

**Betty Ramkissoo...** *My late husband Kenrick Ramkissoo would have been one of those boys. The ladies group did a CD with Auntie Zoey, Shalimar, Auntie Shaheeda & others.*

**Derek Kenosha Ali...** *I remember helping Mr. Ahamed Ghanny a.k.a. Mamoo plant a large palm tree at the front*

*entrance to the Mosque.*

**Sharmie Khan Nabbie...** *I remember August holidays going to mosque with my nanny, Mrs Toon Ali.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *The mosque is the beacon of our area. Just passing by it gives one a feeling of peace.*

**Shamshu Deen...** *Vijay, your father was a special part of our mosque community. Though of a different faith people like him make our world a better place. I still treasure his speech at our parent's 50th wedding anniversary at that mosque in 1985.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *My father said there is only one religion, the religion of love.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *My family had a very good relationship with the worshippers at the mosque. I clearly remember the kitchen area. They had the largest tawa I have ever seen. Five pounds of Five Roses flour used to make one roti on that tawa. Best roti ever. Some of the guys in operation were Uncle Manoo, Mr.Moses, Mr.Bobert and a few others.*

**Nareeza Mosadee-Mohammed...** *I have very fond memories as a child going to this mosque with my grandmother Alimoon Mosadee and family.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Those men from the mosque back in the*



*day were the real cooks.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *A group of men from the mosque used to go around cooking roti at weddings. When Shanty got married I remember them cooking roti under our house.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember their pepper roti, when they cooked.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *That was the first roti they would cook to season up the tawa.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Nurul taught me to cook roti at the masjid. Our crew included Abby Khan & Isaac.*

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## Cecil' s Home



*Cecil Nicome's House*

Next to the Mosque, where Mrs. Kawal's home is now, stood Cecil Nicome's home. It was a small wooden building on ground that I remember was red and sandy. Cecil was a red-complexioned man of mixed race with a pleasant personality. He lived with his wife and children. His wife was a very quiet Indian lady. The children, who I knew, were Lucille & Boyie.

Lucille and I were in the same class at Gasparillo Government School. As an adult she married a fellow named Elton. Boyie was her younger brother. He was a few years younger than me.

The thing I remember most about Cecil was that he was a weight lifter. There was a time when he encouraged many of the younger guys in the area to become body builders. Guys like Ashik, Shanee, Zambo, Cochán, Ming Pilling and Raffiat used to lift weights with him every evening in the shed behind the mosque.

**Fiat Karmally...** *Boyie had a hot temper in cricket.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Boyie is married to Ironman's daughter.*

**Baba Lal...** *I think her home name was Chinkie. Their sons were Jarling and Mooksang. They had a sister who was unfortunately killed with a hammer by her husband.*

**Phillip Allen...** *Boyie aka Trev made some of the biggest and best madbulls. His father Mr Cecil Nicome was a*

*watch tech. His brother-in-law Elton was a mas man.  
My brother Hoin played mas with him.*

41

Babu Niamath & Bharay



**(41) Bharay**

*Bharay*

When I was a boy, Babu Niamath and his wife Bharay lived at the corner of Bonne Aventure (Main) Road and Victoria Street. Theirs was a large board house which stood opposite Sookbir's shop. Today the Agro Shop stands in that spot. I recall that there

was a hedge around the house.

There must have been some problems there because during an argument Apang, who I believe was Babu's brother, murdered Bharay inside the house. I was about 10 years old at the time. We were playing in the park when word broke about the murder. All the boys ran up the road to the crime scene to see.

I was surprised to see Apang being arrested. His nickname was Pee Wee. He lived in a house on Harmony Hall Road across the Marie Dulay River from the back of our house which was in Cocoa Street. My brothers and I used to go to the back and call out to him across the river. We'd shout out "Pee Wee!" and he'd shout back "Easeee!!" Apang was a friendly man to us. After a trial he was executed for the crime.

After Babu died the property was occupied by his son Dadool and his family. Dadool's eldest son Kelvin eventually inherited the property. Kelvin was a very good singer and was one of the central performers at our Gasparillo show "A Pound of Heartbeats". He later on became a professional singer at nightclubs in Port of Spain, Toronto and on several international cruise ships. My brother-in-law Farzan Ali (Node) and I were partly instrumental in introducing him to the nightclub scene in Port of Spain.

**Pamela Witcombe...** *The murder was the talk of the village for a long time. We couldn't believe that Apang was capable of murder. I believe he used a cutlass.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Dad's Cafe operated there for a while. Kelvin the "Gasparillo Elvis" lived there.*

**Sally Umul...** *Babu Niamath was Hakim's father. Hakim lived in Ottawa for many years.*



## Victoria Street to Marajhin

**(42a) Mr. Amrow the shoemaker....** The building on the southeastern corner of Victoria Street and Bonne Aventure Road after Babu Niamath's house was a small wooden shack where Mr. Amrow practiced his trade as a shoemaker. He worked alone in his small open gallery. He was a fattish, light-skin man with curly, greyish hair. He was friendly and took time to talk to all of us as he worked. In later years Ramdath built a concrete building there and opened a bakery.

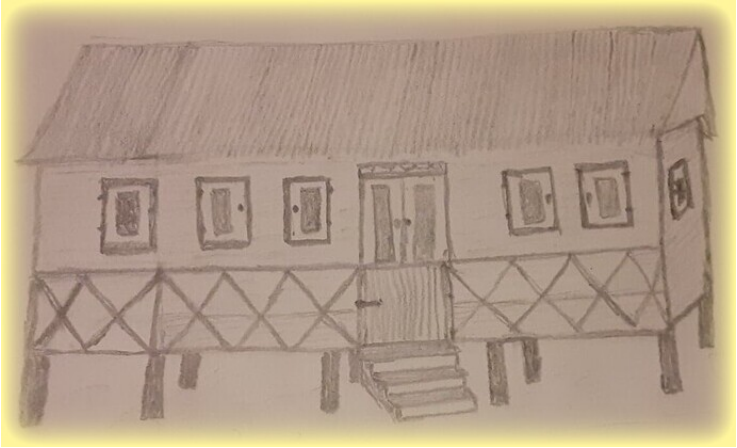


*Mr Amrow's Shoemaker's Shop*

**Michael Ramsawak...***Ramdath owns the building on the corner of Victoria Street where he operated a bakery for many years. People still refer to the premises as the bakery, even though it's closed down.*

**(42b) Tony Banks....** The next building was a long wooden lodge where dances were sometimes held. An old man named Tony Banks used to stay there. He was a tall brown-skinned dougla man. I remember him sitting in the gallery. He used to talk a lot

in a loud voice. Most of the children were afraid of him. Papa had taken him a couple of times to our family land in Tableland to help clear some of the bushes.



*Mr Tony's Lodge*

**Fiat Karmally...** *The Lodge was St John's Lodge. We attended parties there.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *On one occasion when we were taking Mr Tony to Tableland. As you pointed out he was a big talker. As we were going along the car stopped in traffic. There were some loud voices shouting outside and as we were all wondering what was happening little Sham (our youngest brother) shouted, 'I thought it was Mr Tony'.*

**(42c) Moosook & Zahaida...** After the lodge there was a track which led, for about 40 yards from the main road, to a small concrete house. This is where one of my relatives named Moosook lived with her daughter Zahaida. They were my relatives on the John Munradin line. They'd lived before with Moosook's brother Sam, on the site of the gas station. Zahaida was a Vos Primary school-friend of my wife Sherma.

**Nadir Ali...** *Zaheeda is my mother's relative. She referred to Mosook as Uncle Sam. At one time they lived in Guaracara Street. That's where I knew them from.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *Sam was Moosook's brother.*

**(42d) Hydar & Mynee Ali....** Next, after a large drain, was the home of Mr. Hydar (Pess) Ali, his wife Mynee and their children Gyulah, Pooshan, Bayoon, Keefiat, Hashie, Nazma, Junie and Asha. They were my relatives from the John Munradin line.

He was a popular taxi driver from San Fernando to Port of Spain in the early years. He owned a left-hand-drive American car. He always kept it clean and shiny. It was nicknamed "The Ball of Fire". He died while doing some repairs on his car in the front yard. I remember hearing the older relatives saying that he burst a vein to his heart while straining to break a nut.

After he died the family lost their home and eventually moved to a small board house in King Street.

**Fiat Karmally...** *Gyulah, Mynee's daughter & her husband Robert and their family moved to Madat Street behind us.*

**(42e) Marajin & Pie...** The original Hydar Ali house was bought by Marajin who opened an inn downstairs. Marajin's husband was Pie, a son of Laulkhan. Marajin & Pie had a son named Franklin. I think they also had three daughters. There was also an older man who lived there. He always wore a pagree, kurta and a dhoti. We assumed that he was a Pundit. They had a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the gallery. Presently this is the site of the La Paloma Bar and the Government ID Card Office.



*Marajin's home*

**Valmiki Ramsingh...** *Hey you may have to correct the piece on Marajin...Pie wasn't her husband..the pundit was....Piarylal Pundit.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Thanks for the correction, Val. I had always assumed that Pie was her husband. I never really understood who the Pundit was. Sorry for my mistake.*

## Mr Findley to King Street.

**(43a) Mr Findley....**Next to where the Government ID office is located today, Mr & Mrs Findley lived in a board house which was surrounded by a tall hedge. I didn't know them but I remember seeing them in the gallery sometimes. They were a quiet, elderly Negro couple. He used to plant garden in Bobeyland. I remember that they had a palm tree in the front yard which used to bear a small dark green fruit which was bright yellow on the inside.

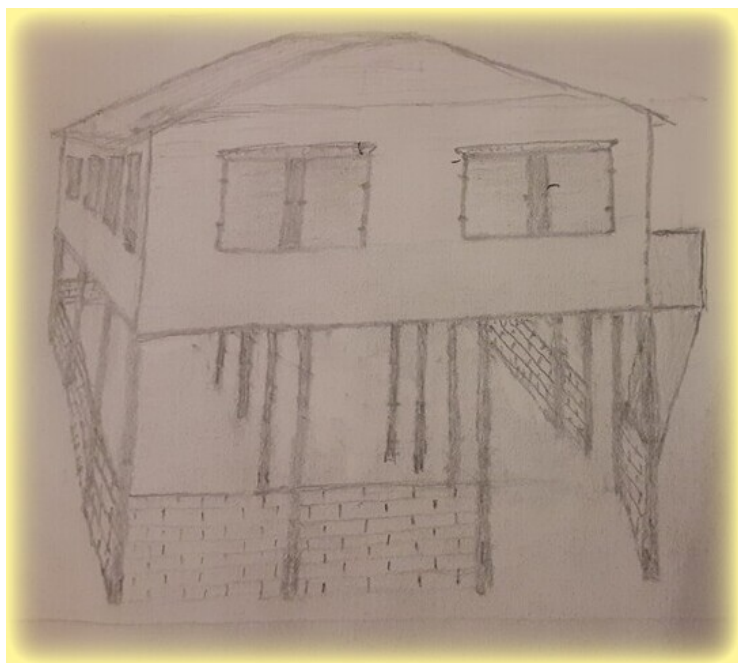
**(43b) Sundar's Parents Home....** After The Findley house there was a track which led to a house about forty yards off the main road. In my young days, I found this area to have a kind of "fairy tale" look. There were tall trees sheltering a clean, weeded area which contained a large dirt & carat house. Here was where Sundar's parents and family lived. Sundar was well known in Gasparillo and used to belong to Mr. Toon Ali's tassa group. He was a loud, pleasant and likable person.

**(43c) The Lodge....** The next building was an upstairs wooden building. The downstairs was open and very high. This was the

home of the East Indian Friendly Society. Most of our parents and adult relatives belonged to the Society. I can remember each year, for the Society's Anniversary, my parents and my uncle Arthur and my aunt Jahina and my grandfather Joom Allaudeen dressing up in their white uniforms and marching with hundreds of other members through the streets of Gasparillo. Mr Toon Ali & Hydar Ali and their Tassa group used to lead the parade.

During the early 1950s construction was being done at the Gasparillo Government School. The Lodge became the temporary home for most of the school's classes. I remember being a student there. We were there for about one year. One day my brother Sham was knocked down by a car at the front of the lodge while crossing the road on his way to school. He suffered minor injuries but it was a major event at our home.





*The Lodge*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *Yes I had my last year of school at the Lodge before going to Naparima.*

**Diana Zaiffdeen...** *I do remember sitting in class under the Lodge, when the Government School was overcrowded. We had a very musical teacher named Clyde Augustine, another Mr. Forde, a very gentle soul, and another male teacher who was not very well liked because he used to soak his leather strap in urine and was not afraid to use*

*it! Oh what memories!! I also remember the Lodge being a place for public events, e.g., dance parties and bazaars, even concerts. Miss Aziman used to hold private school upstairs of the Lodge. This I remember well, as my brother Milton and I were some of her early students.*

**(43d) The Sidials....** In the lot between the Lodge and King Street there was a wooden house where the Sidials lived. They later bought a lot and moved to Ragoobar Lands.

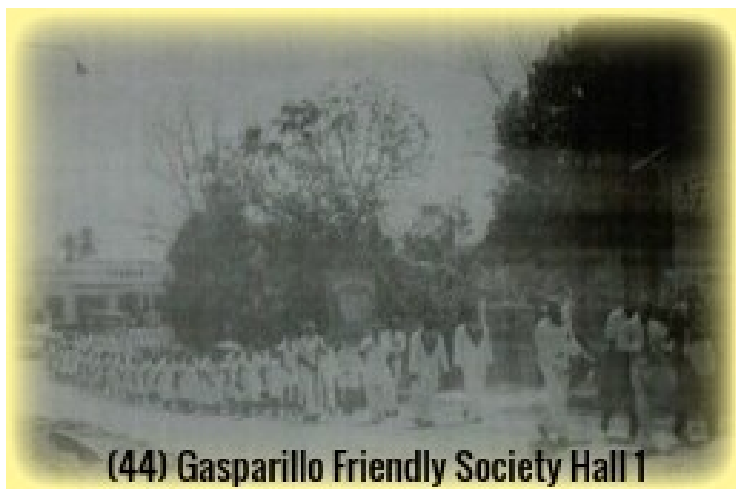
## The Gasparillo East Indian Friendly Society.



*Original members of the Gasparillo East Indian Friendly Society*



*Gasparillo Friendly Society*



*Gasparillo Friendly Society March*

The decision to form the Society originated in early 1925, by Mr Joom Allaudeen (my father's father) and Mr Farzan Ali (brother of Mr Rahaman 'Manoo' Ali). Both men had strong ties to both Gasparillo and San Fernando and were both members of the Southern East Indian Friendly Society which was located in San Fernando. Being strong Muslims, they convinced their fellow Muslim players, after a cricket game, that they should start an Islamic class. After discussions with some of their other village friends, this quickly grew into an idea for Indian youths of the various religious backgrounds in the Gasparillo community to get together and form an East Indian Friendly Society patterned after the one in San Fernando.

It did not take long for them to recruit men like Mr John Dookie, Mr Abu Bakar, Mr John Rampersad, Mr Seudat Mahabir & Mr

Kuarsingh to join the effort. The young men of Gasparillo were so motivated by the idea that within a few months, on April 25th 1925, the Gasparillo East Indian Friendly Society was officially registered. At first it was only open to men and showed an annual enrollment of about 100, but when membership was opened up to women in 1947, the enrollment jumped to over 400.

The Society was in full swing throughout my years in Gasparillo. Every year their Anniversary Parade through the streets of Gasparillo, with their hundreds of members dressed in white and stretched in a long line of twos, following the rolling tassa sounds of Mr. Toon Ali & Hydar Ali and their group, was a sight to behold. It was a day of feasting and of pride for its members. For those of us who looked on at our parents and friends and relatives celebrating our heritage with such great pride, gave us an encouragement to go forward in our own lives with similar pride and determination.

I honestly believe that clubs like Sports Club, Orion and BP Boys were motivated by our parents' involvement in the Society. When Bobeyland began to be developed as Ragoobar Lands the Society bought a plot there and built a new lodge as its permanent home. The old building on the Main Road then became occupied by the Gasparillo Pentecostal Church.

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *We looked forward to seeing the long lines for their annual celebrations as they marched along the main road. My grandparents and my father-in-law were members too.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *They looked so elegant in their white garb.*

**Annmarie Sattie Bernard...** *I attended many bazaars and parties at the lodge.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Lots of wedding receptions were held there. Iman Zool Deen married me there. My grandfather Ali Hosein (father's father) was one of the founding members too. I heard about that cricket match with Farzan Ali. He was the last surviving founding member. We became involved because of my father Rashaad Ali but I never joined. It has a rich heritage for residents in the community.*

**Spice Maharaj...** *My father in law, Bob Ramroop, was the President of the GEIFS for quite a long time.*

**Faraz Khan...** *A question may be asked: Was this a racist organization? Were other races prevented from joining? If other races were allowed to join why the name only alluded to one section of society? Why only Indian youths of various religious backgrounds were the targeted membership? Organization seemed to be ethnic centred at best or having racist overtones at worse.*

**Indira Seurajh-Ramcharitar...** *I guess at that point in time when they thought about doing that, they may have considered other organizations which were already existing for instance the Muslim League and Orisha's faith,*

*so maybe that's how the Indian youths came about.*

**Nadir Ali...** *There was a time when everything wasn't politically correct and nobody minded. Other societies of different races were invited to and joined in anniversary celebrations annually.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *There were other societies in Gasparillo that seemed to be ethnic based.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *The different societies all got along fine. It was never a racist thing. In the end we are looking at one of our historical landmarks.*

**Izzy Ali...** *All I would say is that you need to read up and educate yourself on how our forefathers were treated from the early times of indentureship to well over 100 years later, and then you will understand why our forefathers thought it would be in their best interest to form a bonded movement.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I had the privilege of serving for two years as the Assistant Secretary.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *My opinion is that Indians were very suppressed in that era, therefore they got together to form their own society.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *What about the Chinese or Portuguese Associations. In 1925 Indians was a depressed minority.*



*Our religions were scorned. Our customs were laughed at. Our mode of dressing were mocked....and we had absolutely no political power. Our marriages were not recognized and our birth certificates of Hindus and Muslims were deemed illegitimate. Our ancestors knew that in numbers we were much more powerful. Do you know Gasparillo had one of the only Indian Friendly Association in the country. As the years passed and the TT society started to take proper shape and Indians started to become successful and powerful, the Friendly Society started to die a natural death because it was not needed anymore. Around 1985 Human Rights lawyer and activist Ramesh Lawrence Maharaj was invited to give the the main lecture on Founders Day. He unequivocally told the large gathering that they have to start allowing ALL citizens as members because Indians were not a repressed minority anymore. But by that time the young people were not interested in that type of organization anymore and the Friendly Society started to die a slow death. The Gasparillo East Indian Friendly Society was not a mistake or a failure. It is an Institution of greatness...A labour of love built in the hope that men like Faraz Khan would one day be free to express their thoughts like all the other men in Trinidad and Tobago.*

## From Caratal Road to Church Street

**(45a) Sawh Ji's Shop....** Mr. Sawh Ji's shop stood on the northeast corner of Caratal Road & Bonne Aventure (Main) Road. It was a two story building. The family lived upstairs and there was a grocery shop & rum shop downstairs. The family comprised of Mr & Mrs Sawh and their children.

Later on the building was rented by the Sham Ku family. This family comprised of Mr & Mrs Sham Ku and their children. Mr Sham Ku was Chinese and his wife was a mixed Spanish/Creole lady. I think they had one son and two daughters. They ran the shop until after I left home.

FROM CARATAL ROAD TO CHURCH STREET



*Sawh Ji's Shop*



*Remains of Sawh Ji's Shop*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mr. Sham Ku's son was Austin. We were in the same class at Vos.*

**Ann Sooknanan...** *His daughter Denise attended Vos Government School with me.*

**(45b) Mr Bikram Sawh the Principal....** The next house on the northern side of the main road belonged to Bikram another Sawh family member. He was the Principal of Avocat Vedic School. Mr & Mrs Sawh had about four children.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *When I was around nine years old, Vishnu Ramdeen and myself used to go by Mr Bickram Sawh for lessons. He was the Principal of the Avocat Vedic School. The Bickram Sawhs had three sons and two daughters.*

**(45c) Eric Williams....** The next was a small board house. Eric, a well known member of our community, lived here with his parents, a brother and two sisters. Eric was a victim of some type of muscular disability. Because it caused him to stagger as he walked, it made some people think that he was always drunk. To my knowledge Eric never used alcohol. He always wore a tie and sometimes a jacket. He spent much of his time at the Presbyterian Church. The family's surname was Williams so Eric's official name was Eric Williams, the same as the country's first Prime Minister.

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *I attended Vos Government School. I distinctly remember an Eric that ppl referred to as "Crazy Eric". He used to be on the junction by King's Cafe talking continuously with a book in his hand. I can't remember if it was the Bible.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Eric was not crazy and it was the Bible that he carried around with him.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *I remember Eric. As children we did not understand his disability.*

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *What was his disability?*

**Diana Zaiffdeen...** *Muscular dystrophy. That part about Eric's name is correct. He was a Williams. I knew him and his family who lived along Bonne Aventure Road, but I don't remember their names.*

**(45d) Cokey & Prakash....** The next house belonged to another member of the Sawh family. Among them there were two family members who I remember.

The first was Cokey. He was well known for his role in the St. Johns Ambulance brigade. He led their parade every year through the streets of Gasparillo. He seemed to be very proud of his St. Johns Brigade uniform.

The other was his younger brother Prakash. He was one of the first homosexual (gay) persons I was ever aware of. Because of this he was sometimes teased or abused by others. He seemed to be unfazed by the occasional taunts.

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *Prakash used to come by us in Ferdinand Street. My mother liked to talk with him.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Prakash was a character, quite "girlish" in class. He was in our class and we never thought anything about it. We just thought that is how he was. He was never excluded from any activity.*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *I remember Prakash with his black net jersey and well shaped eyebrows. He/she came to my uncle's bar with another shim named Sheila who now sells newspapers in the town.*

**(45e) Sawh's Commercial School....** The other house was another of the Sawh family. I believe that this family comprised of Mr & Mrs Sawh and their daughters. They ran a Commercial School on their property. Many of the young people, including my wife Sherma, as a teenager, attended. Mr Sawh used to mind birds.

**Catherine Daniel...** *I attended Sawh's Secretarial School. They were really nice teachers. Early in the morning they would give me snacks that they made.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *The Sawh school property always looked meticulous. The bird sanctuary was attractive. They had two big dogs which was unusual to see because pot hounds were so common.*

**(45f) Lakhan/Conrad Parlor....** Next, on the corner of Church Street was Mr Lakhan's parlor. He was also a Sawh family member. Later on, the house and parlor were occupied by Conrad, a Chinese man.



*Lakhan's Parlor*

**Diana Zaiffdeen...** *Yes, I do remember Lakhan Sawh's shop at the corner. Among his daughters were Taramati (my classmate) and Parbati.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Lakhan's parlor was our source for Paradise plums, seven for a cent. He also had a fantastic pickled pomcetay.*



## Gasparillo Government School



*Gasparillo Government School*

I never attended “private school” as a child. My first school experience was at Gasparillo Government School. My father had also attended this school, as did all my brothers and sisters.

In the beginning I wasn’t a fan of school. I started doing

everything I could to escape attending. On my first day I bit my Infant teacher's hand and often times I ran away from school. Papa used to chase after me all over the land in the back trying to get me to go to school. However I eventually grew to like my time there. I was a Gasparillo Government student until Standard 4.

Among the things I remember were: Creeping on my belly with my friends to see how far we could go under the school building; Listening for mangoes falling in the grass during heavy rainfall and rushing outside at recess time to search for them; Buying fried channa in brown paper cone packs or ancharr in my hand from Mr & Mrs Mack by the school gate; Working in the school garden; Santa Claus coming from Pointe a Pierre on the hood of a car for our Christmas treat; Skating down the moss in the concrete drain by the headmaster's house on my bare feet; Going for lash and pingwing in the patch on the hill behind the school; Sports day up on the school hill & Magic shows and concerts.

I was about seven years old when I played one of the Wise men in a Christmas play at school. Zinnah from the street behind the school played Mary and they used a dolly for Jesus.

I remember the teachers: Mr Omardeen, Miss Lenora Dougan, Miss Isa Patrick & Mr. Maniff Deen all of whom I later worked with at Vos Government School. Some of my teachers were Miss Peters (whose hand I had bitten), Miss Brathwaite & Miss Ursula Prime who was my favorite teacher. Our Headmaster was Mr. Marshall, who had fought with the British troops in World War 2. When he was transferred to Robert Village Government School, Mr. Jackson replaced him. The school was shaped like the letter "H". There was a government stand pipe on the Bonne

Aventure Road next to the main gate. There was also a large concrete cistern at the back which provided the school with water. There was a concrete building with a row of toilets further back. Behind that was the school garden. In the back towards the Police Station side was the Headmaster's house.

Other activities that I remember at the school were the Annual visit of the Police Band when they provided a free open air concert for the public. Also the Carnegie Library van used to visit about once per month to lend books. Sometimes there were free open air night-time film shows. Later when my brother Boyie (Nazru) became a teacher at the newly opened San Fernando TML School which was starting to produce great island-wide results, several families in Gasparillo, including ours, chose to enroll their children there.

**Kathleen Wandel...** *Kamalo, you and I went to Gov't School at the same time when I was 6. I think that I was in Ursula Prime's class. She also had a sister teaching there at that time. That must be about 1950.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I remember when we were in Miss Prime's class. Cynthia Nandlal, Harry (Benzin) Ballyram, Winston Jardine, Oswald Peters and Seeta Sinanansingh were among some others in our class. Miss Prime was my favorite teacher and became a family friend. Her sister was Mrs Bowen whose husband Mr Bowen taught my brothers at Naps. I remember for a sports day on the school hill, for the teachers' 100 yard race, Miss Prime was first and her*

sister Mrs Bowen was second. We were cheering for them throughout the race.

**Sadica Ramlochan...** I attended this school too. During my time Mr Jackson was the principal. Miss Sinanan and Mr Ottley were teachers. In one of the concerts they wanted an Indian song and a couple of us Indian girls were selected to sing, led by Miss Nagir. Most memorable too were the Mothers Day functions and bazaars. My mom looked forward to PTA, probably her only outing, and the parcel evening event at that. In those days we walked to school, went home for lunch and walked back.

**Fiat Karmally...** The mango tree behind the bathroom was Turpentine. I remember Mr. Jackson and his family. The underhand cricket fellas who use to play on the hill became Hillboys. The main rivalry in competition were Hillboys and my team from Cocoa Street...Sunshine. We had the two best teams.

**Dennis Andy Kennedy...** My team was Hill boys. Once the pair of Teeluck brothers "Dave and Kamal" were playing, we beating all comers. There was also a team called Mango Valley from inside Semper Street area. They had guys like Timber and his brother on that team. Underhand cricket had its home in Gasparillo and is probably the only area in Trinidad that had that type of cricket.

**Fiat Karmally...** The police band played there for many years. I was in Mr Ottley's class when I was selected to

*beat drum for the Indian dancers in the annual concert. I had no idea what I was beating but those girls danced!*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *You did what you were told. I had no idea what I was singing but they applauded.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *We did practice a few times. The only person I remember was Mala Roopnarine from Charles Street. She was the lead person.*

**Phillip Allen...** *It was you and Kumar. His sister Rajindai was an excellent dancer especially to Indian music. The Headmaster after Mr Jackson was Mr Harry Ramcharan. AKA. Ramcheese.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Started there in 1954 when Mr Marshall was the head teacher. Mr Jackson and then Mr Kallecharan followed. I have so many beautiful memories of our old GGS, the compound, the teachers, the vendors and of course my fellow students that up to today make me so happy to be part of it. My parents also attended. We lost so many friends when Vos and the Gasparillo Hindu Schools opened, but that was progress. Some of the teachers I remember were Miss Brathwaite, Gomes (later deVlught), Kelly, Morgan, Raphael, Bailey(s), Marshall as a student trainee teacher, Mr Ali, Ottley, Daniel (as a trainee), Kelvin Ali before he went to England to study law, the Deens from Cocoa Street.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Mr. Ottley was a highly recognized sports*

*personality in Trinidad. There was a newspaper article about him when he died.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Did my first teaching practice there in 1977.*

**Diana Zaiffdeen...** *Chester, I did not know you did teacher training there. GGS was the only primary school I attended, and was well trained by teachers like John Rampersad, and Maniff Deen, allowing me to win a Government Scholarship (placed 11th out of 4,000) in 1957, so I was able to have free secondary education at Naparima Girls' High School, where I was Class Prefect in 1957, and House Captain of Cavell House in 1962, and won a House Scholarship in 1962, based on Senior Cambridge Final Exams that year. I have wonderful memories of my years at GGS and knew both Headmasters Marshall (whose granddaughter Esther was a fun classmate) and Jackson. From my family only my older brother Milton and I attended Gasparillo Govt School. The other six attended Vos Government School as it was just a short block away!*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Hi Diana, I remember when you won that scholarship. Mr Jackson posted a picture of you in the "glass case of fame" in the hall. Patrick Ramsingh also won a scholarship that same year.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *I started out at GGS then went on to Vos when it opened.*

**Phillip Allen...** *I am a diehard Gasparillo Government school student. The first day I attended I ran away from school. Passed through the wired fence by Emmil Nurse went to the Anglican Church to meet Mr William my grandfather. When he took me home I got the sweetest cut tail from Mammy. Mr William shielded me from most of the licks. I started with Mrs Y Sinanan. This is not the correct order: Miss Murray, Miss Inez Williams, Miss John, Miss De Vlught, Mr Roberts, Mr Khan, Miss Esther Marshall & Mr Guy Ottley. That's as far as my memory allows....Oh ho. Mr Harry Ramcharan, Head master. He taught our common entrance class. Lessons Monday to Friday Am and PM. And Saturday from 8am to 12 noon.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Mr Jackson beat one of those Lord boys bad in front the whole school for stealing mangoes.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember when he rounded us up at the White Rose pond in Bonne Adventure and used that strap. Somehow, I and that strap were not strangers.*

**Phillip Allen...** *Jacobee with the leather strap. I remember a fight with Mr Jackson and Mr Cleary Phillips.*

**Annmarie Sattie Bernard...** *I attended Gasparillo Govt. I remember the principal's office at the front in the old H building, the toilet at back, the house for the caretaker at the side, the chennette tree, the mango tree and the police station next door. We got milk and biscuit in school and went home for lunch.*

**Careen Chotalal...** *My grandparents were Mr & Mrs Mack. My parents are Roy and Maimoon Mohammed. Nice to hear how longtime was.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Besides the annual Texaco Christmas treat, I remember Dan Dan the yo yo man, Outings to the Zoo, Piarco, the Museum, the Botanical Gardens, the Nursery in St Augustine, the Guardian Factory, the Port where they allowed us to go aboard a ship etc. Everybody with their baskets with soggy sandwiches, and dhalpurie and of course your red solo, channa and nuts.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *I remember going on a school outing to the cigarette factory and Carib brewery. I also remember lining up for smallpox vaccination at GGS and was scared because I used to be afraid of needles. When we went for typhoid shots in Pointe a Pierre I was so scared I passed out under the table.*

**Judy Kawal...** *I did my final teaching practice there. I think it was a Mrs. Brandon from Corinth Teacher's College who had to assess me. She was the tyrant no one wanted. But I made it.*

**Robin Nagir...** *Mr Jackson was my headmaster. It had a sticking cherry tree next to his house. I too used to slide down the drain barefooted.*

**Kamalo Deen....** *Mr George Jackson became principal of Gasparillo Gov't School after Mr Marshall left in the early*



*1950s. I remember him as a very pleasant gentleman. Unfortunately my knowledge is limited because I'd left to attend Primary school in San Fernando a little over a year after his arrival at Gasparillo Gov't.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *I used to buy a bara and channa for 5 cents from Mr Ali on his bicycle.*

## Cocoa Street

Cocoa Street is where I lived for most of my life in Gasparillo. It is a short dead-end street which runs southward from the Bonne Aventure (main) Road. It lies at the very entrance to our village from the Pointe a Pierre refinery and the Solomon Hochoy Highway. All the homes are on the eastern side of the street. The Presbyterian Church, Vos Government School and the Gasparillo Recreation Park are on the western side.

According to research by my brother Sham, my ancestor John Munradin had bought the parcel of land, which had one house, on January 14th 1873. It may have been a small cocoa estate at that time. The land was bordered by the Bonne Aventure (main) Road on the northern side, the Marie Doolay River on the eastern side, the Guaracara River on the south and the Concord Estate on the west. Most of the families in the street are descended from John Munradin.

When I was a child the land on the western side of Cocoa Street was one large pasture bordered by a simple barbed wire fence.

The pasture was a guava field dotted with coconut, mango and dongs trees. I remember when we used to collect ripe guavas for Mama to make jam. Mr Taynee kept his cattle in the pasture. We also tied out our goats there. I remember when the street was just a muddy track when it rained.

The pasture was our playground, especially when we were quite young. We'd play stick-em-up and walk-the-black-pumpline and go swimming in the flooded grassy drains during heavy rainfalls. Later, when I was around 6 years old, the road was paved. Around the time when I was about 8 years old we got street lights and houses started being wired for electricity. I remember all the children, for several weeks, playing at nights under the newly installed street lights.

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *The official name of Cocoa Street is now South Charles Street.*

**Faize Mohammed...** *Where did John Munradin live?*

**Kamalo Deen...** *The corner of Bonne Aventure Road & Cocoa Street on the location of Kings Cafe.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *I feel closely connected with the people of Cocoa Street, from the masjid, in the park and liming on the street. I was a member of Sunshine, the Cocoa Street windball cricket team.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *The boys from Cocoa Street had one of*

*the best windball cricket teams in Gasparillo.*

**(47a) Mendi's house....** This was the last house in the street. Mendi, who was an elderly lady, lived alone. There were also Rafeek and Hasnoo who were relatives. I'm not sure how. They lived next door. They were descendents of Munradin's son Samoo.

**(47b) Bandoool....** Bandoool and her daughter Salisha lived in the next house. They were descendents of Samoo.



*Salisha....daughter of Bandool*

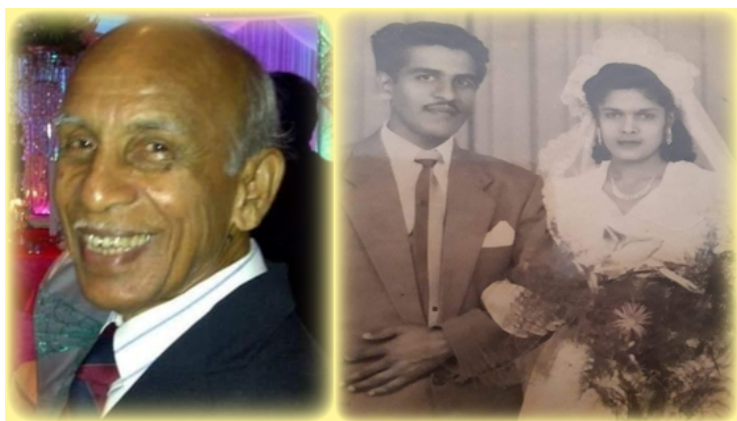
**(47c) Shaffiat...** Mr & Mrs Shaffiat and family occupied the next house. Their children were sons Shaniff, Maniff, Naziff, Taiff, Zaiff (George) & Sherriff. The daughters were Mazoon, Naizoon, Naimoon, Girlie & Zorina (my student at Vos).

Shaniff was a tailor. Maniff, Naziff & Girlie were teachers.

Maniff was a respected Common Entrance teacher at Vos. He later became a school principal. George was around my age and shared quite a few boyhood adventures with me in the Pointe a Pierre fields. Shaffiat was a son of Samoo. My great grandfather Abdool and Samoo were brothers.



*Left: Shaffiat & Naseeran Deen; Right: Mazoon*



*Left: Maniff; Right: Naziff & his wife*



*Left: George & Taiff; Right: Sherrif*



*Naimoon, Naizoom. Zorina & Girlie*

**(47d) Mr & Mrs Ibrahim Hosein...** Mr Hosein, was a quiet man who rode his bicycle to work at Brechin Castle every day. Mrs Shaira Hosein was a daughter of Samoo. They lived next to the Shaffiat family. Ibrahim and Shaira were hard-working parents who gave their children good educations and proper guidance.

The family was very active in our Gasparillo Jamaat. Shaira was an active member of the Gasparillo Muslim Women's Association. Eldest son Sonah was Secretary of the Gasparillo Islamic Group during my time as the President. One of her sons Aziz (Bata) was one of Gasparillo's top sportsmen in our day. The other children were sons Fodie, Imran, Azim & Mahamood and daughters Aishoon, Raffina & Zorida. We used to get shaddocks from them. Some of the children migrated to Canada & the US.



COCOA STREET



*The Hosein's home*



*Left: Ibrahim & Shaira Hosein; Right: Eldest son Ahamad (Sonah)*



*Left: Raffina; Right: Aziz (Bata)*

**Aziz (Bata) Hosein....** *Ibrahim & Shaira were my parents. My mother came from a large family but my father was an only child. They had ten children, six boys and four girls. One boy and one girl had died.*

**(47e) Taynee....**

**TAYNEE & KASSIRAN FYZOUDEEN**



*Mr & Mrs Taynee*

Taynee & his wife lived across from the entrance to the park. He used to rear cattle in the pasture where Vos and the Presbyterian Church now stand. Their children were Meezan, Hazoon, Poo-

nan, Madool, Zohra (Glorie), Rafeek (Doodoo), Shaffick (Doll), Nazir (Chile) and Nazeera. I remember the large sugar-apple tree in their front yard. We use to get oilcake and molasses from him. He was a son of Samoo.



*Mrs Taynee & daughter Hazoon*

COCOA STREET



*Left: Doodoo (Raffick); Right: Shaffick (Doll)*



*Left: Nazeer (Chile); Right: Mrs Taynee & daughter Nazira (Zeera)*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I remember Mr.Taynee well. In his shop you got the tastiest ice blocks.*

**(47f) Met & Basdaye....** Met and his wife Basdaye lived in the next house. They were not my relatives. They bought their property in the street. Basdaye was related to the Pantin family on Caratal Road. Met liked to mind birds.

**Nadiera Springer...** *Basdaye is my mother's cousin. Not sure if she is still alive.*

**(47g) Lio & Safar....** Lio & hher husband Safar lived in the next house. Safar was a carpenter by trade. Lio was a daughter of Baychan Saladeen and granddaughter of Abdool who was the son of John Munradin. She was an active member of the Gasparillo Muslim Women's Association and used to attend meetings in the mosque with Mama. Their sons were Bouywah, Shayam & Sharaz and their daughters were Shaffiah, Salisha & Golina.

**(47h) Rekha & Manny....** Rekha was also a daughter of Baychan Saladeen and granddaughter of Abdool. Her husband was Manny Nagir (whose parents were pillars of the Gasparillo Presbyterian Church). Manny was an accomplished Indian singer. Their children were daughters Shaharezad (Dood), Shanewaz & Molly and sons Faraz & Afraz.

Rekha ran a parlor opposite Vos Government School. The children all did very well educationally. Shaharazad was a teacher and later a school principal. Shanewaz migrated to the UK.



*Two of Manny & Rekha's daughters.... Shaharazad & Molly*

**Robin Nagir...** *Manny Nagir was my dad's big brother.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mrs.Nagir had a parlor opposite the entrance to the school.*

**(47i) Pundy & Noor....** *Pundy, daughter of Samoo & her husband*

Noor lived in the next house. Their children were Zalika, Zalina, Fyz, Nycee & Latiff. A grandson Zohyy also lived there. Another grandson Trollah Boy used to spend holidays with them. Noor was a member of the Shah family from New Grant.



*Pundy with sons Fyz & Latiff*

**(47j) Meezan & Ivan....** Meezan was Mr & Mrs Taynee's daughter. She lived in the next house with her children Shool, Nazim, Tazim (my student at Vos) and Fazal. Her husband Ivan was a carpenter.



COCOA STREET



*Meezan*



*Left: Nazim (Tottie); Right: Pecky*

**Michael Ramsawak...** *Shool and Pecky now live at Ramai Trace in Debe. Tottie is still in Cocoa Street.*

**(47k) The Black Pipeline....** After their house was the black pipeline. This was a large approximately 2 foot diameter black pipeline which transported water from the pumphouse in the Guaracara River on Harmony Hall Road to the Pointe a Pierre oil refinery. It was condemned & removed during the construction of Vos Government School. The oil company had built a new pumphouse in the Guaracara River, within its property.



*Black Pump*

**(47l) Mr & Mrs Rasool....** Mr & Mrs Rasool lived with their daughter Leena and her daughter Annie in a small wooden house after the black pipeline. They also had a parlor there. Later, they moved to Harmony Hall Road in a house near the Guaracara River. Annie's father was taxidriver Sook, the brother of stickfighter Hamid.

**(47m) Fyz & Betts....** Pundy's son Fyz & his wife Betts moved into the Rasool's board house after they moved. They eventually demolished the board house and built a concrete house. Their children were born and raised here. Their children were daughters Shahay & Zeena, and sons Billy, Ken & Dan.



*Fyz & Betts Mohammed*

**(47n) Rajab & Majeeran....** In the next spot Rajab & Majeeran occupied a board house. Their children were sons Sonny, Hamid, Hamilton, Sham, Jannali, Wahid & Tahid (my student at Vos) and daughter Hazra. Later on they moved to Mahogany.



*Wahid.... son of Rajab & Majeeran*

**Michael Ramsawak...** *Of the Rajab and Majeeran clan, I only know one who is still with us...Tahid, who lives at School Trace in Bonne Aventure.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *The eldest, Sonny, is still alive. He lives in Cippy Street. I also think that Hazra is alive.*

**Michael Ramsawak...** *I think Hazra lived at Springland last I heard but that was quite a while ago. As for Sonny, I don't know him very well, but the other brothers, Wahid, Hamid, Tahid, John (Jannali) and Hamilton, I knew them well. Tahid, Hamilton and John all worked with my father and grandfather in the newspaper delivery business and Hamid did various carpentry and masonry jobs for my grandfather also. One of the brothers Hamid had a son, Zahid, who also worked with my grandfather.*

**Joel Rahim...** *Fatty from Cocoa Street is also my uncle and he has two brothers Zahid and Reynold and two sisters Joy and Hafiza and their mother is Sylvia. They lived next to Billy who was a goalie for Santos.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *The people you mention are connected to me. I grew up next door to Sylvie's husband Hamid so I knew Sylvie very well. In fact their eldest son Zahid was one of my students at Vos. Their other son Reynold lived mostly by Paulin & Bolo on the main road. The next house was ours.*

## The Park & Vos Government School - PART 1

**(48a) The Gasparillo Park...**I can barely recall when they graded down the land by Waracka (Guaracara River) to create the Gasparillo Park, but I remember the first cricket match there. I think it was organized by Mr. Cyril Smith. Most of the village had turned out for that game. It was a grand occasion. A popular story from that game was about one of our outstanding villagers Mr. Marshall, the Principal of Gasparillo Government School.

Two teams were selected to play the inaugural game for the Park's Grand Opening. Mr Marshall's son, Mackie, was the opening batsman for one of the teams. For weeks leading up to the game Mr. Marshall had been boasting to everyone about what a good batsman Mackie was. Well, on the day of the game, on the very first ball bowled to him, Mackie was clean bowled for a duck. After all the shouting and cheering subsided, when everyone looked around for Mr Marshall, he was already on the road hurrying home.

The Park was maintained by Texaco. Approximately every fortnight a farmall would come from the company to cut the grass. The farmall operator was our “Uncle” Govern from Preysal.

**Nazira Fyzoudeen-Hasmath (Zira)...** *I grew up across the street from the Park. I remember Sunshine Boys & Girls cricket club, football, catching baby frogs on very rainy days, skating down the muddy slopes on coconut branches, running and walking around the park, watching teams play football and cricket, schools’ sports day, playing netball and just hanging out chatting in small groups on the hillside of the park.*



*Gasparillo Park*





*Farmall grasscutter*

**(48b) Vos Government School...Part 1....** Some years later they began grading the land next to the Park for the construction of Vos Government School. For a while we had a large supply of coconuts from the trees that were graded down. The men in the street used to cut off the heads of the coconut trees and dig out the sweet, juicy coconut hearts which they shared with us. Soon the construction workers wired off the area when building began on the school.

I had posted the following on Facebook in February 2013, with the hope that people would add other items on the history of Vos Government School:



*Vos Government School Office*  
212



*Vos Government School*

**“VOS GOVERNMENT SCHOOL”**

Simon J. Vos was an executive for Texaco Oil Company which had

bought Trinidad Leaseholds Limited in 1956. He was stationed for a few years at Pointe a Pierre. During his time at Pointe a Pierre he showed much interest in the company's involvement with the surrounding communities. He was convinced that Gasparillo was in need of a second Government primary school to ease some of the overcrowding at the Gasparillo Government School. He was able to persuade the oil company to assume the cost of building this school on lands donated by the company as a gift to the Ministry of Education and to the people of Gasparillo. The school was built in the late 1950s. It was dedicated in the name of Simon J. Vos and was named Vos Government School in his honor.

The first principal was Mr. Henry who lived in Port of Spain. Among the early staff were Mr. Hills, Miss Simonette, Miss Paltoo, Miss Jordan, Mr. Maniff Deen, Mr. Haniff Mohammed, Mr. Razack Khan & Miss Lenora Lord.

My mother was well-loved by these teachers, especially those who lived far from Gasparillo. Since we lived across the street, they frequented our home if they felt sick or if they wanted their lunch heated up. Often we'd find one of the out-of-town teachers resting in one of our beds because he/she wasn't feeling well. Several students had lunch at our home.

This is in no way a complete history of Vos Government School. A proper history should be undertaken while facts and memories are still available.”

**Chester Madhosingh...** *The area was boosted by the refinery. The Vos Government School was a gift to the community by the oil company.*

**Takeya Deen Hosein...** *The school was named after Simon J Vos who was the PRO of Trinidad Leaseholds Ltd which later became Texaco.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Mama was the mother for Vos Government School. I remember how many children would come there to have their lunch along with us her grand children, and often times even though the other children had their own lunch they would still partake of lunch that Mama had prepared for us.*

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...** *I remember going home by Aunty Sohalia for lunch and when she was not home I ended up by Mama. Even though I carried lunch Mama used to feed me food she had cooked.*

**Naseem Ali...** *I remember having lunch by Mama. Everyone called her Mama. Such an amazing lady.*

**Candy Hosein-Stanton...** *I was one of those kids who use to eat lunch with Mama and Papa!*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *Great memories! I started primary school at Vos in January 1956. I believe that to be the opening of the school. We were living in Cippy Street.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember when that school was being built, I used to deliver milk by the old barrier to my uncles on their way to work in PAP. Both of my parents grew up in Charles Street. I spent a lot of time there, so I am quite aware of much of the history and people in that street.*

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *We moved down to Ferdinand St in the late sixties. Before then we lived in a little hut in No.10 that's on the other side of the second tunnel in Mahogany in upper Charles St. I attended kindergarden in King's building downstairs, then Vos. The teachers I remember were Miss Derond, Miss Lord, Miss Regis, Mr. Smart and Mr Persad. Miss Best was the best. Until now I keep a perfect posture in sitting, standing and walking. She taught me to lift the breastbone and square my shoulders and walk like a lady. She taught us about personal hygiene. I remember how the girls drew boxes in the drain to play moral and hopscotch. We played rescue during lunchtime and was so sweaty to resume classes. Then we left for Sangre Grande but came back. I finished Standard 5 there. Next to the church was a guava patch with a track that I used to take to school. Behind King was a huge tamarind tree. I would gather up a few to take to school while some other girl would bring salt and pepper. What a delight that was. At the back of the tamarind tree was a wooden house. My friend lived there. Her last name was Baksh. I think they left. I lost contact with her. Opposite Vos was Miss Shanny's mother who sold the best ice blocks.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *Zakey and I were among the first students to attend Vos.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Very true. I think I may be one of the few who started my school life as an infant student at Vos and ended it there too as a teacher. Mr Khan is younger so this would apply to him also.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Kamalo taught me at Vos. We were the boss, winning out everything in sports.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *Kamalo you were my teacher and cub pack leader. I remember you taking the troop to POS by train to see Lord Baden Powell's brother at a rally in Woodford Square. It was truly a momentous occasion and the only time I travelled on a TT train. Soon after that they were foolishly abolished.*

**Nazira Fyzoudeen-Hasmath (Zira)...** *Sohaila and I used to play doll house and pick guavas next to Vos school. Raffina and I played lawn tennis at Vos school court. Girley, Salisha and I played hop scotch on the road.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Our shout when there was any competition, "Simon Vos, never loss, always the boss!!"*

## Vos Government School - PART 2



*Vos Government School Students*





*Vos Government School*

Although my last two sisters and my wife attended Vos, I never did. However I had the privilege of teaching there for four years. After passing my Cambridge Exams in 1962, I couldn't wait to begin working. I had been accepted for a job as an Assistant Field Officer at the Ministry of Agriculture, in Centeno, but Mr. Omardeen who was Principal of Vos encouraged me to become a teacher at his school instead. He knew that I was involved in sports and that I was a member of Ist Gasparillo Scout Troop which had won the Chancellor Flag competition. He wanted a Scout Troop at the school.

I joined the staff at Vos Government School in September 1962. I was 17 years old. It took a while for me to feel comfortable in front of a class. But I learned after a while. I liked all my students over the period I taught there and I hope they all liked me. I had very good relations with the parents. Most of my students have done very well with their lives. I've run into many of them over the years.

I had a great relationship with all the other members of the

teaching staff. Among the men were Mr. Omardeen, Egbert Taylor, Haniff Mohammed, Maniff Deen, Jai Ramkissoon & Iranius Mungal and among the ladies were Miss Best, Lord, Derond, Inez Williams, Magnolia Williams, Vera, Bebeon, Girlie Deen, Chanika, Paltoo & Jordan. During those years Vos dominated most of the sports competitions and the educational results in the area. Mr. Omardeen was a dedicated, hands-on Principal with a committed staff of teachers and the school's results showed this.

The school in those days was just the main building. There was a school garden at the south of the school where the new building is now located. In those days both the Gasparillo Park and the Vos Park were maintained by Texaco. During my time there, I partnered with Egbert Taylor in the football & cricket programs. I founded the 2nd Gasparillo Scout Troop and took our troop to several trips and camps. I especially remember taking the boys on a camping trip to Blanchisseuse on the north coast. We used to have such great times.

When I left for the USA in 1966, our 2nd Gasparillo Cubs was adopted by Manny & Irma Ramjohn and transferred to their home on Caratal Road. Mr. Omardeen also made it possible for me to escort Muslim children from Vos to Friday prayers at the Mosque in Gasparillo during school time. At his request I also conducted extra lessons to students. My last year at Vos was a hectic time in my life. I'd eloped and gotten married, moved to Hahnnoo's house in Charles Street, then to my in-laws home on Caratal Road where we had our daughter Shyama. Then in September I left for New York.

**Sonny Blacks...** *Was that Mr. Omardeen related to Dr. Talib Omardeen? He stayed with us in town while attending college, I heard he became a doctor later on.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Talib was principal Omardeen's brother. He was a doctor who also worked for the World Health Organization. Later in his life he returned to Trinidad where he had a practice until he died. His son is now a doctor in Trinidad. Talib's nephew Wahid (Mr Omardeen's son) is married to my sister Sohaila.*

**Sonny Blacks...** *It is very amazing. He came and stayed by my father's little one bedroom place in Lodge Place, East Port of Spain. My Father and Step Mother slept in the bed and Talib slept on the floor. He was very quiet and studious and studied hard. I'm pleased to have heard he became a doctor. It just goes to show with perseverance one can reach great heights.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mr.Omardeen started the V on school uniforms to identify Vos students.*

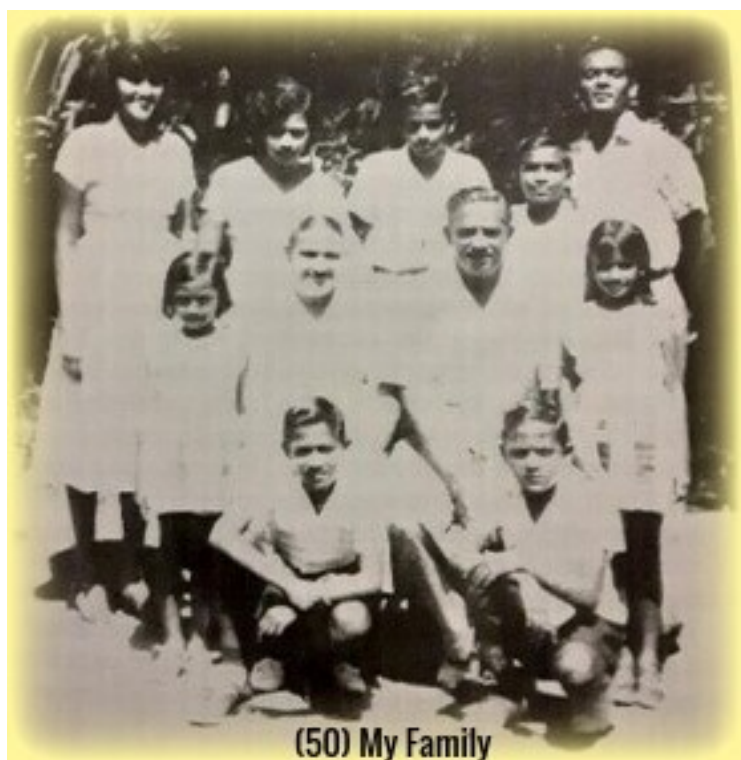
**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Sad to say that the V is no longer there. They now have a button.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *Every shirt had a different color V. There was green, red, pink and yellow. They represented the various houses.*

50

My Family

MY FAMILY



**(50) My Family**

*My Family*

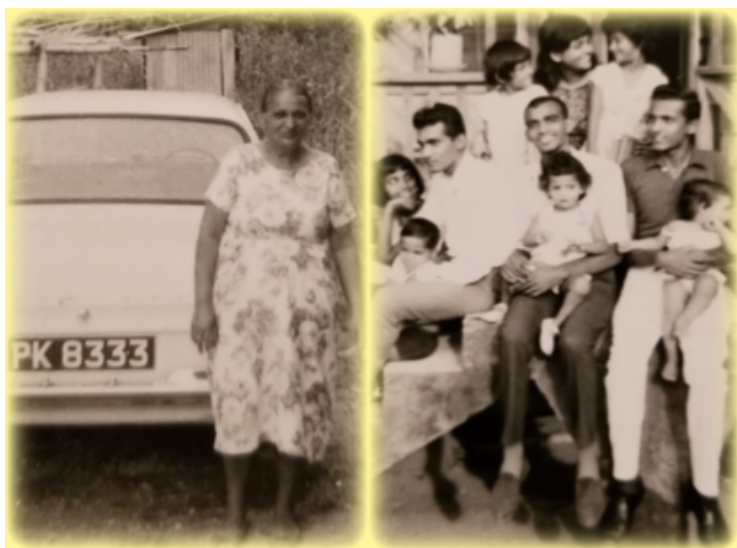
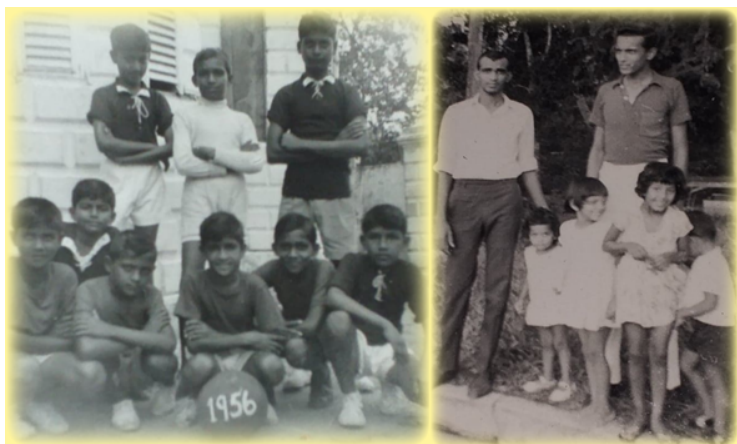


**(50) Mr & Mrs Zool Deen**

*Mr & Mrs Zool Deen*



MY FAMILY



Like most people I know, I believe that my parents were the best parents in the world. Like most parents I know, mine had done everything and made every possible sacrifice for their family. During the early years they'd moved around quite a bit with their growing family in the Gasparillo, Preysal and San Fernando areas.

After several pre, during & post World War II jobs as a driver, my father gained employment at the Transport Department of Trinidad Leaseholds Limited (later Texaco). This allowed him to finally have us settled back in his home village of Gasparillo. On our final move back into Gasparillo, we first lived at the Carat House (see #5) until Papa had put together enough resources to build our permanent house in Cocoa Street. To help, my mother sometimes took in sewing at home.

My father was Mr. Zool Deen. He was the Imam of the Gasparillo Mosque for about 40 years. My mother was Mrs. Macsooman Deen. She was originally from Preysal Village. Altogether they raised nine children: Salima (Sally), Nazru (Boyie), Hafsa, Nurul, Sadru (Suge), Kamalo (Malo), Shamsu (Sham), Sohaila (Ila) & Zakeya (Zakey). Most of us attended Gasparillo Government School. Some also attended San Fernando TML and Vos Government. My first two siblings Sally and Boyie also had begun their education at Vista Bella CM School.

Sally, a founding member of the GIG, was married to Umul from Princes Town and moved there. Later she and her family migrated to Ottawa, Canada where they now live. Umul passed away about three years ago.



Boyie attended Naparima College and became a school teacher at San Fernando TML. He was a founding member of both BP club and the GIG. He later moved to England, studied law at London U. and married Beatrice. After a few years in England they migrated to Canada. He eventually retired as a Superintendent of Education for the Carlton Board in Ottawa. He was the author of two books. Unfortunately we lost him in 2020 at age 81.

Hafsa was a pupil teacher at San Fernando TML. She married Boysie Nandlal. They migrated with their family to Ottawa, Canada. Boysie died in 2021.

Nurul married Fedosha (Golin). He was an Inspector of Police at Texaco and a member of BP club until he unfortunately passed away while still in his early 50s.

Suge migrated to the UK. He is married to Caryl. He was a Nurse with the British Military. After his retirement he & his wife had moved to Trinidad for about 5 years. However they returned to England to be nearer to their children & grandchildren.

I'm Kamalo. I was a member of First Gasparillo Scout Troop, BP Club and the GIG and a teacher at Vos Government School. My wife is Sherma the daughter of Mr & Mrs Toon Ali (tassa man). We live in New York.

Sham is married to Mooneera of Princes Town. They have homes in Tableland (Trinidad) and Ottawa (Canada). He attended Naparima College and is a graduate of UWI and Univ. of Manitoba. He is a renowned genealogist and author. He's also heavily involved in Agriculture at his farm in Tableland.

Sohaila attended Naparima Girls High School and is married to Wahid (Doolie) Omardeen. Both are accountants and founded Omardeen's School of Accountancy.

Zakey also attended Naparima Girls and is married to Fyzool Hosein of Sum Sum Hill. She is a retired school teacher (Miss Hosein of Vos Gov't School).

Each of us, during our time, had been actively involved in the activities of Gasparillo.





**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *Uncle Malo, a somewhat similar brief discussion came up on the Baden Powell Club chat group and a suggestion was made that we (or someone or group) should undertake to create a virtual museum recording the history of Gasparillo through profiling its burgesses past and present who made contributions both at the community level and the national level. Gasparillo possesses a rich history in this regard.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *You can post this on their chat group.....I was a member of BP in the early days.*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *I know. You, Uncle Nurul and*

*Uncle Boyie on the list. I think if I am not mistaken that Papa was involved with the club as a mentor in the early days as well.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Yes, our fathers acted as mentors...Papa, Mr Ramsahai, Mr Rahaman Ali and more.*

**Donna Lee Ling...** *I remember Mrs Zakeya Hosein from my time at Vos Government School.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *Zakie & I both attended Vos. She went to Naps and I went to St Stephens.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Outstanding family the Deens. Like so many families of that era, parents made great sacrifices for their children, and these kids grew up and made their parents very proud.*

**Jeewan Ramlal...** *Malo, I was a member of 1st Gasparillo Boys Scout Troop together with you with MJ as our Scoutmaster. Hafsa was my teacher at San Fernando TML School and I was a member of BP Club together with Nurul and Abby your cousin, so I know this wonderful family pretty well.*

**Varsha Ramlal-Khan...** *I recall an article in the papers about your brother and his love of geneology.*

**Shah Deen... (son of Nurul & Manager of Robert Treat Hotel, Newark, NJ).** *Hope all is good with you and*

everyone in Staten Island. I just wanted to let you know this time has been very difficult for all of us. During my stressful and scary days here at the Hotel, the one bright spot is reading your stories about Gasparillo but today in particular I was so moved by just reading our family story. You may not realize what impact you are making on some of us to feel better with this difficult time but I want you to know I appreciate it and I'm sure many others do. Stay Safe.

**Sharlene Ali...** *Shah you are absolutely right. Uncle Malo, you somehow know how to find ways to support and comfort us in trying times. Thank you so much, we love you.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *There was another well known tamarind tree in Gasparillo which was at the north side of your house on Cocoa Street. Most if not all the children of Vos used to cut through your yard after school to snack on the tambran. It didn't matter the maturity of the fruits, we'd bring salt and pepper from home to eat the green ones. Also a lot of the jamaat infant children who attended Vos used to have their lunch at your parents' home under the watchful care of Mama. I was one of them.*

**Arlene Francis...** *It had a huge tamarind tree after King's Cafe that was our afternoon snack... tamarind in a penna kool pack squished with salt sugar and bird pepper. Those were the days.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *There were two large tamarind trees by our house in Cocoa Street. The ground under the trees was a small park where we played cricket. A few famous first-class Trinidad cricketers had bowled or batted there with us while on their way to or from the Gasparillo Park for weekend matches.*

**Sadru(Suge) Deen...** *I remember Wilfred Ferguson playing a match at the Gasparillo Park and then coming to our home to see Papa. Mama made him roti and choka. That man could eat roti.*

*He is at the right in the top row in this photo.*



*Top Row Right: Wilfred Ferguson*

## King Street to The Pentecostal Church

**(51a) Stella Brooker....** During my very early years at Gasparillo Government School I recall that the mixed-race family of Stella Brooker, her husband and her sons lived on the south-eastern corner of King Street in a small concrete house. Their sons were Junior, Roger and Ellis who was a mute. The boys were our friends. Another lady Vikey lived with them. She may have been Stella's sister.

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *As far as I know, Stella was Stella Jiminez. Junior and Roger Brooker were her sons by my uncle but Ellis was not a Brooker, he was a Jiminez. Ellis is a mute. He communicated through sign language and is from all appearances a good lip reader.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *While growing up, I always knew her as Stella Brooker. Ellis was extremely hard-working. His handicap was accepted by all. There were a few others in*

*Gasparillo who had a similar disability.*

**(51b) Took Took...** The next house was bordered by Stewart (Pepper) Street. It belonged to Mr Took Took, his wife Kassiran and their family. Two of their daughters were Aziman & Silvie and three of their sons were Sonny Boy, Doods & Mumtaz (who was also nicknamed Took Took like his father). Sylvie was married to my neighbor Hamid who was the son of Rajab & Majeeran (see #47n).

Theirs was a board house with an extremely tall coconut tree in the yard. Mr Took Took also had a donkey cart. There was an animal pen in the yard behind the house.



*Mumtaz Ali (Took Took, son of Took Took)*



**Joel Rahim...** *Took Took is my uncle. My grandmother was Casiram. I come from the Joel Rahim family. Dollar was my mother. She was better known as Aziman.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Aziman had a daughter also. I think her name was Claudia.*

**Joel Rahim...** *Yes.*

**(51c) Ma Jadoo....** On the eastern side of Stewart (Pepper) Street there was another small board house. According to **Marsha Dougan Jobity...** *“The old house where the Chinese restaurant is now (the one next to Stewart Street, opposite the Government School) was my great-great grandmother’s house. She was known as Ma Jadoo. We, the Dougans, the Rogers and the Raphaels are one family of Ma Jadoo.”*

**(51d) Miss Elaine....** The next house was an upstairs house where Miss Elaine Warner and her sons Erwin Brooker & Tony Warner lived. They were very quiet people. Miss Elaine seemed to be very protective of her sons. I remember Erwin as a student at the Technical Institute.

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *Miss Elaine Warner was my grandmother. She had two sons – Franklyn Erwin Brooker (my father) and Anthony Warner. Uncle Tony’s father was Alexander Warner.*

**Alisha Ali...** *Stan, I could never forget the shop/parlour your grandmother had downstairs her house. We used to always be going there to buy snacks.*

**(51e) Constable Phillips....** Further down the hill was another small board house where Constable Phillips lived with his family. He was a Special Reserve Policeman. I remember him as being a quiet, dignified man. I don't remember his wife. Some of the children were my schoolmates at Gasparillo Government School.

KING STREET TO THE PENTECOSTAL CHURCH



*Constable Phillips*  
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**Robin Nagir...** *We used to call Mr Phillip's sons "Fish" because whenever it rained heavy they used to get flooded-out with water in the house and yard.*

**Simone Ayres...** *Constable Phillip was my great grandfather. And yes they still get the occasional flood.*

**(51f) The Pentecostal Church....** Further down after a large drain, there was a new Pentecostal Church. It was a one-level concrete building with a concrete walkway bridge crossing a depression. The church was directly across from Henry Street.

## Charles Street....Part 1

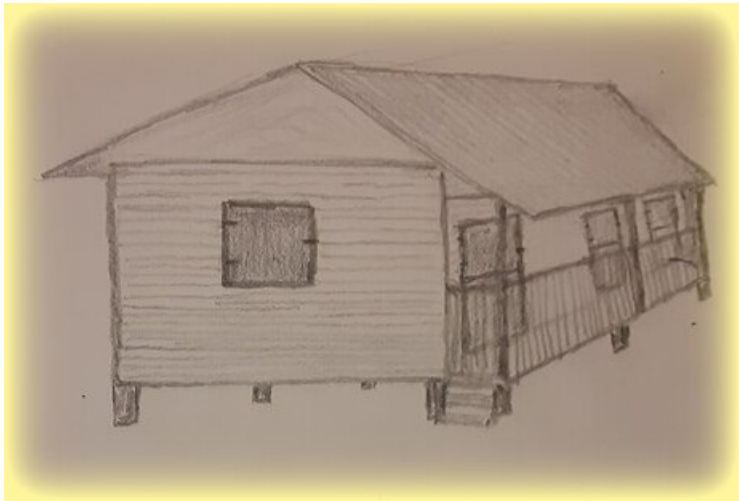
In 1873 my ancestor John Munradin had bought the piece of land between Charles Street & the Marie Dulay River. It extended from the Bonne Aventure Road north into Charles Street to the site of Mr Madul's house.

**Vijay Mohip...** *The majority of lower Charles Street residents came from a place called Concord (the Concord Estate). That was situated where Petrotrin Refinery now stands. The new residents were not given the land but had to pay for it. Imagine poor people were evicted from their homes, then had to pay. Some of the residents of Concord also went to Pleasance Park area. They too had to pay for the land.*

**(52a) Miss Ivy....**On Charles Street, just past the ChinKeeHee shop, was a flat board house where Miss Ivy lived. .She was a

friendly, Negro woman who was in her fifties when I rented an apartment in Miss Hahnnoo's house next to her. I never saw her without her head wrapped in a scarf which was common to most of the village ladies at that time. She was well known to everyone because she sold pudden at the front of Mr. Nandlal's shop at night. Although as Muslims, we were not allowed to eat it, I must admit that the smell coming out of her coal-pot was tempting.

I believe Mr Pelly's son Bolo rented a room by her. My brother Suge also reminded me that Edward Hochoy (grandson of Governor General Sir Solomon Hochoy), also rented a room in that house for awhile, while he was an apprentice in Pointe a Pierre.



*Miss Ivy's house*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Mammy said Miss Ivy was like a godmother to my brother and me when we lived in Miss Hahnoo's house. Ms Ivy loved playing with us, the twins.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *She was very nice. We called her Tanty Ivy. She used to drink her hot chocolate in milk from a tin fashioned into a cup. She had no children.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I was told that "Theater" Khan (the cinema projectionist) and his wife Gloria rented by Miss Ivy for a short while. Gloria was pregnant at the time.*

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *Miss Ivy was a mother figure. The side of her house facing the road was always clean. After her, Sammy lived in a wooden house. His daughters were Shanti, Donna and Carol.*

**(52b) Miss Hahnoo's House....**The next house was an older two-storey house which belonged to Miss Hahnoo. She was a daughter of Dose Dardee and Baboo Tailor. This was her family home at one time but in later years was rented out as two separate units, upstairs and downstairs. It was located directly opposite the government standpipe at the top of the Charles Street hill.

I remember when the downstairs was rented by my sister Hafsa and her husband Boysie. We would visit them very often. Later when we first got married, my wife and I rented the upstairs

apartment for a few months. Not too long after, when we moved to Caratal Road to my in-laws home, my brother Nurul and his family moved into the upstairs apartment which we had occupied. I also remember that there was a time when Archie and his family lived downstairs.



*Miss Hahnoo*



**(52c) The Zaiffdeens....**The next house was a two-storey, concrete house which belonged to Mr & Mrs Milton Zaiffdeen. Mrs Zaiffdeen's name was Ruby. They had eight children: Milton (Ellis), Diana, Dennis, Maureen, Gail, Janice, Cheryl and Clinton. They were related to us through our ancestor John Munradin.

Mr Zaiffdeen, a celebrated photographer who worked for Texaco, was the son of Miss Hahnoo and her husband Japhar. Miss Ruby was a housewife. Like many others in the village they were devoted parents. This is reflected in their children's accomplishments. All attended prestigious high schools; some on government scholarships. The family migrated to Canada in the mid-1960s where they continued to distinguish themselves.



*Mr & Mrs Zaiffdeen*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *We used to make a mud path from our backyard and use Palmiste branches as sleds and slide down to the Marie Dulay River. Before there was electricity in Charles Street, my grandmother Haniffa (Hahnoo) had our house wired. My step-grandfather, Japhar (Tinker as I called him because he used to call me Stinker) had a Delco generator which he hooked up so we had power in our house. The generator was set down by the river so we could not hear the noise.*

**Milton Zaiffdeen...** *I was the Owner/Manager of “Matadors Combo” from #6 Charles Street? We had the #1 Hit on Radio Guardian for three months, “These Boots are made for Walking” and “Ferry across the Mercy”. After I left for Canada in August ‘66 they continued for a short while then slowly fizzled.*



*Matadors Combo*

**Faize Mohammed...** *My father Fazool had a tyre shop in Marabella. We are also from the John Munradin lineage. I remember the band & your farewell at Naparima Club. I loved to dance. Most of the times, when your band was practicing by your grandfather in Marabella, I was there.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *My brother-in-law Dr Jay Manohar speaks about those combo days.*

**Milton Zaifdeen...** *Yes, Jay is a personal friend of my family and probably learned to dance under our house in Charles Street.*

**(52d) Mr & Mrs Madul....**

Mr Madul and his wife Aisha lived in the house after the Za-iffdeens. It was a two-storey house with a rental apartment downstairs which was rented at one time by Peter Herbert's (Mighty Wanderer) family. Mr. Madul was a son of Mr Taynee of Cocoa Street. He was my relative through our common ancestor John Munradin.

I was about fifteen years old when one evening at about 7 o'clock the usual quiet was broken by loud screaming coming from the main road corner. I ran out and as I got to the main road I ran into Tall Sheila a well-known lady from upper Charles Street. At the same time Batch from Mr. Cippy's house also ran up. Sheila was shouting, "Oh God, she dead!!....Oh God, he kill Merle!!" And she was pointing up in Charles Street. Well, Batch and I took off up Charles Street with Sheila behind us. "Look dey! Look dey!!....He stab she up!!....He kill Merle!!" We ran onto the dead body of Merle, who we knew from further up Charles Street. She was lying in the yard by Mr Madul's house. The killer, who was also from Charles Street, went into hiding but was caught a few days later at the Zenith cinema.



**Lilla Ogeerally...** *We used to call Sheila “Tall Sheila” because she was very tall. She was the daughter of “Pass it on”. If you say anything to him he will reply “pass it on”.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *I remember Merle’s murder close to the apartment shared by Peter Herbert (Wanderer)*

*and his mum and siblings. The gentleman who was responsible lived at Cippy Street.*

## Charles Street....Part 2

After Mr. Madul's home there was an empty lot of land.

**(53a) The House with the Hedge....** The empty lot was followed by a board house surrounded by a high hedge. All I can recall about this house is that the people who lived there were a very quiet middle-aged Indian couple who mainly kept to themselves. I did see them on occasion going about their business but I don't recall ever communicating with them.

**(53b) Johnny & Aishun....** The next house was occupied by Johnny, his wife Aishun and their young children. Johnny worked in Pointe a Pierre. They had two sons, Pengy & Rennie and a daughter.



*Johnny & Ishun*

**(53c) Mr Rajah....** After them was Mr. Rajah & his family. They occupied a small board house. He had some control of the grazing land across the wire in Pointe a Pierre because I remember that we used to hide in the bushes whenever we crossed over for coconuts and we saw him coming.

Among his children were daughter Chingaria and sons Jokhan, Stuart, Langa (Pooge), Boborn & Sancho. Boborn was a very good windball spin bowler and Sancho was a good batsman. Stuart and Langa were good friends with my brother-in-law Boysie Nandlal. Jokhan worked for Brisco in Marabella. Chingaria was married to Jash from further up Charles Street.





*Stuart Rampat....son of Rajah*

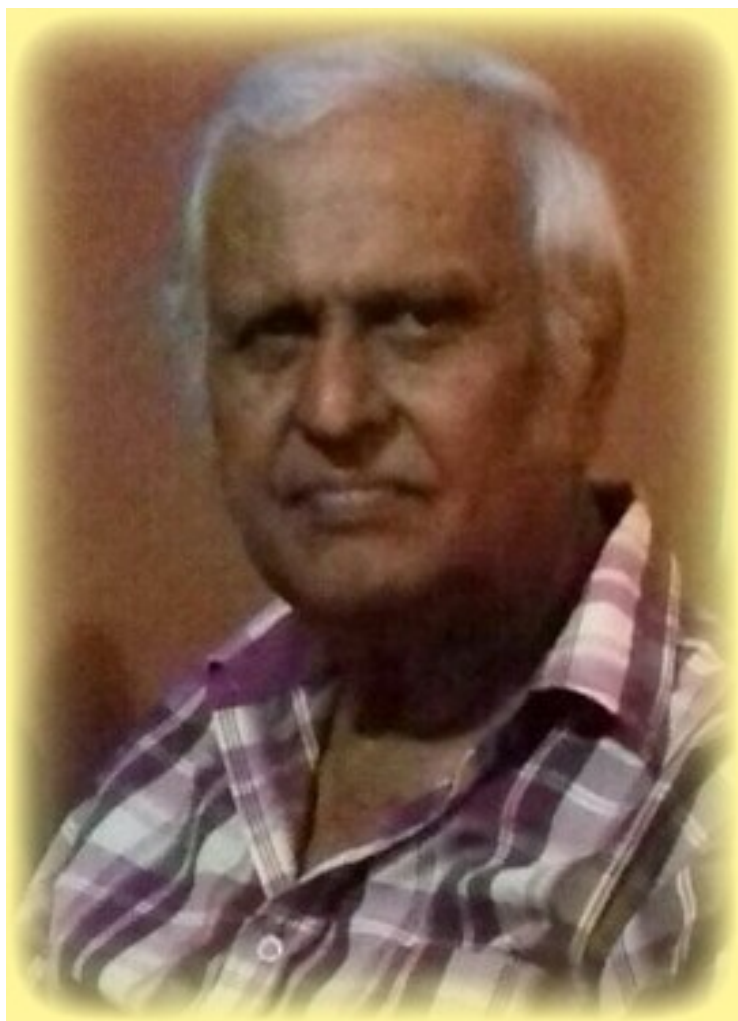
**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Yes, Rajah had one daughter, Chaing (Chingaria). I remember once a group of us went to pick coconut behind the wire, when caught I was sent to negotiate. My grandfather's response was "grandson or no grandson, if caught, the penalty is the same" (not exact*

words). *He had a contract for collecting and extracting the kernel from the nuts which was later sold to the CGA. Rajah's brothers were Ballyram and Mohip.*

**(53d) The Ballyram House....** Next was the Ballyram home. It was a large wooden house which sat about two full lots away from the road. There was an oil-sand roadway that entered the large front yard and led up to the house. There was also a long animal pen towards the southern side of the house. Mr Ballyram had a few cattle and mules. Among their children were Malo, Benzin, Kenny & Doris. Benzin and I were classmates at Gasparillo Government School. He was a brilliant underhand spin bowler. My wife says that she and Doris were classmates.

I remember that Mama used to send me and my brothers for manure from their pen. We would load up our box-cart and push it home. Mama took special care of her flower garden.

I was about eight years old when Mr Ballyram disappeared. He'd gone to his latrine one night. When he did not return they began searching for him. The latrine door was latched from inside with the flambeau still lighting. There was no sign of him leaving the latrine. He just disappeared and no one ever saw him again. Police and relatives searched everywhere. They bailed out the latrine and the river. They searched throughout the island but he was never found. Many stories and rumors grew out of this incident but the mystery of Mr Ballyram's disappearance was never solved.



*Kenny.... son of Mr & Mrs Ballyram*



*The Ballyram home*

**Nadir Ali...** *My father once told me a story about a Gasparillo man who went to use the outhouse (latrine) in full view of persons and never came back out. He disappeared from the face of the earth.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Ballyram was his name. He was my grand uncle. Rumour is that there was some sort of romantic shenanigans involved.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *He was my grand uncle.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Directly opposite Mr. Ballyram's house the boys had carved out a cricket pitch. First it was just for wind ball cricket but Sports Club then concreted*

*the pitch and used it for their practice.*

**Rajesh Balliram...** *I've been married to Kenny's 2nd daughter over 22 years ago .*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Our families were good friends in those days.*

**Kathleen Wandel...** *I remember that Mr Ballyram story so well. We were quite friendly to that family. My brother Boy (Hollis) and Marlow were good friends. Harry (Benzin) and I went to Gov't school together.*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *I remember the story about Mr Ballyram disappearing. In my days some people were very superstitious and they assumed different things as to what happened to him.*

**Nalini Ramkissoon...** *I have heard the story of Mr Ballyram during the years but I didn't know the true one. Mrs Ballyram was a wonderful lady.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *That shed on the side of the Ballyram's home had a movable roof which ran on rollers. It was rolled open to dry cocoa in the sun.*

**(53e) The Arjoons....** Mr & Mrs Arjoon were very religious people. Theirs was an upstairs house with a wire fence. They had quite a few children in the family. The one we knew most at that time

was nicknamed “Thinny” because of how small and skinny he was.

I was in my mid-teens when a sensation was created at the Arjoon’s home. Mrs Arjoon kept many flower plants in her gallery. One of her anthurium lilies sent out a flower which took the shape of a human hand. Mr Arjoon claimed that it was a sign from God. Word started to spread and people started coming from all over just to see this miracle. Every night Mr Arjoon would have a puja at his house for the flower. Because of the crowds that used to gather every night, this became a liming area for me and my friends for a few weeks. After a while the whole attraction just seem to dwindle away.



*Anthurium at the Arjoon’s Home*

**Nalini C A Ramsingh...** *My family knew about the Arjoon flower and my Dad use to go sometimes.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *I used to visit the house with the flower hand. People from all over came to see it.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I remember going to see the flower with my parents.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *We just went for the parsad with the coconut chunks.*

## Charles Street – Part 3

**(54a) Mr & Mrs Pouï ....** Mr & Mrs Pouï lived in a board house. He was a very fair-skinned man and was my father's boyhood friend. His wife Mamin, was the butcher Mr. Rasool's daughter. Some of their children were Samuel, Aziz (Shane), Rasheek, Nazir & Shaffina who was my student at Vos. Samuel & Rasheek worked in Pointe a Pierre. Samuel was a very good fast bowler.

During a period of my boyhood days Shane was the leader of most of our adventures. He used to lead us down through the bamboo fields along the Guaracara River in Pointe a Pierre. We had nicknamed this approximately half-mile pathway "The Ahwoo". I wasn't surprised that he later became a policeman. I believe that some of his younger brothers also were policemen. Rasheek married Lutchmin who was my wife's childhood friend.



**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Samuel was Mr.Poui's nephew but he grew up as a son with the Poui family.*

**Robin Nagir...** *I used to watch Samuel play cricket. He was one of the best swing bowlers in Gasparillo. Mr Poui's son Nazir was married to my sister.*

**(54b) Mr & Mrs Rock....** Mr. & Mrs. Rock lived in an upstairs board house which sat about 100 feet off the road. They were a middle-aged, brown-skinned mixed-race couple. He was a tall, quiet man. She was a short, plump, pleasant woman. They were very friendly and communicated well with everyone in the community. They had two grown children. Their daughter was the first albino person I had ever seen.

**(54c) The Mohips....** Mr & Mrs Mohip were religious and respected people in the community. I remember their sons, Ramdeo, Krishendeo, Basdeo, Baldeo and Harrydeo. They were among the founders of Gasparillo Sports Club. The three youngest sons eventually migrated. They are a talented family and some have distinguished themselves in the music & drama communities. Their daughters were Moonin and Phulmat (Doya). Ramdeo owned a successful furniture factory. His son Vijay was my student at Vos. Vijay married Sherrine Moonah, one of the stars of our movie "Bacchanal Time". Along with the Ballyrams they formed the Suhani Sangeet Indian Orchestra and were foundation members of Sports Club.

**Sharlene Ali...** *The older parents of the Mohip family were such nice people. I attended satsang at the home of Krishendeo Mohip and his family when his parents lived there.*

**Robin Nagir...** *In 1982 I crashed my car on a bridge in Mayaro. I was in Sando hospital and Mrs Mohip sent Vijay and Viinoo with Sai Baba ashes to rub on me.*

**(54d) Mr Moonwah....** Mr & Mrs Moonwah and their children lived in the next house. We knew them as Gaga's parents. My mother sewed for them and was Mrs Moonwah's friend. Mr Moonwah was a very tall man. He worked in Pointe a Pierre. Their sons were Dan, Boy & Goopie. The daughters were Gaga, Sylvie, Molly and Dolly and a few younger ones. The boys played windball cricket with us.

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Gaga's mother was Mama's friend. We all called her "Gaga mother" and they called Mama, "Hafsa mother". Among her other daughters were Sundri and Jap and a few younger ones.*

**(54e) Dean Ganpatt....** The next house is where Mr. Dean Ganpatt's family lived. It was a flat concrete house. There was a short, shady donkey stones mango tree in the front yard. I remember Mr. Ganpatt as a serious man. His wife was a quiet lady. I think they had a few children who I'd see sometimes.

He worked in Pointe a Pierre and was one of the founders of Gasparillo Sports Club. I remember him playing cricket for Sports Club in the park. I knew Salick, his nephew, and a lady named Deyah, who both lived there. Deyah was physically handicapped but was a very good seamstress.



*Dean Ganpatt*

**(54f) Jai Ramkissoon....** Jai Ramkissoon lived in the next house with his parents and sisters. When I left Trinidad, Jai was working as a Teaching Monitor at Vos. He was showing signs of

becoming a really dedicated teacher.

**Donna Lee Ling...** *Mr Jai, was my Standard Five teacher at Vos Government School. He also taught my sister, who attended many years before.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I worked with Jai for many years at Vos. He was a most dedicated Common Entrance teacher. His students were always his number one priority.*

**Zenobia Doodnath...** *Mr Jai was my teacher. I also attended Vos Gov't School.*

**Shirley Ramrattan...** *Mr Jai was Renuka's teacher when she wrote the Common Entrance Exam. She got a five year school but we had to migrate to the USA. She always remembers how strict he was.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Teacher Jai as we all called him was very good math teacher.*

## Charles Street – Part 4

**(55a) Cry Cry....** Cry Cry was also known to some as Nanee. I knew her as an elderly lady who was a midwife to many in the village. She lived with her son and his family at the northern corner of Charles & Ferdinand Streets. Among her family were Rock, Coaxey, Jeewan, Docks, Lilla & Angela. Lilla is married to Safar (Jalliah's son). Angela was my student at Vos. She migrated and lives with her family in New York. Rock was one of the golfers of Charles Street.



*Cry Cry's Grandchildren*

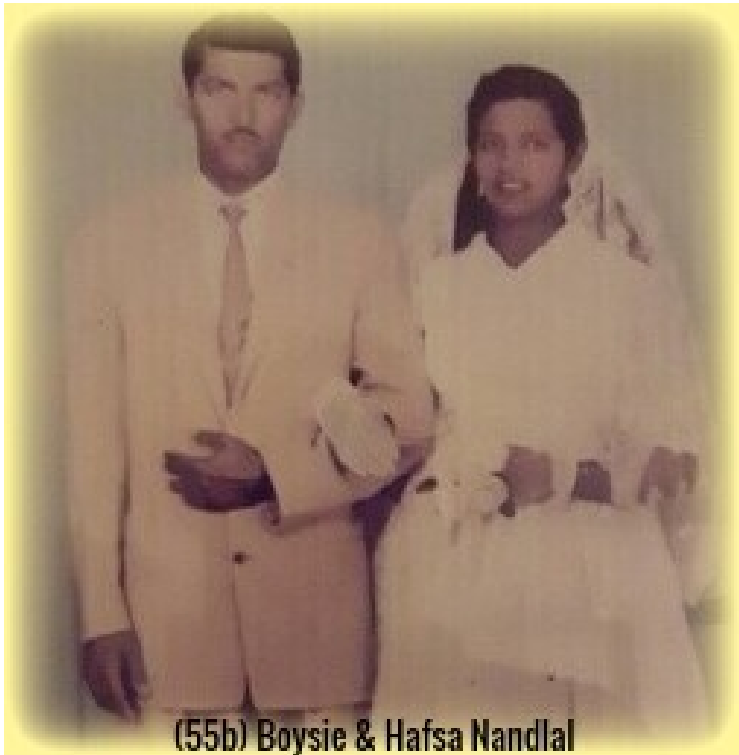
**Lilla Ogeerally...** *My sister Angela lives in Staten Island. One of her sons teaches at Staten Island College and also heads the audio and video engineering dep't at Rockerfeller University.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Cry Cry was my babysitter as a newborn. My mother had medical problems when I was born. She stayed on until I was about seven years old.*

**Gloria (Roopchand) Singh...** *Her appearance is so clear an image in my mind. She had a solemn looking face, is*

*that why she was called Cry Cry?*

**(55b) Hafsa & Boysie....** The next house belonged to my sister Hafsa & her husband Boysie. They built their flat concrete house at the corner of Charles Street and Rex Street, and moved-in with their children in 1962. Boysie was at that time working in the Instrument Department at Texaco. He was a member of Sports Club and later a member of Gasparillo United Sports Club. Their children are Cindy, Terry, Sherry, Jacqueline, Barry & Roger. Eventually the family migrated to Canada. They bought me a white, long sleeved terylene shirt to wear on my first day of teaching at Vos Government School.



**(55b) Boysie & Hafsa Nandlal**

*Boysie & Hafsa Nandlal*

**Jackie Teasdale...** *Toby and his family lived on the street behind our house when we lived on Charles Street. We Nandlal kids were friends with his kids!*

**(55c) Ragoobarsinghs....** After Rex Street there was the two-storey board house of Mr & Mrs Ragoobarsingh and their family.



I think that Mr Ragoobarsingh & Mr Arjoonsingh (see #54) were brothers. Three of the children were my students at Vos: Basdeo, Mahadeo & Savitri. Another son Jim (Bayto) was one of my teenage liming friends. They had two older children, a son and a daughter. Most of the children have migrated. At one time there was a “Private School” downstairs at their home.



*Some of the Ragoobarsingh children*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I attended a pre-school under Mr Ragoobarsingh's house.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember that school.*

**Gloria Singh (Roopchand)...** *My brother Russel attended this school. I went to Miss Brathwaite's school. There was a large empty piece of land after the Ragoobarsingh home.*

**(55d) Mr Jalliah....** The next house was where Mr. & Mrs Jalliah and their family lived. They were a quiet, hardworking family. They had several children. The ones I remember were the daughters Rosa & Haniffa and the son Safar. Hannifa was my student at Vos. Mr Jalliah was a well-liked taxi driver in Gasparillo.



*Mr Jalliah's son.... Safar*



*Mr Jalliah's daughter.... Haniffa*

**(55e) The Ramdeens....** The next house was owned by Mr & Mrs Ramdeen. I remember that Mr Ramdeen drove a horsecart. Their oldest daughter was Jaimoon. She was married to Chake who was the son of the Ramnaths of Caratal Road. Chake and Jaimoon eventually built their home on the main road where they

raised their children Latchmin, Omadath, Partap and Danny. The other Ramdeen daughters, Pickin & Pearly, were classmates of my sister Sally and brother Boyie at Gasparillo Government School. Pickin married Haniff (Tanty Zama's brother). Mr & Mrs Ramdeen also had three sons, Jash, Lal & Sugarlal. Jash married Chingaria (Rajah's daughter). Lal & Sugarlal migrated to the USA.



*Vishnu.... a grandson of the Ramdeens*

**Twila Deokinath-Maharaj...** *Mrs. Ali (Pickin) was a teacher at Happy Hill Hindu School. I was a student so I only knew her by her government name.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Rosey was Pickin's real name. She was one of the original staff at Gasparillo Hindu School. She retired as the Principal of the Happy Hill Hindu School. My grandparents had cows for milk production and a horse and cart. My grandfather Tammy was a cutlass man in the refinery, and after work, he used to harness the horse to the cart and go to his garden in Maryland, or go to cut grass for the animals, (they had a "grass pass" which permitted them to cut grass on refinery lands). Some of my most memorable experiences were riding on the cart with my grandfather. I also remember having to "mash is back" in the evenings. I remember him rocking in his chair and singing and reciting from the Ramayana at the end of his day. My ajee sold milk and dahi and ghee which she produced at home. I remember her churning these products in the kitchen early in the mornings. One of the stories I remember as a young boy about my grandfather is he operating his mother's horse cart during the excavations in Pointe a Pierre. He had to split his pay three ways: One third for himself, one third for his mother and one third for his animal (for feed and maintenance). One of the stories we heard from my ajee, was about the caravans that left and traveled to Mayaro to collect coconut oil. They traveled as a caravan, with a lead cart which led the way. Other carts were hitched*

*to that cart in a line. This enabled the other cartmen to take a rest during the journey. Of course the role of lead card alternated. The journey took about a week. When they reached Mayaro, they rested for a day before turning around (maybe this is where I got my love for a beach lime). Life was hard and people did not squander. Monies were used to acquire property or to educate children. Your brother Sham dug into our ancestry during one of his trips to India and discovered that we originated from Bihar and UP and just like the Munradins made our way to Trinidad and planted our roots. All in all, the Ramdeens is a successful clan producing our share of vagabonds, teachers, lawyers, doctors, engineers, scientists, nurses, craftsmen & entrepreneurs.*

**(55f) Mr & Mrs Ali...**Mr & Mrs Ali lived next door to the Ramdeens. They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat. They had a daughter whose name I don't recall. Their grandson Ashmeed lived with them.



*Mr & Mrs Ali*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Mr and Mrs Ali daughter's name was Zalina. Mrs Ali used to rub little babies when they had hasulee (stiff neck or strain neck).*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mr and Mrs Ali were very good friends with my parents. She and my mom grew up together in Tableland. She used to rub Nara and uncle used to jahrey. They were wonderful, humble people. Ashmead lives in Mahogany. Their daughter owns Hassanali Doubles, The Green Shed in Debe.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mrs Ali is my Chachee. They were very close friends to our family. I remember when my grandfather died. In those days bodies remained in the home and was disposed of that same day. Chachee helped to prepare his body.*



**(55g) Dolly Dardee....** Dolly was my grandfather's sister and John Munradin's grand daughter. We called her Dolly Dardee. She was a member of our Jamaat and was very close to my family. Her house was a small board house which stood after an empty lot past the Ali house. She owned a block of land which extended to the side and the back of her house. My brothers & I and my cousins Abby & Killers worked on weekends for several weeks to build a road through her land. Today it is known as Dolly Street. She also owned some other pieces of land in Gasparillo.

She was married briefly to Man Bago of California and had one child, a daughter named Ruby. Ruby was married to taxidriver Harrysingh. They lived with their children in Allen Street. Dolly's grandson Ozzie lived with her in Charles Street. Merle, who was murdered (see #53) was Dolly's neighbor and good friend.



**(55g) Dolly Dardee**

*Dolly Dardee*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Dolly Dardee used to beat the hand drum and sing for weddings and celebrations.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Yup, I remember her in action, quite a female character with her multi colored bags.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *Was this taxidriver Harrysingh father to Jang, Kelvin and Ozzie? If so, his wife was my grandmother's cousin.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *All descended from John Munradin.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I think Mr Harrysingh hailed from Beadeau Street.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Scoutmaster SK Ramsingh and his brother Mr Harrysingh were from Beadeau Street.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Dolly Dardie once rented the front room of her house to my friend Andrew (Faye). If my memory serves me right I think you told me that you once met Faye in New York.*

## Charles Street – Part 5

**(56a) The Roopchands....** Mr & Mrs Roopchand owned a popular shop/rumshop at the north-eastern corner of Charles & Cippy Streets. This business offered a necessary service to the inner Charles Street community. Mr Roopchand was more commonly known as Chandulal.

Their children who I have known were: Boy & PT (they were married to two of Mr & Mrs Cippy's daughters, Beti & Veena and migrated to Canada); Bernice, who operates the business and still lives there; Kathleen, who was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School and at St Johns College, San Fernando and now lives in England; Charlie, who was my student at Vos and had migrated to Canada; and two other daughters Roslyn & Gloria.



*Mr & Mrs Roopchand*



*The Roopchand Family*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *One of the Roopchand daughters was Roslyn. She was a Primary schoolteacher and also my Sunday school teacher at the Presbyterian Church.*

**Kathleen Wandel...** *She now lives in D'abadie and enjoys retirement. I am one of 12 children. One died at 9 months old. So eleven are still alive now; eight live in Toronto, one in England and two in Trinidad. We are all well and now busy looking after our children and grandchildren and*

*enjoying our retirement. I came to England in 1967 to do Nursing, which I did until I retired at 60. I was married to a German for 47 years. He died earlier this year. We have 2 children and 4 grandchildren. My son lives in Australia. My daughter lives in London.*

**Debbie Lora...** *I am Pity and Veena's daughter. Thank you for the history as I grew up in Toronto.*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *Hi Debbie. Veena your mom is my mother's cousin. We see and hear from Beti from time to time. My mom is Shama. She is now 84 years old.*

**(56b) Maimoon & Roy...** Maimoon & Roy lived further up on Charles Street just past Hunger March Road. They had two daughters. They migrated to Canada. Maimoon was a good friend of my sister Sally.



*Maimoon & Roy*

**Nadir Ali...** *Mymoon and Roy also have a son, Zulfikar (Cliff). He's the eldest.*

**(56c) Sayeed Khan....** At the end of Charles Street lived the Sayeed Khan family. He was the eldest son of Laulkhan who moved to Gasparillo as a member of the John Munradin family during the late 1800s. Sayeed was a tassa-man who played sometimes with the Toon Ali group. He also raised animals.



His family had helped to create a community in the area referred to as Mahogany.

His son Jaleel & wife had focused on educating their children. I knew their sons Razack who became a teacher and Abzal who was active in the Gasparillo Jamaat and worked in an administrative position for the Postal Service. They also had several other sons and daughters. I remember another younger son named Leo.



*Sayeed Khan*

**(56d) Shorty Kenrick Francis...**“Shorty” Kenrick Francis worked for Texaco. He raised his family in Upper Charles Street. He was a great stickfighter and used to play at the gayal by Bogart’s shop and other places. He was also a very good cricketer.



*Mr & Mrs “Shorty” Kenrick Francis*

**Arlene Francis...** *My father was nicknamed “Shorty”. He used to ride his bicycle from Mahogany to Forest Reserve in Fyzabad when he was working for Texaco. He was a great stickfighter.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *I saw your father play. He was a respected*

| *and feared bois man.*

**(56e) The Tuitts....** Mr Tuitt was a Texaco policeman who worked at the same time as my brother Nurul. But he was a horse policeman. Among his children were son Melvin and daughter Bernadine. Mr Tuitt had an old grey Austin of England motor car. It was an icon in Gasparillo. There were many stories about his car. According to one report the back seat was a wooden bench from under his house. All in all the Tuitts were a well disciplined and respected family.



*Melvin Tuitt*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Bernadine and I were in the same class at Vos.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mr Tuitt had one big macco car! When he rode his horse on patrol in Pointe a Pierre, we used to shout "Tuittttt!"..... I dont think it made his day.*

**Nadir Ali...** *I remember Mr Tuitt and his old car. What a classic!*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *Other families from the area were: Coombs, Phillips, Blackburn, Redhead, Wilson, Jonas, Knights and Mr Profey who had large thanksgivings. I loved his roti and pumpkin. Others were Miss Theresa, Mr Tanker; the bicycle fishman “Walk Walkaway” and the garbage man Chindo.*

**(56f) Kyaho....** One of the memorable night sounds of my childhood was the voice of a man from upper Charles Street. There was a time when I and my brothers Nurul, Suge & Sham would wait up late on weekend nights to hear him. I believe that his name was Saroop. We never knew him because we lived off the main road where he passed, so I don't recall ever seeing him. We identified him only by his voice.

Every Friday and Saturday night we would hear him from just before midnight as he left the rum shop by either Nandlal or Sahaboo and began his journey home. He was always heavily drunk and would sing a few lines of an Indian song in a mumbled voice followed by some Hindi words, as he slowly stumbled along. After every couple of sentences he would shout the word “Kyaho!” Sometimes we could tell that he was standing in one spot for a long period mumbling his song or his speech; sometimes we could tell that he had fallen on the road or in the drain and was struggling to get back on his feet, and sometimes he would begin stumbling back in the wrong direction before

correcting himself and resuming his move towards his home. But even when he changed his song or his speech the word “Kyaho!” was always present. So for us, his name became “Kyaho”. He used to take at least two hours to make his way from the rumshop to out of our earshot on the hill by the Charles Street standpipe.

Eventually a time came when we stopped hearing his voice. We later learned that “Kyaho” had suffered a stroke, while in a drunken state, as he’d approached his home one night.

His voice, like so many other voices from my childhood, have never faded from my memory.

**Sadru Deen....** *Great memories. We would sometimes pretend to walk like him. Taking 2 steps forward and 1 step back.*

**Varsha Ramlal-Khan....** *Reminds me of some of those in my village. Payday was a serenade at night. They had some pretty loud voices, but could skilfully carry a tune!*

**Phoenix Fiona Maurisa....** *My mother, Phyllis Cross, thinks his name was Jaglal Dass, Bates brother.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen....** *I remember him.*

**Arlene Francis....** *The only Saroop I remember was living up by Jaleel and then he lived in 5th Street. Boya who used*

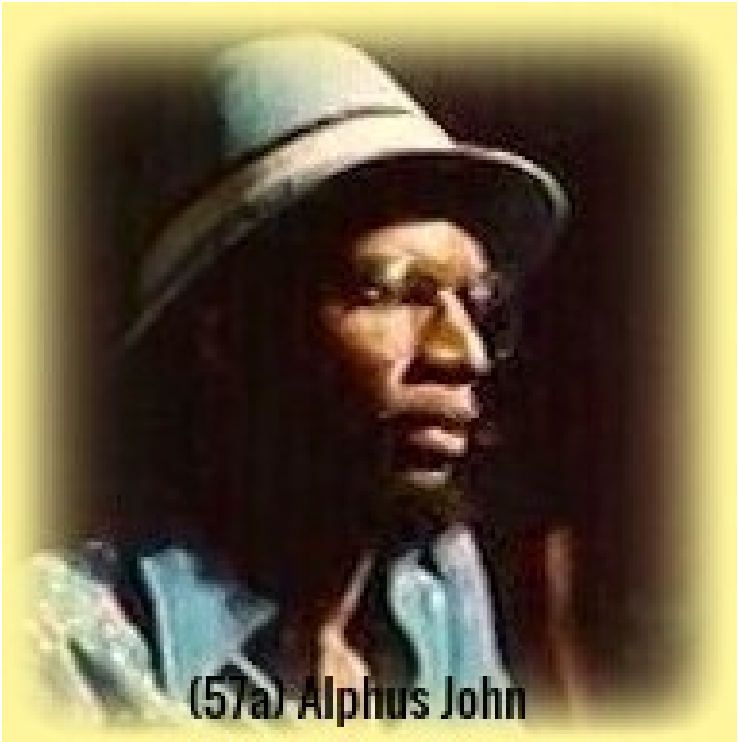
*to rent tent, table and chairs. Maybe it was his father. One of the Bhagaloo called Bugs. He used to sing sweet. He used to pull long chords of Bhajans while he walked. One time he'd pulled a chord for so long it spanned the length of the tunnel before he started to sing.*

**Careen Chotalal....***That's him, I believe.*

## Charles Street – Part 6

**(57a) Alphas John....** Alphas was my student at Vos. I found him to be very entertaining. He acted in our movie “Bacchanal Time”. He wanted to be a calypsonian. He’d adopted the name “The Mighty Guana” (the same calypso sobriquet as Palooka from the laundry). Years later he died in an accident in New York while visiting his daughter who was a schoolteacher there.





*Alphas John*

**(57b) The Kings....** The King family was quiet and well-disciplined. Audrey, Raymond, Lynette & Annette were all students at Vos. All except Audrey were my students there. Audrey & Raymond migrated to the US. Lynette who acted in the movie “Bacchanal Time” also lived there for a short time.



*Raymond King*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Raymond King and I were in the same class.*

**(57c) Franco Sanchez....** Franco was an elderly Spanish/creole man who lived with his wife in Mahogany. He appeared in our movie “Bacchanal Time”.



*Franco*

**Arlene Francis...** *Old man Sanchez lived on the way to number 10. He was a blind Spanish man who played the guitar as well as cuatro. He lived there with his wife Vanessa and his son Vaughnie.*

**(57d) Traboulays....** The Traboulay family lived near where today, there is an elderly retirement home on upper Charles Street. They owned a shop. Mrs Traboulay's name was Baylah. She was my wife's cousin. The Traboulay children were sons Norbert, Malcolm & Michael and daughters Helen and Ann. Malcolm died as a child from a scorpion sting.



*Mr & Mrs Traboulay*

**(57e) Herbert Charles....** Charles was a worker in Pointe a Pierre. He was a very good friend of mine in those days. He was like a friendly giant. He still lives in Charles Street and has at least one grandchild attending Vos. I meet him on occasion on my visits to Gasparillo.

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *I remember big Charles from Mahogany. I attended Vos with his sister Jennifer who now lives in USA.*

**(57f) “Pass it On” & Tall Sheila....** “Pass it on” was a very well-known and well-liked Charles Street personality. Tall Sheila was a giant of a woman. She was a loud and friendly person. She was the lady who witnessed and loudly warned the village about Merle’s murder in Charles Street (see #53). She was “Pass it on”’s daughter.

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *He was named “Pass it on” because if you say anything to him he will reply “pass it on”.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *“Pass it on” was a brick layer by trade hence the name. Pass on the bricks.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *“Pass it on” was a great character. His reply to greetings was “pass it on”.*

**(57g) The Jordans....** I remember the Jordan family. Their son John as a student at Vos before he became “Cowboy John”. His sisters were Patricia & Theresa. I believe he lived in Canada for a while.

**(57h) The Greaves....** Like my brother Nurul, Mr Greaves was a Texaco policeman in Pointe a Pierre. I remember him as a tall giant of a man. His children attended Vos. One of his sons Anderson, was my student. One of his daughters was named Betty.

**(57i) Mr Blackburn....** Mr Blackburn had a parlor in Charles Street. He used to mind pigs. His children were students at Vos.

**Robin Nagir...** *Mr Blackburn was a hog farmer.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *He had the biggest pigs in Gasparillo. He walked with them in Charles Street holding a big stick in his hand to crack them when they refused to walk.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *He had a parlor too! Big pink pigs held in pens at the side of Mr Blackburn’s parlor.*

**(57j) The Mitchells....** Several Mitchell children attended Vos. Leo was one of my students. I also remember two other brothers (older brother Leroy and a younger brother whose name I can’t remember) and a sister Patricia.

**(57k) The Seales....** Mr & Mrs Seales were quiet and friendly people. They were tall people of mixed race. They had several children. Their eldest daughter Joan was one of the first women police officers in the country. Among their other children was a son. I think his name was Trevor. One of their daughters Brenda, was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School.

**(57l) The Keiths....** The Skeetes (Keiths) lived in Cippy Street. They were a light-skinned, mixed-race family with several children. Among their children were Linda & Lee. The children were all students of Vos Government School.





*Lee Keith*

**(57m) Mr & Mrs Jonas Hyatali....** Mr & Mrs Jonas who lived in Cippy Street were close to our family. Their family was active in the Gasparillo Jamaat. Mr Jonas was Papa's friend. Among their daughters were Assiran & Amiran. They learned to sew with Mama. Their sons Mohamed (Bunjie), Shaffick, Ibrahim (Meethis) & Rahim (Chinee) were my students at Vos. Bunjie,

the eldest son, was a very good cricketer and a star batsman for Vos.



*Mr & Mrs Jonas Hyatali*



*Left: Ten of the twelve Hyatali children; Right: Jonas Hyatali House*

**(57n) Mr Liverpool the Sharpener....** Mr Liverpool lived somewhere in Charles Street and rode his bike on weekends sharpening knives and scissors.

**Aziz (Bata) Hosein....** *He was a slim dark Afro-Trini man who did sharpening knives and scissors and soldering. On weekends he would pass around calling out his trade in a song.*

**(57o) The Pudden Lady....** Miss Thelma was a Negro lady who lived in Cippy Street. She and her granddaughter Joanne sold pudden and souse on weekend nights on the Gasparillo Junction by the Arman building. Joanne was a student at Vos.

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *Miss Thelma sold pudding on the corner on a Friday and Saturday evening right outside Miss "S" bar in that same building. Miss Thelma's granddaughter Joanne would sometimes be there with her.*

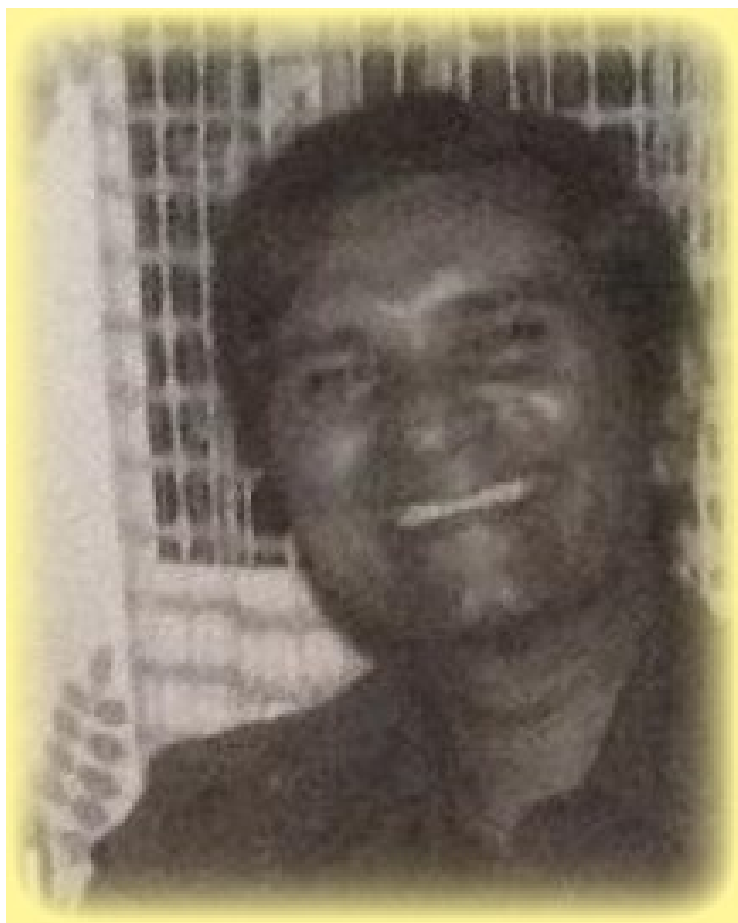
**Baba Lal...** *Best pudding I ever eat. To top it off, we also bought chicken feet from Mrs Sahaboo.*

## Rex Street off Charles Street.

Rex Street was developed as a side street off Charles Street, on lands owned by Rex Ali.

**(58a) Theater Khan.....** Mr Subrattie Khan & his wife Gloria lived with their two sons on Rex Street. They were very active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat. Mr Khan was known as “Theater Khan” because he was the projectionist at the Zenith Cinema in Gasparillo. His sisters were Poopoon, wife of Hakim (who was a grandson of LaulKhan) and Kitty, wife of Jodo (who was the son of Olidad). He and his boss Sonny at the cinema were very helpful to me during my period of courting my wife. Later on after I had left Trinidad, one of his sons, Ameer (Choonksie), was killed in a traffic accident on the highway near Charles Street. Their other son Omar became active in the administration of West Indies cricket. He even became the Manager of the West Indies Cricket Team for a while.

REX STREET OFF CHARLES STREET.



*Subrattie Khan*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Choonksie as he was fondly called was only 16 when he died in an accident on the highway. It was a terrible time for the Khan family.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *Ameer was in my class in ASJA BOYS. Bro Khan also was in a serious accident.*

**Goolazees Chan...** *We were all in ASJA Boys College together. Ameer was a nice person. Omar was also there while we were in Form 1. Unfortunately I did not know of his passing until a long while later.*

**(58b) Toby & Meena....** Toby & Meena lived with their children on Rex Street. He was the eldest son of Mr & Mrs Sahaboo who was a son of LaulKhan (see #7). Toby worked on the docks in Pointe a Pierre.

**Yasmin Lynch...** *Over the road to Uncle Toby lived a woman named Mamin. Her son was killed in a motorbike accident one Christmas night. I can remember when the news came she was in shock because he was supposed to be in bed, but he'd sneaked out of the house with his bike.*

**(58c) Rock....** Rock & his wife lived with their family further down on Rex Street. He was a son of Cry Cry (see #55). He worked in Pointe a Pierre. After his wife passed away he moved to Ferdinand Street. I think his daughter Tara continued to live

in this house.

**(58d) Sluggy....** Taxi driver Sluggy (Toyah) who was a son of taxidriver Abass and grandson of LaulKhan, and his wife Sonah who was a daughter of Mr.Parsan lived on this street with their children. They had two daughters Betty & Sherry and two sons Bobby and Shane. Both boys were my students at Vos. A young Negro woodcarver named Peppy lived with them. Years later I had bought two large carved wooden fishes from Peppy that I had taken to my home in New York.

**(58e) Rambally....** The Rambally family lived in a small house next to Toby. One of their daughters was my student at Vos.

**(58f) Baytal....** Taxidriver Baytal and his wife Agee also lived on Rex Street for awhile.

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *The property where Agee and Baytal rented belonged to Pone (Sahaboo's son). We bought it from Pone in 1971 and built our first house. Safar and I have been living there for 48 yrs. Sahaboo was my mother-in-law's uncle.*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *That property was owned by my dad Shaffie Mohammed and his wife Salima Khan, eldest daughter of Sahaboo. Shaffie who was employed at Texaco inherited property in La Fortune so he sold the property to his brother-in-law Pone. I spent vacations at Uncle Pone and Aunty Dolly's home.*

**(58g) Harry Duff....** Duff was a renowned bargeman in Pointe a Pierre. He worked hard and lived harder. He was a mixed-race white person with an Indian wife. He had a great & exuberant personality.

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Mr.Duff's wife's name was Gloria, a very friendly person.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Duff migrated to the US and worked as a printing press operator/mechanic for a number of years. He returned to Trinidad and rented a house in Rex Street. Then he built a house and moved to Guaracara Street. He returned to Texaco as a tugboat operator (Captain) having obtained the necessary training while in the USA. He refurbished an Opel, the envy of car enthusiasts. Our families remained friends until his death of a heart attack around 1985. Wonderful helpful guy. I should add he became a teetotaler (quit drinking alcohol). If you knew Duff you would have said that was impossible. He did the plumbing in my house in Guaracara Street as a gift to me, no charge. I still remember the night Cochan, you and myself went to visit him in Brooklyn in 1968. We met Ray Raphael there. I think Tuitt was there too.*



## Ferdinand Street

In those days Ferdinand Street was a gravel trace.

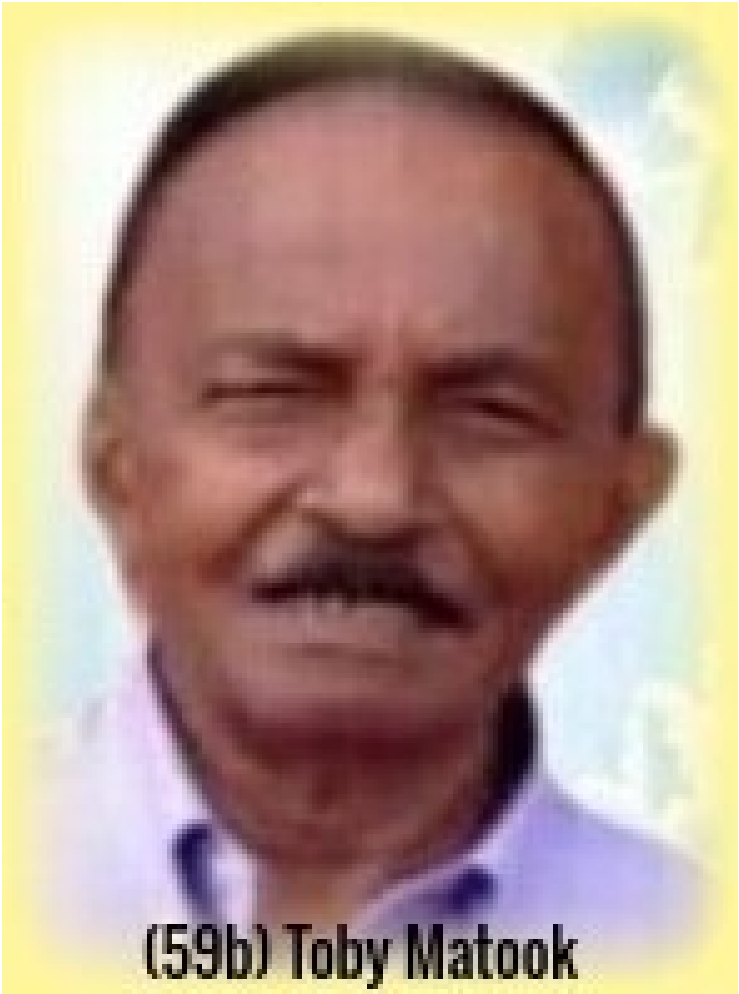
**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *When they cut Ferdinand Street, we'd go to pick pineapples, ping wings, play etc.*

**(59a) Rock...** After Cry Cry's son Rock's wife had passed away, he moved from Rex Street to Ferdinand Street and built a house not far from his mother's home. A plot of land belonging to my father-in-law Mr Toon Ali was next to Rock. It extended for about one acre down to the Marie Dulay River.

**Fiat Karmally...** *At the end of the Street next to the river was the tailor Bandu. "One done Eddie" was a high school teacher at Couva Sec. His last son died in a motorcycle accident. The elder sister Una was my parents' companion*

*and helper when they needed help. She was trustworthy. When you cross the river heading east you would end up at our backyard.*

**(59b) Toby Matook...** The house that followed this plot was where Toby Matook lived with his wife and family. He was the son of Mr Matook from King Street. At the front of Toby Matook's home a short extension pathway led down to the river.



*Toby Matook*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Toby Mattook who lives in Ferdinand Street is my husband's uncle. Uncle Toby's parents used to live in Concord. When the Oil Refinery came they had to move. They relocated to King Street. The relatives still live there in the exact spot.*

**(59c) Haliman....** Across this pathway was a board shack. Miss Haliman an elderly Indian lady, who used to live on Caratal Road (see #82c), lived here. Her son Wackay, who lived with her, was a regular and well-known person in the Gasparillo area.

**Baba Lal...** *I remember an incident in my late teens, while we were living next door to Miss Haliman. In those days I was always running away to party and lime. On returning home from one such escapades with some of the boys, on reaching around Toby's house, we were silenced by some older men who were also liming. We found it odd that they were so quiet. One of the guys whispered to us if we wanted to see something spooky. We agreed and gently walked over to meet the rest of the guys who then pointed out to us a ball of fire on top of Ms Haliman's coconut tree. We all stood in awe and I was scared as hell. Eventually it disappeared and we made our way home.*

**(59d) Salick....** Down the pathway lived Salick. He was Dean Ganpatt's nephew. He had built a board house where he'd moved with his mother and his aunt Deyah.

**Nazeena Ali Hosein...** *Tanty Deyah was our family seamstress. She was physically challenged but that didn't stop her from earning a living. I used to get cross with Mammy because she used to make me sing songs for Tanty Deyah. I felt embarassed. Now I find myself doing the same with my granddaughter.*

**(59e) Gloria's mother & Nanee....** Next to Salick's house was a small board house on the riverside. Here is where Gloria's mother & grand-mother used to live. Gloria was Theater Khan's wife. I remember them during croptime, going to and from the estate in their work clothes & carrying their cutlasses. These two women represented, to my young eyes, what hard work was really like and how it might have been for my ancestors working in the sugarcane fields. They had a young relative named Annie living with them. Annie was one of my students at Vos.

**(59f) Nurul & Golin....** On the opposite side of the pathway is where my brother Nurul and his wife Golin lived in a small board house. They had twins, a boy Shah & a girl Sharlene, during that time. My eldest brother Boyie was more a guide and a disciplinarian to me & my other brothers when we were growing up, but Nurul, Suge, Sham & I shared many childhood pranks & experiences.

Nurul, who died during his early 50s, was a special type of brother. He was the one who did most of the tasks assigned to us and never complained or tried to take all the credit. My

parents could call on him at anytime to do anything and he never complained. Many stories can be told about our experiences with him.

After graduating from school he had worked at Southern Sales for a short time and then he became a police officer for Texaco. So dedicated was he at his job that one day he even turned back our father at the barrier because he had forgotten his badge at home. No wonder he rose to the position of Inspector. He was a member of the Gasparillo Islamic Group and of BP Club. Nurul was also one of the best opening bowlers in Gasparillo.

He and his wife Golin built a reputation for helping everyone. Golin was the granddaughter of Mr & Mrs Toon Ali, my wife's parents. Anyway, while my wife and I were "seeing each other" and both families were against it, Nurul & Golin allowed us to meet almost everyday at their home on Ferdinand Street. Going to help with their newborn twins was the excuse. It worked out well. We've been married now for 56 years.



**(59f) Nurul & Golin Deen**

*Nurul & Golin Deen*



*Twins...Shah & Sharlene*

**Sharlene Ali...** *You brought tears to my eyes with such beautiful memories of Daddy, but my tears were followed with a smile because I remember hearing stories of yours and Aunt Sherma's courting.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Nurul used to come home by us every Divali for my mother's sweet rice. He said that was the best he ever eat.*



**Sharlene Ali...** *Yes Shanty you're right and he also loved Nanny Pantin's sweet rice too.*

**Donna Lee Ling...** *My dad Roach Bridgemohan from Allen St and Uncle Nurul were very close friends.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *They were opening bowlers for BP.*

**Donna Lee Ling...** *Yes, I hear they were a deadly combination.*

**Nalini Ramkissoon...** *Aunty Golin is a close friend of mine...a very nice lady.*

## Harmony Hall Road—Part 1

**(60a) The Akai Shop...**Mr & Mrs Akai ran a shop at the Gasparillo Junction on the eastern side of Harmony Hall Road where KFC is presently located. They lived there with their family. They were well-known and well-liked in the community. I remember the daughters Barbara & Yuklan who were friends with my elder sister Sally and brother Boyie. I believe they attended Naparima Girls High School in San Fernando. I remember sometimes watching mas in front of the shop on carnival days when I was a boy.

Sometime in the 1950s I think Mr Akai passed away. Mrs Akai left the shop and moved to a house across the Harmony Hall Road. Barbara married Clyde Ishmael (who was related to us). He was involved in national sports. Yuklan married Ousman Ali who was the son of Mr & Mrs Rahaman (Manoo) Ali.



**(60a) The Akai Shop**

*Mrs Akai*

**Nalini Ramkissoon...** *All I remember is the building where KFC is. I was a little girl back then.*

**Nigel Ishmael...** *Long before KFC and a club, it was the Akai's (my grandparents) residence and shop. The shop was down stairs and they lived upstairs.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Clyde Ishmael was an assistant coach with the Texaco Sports Club Track team and Southern Games for many years.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *Clyde Ishmael, my father, worked at Texaco in the Accounts Department. He was a true sportsman. He played cricket, football and hockey. Then he got into Athletics with Texaco Sports Club. He was one of the starters at Southern Games. He married Barbara (Lima) Akai. The Akai children were Wong Fai (went to school in POS at CIC, later on he migrated to the US). Yukin Lucille (married Thomas Poon Kwong; their son Franklyn has the property where Mme Akai had her shop). Moi Lenore married Shaffie Khan. My mom is Barbara and the baby was Yuklan Lena who married Ousman. My mother is the last one alive at 85 years old. All the Akai girls went to Naparima Girls High School.*

**Nalini C A Ramsingh...** *The Akai family is like my second family. I grew up with all of them. From Ma Akai and all the children and their spouses. I am still considered family.*

**(60b) Mr Chin Soo....** A new Chinese shopkeeper, Mr Chin Soo, took over the shop after the Akais left it. I remember him as a young man who sent to China for a wife. I recall that when she arrived, the shop became busy for awhile with everybody going there to see her. She couldn't speak any English at the time. Soon however we could hear her starting to say English words in a strange accent, as she helped with the work in the shop.

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *The Chin Soo children went to Vos. Later they moved to Ragoobar lands.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Karen went to ModSec and Willie Chin Soo and I were in the same year.*

**(60c) The Gambling Club....** After the Akais moved, the upstairs of the shop was rented out as a gambling club. I never knew who ran the club. My brother Suge and some of his friends used to frequent there. I went upstairs once out of curiosity. It was an empty hall with a few wooden tables and chairs. There was also a small bar in one of the corners. Many of the local Gasparillo characters used to hang out there.

**Vijay Mohip...** *The gambling club was operated by a bearded man with gold teeth named Clarkie.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *The licence for the gambling club*

*was held by Mr. Nandlal, Boysie's father. There was a small snack bar at one corner of the upstairs. Mr. Nandlal (aka Lord) only visited the club on poker nights which were held monthly. Poker players from all over the island came. Hafsa and Boysie did the catering for those special nights and I used to help out. A guy who was only known as Clarke did the day to day running of the club. And yes Clarke did have a bushy beard and gold teeth. Lord also had a licence for a gambling club upstairs John Tang laundry. It wasn't very popular and I don't think it ran for very long. PS. Hafsa didn't go to the club. She prepared the food which Boysie and I took there and sold.*

## Harmony Hall Road—Part 2

**(61a) The Junction....** The Junction was a favorite liming spot for most of us, especially for the young fellas on weekday afternoons. This was the time when most taxis & buses stopped there at the major-road to drop off workers and students from San Fernando. We used to hang out there to see the girls. The Junction, especially on the Arman Building side, was usually crowded at that time of the day.

**(61b) The Arman Building....** The two-storey building on the Junction opposite the Akai shop belonged to Nabbie Baksh Arman. He was related to us through John Munradin, but lived in Marabella. He may have been a politician because I recall a banner on the building from those days saying: “Vote for Nabbie Baksh Arman”. The major part of the downstairs of the building was built as a shop but I remember it being closed for long periods.

**(61c) Mrs Nabbie....** A smaller section of the downstairs of the Arman building, nearer the Omardeen’s home, was a parlor

run by Mrs Nabbie. She was a nice quiet middle-aged lady. I remember her children: Raffick, Dolly, Nora & Nicey. I believe that the family lived in an apartment at the back of the parlor. I don't recall when the others married or left the home but I know that the youngest daughter Nicey married Starlin Jones (Mr Pelly's son) and moved to New York. Starlin shared many of our boyhood adventures.





*Mrs Nabbie*

**Ann Sooknanan...** *Mrs Nabbie was my grandmother, she had two other children, Ivy the eldest and Carmen. My mom was Dolly who passed away eight years ago. The only remaining children are Auntie Nora and Auntie Nicey who lives in America. I never knew my grandfather, but I was told that he died in an accident at a very young age.*

**(61d) Bill Haley, the papersman....** Most people will remember Bill as the heavyweight man who sat on a bench selling newspapers on the junction. But Bill wasn't always a fat man. As a teenager he was regularly built and limed by the cinema and the junction like all of us. His parents were Mr & Mrs Boodoo who sold roti near Dentist Harry's home on the main road. The family had moved to a small house in Ferdinand Street. They were a quiet hard-working couple with several children.

As a teenager Bill began selling nuts & channa in the cinema. It was while selling at the cinema that he got his name. When the movie "Rock Around The Clock" came to the Zenith Cinema, nobody could dismiss the resemblance between our nuts man and the leader of the movie's rock n roll group "Bill Haley and the Comets". In those days Bill Haley was one of the most popular rock n roll performers in the world. Everyone started calling our nuts man Bill Haley, so from then our nutsman became known to all as "Bill Haley".....The name stuck on him.

Later on he became the newspaper vendor on the junction at the front of Arman's building. We soon forgot his real name.

He eventually married Deowattie and brought her to Ferdinand Street. I think they had two children. Bill was also a great cook. I remember going to Caura River on a lime with my brother-in-law Boysie and some of his friends. They brought along Bill as the cook. His curry duck was perhaps the best I have ever tasted.



*Newspaperman “Bill Haley”*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Bill and his wife Deowatie became very close to our family. Bill was a very generous man. Their children are Seema and Rodney. Mr & Mrs Boodoo and their children were very nice people.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Bill was probably the most popular newspaper vendor in TT. When there was horse racing in Union Park all the racehorse owners would give him good tips on winners.*

**Baba Lal...** *Sure right, especially one of the most renowned horsetrainers Mr Eric Colt Durant. He became a very personal friend of the family. By the way, Bill's real name was Roopnarine Singh...and I heard the story of how he got his nickname "Bill Haley", directly from him. He was my older brother.*

**Arlene Francis...** *I remember papersman Bill. He was friendly. He and my father were friends. He used to call my father Kenno Boy or Shorty.*

**Shirley Ramrattan...** *We were good friends with Bill and Deowattie and their two children and Lall. I and Lall became best friends. We used to party together. We had lots of fun with our friends every weekend.*

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## Harmony Hall Road—Part 3



**(62) Mr & Mrs Omardeen**

*Mr & Mrs Omardeen*  
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**Omardeen's Regent Store....** The building after the Arman Building was a store named "The Regent Store". It was owned by the Omardeen family. Here you could purchase anything from schoolbooks to clothes to Christmas supplies. It was a true variety store and was one of the main variety shopping enterprises for miles around.

Mr & Mrs Omardeen, his parents, sons Aga, Doolie, Zaid & Tot and daughters Hafeeza & Babes all worked to make this a successful business. The children also excelled educationally. Regent Store also had a tailoring area led by Mr Omardeen's father. Many of their clients were the foreigners from Pointe a Pierre. I also remember his mother helping out in the store.

Mr Omardeen always seemed to welcome nieces & nephews into his home, all of whom helped in the store. Among the ones I remember were Shaffora, Shairoon, Toy, Samad, Abidh, Amo & Abby. Amo and I were friends and high-school mates in San Fernando. He unfortunately drowned in Mayaro during a bus excursion. Among the people employed over time at the store was Madonna Hilliare from Lumsden Street.

Mrs Omardeen was originally from a large Williamsville family. She was related to Mrs Taynee of Cocoa Street. I had gotten to know some of her family because one of her younger brothers Haniff was my high-school mate in San Fernando.

I had known of Mr Omardeen since I was a child. My eldest sister Sally & brother Boyie were his students when he was teaching at Gasparillo Government School. He had built a reputation

there for producing some of the best college entrance students in south Trinidad. After several years as a teacher there, he was appointed Principal of the Monkey Town Government School where he served for several years. Later he was transferred to Vos Government School as the Principal.

As a schoolboy, I was friends with both Aga & Doolie. Later on I was a teacher at Vos, working under Mr Omardeen. His devotion as Principal brought much success to Vos Government School. Under his leadership Vos topped the region in academics and sports. During my time at Vos, he and I had gotten along very well. I'll always remember the talks we used to have on evenings after school. He used to give free lessons to the Common Entrance class and I always had some Extra Curricula activity at the school. I remember him telling me about his early ambitions of pursuing other dreams. He explained that the time came when he had to make a choice between his early dreams or teaching as a means of helping his large extended family. He chose the latter.

On my first visit back home from the US he had organized a trip for me and my wife to Maracas with the other Vos teachers. Later on we became family when his son Doolie and my sister Sohaila were married.

**Jai Roopnarine....** *I remember going for lessons by Mr Omardeen downstairs in a building at the corner of Charles Street South where Mr King's parlor now stands. I came to Gasparillo around the age of ten to live with my*



*grandmother in Victoria Street.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mr Omardeen has always been a mentor to the Ramdeens. He guided my parents and their siblings through their academic undertakings at GGS. He was well respected. He was an excellent tailor, he sewed many of my pants and shirts when I was a child. Of course booklists were tendered to Omardeen's Regent Store as soon as they were obtained.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Mr Omardeen was a strict, serious principal but a man who led us all to good education. I remember a little incident /joke. Mr Omardeen came up to the class window because everyone was being noisy. Shyama (my cousin) was chewing gum. She didn't know he was standing there. In the haste she turned around and spit the gum out the window right on Mr Omardeen, lol.*

**Imran Ali...** *We were camping in Mayaro one summer and went to the shop to buy cooking oil. 'Omes' was driving by and saw us walking down the road with an Old Oak bottle of oil. He told all our fathers we were walking with a bottle of rum when he went back home. As always, it was licks first, explanation after!*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *In my early years at Vos, Mr Omardeen scared me spitless, but when I reached Std 5 he trusted me to run errands for him, one of which was to run to his home and ask Mrs O, whom he called Dearie, to send his cheque book.*

**Alisha Ali...** *I remember when I was a student at Vos, students referred to Mr. Omardeen as Omes.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Toy was a very good friend of mine. And later when he got married our friendship continued. This friendship included Toy's wife Mogi. I also remember Doolie sewing my trousers once.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *My mother Ruby (Phyllis) used to work there but not for wages, instead she got material so she could sew clothes for her children.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *Maybe I am quite unique...Mr Omardeen taught me, beat me with a guava whip and then became my father in law!*

**Nadir Ali...** *I think he probably beat about half of Gasparillo but you were the lucky one.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *In our time we all had FREE common entrance lessons by our teacher or principal... how times have changed.*

## Harmony Hall Road—Part 4

**(63a) Gokool's Traveling Cinema...** After the Akai shop, on the Harmony Hall Road, there was an empty lot of land. I was told by my brother-in-law Boysie Nandlal that when he was a boy around 1944/45, a traveling tent cinema used to set up in this lot to show movies. Those were the early cinema days in Trinidad. It was operated by a man named Gokool. This ended when the Zenith Cinema opened in 1945.



*Tent Cinema*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *My parents told us about Gookol's tent cinema and the excitement of having it visit Gasparillo, a village with a huge Indian population and no Indian pictures.*

**(63b) Baychan Parlor...** Just past this lot was the Baychan Parlor. Mr Baychan Saladeen lived here with his second wife, their family and their extended family. I remember Farouk, Kamal, Rasheed and another lady whose relationship to the family I didn't know. With his first wife who had died, and

who was a John Munradin descendant, Mr Baychan had several children: Mookie, Lio, Rekha, Poonie, Jharo, Pess, Skull & Boyen.

The Baychan property comprised of three sections but joined together as one compound. On the section furthest away from the junction there was a small painted house with a gallery. This is where the family lived. The middle section was the famous Baychan parlor. The area nearest the junction was private and blocked off by high walls and a high wooden gate. This area was opened as a fresh vegetable market on Sundays. It was always well stocked on market day with a variety of fresh fruits, vegetables and seasonings. The place used to be crowded with foreign residents from Pointe a Pierre and villagers looking for fresh salad vegetables and seasonings for their Sunday lunches. The parlor specialized in selling hops-bread and bull-joll, smoked-herring or corned-beef sandwiches. Their specialty however was bread and channa sandwiches. The parlor was very popular.

Farouk played football for BP. He inherited the property and the business after his parents death. Kamal attended San Fernando TML with us and joined in our boyhood exploits in Gasparillo. While we were students at San Fernando TML, Kamal used to pay my brother Suge to do his homework before they arrived in school every morning. The teacher was impressed by Kamal's home work. When test came around.... Well you can imagine the results!!!



*Baychan's Parlor*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Remember all the great stories about me and Kamal and his homework.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *I remember my mother working in Baychan palour. She was the cook.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Rasheed aka Teeths was my good friend.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Bachan parlor was a life blood for men living in the surrounding area....Hardbargain, Cedar Hill and places beyond. Men working in the refinery rode bicycles to work. Before entering the refinery on mornings, they stopped by Bachan for a bread and channa, bread and buljoll, bread and fried-dry fish or whatever for breakfast. Farouk was and still is an icon in Gasparillo.*

**(63c) Mr & Mrs Rex Ali...** Mr & Mrs Rex Ali lived at first in a board house across the road from Baychan parlor and next door to the Regent Store. Mrs Ali's name was Mookie and she was a daughter of Baychan Saladeen and his first wife. They were active members of our Gasparillo Jamaat.

They had four children; two boys Fatty & King and two girls Farida & Cadra. Fatty had heart problems since childhood. He died from a heart attack in 1953 while on his way to school. He was 17 years old and a student at Naparima College. King married and had three daughters. Their daughters, Farida & Cadra, were never married.

Rex was a well known tailor. He sewed the wedding suits for our movie "Bacchanal Time". He was also a lover of horse racing. Eventually they replaced the board house with a new concrete house. Some people said that they'd won a sweepstake which made the new house possible. I remember that Mookie's brother Boyen was married from their home.



*Mr & Mrs Rex Ali*



*Children of Rex & Mookie - King, Cadra & Farida*



**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Rex made my “going away” suit. It was well made and it fitted me perfectly. That was the first suit I ever had and I was reluctant to part with it. I’m sure I kept it for about 8 years.*

**Faize Mohammed...** *Rex was my Uncle, my father’s brother. He made my first suit for my birthday 15/02/1948. I was only 15 years old. I still remember how happy I was.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Rumour had it that Rex won a sweepstake (lottery), and used that money to build the beautiful flat with the porch adjoining the main road. In the days when there was no TV and everyone stopped to chat, that must have been something.*

## Harmony Hall Road—Part 5

**(64a) Mrs Akai's new home....** After leaving the shop, Mrs Akai & her family moved to a home across Harmony Hall Road. The Chin Soo family became the new operators of the shop. The Akai's new home was next door to Mr & Mrs Rex Ali. The back of their new home, like with the Rex and Omardeen families, bordered the back of the Zenith Cinema so they could hear all the sounds & music from the movies.

**(64b) The Old Police Station....** Until around 1947 there was a Police Station on the lot next to where the Akai's new home was now located, on the side approaching the river. It was a small wooden building where the hardware now stands. As the population grew, it was replaced around 1947/48 by a new larger Police Station & compound up the road next to the Gasparillo Government School (see #91).

**(64c) The Gahjee/Apang house....** After the Police Station there was a flat wooden barrack-type house. The first occupant was Mr. Gahjee. He was the father of Rajab, who was our next-door

neighbor in Cocoa Street. His first grandson Sonny, who was Rajab's first son, was married from this house. It was a modern Christian wedding.

The next occupant of this house was Apang. The back of his house was across the Marie Dulay River from the back of our house. As boys we would always call out to him across the river. He would always answer. Later on he'd committed a murder at the Babu Niamath house on Victoria Street (See # 41). For this crime he was convicted and executed.

**(64d) Mr & Mrs Rasool....** A little board house almost on the Guaracara River bank was occupied by Mr & Mrs Rasool, their daughter Leena and her children . They were our neighbors in Cocoa Street before they had to leave their home there.

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Leena was married to Sook. He was a taxi driver.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *Next door to us, before the hardware was built, were Miss Leena, her mother and her daughters Ann, Annette & Susan. Next to them down by the river was the mechanic Yussuf. One of his daughters is Aneesa. They moved up to either King Street or Stewart Street.*

**(64e) Mootilal Gokool & Family.....** Afterwards this same house was occupied for a short while by Mootilal Gokool & his family. His wife at that time was Ajiman who was a daughter of Toon Ali

from an earlier marriage. His children with her were daughters Jennifer & Pamela and sons Bobby, Hookie & Twisty. They were from Bonne Aventure. Another of Mr Gokool's sons, Franklin, from another marriage, lived with his mother in King Street. She was a member of the Matook clan.



*Mootilal & Ajiman Gokool*

## Harmony Hall Road—Part 6

**(65a) The Guaracara Bridge....** As a child I sometimes had nightmares about falling off one of the sides of the Guaracara River Bridge. It was old and wooden and seemed to be very high off the river. Eventually when I was about twelve, they began work on replacing the old bridge with a more modern one. Work was completed sometime in the late 1950s. During the construction period a single-lane temporary bridge was placed on the side of the big bridge to accomodate traffic. By the time the new bridge was completed, I had long ago overcome my fear of the Guaracara Bridge. My friends and I spent much time liming on the new bridge. It was an evening liming spot for a while for many of the village people. I guess mainly because it was new.



Guaracara Bridge

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *While the bridge was under construction it was a regular after-school outing for us. Under the pretense of walking friends home, we walked over the old bridge to watch the construction of the new bridge and see the heavy equipment in action. We attended GGS at that time. I remember when Learie Constantine opened the bridge. The cadets who were in summer camp at Vos, did their "military thing". Afterwards, villagers walked across the new structure, an international first day gesture.*

**(65b) The Pump House....** During the 1920s a refinery was constructed at Pointe a Pierre to convert crude oil to much-in-demand usable materials. A constant supply of water was needed to run the refinery. Large ponds were built within the refinery compounds to store water for this purpose, but to ensure a constant supply, especially during the dry season, Trinidad Leaseholds Limited constructed a concrete wall across the width of the Guaracara River to create a dam and installed a giant pump to suck water from the river.

The concrete & steel structure which housed the pump, was called the Pump House and was built before my time. The location was unmanned since the pump was set up to activate automatically. A black, 24 inch diameter pipe ran for about two miles from the Pump House, transporting river water to the ponds in Pointe a Pierre. The dam from which water was drawn became one of our most popular but most dangerous swimming pools in the river.

One major tragedy that occurred there was when one of our friends George Paul, grandson of the Post Mistress, drowned at the Pump House. It is believed that the pump self-activated while he was underwater near the mouth of the black pipe and that his upper body was sucked in and got stuck in the mouth of the pipe.

**(65c) The Black Pipe....** This 24 inch black metal water pipe ran from the Pump House underground across the Harmony Hall Road, then surfaced to cross about 40 feet above the river and run about 200 yards across the Munradin lands to under the road across Cocoa Street. It rose again above ground on the other side of Cocoa Street to run another hundred yards to the oilfield fence and then into their property.

The length of this Black Pipe was a major adventure area for us during my boyhood years. Learning to “walk the pipe” across the river (40 feet below) was a major “rite of passage” for us. I think we got more licks for this than for any other of our river activities. We sometimes even dared to “walk it” into Pointe a Pierre lands in search of bread coconuts. But then we lost this asset when the Black Pipe was condemned and removed around

the time they were building Vos Government School. Texaco constructed a new dam and installed a new Pump House in their lands, further down the Guaracara River.



*Black Pipe*



## Harmony Hall Road—Part 7

As far back as I can remember all the homes on the Harmony Hall Road after the Guaracara Bridge, were on the western side of the road. The eastern side was covered by canefields from the bridge to Mr Norman's shop. I remember a few of the families living along that stretch of road in those years.

**(66a) The Sankar Family....**The first house was the Sankar home. Mr & Mrs Sankar had several sons and daughters. I only knew of the ladies and girls by sometimes seeing them when I passed by the house or in the shops in Gasparillo. The men I saw regularly at the park on weekends during cricket season. Mr Sankar was a cricket enthusiast and so were his sons. They all played in the Smith League, which was organized by Mr Cyril Smith and centered at the Gasparillo Park. One of Mr Sankar's sons, Senthill, played for Sports Club while Mr Sankar and two other sons, Ivan & Pomah played for Harmony Hall. Mr Sankar was a brilliant wicket-keeper.

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I can only remember a few of the residents who lived on the other side of the Guaracara Bridge. I think Anand Ramsawak (Smalls) married one of Senthill's daughters.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *Smalls was married to Suzy Sankar. They had 2 sons Ryan and Brian. Senthill's other children were Billy (Joy), Sherman, Joshie (Angela), Ingrid & Myrna. They made chocolate like what our parents would use to make chocolate tea long ago. Sherman migrated to the US. Joshie (Angela) lives in Lightbourne. Ingrid lives in the home. Myrna migrated. Their mother was Rhonie. The house after Sankar was where Maureen Armoogan one of Buddy's daughters lived with her family.*

**Naseem Ali...** *Smalls & Suzy had a third son, Damien.*

**(66b) Miss Julie....** *Miss Julie lived in a small house with her son Kelvin Jordan, his wife Sybil and their children Keith, June and a younger daughter whose name I can't remember. Miss Julie was a light-skinned lady of mixed race. She was friendly and well-known in the village. I think that Kelvin worked in Pointe a Pierre. The three children were my students at Vos.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I remember Miss Julie. She was a regular at the Sports Bar. I think tailor George lived somewhere there before moving to Ferdinand Street.*

**(66c) Esmond & Shirley Bassarath...** I remember Esmond Bassarath and his wife Shirley. I was about 10 years younger than them. I think he was a teacher. I didn't really know much about them.

**(66d) Mrs Smith...** Mrs Smith lived on this stretch. She was a well-known seamstress in the village. Her daughter Naomi who was also a seamstress was married to Mr. Ben Dickson.

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Mr Cyril Smith's brother was married to Conelia Smith, who was my husband Henry's grandmother, the seamstress.*

**(66e) The Madhosings...** Mr & Mrs Vernon Madhosingh and their family lived in a board house. Among their children were daughter Glenda and son Neil. Mr Madhosingh was related to Chester Madhosingh.



*Vernon Madhosingh*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Vernon, was adopted by Chester. He is his adopted son. I know because I've been married to his daughter Glenda for the last 46 years.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *My wife, from the Madhosingh clan, says Vernon is Chester's nephew.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Vernon was Chester Sr. nephew. He grew up in our home.*

**Judy Kawal...** *I knew he wasn't a brother but I wasn't sure of the relationship. I kept looking to see when you would explain it. Finally! I was young and called him Uncle Vernon.*

**(66f) Mr. Pusha...** Mr Pusha used to plant garden at the back of his home. His garden stretched down to the Guaracara riverbank. We lived on the opposite side of the river. As boys we often stole corn from his garden and boiled them in a can of river water on the river bank. One of his sons Harewood, was slightly older than me. Mr Pusha was an active member of both the Gasparillo Mosque and the Presbyterian Church.

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I remember Mr Pusha and the times we had "harvesting" some of the corn on his side of the river. Also, on the day when he came to Papa to complain that we were stealing his corn, we were at home helping Papa with the car. What a relief for us that he chose the wrong day to accuse us.*

**(66g) Mr. Dean Lalloo...** Mr. Dean Lalloo was a big, strong man

with a quiet pleasant personality. He was a County Council road-worker who was also one of the best stick fighters I had ever seen. I remember him on several occasions, defending the Gasparillo gayal by Mr Buddy's shop against outside attackers. In those days his stickfighting friend was taxi driver Hamid (brother of taxi driver Sook). Together they faced all comers. His son was also one of my students at Vos.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Dean was one of the best stickfighters in Trinidad.*

## Norman Junction

**(67a) Norman Junction....** This is the name of the road junction where the Harmony Hall Road meets the Union Road. It got its name because of Mr Norman Mohammed's shop on the northeast corner.



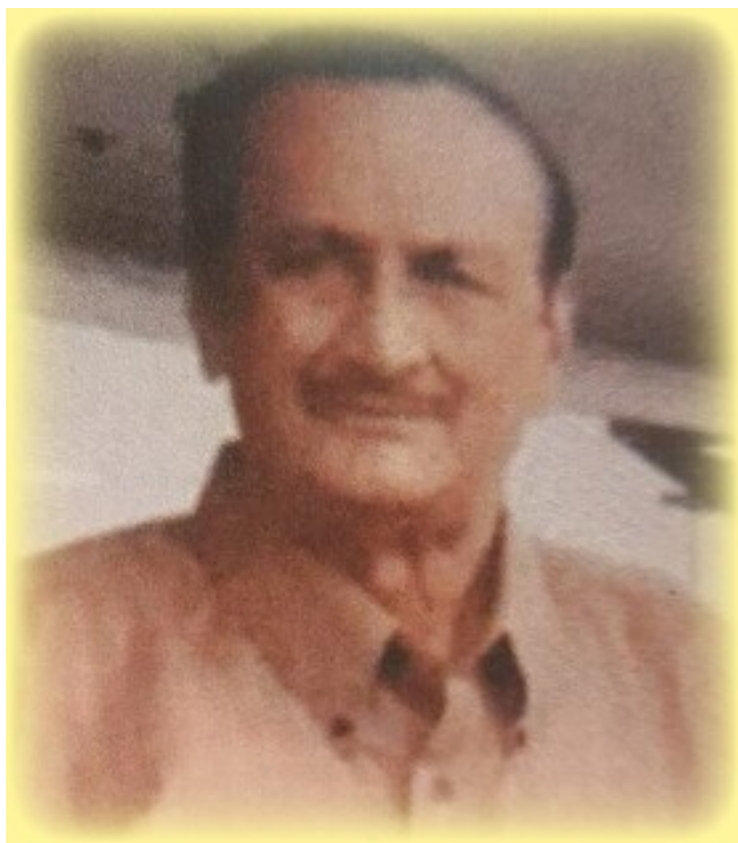
*Norman's Shop*

**Fiat Karmally...** *On Harmony Hall Road, before Norman's shop, there was a 2 lot property owned by my grandfather. As a teenager I would accompany my parents daily to do gardening. My mother and I used to trek down the road everyday after school and on weekends. I would stop by my friend Neil Madhosingh on Harmony Hall Road to chat a bit. I was a bit embarassed passing by Mrs Aqai's shop with gardening tools on my shoulder knowing my friends would probably see me. My father had a short temper and had many encounters with Mrs Norman. Opposite Norman was my school friend David who had a muffler shop. I remember there was a competition in Trinidad for the person with the most beautiful eyes. The winner was a relative girl from David's home. There are now several small businesses there.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Yes. I too went there to help in the garden. I remember how sad we were when our Nana sold the land.*

**(67b) The Dicksons....** Mr & Mrs Ben Dickson lived in a small wooden house. He was a taxi driver. Mrs Dickson's name was Naomi. She was a seamstress. Among their children were sons Suarez, Docks, Jackie & Henry and daughter Gloria. Later the family moved to Victoria Street.





*Mr Ben Dickson*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Opposite my grandfather's land lived our liming buddies Doc and Suarez Dickson.*

**(67c) The Rice Mill....** When I was a boy there used to be a rice mill on the north-west corner of Union Road at Norman Junction. I remember going there a few times to crack corn for our chickens and to have some dhan milled and turned to rice. Sometimes we would get dhan from my aunt Hazra Khala in Charlieville. She was my mother's sister. They used to plant much rice and always had heaps of dhan in a shed by their house.



*Rice Mill*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *There were two rice mills in Gasparillo, the one at Norman Junction, and the other at Maiden Street. Both were gas-driven mills and were well patronized. Both my parents and grand parents had rice land. I remember, we produced around thirteen barrels of rice per year. If the rice was not properly dried before milling it broke up during the milling process. To prevent this we used to spread the rice on the hot asphalt (on "pals") in the road. In Allen Street if two cars passed for the day that was a lot, so it was no problem. After properly drying, the rice was taken to the mills to be dehusked (milled). You got the rice milled cheaply (about 8 cents per pitch-oil tin). The miller kept the rice husk which he sold to farmers who mixed it with molasses and fed it to the animals. I visited the mill at Norman Junction often with my grandfather. We would ride there on his horse cart. I loved it. We also used the mill in Maiden Street too, since I lived in Allen Street. We loaded the rice into box carts and pushed it to the mill. Later, Mr Bailey acquired an electric mill. He became the third miller in Gasparillo. There was another mill in Parforce, but that was mainly used by people from Bonne Adventure and surroundings. Besides milling rice, these mills also ground dry massala, corn, and whatever needed milling.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *My parents also had a rice room where the rice was stored before it was taken to the mill. We hid our sapodillas to ripe under the rice. My brothers used to steal our ripe sapodillas and replace them with aloos (Irish*

*potato). We'd put our hands under the dhan to check if they were ripe.*

**(67d) Mr. Norman's Shop....** I first knew of Mr Norman Mohammed when he was President of our Mosque Board and I was still a young boy. He was the owner of the shop at what is referred to as Norman Junction. I believe that Mrs. Mohammed was from Suriname.

Their children who I knew were sons Francis & Freddy and daughters Margaret & June. I remember the boys attending San Fernando TML School with us. They never took the bus to school like all of us did. They were driven to & from school by Mr Rahaman (Manoo) Ali. I remember riding with them on a few occasions. I recall visiting their home on one occasion to attend a religious function.

One of the daughters, June, was married to Pushan, a member of our family. He was the son of Hydar (Pess) a descendent of John Munradin.

Von Mohammed is Mr Norman's grandson from a previous marriage. Like his grandfather he later also served as President of the Gasparillo Mosque Board. According to Von, his grandfather had helped his son (Von's father) to open a shop near the barracks at Harmony Hall Estate.



*Mr Norman Mohammed*

**Baba Lal...** *As a young boy growing up along the main road, there were stories that Norman had a shotgun. I recall that Mrs Norman was a very nice and well-spoken lady. While awaiting transport to and from Williamsville Junior Secondary School, we would raid their abundance of fruit trees.*

**Fareed Ali...** *The Norman house was considered by some to be haunted. The neighbors had quite a few tales about the area. To me, the house looks the same as far back as I remember, even the shop.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *There were stories about Mrs Norman and why she wears socks all the time lol. One of Mr Norman's daughters had a 2nd hand bookstore in a really old building which they owned on the corner of Freeling and Rushworth Streets in San Fernando .The building was a historical one.*

**Vedal Seepersad...** *Freddy was my friend. I remember the school children from Reform Pres. used to say Norman was a lagahoo. A classical singer named Tulum Dindial used to sing in the shop.*

**Francis Morean...** *A real landmark. I stopped there many times to hitch a lift to further inside Gasparillo.*

**Mollin Sadhai...** *Norman was our neighbor. I remember people in the village used to say he was a lagahoo and his wife was a sukinyah. He used to ask us if we ever eat dead chicken. As kids we used to say NO. I remember the white man's house. Wow!! This is really taking us back in time.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Interesting reading your latest about Norman Junction. I really don't know much about that family except that Mr. Norman was an active member of the Mosque Board. As for the children I can recall Francis*

*but not the others. I do remember that one of the girls June (who I never knew) married Pushan. I can't even remember if I ever stepped foot in their shop.*

**(67e) The Harmony Hall Estate.....** Across the road from Norman Junction is a house upon a hill which is surrounded by huge samaan trees. The entire area is surrounded by a wire fence. This used to be the home of the owner of the Harmony Hall Estate. We called it the “white man” house.

There is much history centered there. This was the headquarters for the Harmony Hall Estate which used slave labor and then indentured Indian labor in the surrounding cane fields. Most of our Gasparillo ancestors were either slaves or indentured Indians at Harmony Hall or on one of the surrounding estates.

As a boy I had visited the remnants of the barracks and the mule pen on a few occasions. Ever since then I had imagined what life might have been like for our ancestors who'd lived and labored there.

**Baba Lal...** *There were plenty stories that the house on the hill was haunted.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *The house way up on the hill in which the white man lived, belongs to the Murphy family. Actually I think they still own it. I remember Mr Murphy had a couple of sons.*

**Ann Marie Ramsundar-Radhay...** *I always wondered about the house on the hill. The one that is there now is a more recent design. I would've loved to see the original. I'm always captivated by those trees.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *In your article about Norman Junction you mentioned about the white people's house on the hill. I think our brother-in-law Boysie Nandlal knew one of the boys.*



## Union Stretch & The Scheme.

Union Stretch got its name from the long straight stretch of Union Road. It had a few houses along its southern side (where Marabella Senior Sec. is located) and only canefields on its northern side to the Guaracara River. This side is now lined by hardwares, a gas station & other businesses. I've been told that a primary school once stood at the Marabella end of the Union Stretch. That was before my time though.

The Scheme is a community where most of the Harmony Hall Estate workers were settled after leaving the estate barracks. In my time it was just a collection of small wooden and dirt houses.

Both areas were considered to be parts of Gasparillo.

**(68a) The Bests....**Mr & Mrs Best lived on Union Stretch in a board house in those years before I left home. Mr Best was a tall, dark & handsome man; very quiet and dignified. He was a bus driver by trade. He was one of our regular drivers when we attended school in San Fernando in the 1950s. Mrs Best, whose

name was Lillian, was the daughter of Mr & Mrs King of Caratal Road, Gasparillo (see #75b). Although the Best family lived on Union Road, their roots were buried deep in Gasparillo.

Among their children were Lynette, Wilva, Lorna, Selwyn, Alvin & Ruthven. The children spent much time in Gasparillo with their grandparents. They were a nice respectable family. Lynette became a schoolteacher and spent most of her career until her retirement, at Vos Government School. We worked together there before I left for the USA. In later years Wilva, who worked for the Postal Service, got married and lived in Gasparillo. Alvin became a Minister of the Anglican Church. Selwyn spent much time in Gasparillo.



**(68b) Lynette Best**

*Lynette Best*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Miss Best was our Std 5 teacher at Vos. I still feel like she's my teacher whenever we meet. It's always such a pleasure to talk with her. She and Mr. Maniff Deen were the only teachers at Vos who didn't give us licks. You had to do something really terrible for them to ever bring out the guava whip from the cupboards.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Everyone knew Selwyn. There was no end to conversation with him. The King family lived 2 houses away from me on Caratal Road.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *The Best family were very close to the Ali and Karmally families. Miss Lynette would refer to my mother and Mrs Toon Ali as Chachee. She too has a wealth of knowledge about Gasparillo. Our family also had a close relationship with Wilva and Joe. At Frank Brooker's funeral I heard Alvin preach and I was very impressed. Sello was everyone's friend.*

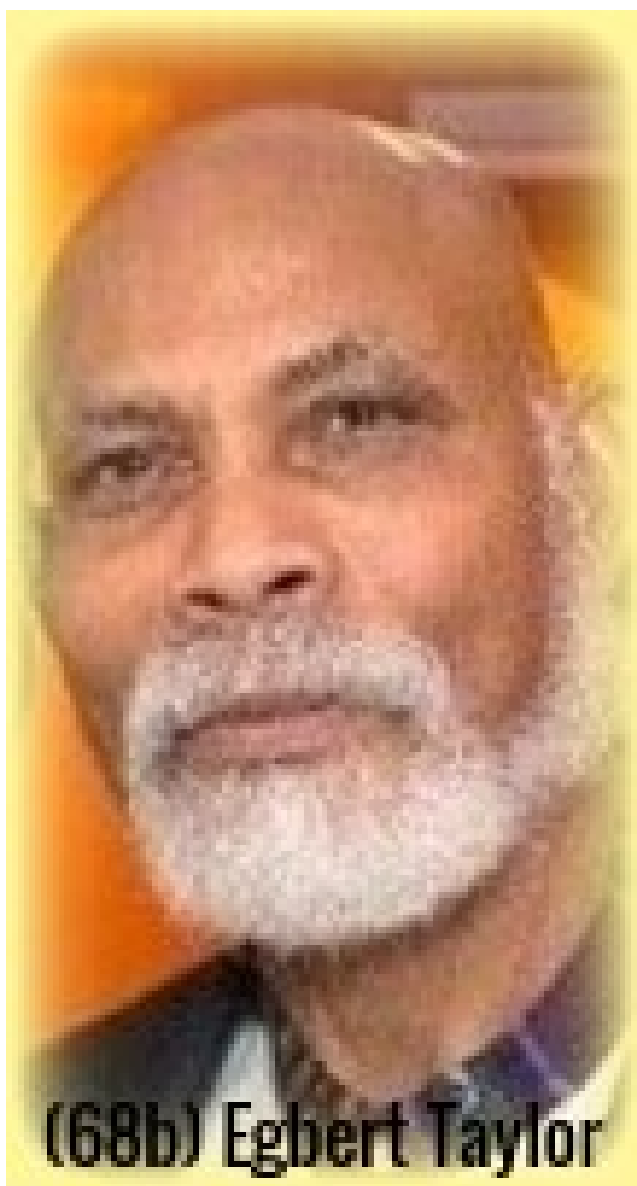
**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Wilva and I worked together in the Postal Services. During our lunch breaks we talked about Gasparillo. Lynette taught my daughters at Vos and Rutven and I were in the same class.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *When I moved from Siparia Old Road to Gasparillo I attended Vos and was placed in Miss Best's class. She was an awesome teacher.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Another delightful article. So very happy to read about the Best family. They were a big part of our lives in Gasparillo. I met up with Selwyn twice when we lived in Trinidad. Once in Marabella market and another time at the Manny Ramjohn stadium.*

**(68b) Mr. Egbert Taylor.....** Egbert Taylor lived in the Harmony Hall Scheme. Like most of the Scheme's children he attended Vos Government School. Because of his good conduct at school and his constant efforts to better himself, Mr Omardeen the Principal, gave him the opportunity to become a Monitor (Student Teacher). After passing all the necessary exams he succeeded in becoming a regular teacher on the staff at Vos Government School. Mr Taylor was also the Sports Master at Vos and led the school to its supremacy over other schools in the area. We were very good friends during the years we'd worked together at Vos.

Egbert was also a member of the singing group "The Candies". They had performed at our shows "A Pound of Heartbeats" at the Community Center and the Zenith Cinema. Later he migrated to New York where his push to succeed and years of dedication led him to become the Patients Coordinator at Kings County Medical Center, a major hospital in New York City. Mr. Egbert Taylor died just about two years ago in Brooklyn, New York.



*Egbert Taylor*  
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**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Egbert Taylor was always a good friend to us. From our teenage years and of course with you in New York. I remember Egbert and I doing a pretty good rendition of “Under the Boardwalk” in our living room. I am not at all surprised that he later sang in a group.*

**(68c) Mr Bullah.....** In the quiet late nights, during the years when there was no television, radio or traffic disruptions, certain sounds registered in my young mind. Sounds that could never be forgotten. Sounds like a hooting owl or the wind whistling through the bamboo patch or a dog barking somewhere up the road or the raindrops on our galvanized roof. One such late-night sound which would echo in the distance on most weekend nights was the voice of a Negro gentleman from the Harmony Hall Scheme named Mr Bullah. He was reputedly a renowned stick-fighter in his younger years and was recognized as such by most of his generation of Gasparillo residents. During his twilight years, long after his glory days were behind him he still reveled in the legacy of his youth.

On weekend nights after he was “fully charged” he would walk from Sookbir shop down the road to the Junction, then along the Harmony Hall Road, across the Guaracara Bridge until he made his way to his home in the The Scheme. Along the way he would drunkenly expound on the glories of his stick-fighting days, who he had faced and who he had beaten and how many

were afraid to face him. Along the way he would stop at the front of different homes and would shout out the occupant's name as a witness to his conquests in the gayal. He would shout: "Arks Mr Manoo!" or "Arks Mr Buddy!" or "Arks Mr Chester!" or "Arks Mr Bachan!" or "Arks Mr Norman!" I remember lying in my bed, imagining Mr Bullah's movements in the ring, as his voice clung to the darkness outside eventually fading off into the distance and the quiet of the night.

**(68d) Mr Ram the Pressman....** The ring-a-ling, ting-a-ling of his bell in the distance was an eagerly awaited sound on the hot sunny days of my childhood. Mr Ram the pressman, lived somewhere around the Harmony Hall Scheme or Reform Village. He would come to Gasparillo on weekends and holidays to ply his trade through the streets and at sports and social gatherings around the village. I remember him as a neatly dressed, middle aged man who always wore a Wilson hat. He was a quiet man who pushed his cart along the streets, shaving ice and delivering "press" to customers who waited patiently for his arrival. In later years this product was made in a machine which produced the shaved ice and became known as a "snow cone". In Mr Ram's time it was all handmade and known as "press".

His cart was equipped with a large, solid block of ice covered by a jute sugar bag to keep from melting, a metal hand ice-shaver, a few bottles and a covered bucket of homemade syrup, some cans of condensed milk and a metal "glass" for pressing the shaved ice into a compressed form. Individual orders were mainly one "press" dipped into the bucket of syrup and transferred from his hand to yours to be sucked and licked until all ice and syrup are consumed. A few cents extra would get your press crowned



with some condensed milk which oozed out of a hole punched in a milk tin. As children part of the fun was licking the syrup off your hands and arms until every last drop was consumed.

There was always a line at Mr Ram's cart whenever he was in the Park for cricket matches and sports events. Our parents also looked out for Mr Ram on weekends. I remember stopping him on the street at the front of our home with a jug in hand. He would fill our jug with shaved ice and add syrup from one of his bottles. Sometimes we'd order some condensed milk onto the whole concoction. Mr Ram's "press" cart brought much pleasure and comfort during those long, hot days of my Gasparillo childhood. Even today, the soft tinkling sound of that particular type of bell brings to mind Mr Ram and the taste of his delicious homemade "press" syrup.

**Imran Ali...** *I was always in the Park. My memory is Mr. Ram and his press.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *For me Mr. Ram's press was on evenings on the way home from school.*

**Admurry Sinanan...** *We always looked out for the press man.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I remember those days very well... fond memories of the press man.*

**Von Morris...** *Mr Ram lived in Reform. 2 houses away*

*from the junction by the Reform Hindu School.*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *We used to look out for him all the time.*

**Patricia Brooker...** *I remember Mr Ram. What about Mr Gerard the chilli bili and ice cream man. He was from Allen Street.*

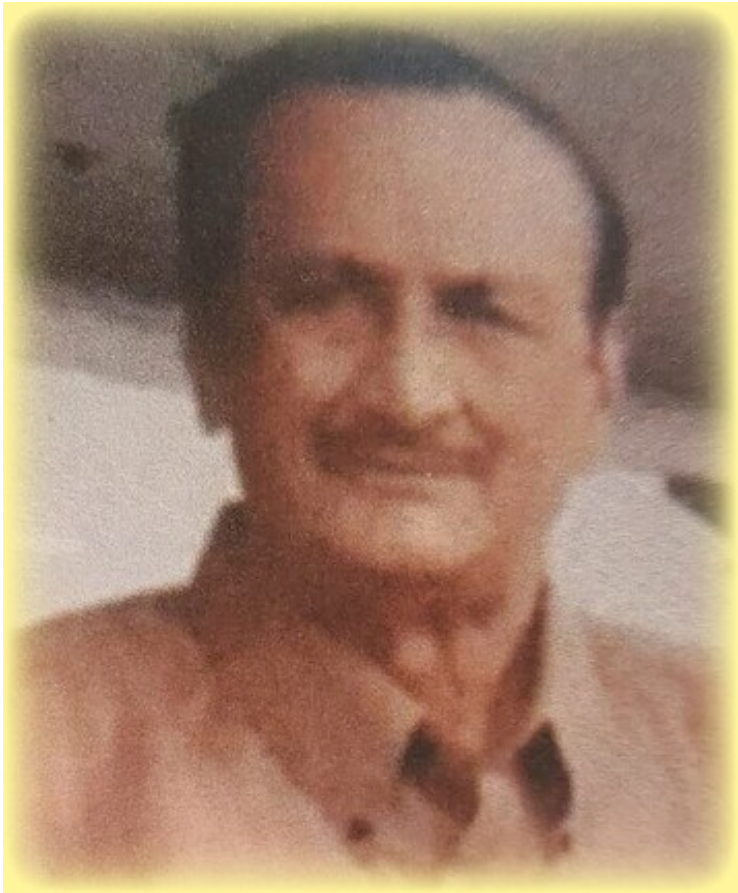
**Sadru Deen...** *What wonderful memories of our glorious youth. I really enjoy reading these stories.*

**Simon Rostant...** *Oh, those iconic personalities and traditions. Could not have being better illustrated, the legendary, pressman. Keep up the great work. It is sincerely appreciated and enjoyed.*

## Victoria Street—Part 1

Victoria Street is a dead-end street that runs opposite Caratal (Gasparillo) Road from the Bonne Aventure (Main) Road to the Guaracara River. In posts #41 & #42 I had recalled my memories of the two corner buildings of Victoria Street. Following is the street as I remember it from before I migrated in 1966.

**(69a) Mr. Ben Dickson....**



*Mr Ben Dickson*

Mr Ben Dickson lived for sometime with his wife Naomi and their children, in a house after the corner house which was occupied by the shoemaker Mr Amrow. They had previously lived on Harmony Hall Road. Some of their children were Gloria, Jackie, Suarez, Docks & Henry. Mr Dickson was a taxi driver. His wife

was a seamstress.

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *My sister got married at the end of Victoria Street and I got married at the top.*

**Clyde Fonrose...** *I remember Mrs Dickson. She taught us craft at Gasparillo Hindu School.*

**(69b) Poonan....** Mr & Mrs Poonan Fyzoodeen and family lived in the next house. Poonan was the son of Mr & Mrs Taynee of Cocoa Street. The Fyzoodeens had several sons. I'm not sure if they had any daughters.



*Poonan Fyzoodeen*

**Asha Fyzoudeen...** *Mr & Mrs Poonan had five sons and two daughters. Mr Poonan passed away but his wife is still alive. Thanks for sharing Mr Deen. Yes, my mother-in-law said she remembers your family.*

**(69c) The Lakes....** Mr & Mrs Lake with their children Carl, Ermin, Annette & Gemma lived in a small house in this area before moving to King Street. That may have been during the late 1950s.

**(69d) The Drain....** Next there was a large drain which crossed the road through a concrete tunnel.

**(69e) Mr Baytah & family....** Alongside the drain was a track which led to King Street. Along this track was the home of Mr & Mrs Baytah and their children.

**(69f) Dymally....** On the other side of the drain is where Mr & Mrs Dymally lived. They had no children. He was the brother of Karmally, Toon & Madat of Caratal Road. Mrs Dymally belonged to the mosque and attended often. Although Mr Dymally was officially a member, I don't remember ever seeing him attending mosque. When they were young men he and his brothers were in a music group that used to perform Indian musical skits at weddings. That tradition has passed away.



*Mrs Dymally*



**Fiat Karmally...** *I did not know that Dymally, my grandfather's brother, lived in Victoria Street.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Dymally & Dy Chachee lived in Victoria Street as far back as I can remember. Your grandfather's only sister lived in Upper Caratal past Kanchan Hill.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *I remember relatives called Dymally living in Victoria Street.*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *I remember mammy sending us to visit Dymally Chachee in Victoria Street.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *My grandparents and their children lived in Victoria Street at one time also.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *I remember Mrs Dymally. Nanny and others use to call her Dy Chachee.*

**(69g) Miss Ena....** Miss Ena & Mr Lawrence lived in the next house. She was a member of the Dougan family. She was the sister of Lenora, Monty, Olric & Ralph among others. I remember her telling me that she and my father grew up in Gasparillo as brother and sister. She was a very pleasant lady. I think she had one daughter named May. She sold market goods on weekends.



*Ena (Dougan) Sealy Joseph*

**Phillip Allen...** *May was not Miss Ena's daughter. May is my cousin from country side. Before coming to Gasparillo she lived with her grandmother. Our family called her Cousin Sandrine.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *May was a pretty girl and very respectable too. I lived opposite them in Victoria Street.*

**(69h) Harold (Figgy)....** Harold lived in the next house. His nickname was "Figgy". In those days his wife was Chandra. He was a good friend of my brother-in-law Boysie Nandlal. When James opened his inn on the main road in a building owned by Mr Chester, Harold was his helper. After James left the business, Harold and his wife Chandra took over.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Uncle Harold married Tante Chandra from Biche. The bharaat left Gasparillo around 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning. He and Pappy were best friends. After the wedding the couple lived in Tante Ena's board house in Razack Street for a while before moving again to Victoria Street.*

**(69i) Simon Parmase....** Mr & Mrs Simon Parmase lived with their children in the next house. They were very nice people. I think they had two sons. One was named Garnet. One of their daughters was married to Joshua (Babzoon) Kallideen and

another, Priscilla, was married to Gladston Paul. Mr Parmase was an executive member of the East Indian Friendly Society.

I seem to recall hearing that Mrs Parmase and the grandmother of the present Attorney General Faris al Rawi (Mrs Lionel Seukeran) were sisters. The day Mrs Parmase got news that her sister Mrs Seukaran had died, she suffered a heart attack and died also.

**Robin Nagir...** *Babzoon was my family.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Simon was an avid cricketer of the 50's, I remember him, Lochan Gopaul, Teacher Roop, Lalchan, Bridgemohan and others playing in Lumsden Street. I think it was the original Maple Club. Later after retirement, his circle included my father-in-law Vernon, Buddy, my Dad and others, I had the opportunity to shake a glass with him and his group in James and later Harold Inn on many occasions.*

**(69j) Benny Goodman....** In the old days a part of our boyhood adventures was going to swim in the rivers around Gasparillo. On one such occasion, while I was still a primary school student at Gasparillo Government School, a group of the big boys had gone swimming in the Guaracara River near the end of Victoria Street. One of the boys Benny Goodman from Caratal Road, got into some difficulties and drowned. It was a tragic event for the village and particularly for the school.

**Fiat Karmally...** *The Goodman I knew was a white man. There is a road in Springland with that name.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Yes it was the same people....They were a white family.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *The Goodman family lived on the corner of Johnson St and Caratal Road. Mrs Veronica Goodman aka Baby was a sibling of a well known San Fernando family, the Carvalhos.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *My cousin Ronnie Deane from Rushworth Street was married to Anna Carvalho.*

## Victoria Street—Part 2

**(70a) Archie....** Archie & his family lived after Babu Niamath's house and just before the drain. They had moved around to several homes (including Hahnnoo's house in Charles Street and the barrack house opposite Tanty Zama on the main road) before coming to Victoria Street. He was Negro and his wife was Indian. They had several children. I remember their son Denzil.

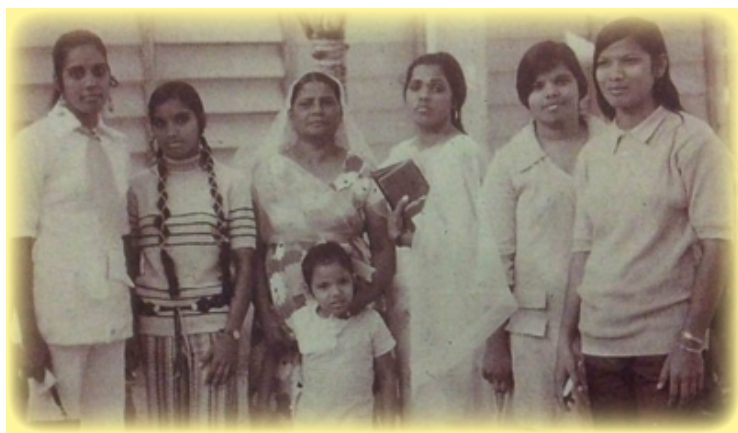
**Fiat Karmally...** *Whenever I heard the calypso "Archie... dem up" I used to think the song was made about Archie from Victoria Street.*

**(70b) Mr. Waddle.....** Mr Waddle lived with his wife & daughter. Their house was near the drain across the street from Mr & Mrs Dymally. They were a respected family in the street. Mr Waddle used to give lessons to several young people from the neighborhood. He was an immigrant from Barbados.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I can clearly remember Mr and Mrs Waddle. He spoke the Queens English.*

**(70c) Black Mammie.....**Mrs Samdaye “Black Mammie” Roopnarinesingh was a hardworking lady who made many sacrifices to raise her children. I remember Bhan, Joey, Shanti & Sham living with her in those days. She also had some older daughters who did not live in Gasparillo. Bhan had attended San Fernando TML School with us. Later on Shanti was my student at Vos Government School.

Black Mammie had moved her family from Siparia to Gasparillo in the late 1950s. They had lived at a few places before settling in Victoria Street. She was a close friend to my in-laws Mr & Mrs Toon Ali and had lived for a while, with her family, at their home. She used to help Mrs Toon & Mrs Moses in the bara stall for the mosque’s annual bazaars. She also was a cook for Baychan’s parlor. Black Mammie worked hard and provided well for her children.



*Black Mammie and her daughters*





*Joey (son)*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *Growing up in Gasparillo, I know we were all closely knitted. Our religious beliefs and race never separated us. We were one big family and it's so great that we can reconnect.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Black Mammy and all her family always had the ability to cross the religious line.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *I'm her daughter. I even went to mosque on Fridays, thanks to my teacher Kamalo.*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *Her family always came over for Eid and we went for Divali. Sham and I were friends and Mammy sewed for her. Also Fuzzy (my husband) and Vishnu went to the Police force together.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Growing up in Gasparillo with most of you was a privilege and a blessing.*

**(70c) Itwarry & Green....** Itwarry & Green were a middle-aged Indian couple who lived in a little house after Harold. They sold anchor from a table outside Sookbir's shop in the old days. They lived alone.

**(70d) Baytiah....** Baytiah was a middle-aged woman who lived with her brother Johnson & his family. Johnson was a popular barber who cut hair at a booth on the Gasparillo junction.

**Shurland Harrynath...** *Batiyah, Johnson's (the barber) sister had 2 children: a daughter Radica and a son Vishnu the Policeman / footballer of Rillo Boys. Johnson was my father.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Vishnu married Sham, Black Mammie's youngest daughter.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Vishnu and his wife Sham passed away at the same time.*

**Joel Rahim...** *I played football with Vishnu from Victoria Street. His uncle Johnson had a barber shop.*

**(70e) Bakkey.....** Bakkey lived with his wife and children near the end of the street. I believe that he worked for the Victoria County Council as a road worker. His son Lindsay was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School. The Bakkey family was one of the first to buy a house lot and move to Ragoobar Lands when that area was being developed.

**Baba Lal...** *Bakkey had a brother named Batal who married my Aunt Dodo and lived in Ragoobar lands. He was also a county worker. Here's the twist. Bakkey and Batal and my father Boodoo were brothers. My mom Vio and Dodo were sisters. So two brothers married two sisters.*

**(7of) Sundar & Family....** Sundar grew up at his parents' home at the back of the original East Indian Lodge. Some time after he married he moved to a house in Victoria Street. He was a loud but very pleasant person. He was also a regular member of the Gasparillo Tassa Group with Toon Ali, Hydar Ali & Mungal. They played regularly at weddings and other special occasions in the area.



*Sundar*

**(70g) Waterman....** Waterman & his wife planted garden near the river. I think his wife's name was Leena. They sold their produce in a stall on the main road. Their two daughters attended Vos. I remember that the girls were very good athletes.

**Jai Roopnarine...** *The section of the river at the end of Victoria Street where everyone used to bathe was called Bassay. There was also a lot of good fishing in that spot. I remember Waterman blocking the river and bailing out the water. He caught some of the biggest warbines I ever saw.*

**(70h) The Huntes....** The Huntes was a quiet, good-looking Negro family. I don't remember the parents. There were three brothers and three sisters. The boys were Lloyd, Monty & Hurley. Two of the girls were Monica & Gwendolyn. I don't remember the other girl's name.

I remember Monica attending High School in San Fernando. I think that Gwendolyn attended Vos while I taught there. The two younger boys Monty and Hurley were my boyhood friends. Lloyd, who was the oldest child in the family, used to work at a club in San Fernando. I remember that some kind of incident had occurred there one night and he was chopped to death.

**Joel Rahim...** *We used to rent together with the Huntes and then they moved to Marabella.*

**Clyde Fonrose...** *I remember the Rahim family living side by side with my aunt — the Hunte family at the last house on the right in Victoria Street. My deceased father worked at Texaco Pointe a Pierre and had a Zepher 6 cylinder no. HD 9923, green with a white stripe.*

**(70i) Molly & Mogs....** I had taught Mogs at Vos and we remained friends after he'd left school. When he and Molly became friendly without his family's approval, he told me about it. They eventually lived in Victoria Street. They had two sons & a daughter.

**(70j) Aziman....** Aziman Rahim & family lived on the other side of Victoria Street near Molly and Mogs. She was the daughter of Mr & Mrs Took Took. Aziman was a nurse who worked hard to raise her children. She was known by the nickname "Dollar". I remember her daughter Claudia. In later years her son Joel was a player on the National Football Team.



*Aziman with daughter Claudia*

**Joel Rahim...** *Aziman was my mother. I am the last of her children. We are Claudia, Gail, Flynn and myself. I know that her family used to live by the government school.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *Joel Rahim played football for the T&T National Team.*

**(70k) Nandoo....** I remember an old dark-skin Indian man



named Nandoo who was well known for eating pieces of glass bottles. I saw him in action one night at his shack. Although I could hear the pieces of bottle grinding up and seeing everything turning to powder in his mouth there was no sign of blood.

## King Street—Part 1

King Street runs parallel to Victoria Street from the Bonne Aventure (Main) Road to the Guaracara River.

**(71a) Mynee & her children....** After Hydar (Pess) Saladeen died, his wife Mynee (sister of Gibbs #130c) because of financial complications, lost their home on the main road (See #42). She moved with her children to a small board house in King Street. It was the first house into the street from Mr Sidial's house on the junction. The children were boys Pushan, Bayone & Keefayat and girls Gyulah, Harshy, Nazma, Junie & Asha.

There followed some difficult years for the family but Mynee, through sheer determination, pulled her family through those hard times. The children all grew up and built their own families. Gyulah married Robert, a barber. Pushan became a popular taxidriver. He married June, Mr Norman's daughter from Norman Junction. Junie married Junior, Stella Brooker's son. Keefayat nicknamed Marbles was a good friend of my brother Suge. He got married and lived with his family in Charles Street.

All, including Mynee, migrated to the US except Gyulah and Keefayat, both of whom settled well and raised their families in Gasparillo.

**(71b) The Lakes....** After Mynee & her family moved out of the King Street house, the Lakes left Victoria Street and moved there. Mr & Mrs Lake had four children, Ermin, Annette, Gemma & Carl. I remember the girls attending Secondary schools in San Fernando. They were among the children who, like us, traveled to school by bus. Carl & I were Scouts in 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop. We were both in the winning Patrol when 1st Gasparillo won the Chancellor Flag in 1962. After his father died Carl got a job with Texaco. The last I saw him he was living on Rushworth Street, San Fernando.

**(71c) Mr & Mrs Fyz....** Mr & Mrs Fyz Mohammed lived in the next house. Among their children were a son Nizam and a daughter. They were a quiet family who were very active in the Gasparillo Jamaat. Fyz was a member of the Mosque Board, his wife was in the Women's Association and the children attended Sunday school and were members of the Gasparillo Islamic Group. Mr Fyz was also a barber.



*Mrs Fyz Mohammed*

**(71d) The Ramcharitars....** I remember when Mr & Mrs Ram-

charitar moved to Gasparillo with their children and settled into a home in King Street. They were a quiet family who were active members of the Presbyterian Church. There were four daughters Angela, Jasmine, Christa & Donna and two boys Cherril and Vern. Like many other Gasparillo parents they seemed focused on providing a good education for their children. Cherril went to Naparima College and the girls went to Naparima Girls. Cherril & I were friends since we were in 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop together. We were members of the patrol that won the Chancellor flag as the country's top troop of 1962. Most of the children eventually migrated.



*Left: Mrs Ramcharitar; Right: Jasmine Ramcharitar*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *John Edoo previously owned the house where the Ramcharitars lived.*

**Donna Ramcharitar-Emison...** *Mr Deen, I was one year old, when we moved there in 1958. Our names are Angela, Cherril, Jasmine, Crysta, Vern and me, Donna. You don't know me because I am the baby.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I corresponded with Cherril until his passing. We were boys together in Gasparillo.*

**Donna Ramcharitar-Emison...** *I remember him saying that.*

**Denzil Hussey...** *Those were my grandparents and my uncles and aunts. My mom was Jasmine who passed away in 2004.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I remember your mom. She was very quiet. In fact they all were. They were a good family... Ada Stewart of the Guardian wrote: "Mrs Ramchariar was born on the same day that the Trinidad Guardian was first published. She received a free Guardian newspaper every day of her life."*

## King Street—Part 2

**(72a) Harold & Mary Brewster....** Mr & Mrs Brewster lived next to the Ramcharitars at the end of King Street. Their children were Angela, Piola, Agatha (Veda), Phillip, Elizabeth & Christine. Their eldest son Eric (Drake) Mitchell did not grow up with the other children in King Street. He was well known in Gasparillo though. They all attended Gasparillo Government School where Piola was my classmate in the early 1950s.

**(72b) Mr & Mrs. Mattook.....** Mr & Mrs Mattook lived in King Street for all the time I had known of them. I remember him from since my school days at Gasparillo Government School. He had a donkey or mule cart which in my memory was always loaded with bundles of grass. They had several children. Among them were Deo, Toby & Carlo. Deo Matook (Mohammed) & his wife Zalica retained the Mattook family home in King Street. She was an active member of the Women's Association of the Gasparillo Jamaat. Some of their children are Simon, Desmond, Kenneth and Judy. The children were active in the Gasparillo mosque. Toby moved with his family to Ferdinand Street. Carlo

also lived in King Street.



*Deo Matook with his daughter*





*Mrs Zalica Matook & her mother*

**Tiny Tunes...** *My grandmother was Zalica Mohammed. She was active in the Muslim ladies group.*

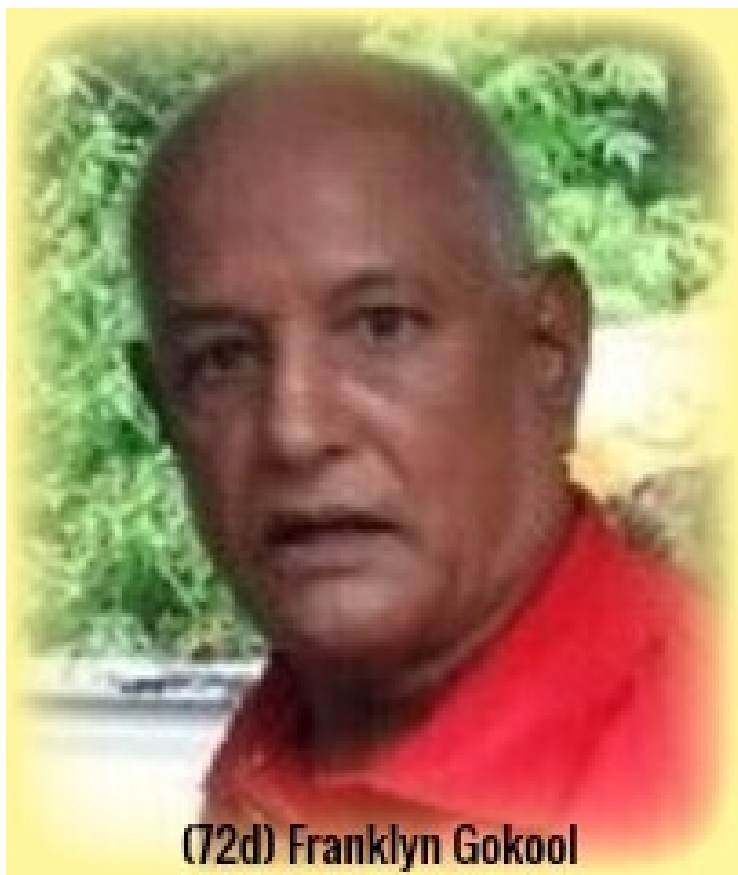
**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *My husband is Simon as mentioned in an earlier post, the Mattook's lived in Concord and after Texaco took over the land for the refinery they relocated to King Street where the relatives still live in the exact spot. Deo Mattook married Zalica*

*(Baby). She was a very active member of the Gasparillo Jamaat. Her daughter Judy (mother of Tiny Tunes) was married to Ackbar who lived at the last house in King Street.*

**(72c) The Haniff Family....** Mr Haniff (Caliper or Wash) was a taxi driver as was his son Ackbar. They lived at the very end of King Street almost on the riverside. They probably lived at that spot for over 80 years. Ackbar was married to Judy who was the daughter of Deo & Zalica Mohammed (Mattook).

**Tiny Tunes...** *I'm Judy's son. My father was Ackbar who was one of the known Gasparillo taxi drivers. We lived at the end of King Street after Franklin Mattook, opposite the Brewster family.*

**(72d) Franklyn Mootilal (Gokool)....** Franklyn grew up and lived in King Street with his mother and younger brother who I knew as Sam. His parents had separated when he was a child. I believe that his mother was one of the Mattook family. She worked hard to support her children and give them a good life. Franklyn's father was Motilal Gokool of Bonne Aventure where he had another family. Although he was devoted to his mother and his King Street family, Franklyn always endeavored to maintain a relationship with his father's other family in Bonne Aventure. Franklyn worked for Texaco in Pointe a Pierre.



*Franklyn Mootilal (Gookool)*

**Nandy Ann...** *My dad Franklyn's last name is Mootilal not Gokool.*

(72e) **Jacob & Khutun Mohammed....** My memories of Mr & Mrs Jacob Mohammed before I migrated from Trinidad in 1966 were mainly associated with the Gasparillo Mosque. Their home was about midway down the street. The family was very active in Mosque activities. The Jacob family comprised of several children among whom were boys Boboy, Azam, Snakie, Ricky, Fuzzy & Chris and girls Halima, Pinky & Zorida. The children were members of the Sunday school and the Gasparillo Islamic Group.

I remember when Halima went abroad to study Nursing. She succeeded in her studies and eventually began opening opportunities for her siblings. After migrating to the US she began to assist some of the others to join her.



*Khutun Mohammed*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *Fuzzy's mother (Kootoon) was very good at making all the Indian goodies.*

**(72f) Felicia Hosein....** Felicia lived at the end of King Street with her parents and siblings. I think she was the eldest of the children. The family were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat. I believe that her father used to be a taxi driver. They were very fair-skinned people. Felisha attended Naparima Girls High School. She married Mr Yusuf's son Joseph from Caratal Road. They migrated to Canada.

**Zeenobiah Karmally- Mohammed...** *Simon's eldest sister whose name was Latifa Shirley Edoe used to live in King Street. She is actually Simon's half sister. Same mom different dad. She has lived in England more than 50 years but told me she remembers your name because she too went to Gasparillo Govt for a short time. She remembers Felicia. Actually Felicia's family used to live in the same house where Simon used to live. His parents bought the house from them. Shirley said they grew up together until she (Shirley) and her dad went to live in Bedeau Street. They lived about the 5th house from the end of the street. When Simon heard who she is, he remembered a couple of the brothers.*

**(72g) The Gobes....** During the mid-1950s when I was around

twelve years old Mrs Gobe was murdered at her home in King Street. I recall as a boy, rushing with other villagers to the murder site. Her husband Mr Gobe was arrested for the crime. He was eventually convicted and sentenced to life in prison. After serving several years he was released for good behaviour.

**Azam Mohammed...** *Mr. Gobe was my father's (Jacob) brother and he had only served 12 years and 8 months in prison for the murder. He was set free in 1968 due to good behavior while in prison.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember that incident, I was at GGS at that time. Thanks for the update.*

## Caratal Road—Part 1

Although it is officially known as Gasparillo Road, to everyone in those days it was Caratal Road. Beginning from the Bonne Aventure Main Road, Sookbir's shop (see #37) was on the western side and Sawhji's shop (see #45a) was on the eastern side.

**(73a) The Old Lodge....** On the western side of Caratal Road after Sookbir's shop, there stood the remains of an old wooden building. I don't remember it being used by anyone. I was told that it was a lodge or a church at one time.

**(73b) Mr Madat's House....** Mr & Mrs Madat Ali lived in the next building. It was a two story concrete house. Mr Madat was the brother of Karmally, Toon Ali & Dymally. He had one sister who lived in Upper Caratal, past Kanchan Hill. He worked in Pointe a Pierre. Among their children were sons Boysie, Fazal, Ashraff & Esau and daughters Haylah, Girlie & Molly. The family lived upstairs except Boysie who had a room downstairs. Ashraf & his wife Carmen also lived in the downstairs apartment before

it was rented out.

All the children eventually migrated except Boysie & Molly. Fazal migrated to Venezuela. Ashraff, Haylah & Girlie migrated to Canada and Esau migrated to USA. In the early 1960s Mr & Mrs Madat had visited Esau in the USA. Molly married Jim, a taxidriver, and continued living there, raising her family in the house.

Boysie also continued to live at the house. He was always a great lover of movies. I remember him telling me that he sometimes rode his bicycle from Gasparillo to Fyzabad to see Indian movie “triples” (an all-night affair). Later on he appeared in the movie “Bacchanal Time”.

There was also an additional apartment downstairs which was rented out. Some of their renters over the years were: the Geoffroy (Jopher) family, Miss Legion, Sister Aisha and the Seenath & Ivy family. In the early 1960s Mrs Madat suffered a stroke, confining her to a wheelchair. Both Mr & Mrs Madat died in the mid-1960s.





*Madat Ali on the left with brothers Dymally & Toon Ali*



*Madat Ali's house*

**Baba Lal...** *Boysie and my dad were good friends. He really loved Indian movies and would often stop by after watching movies and give his critiques to my dad.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Several years later Boysie was thrilled to see himself in the movie "Bacchanal Time".*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Fazal's son Ibrahim lives in Ontario. Haylah also lives in Ontario.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *I remember when Sister Aisha and Miss Ivy were renting there.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Mammy and Aunty Ivy were best friends.*

*Aunty Ivy and Aunty Hanifa had lots of plants in front of their house. I could still see them both at their windows talking. Boysie, better known as Crocky, was a friend with everyone.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Ashraff and Carmen returned to TT and settled in Claxton Bay close to the highway. When Tanty Ivy moved to Poona, Ashraff used the apartment for his business.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember Boysie, he worked with my uncle Ramdhan on his truck delivering groceries to shops throughout the island.*

**Robin Nagir...** *Sister Aisha was the pastor of the Pentecostal church.*

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *I walked every day from San Fabien Road to Marabella Jun. Sec, unaware of all this beautiful history. I remember some girls just before the post office. One was married on Garth Road. She died not too long ago. I also remember a guy in a house at the back of Bata store named Ishwar.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *The girls Judy, Donna, Debbie & Susan and brother Tony lived downstairs of Ishwar.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *The girl who died recently was Donna.*

**(73c) The Karmally Home....** The next house stood on the original homesite of the Beharrys, the grandparents of Karmally & his siblings. Karmally lived there until his death. He & his wife had raised their several children in that house. Their sons who I knew were Moses (see #80a), Baytal, Hydar & Gustin. I don't remember the names of their daughters.

I remember his son Gustin's wedding to Haniffa from Sum Sum Hill. It was a double wedding with his nephew Selvon being married to Babylin of the Happy Hill Buckreedan family (see #118b).

Gustin & Haniffa made their home and raised their family there. Eventually the house was rebuilt as a concrete house. They were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat. Their children were sons Shaffiat & Sheraz and daughters Shaffina, Zenobia, Amina, Naz & Zamin.

Gustin & Haniffa were devoted parents who were focused on giving their children a good education. The children were also active in the Sunday school and later on in the Gasparillo Islamic Group. Gustin was among a group of very good Gasparillo golfers which included Hydar, Rock & Taynor.



*Gustin & Haniffa Karmally*



*The Karmally Family*



*Gustin Karmally Home*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *The Karmally children were all great friends with us even though we lived further. Mostly because of the mosque activities.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Toon Ali, my father-in-law, told me that his big brother Karmally was the best and most dedicated tassaman he had ever seen. He said that Karmally would spend hours everyday in the fields behind their house practising new hands. I'd asked him about how Hydar compared. He said that as good as Hydar was his father Karmally was better. Because Karmally had already died, Toon had stood in as Gustin's father-figure at his*

wedding.

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *I never knew this. Thanks for the information.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Gustin was one of those Gasparillo golfers.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *The golfers had a lime at our house one evening. It included Chacha Hydar, Mr Tayner, Mr Mack Shah, the judge Mr Ramlogan and special guest Mr Basdeo Panday.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *In my teens I used to caddie for my father Gustin on weekends. The crew were Gustin, Hydar, Taynor and Mack from San Fernando. Sheraz and I picked up golf later in life. Hydar's grandson Amir was good too. Sheraz daughter was very good from a young child winning many awards.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Taynor Ramoutar was my step grandad. They lived above Toy's tailoring. His children were Joan, Patsy. Errol and Ruth. He was an avid golfer with Gustin and Hydar.*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *Tanty Molly, Tanty Ivy, Tanty Golin and Daddy Moosh were very good neighbours. Tanty Molly stayed with mammy until the end and was very good to us. Tanty Ivy gave us her phone when she moved even when people offered her money for it. When Papa's*



*mother died Mammy got sick and didn't want to be alone so Susan used to stay with Mammy until we came from school.*

*Jai Roopnarine... Very good memorable time being relived. Shaffina was a very good singer of kassedas in the mosque. Even though I never fasted I would go in the night to the readings. Shaffina and Sham were very close. Aunty Golin did have an infectious laugh that everyone knew.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *The tassa drums were kept at our house and eventually given to Hydar. We had a family reunion years ago and hired a tassa group to play some hands. By request we had Hydar beat some hands as well. There was one special hand which the hired drummers could not understand. Hydar's grandson Amir took over the dole and made it happen. I mention this because Hydar and Toon cha cha would practice and perfect the hands. Karmally, Toon and Hydar (and Amir) would have known hands that other tassa groups were unaware of.*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *As good as Uncle Hydar was, Inshan (his son) had the potential to be much better.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Hydar had told me that Inshan was better than him. I remember him telling me that Inshan had a better natural understanding of drumming.*

**Phillip Allen...** *I remember my neighbor Gustin Karmally making paratha downstairs the house. He passed the roti*

*over his head before it went on the tawa.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Papa used to cook roti for weddings. Paratha not buss up shot.*

**Phillip Allen...** *Also him and chacha Hydar killing goats downstairs. I admired how they skinned it after.*

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...** *My dad learned to kill and skin goats from them.*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *I was traumatised the first time I saw them skin a goat at my granddad's home when we moved to live with him. If I am not mistaken, Mr Shanee helped too.*

## Caratal Road—Part 2

**(74a) Mr & Mrs Ponay Jaggan.....** On the eastern side of Caratal Road, next door to Mr Sawhji's shop, was a small board house. Ponay & Julie Jaggan rented this house from Mr Sawh. This was where I remember them living with their young family. Their children were sons Vish, Jimmy & Aish and daughters Joan, Patty, Jean & Indira.

Ponay was a popular tailor in the village. He practiced his trade from behind a small counter in his home. Julie helped him in his trade. Later they bought a lot of land and built a flat concrete house up the road, next door to the Lloyds.



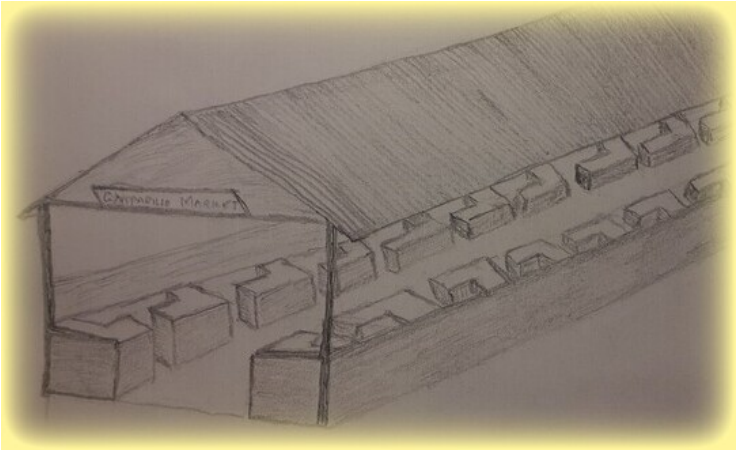
*Mr & Mrs Ponay Jaggan*

**(74b) The Market....** In the next lot after the Jaggans was the first and only official marketplace ever built in Gasparillo. This was around 1950. It was used very briefly but never really succeeded as a marketplace. I can recall seeing people selling market goods there on one or two occasions. But I understand that was very short-lived.

For over fifteen years the construction just sat there with little official use by the public. I remember my cousin Killers and me roaming around the market & the cemetery from Government School when we were around six or seven years old. The children were often warned in school about going by the market because Mahal and Oblijay used to sleep there whenever they were in the Gasparillo area. I remember seeing Mr Clark (one hand) there on several occasions. Later on a middle aged lady lived in the market with two boys, John and Baby. I don't know if she was

their mother.

John ‘Gandi’ Modeste with Will & Ray Raphael had founded Gay Monarchs Steelband at the Raphael house. He then left to form Moonlight Sonatas Steelband at his home on Caratal Road. Shortly afterwards he moved the band’s practice down to the market. This became their practice location for several months.



*Gasparillo Market*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *John and his brother Baby moved further up Caratal Road. John passed on a few years ago. His wife and children live there now. I don't know what became of Baby.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Babyboy is alive and well. He lives on St Fabian Hill. After the market there was a dirt track. This was one of the entrances to the cemetery. The other entrance was by the Anglican Church.*

**(74c) Miss Iris & Mr Sydney....** Miss Iris & Mr Sydney lived in the house after the market. They were a very nice and quiet couple. Their nephews Dennis & Vincent used to live with them. Their daughter Sheila would visit often. She was very educated and was a teacher at St Joseph Convent in Port of Spain. Later on she married a Bishop from Guyana and moved there. I remember that Miss Iris & Mr Sidney used to mind pigs. I also remember them having parang at their home at Christmas time.



*Miss Iris & Mr Sydney's house*

**(74d) Chinee John & Shirley...** The next house was owned by Mr Yusuf the tailor. His home was next door. The house had a few short term renters until it was rented by John the Chinese man who worked at Chan's shop. John moved there with his wife Shirley and their family. They had several children among whom were Joylyn, Choong, Selwyn & Alvin. Choong was my student at Vos Government School. Later he became a Muslim and adopted the name Mustapha. They were among the early TV owners in the area. Several neighborhood children were attracted to their home on evenings to watch shows like "Bonanza" & "Have Gun Will Travel".



*Shirley & Mustapha*



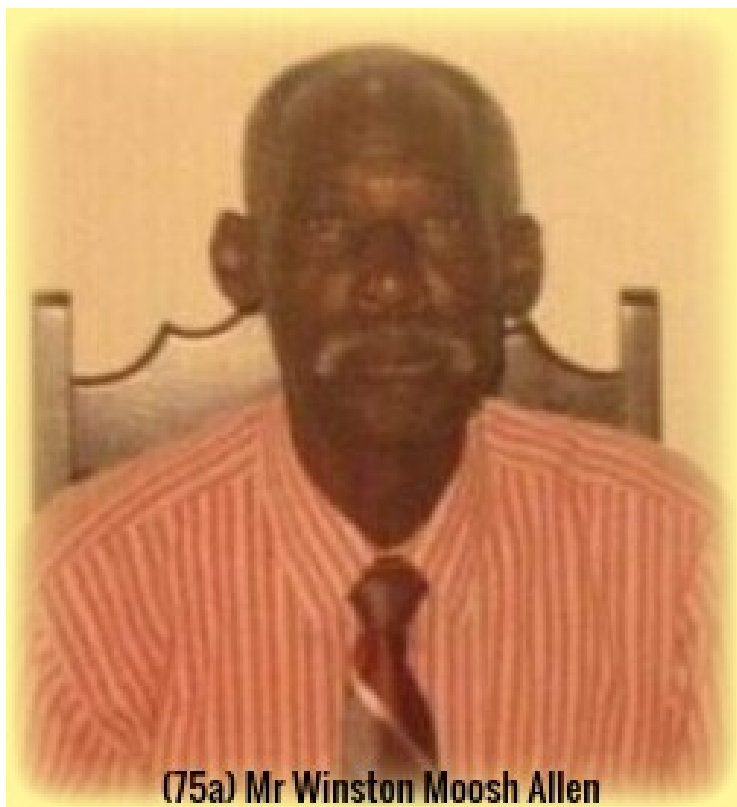
*Chinee John & Shirley Home*



## Caratal Road—Part 3

**(75a) Mr Winston “Moosh” Allen....** “Moosh” and his family lived in the house after the Karmally home. He was a friendly, pleasant man. His wife Hilda was quiet and like some of the other Gasparillo housewives, hardly ever left the house. I remember seeing her sitting by the front window whenever I passed by to go to the Post Office.

“Moosh” had one daughter Joslyn, from a previous marriage. Miss Hilda had three children from a previous marriage, Ruby, Beverly & Hoin. She lived in Brasso/Tamana before coming to Gasparillo. “Moosh” & Hilda had one child together, a son named Phillip. They were well known and well liked in Gasparillo. Hoin was a good footballer. He also was very helpful to me in staging the show “A Pound of Heartbeats” at the Community Center and the Zenith Cinema. In later years Joslyn & Ruby married and moved away from Gasparillo. Beverly had a son for Lennox Paul and migrated to England. Hoin left Gasparillo and moved back to Brasso/Tamana.



**(75a) Mr Winston Moosh Allen**

*Winston "Moosh" Allen*



Winston's House

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Phillip was my brother's school-mate. We all became friends from primary school.*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *My best neighbour was Beverly Crawford. She used to tell people I was her daughter. She was always there for us. We used to call Moosh "Daddy". He was always joking and Phillip was always well mannered. If he pass by the house 10 times a day he would say "morning" or "evening" to Papa and Mammy. Beverly took me to Primary school on my first day and gave me all the latest songs written in a book.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Moosh was one of a few to own a*

motorbike. When I was around 7/8 years old, Phillip and I were heading to school in some rain on the main road when a drunk driver knocked me down. Joslyn was the person who took me to the hospital. I remained in the hospital for the whole summer.

**Phillip Allen...** Moosh had 3 children previously Joycelyn, Marilyn and Owen. Mammy and Moosh met in Brasso where he was a station master for Trinidad Railway. Moosh brought Mammy to Gasparillo where I was born. Hoin now lives in Brasso. Moosh also had a Ford Anglia PH 2698.... All the neighbors lived as one family. I remember there were no fences in those days. The lands to the back was our playground. I loved playing stick em up with Fiat and Mamoo.

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** I remember one day it was raining and Daddy Moosh brought us home in his car. Now I wonder how we all fit in the car.

**Phillip Allen...** Fiat, I got licks for you getting bounce down. Mammy believed we were playing in the road.

**Sharlene Ali...** Moosh or Ayee as we called him was the life of that area. Miss Hilda was a humble, quiet, beautiful woman. Both she and Ayee had a particular infectious laugh. I can remember her at her window.

**(75b) Mr & Mrs King...** The house next to “Moosh” was the

home of Mr & Mrs King. They were a quiet, well-liked couple. Mr King was an expert mattress maker. Those were the days when home-made fiber mattresses were what almost everyone used. He also planted garden alongside the Marie Dulay riverbank at the back of the house and kept a few pigs and chickens. Mrs King, also known as Miss Ruth, was a good baker. In the early days she had a dirt oven in a shed behind the house where she baked her bread & pone.

Their children were daughters Phyllis, Lillian & Sheila and son Roddy. Phyllis married and moved to the Chaguanas area. Lillian married Mr Best the bus driver and settled on Union Road. The Best children have planted deep roots in the Gasparillo area. Roddy worked for the San Fernando General Hospital. Later he moved to Union Road and opened a bar. Sheila never married and lived with her parents until their deaths. She inherited the house and eventually had it rented out.



*The Kings house*



*The King's grandson....Selwyn Best*

**Phillip Allen...** *I have very fond memories of the King family. Starting with Ma and Pa who were my neighbors and Sheila King who is my only Godmother alive. I still call*

her “Nenny”. When I was a child the house was always full of people. Friends and family. Mr Ruddy, ever since I could remember, worked at the San Fernando General Hospital. He called my father SM. Mr Best lived on Union stretch with his wife Miss Lill and the children. Selwyn was the one everyone knew. There was another one of Ma and Pa’s daughters who lived in Couva and one in Chaguanas. All the grandchildren spent time in Gasparillo.

**Sharlene Ali...** *Aunty Sheila was good to us when Mammy and Daddy rented the house from her. Shah, I & Salmah grew up there. Joe & Aneesah were born there but we left while they were practically babies.*

**(75c) Mr & Mrs Toon Ali....** Mr & Mrs Toon Ali lived next to The Kings. They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. They were my in-laws. My wife Sherma, is their youngest daughter. Mr Ali used to work as a mason in Pointe a Pierre. Mrs Myah Ali, who most people in the area called Chachee, came from Thick Village, Siparia.

Theirs was a mixed-religion marriage. He was Muslim & she was Hindu. Her brother was Pundit Bhagwat Maharaj of Siparia. She converted to Islam but never allowed beef into her home. They planted garden in lands across the Marie Dulay River and in Pointe a Pierre. They also used to mind cattle, goats & chickens.

Their children were daughters Nageeran (Yahya), Kulsum (Doo-doo), Shaira, Salesha (Beti) & Sherma and sons Norman, Ra-



haman (Darling), Anwar (Zambo), Solomon (Cochan), Farzan (Node) & Lincoln (Links). Their grandsons Mamoo & Handel and granddaughter Shanewaz also lived at their home. Handel and Shahnewaz were Salesha's children. Mamoo (Ahamad Ghanny) was Nageeran's son. He was very well-liked in Gasparillo and continued to be his grandparents support when all the children had migrated.

Norman, Zambo & Cochran were policemen. Salesha was a nurse at San Fernando General Hospital. Sherma had worked professionally as both a print and stage model in the USA. She has also appeared in several TV commercials and acted in the movies 'Bacchanal Time', "The Panman" and "Jahaji Family".

All the children except Doodoo, Shaira & Darling eventually migrated to the USA. Doodoo married Waj and raised her family in Barackpore. Shaira married Shomes and lived in Pleasantville. Yahyah was married to Ghanny from Couva. Salesha married James Whitmore from California. Norman married Barbara from the Bahamas. Zambo married Isabel from Princes Town. Darling married Rookmin (Amina) from Reform. Cochran married Jennifer from Couva. Node married Karen from Seattle. Lincoln married Sherrifa from Couva.

Zambo went to the Middle East with the United Nations. His children all grew up in Jerusalem. Our daughter Shyama was born in that house. Over the years several people and families had lived as guests in the Ali home. Mrs Ali ran the bara stall for the mosque's annual bazaar. Mr Toon Ali was a renowned tassaman. He was also well known for jahraying, match-making and giving advice on cookings, constructions etc.



**(75c) Mr & Mrs Toon Ali**

*Mr & Mrs Toon Ali*



*Toon Ali*



*The Toon Ali's home*



**Shaffina Mohammed...** *From my memory hearing stuff, Toon Checha was the first person Papa called for advice on rebuilding the house. I remember Toon Chachee showing Mammy how to knead the dough for bara. Not the ones like now but with the urdi dhal, and she kept the shiniest*

*pots. I always try to shine mines to be like hers. They were there for Papa, like when my sister Zamin got married in Hindu rites.*

**Sharlene Ali...***Toon and Maya were my great grandparents. Nanny helped everyone in Gasparillo. Nana was famous for jahraying people. He was Gasparillo's healer. The children, grandchildren and great grands got their cooking skills from them. My mother and father (Golin and Nurul) learned wedding and prayers cooking, and bathing the dead from them. Nanny also taught us the art of shining our pots.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...***At one time we used to live by Mr and Mrs Toon Ali.*

**Phillip Allen...***Toon chacha also showed us how to stretch the goat skin and clean the hair with ashes. We tried our hands at making tassa also. Mamoo taught us many skills. We used to use the box cart to collect gobar for Toon Chachee to lepay.*

**Fiat Karmally...***You, me and Mamoo made tassa out of tin pans. Toon Cha Cha's house had the loudest laugh. Lincoln, Mamoo & Golin. While I was in the hospital I was always happy when I saw Salesha working in my ward.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...***Toon Chacha taught my father to make paratha. I have never seen anyone besides Toon Chacha who will throw a roti on the tawa from a little distance*

*and it will spread out on the tawa. My father said these people prayed before they started to cook.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *Toon Chacha's house always had goat skins on the walls.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Their family and ours grew up as siblings.*

## Caratal Road—Part 4

**(76a) Tailor Yusuf....** Mr & Mrs Yusuf lived with their children, daughter Tiny & sons Boyah, Joseph & Jimmy across the road, just after “Chinee” John & Shirley. Mr Yusuf was a master tailor. I used to see him in the gallery practicing his trade. He attended the Gasparillo mosque on Fridays. Mrs Yusuf was a very private person. I’d seen her only on a few occasions. Tiny attended Naparima Girls High School. Boyah & Joseph attended Naparima College. Joseph married Felicia Hosein from King Street. Jimmy owned and operated a popular parlor on Gasparillo Junction. As far as I know all the children eventually migrated to Canada.





*Tailor Yusuf's house*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Tailor Yusuf's son Jimmy (Django), ran the parlour at the junction. He migrated to Ontario in the late 60's and still resides there. He has since retired and visits home every chance he gets.*

**Suzanne Singh...** *Mr. Yussuf's house is no more. I built a new house and now live on that site.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mr Yusuff was a fantastic tailor. His apprentice from Mayo was related to Morgan Jagessar by marriage.*

**(76b) The Pauls....** Miss Paul lived in the small wooden house after Mr Yusuf. The front room of the house was the Post Office for Gasparillo. It was operated by Miss Paul's mother. In those

days there was no mail delivery service to homes so you had to go to the post office to pick up and mail out your letters. She was a competent Post Mistress and everyone in the village knew her.

Miss Paul's children were daughter Rosemarie and sons George, Lennox & Gladston. Rosemarie attended Naparima Girls High School. Later she was married to Ingal Gill whose father was a school Principal. George was in his early teens when he drowned at the Guaracara River pump house. Lennox was a member of 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop with me. Gladston was a Cub Scout at the same time.

Another member of the family was a young man named Bunny. He attended Gasparillo Government School with my eldest brother Boyie. I'm not sure about his relationship to the family. Bunny was involved with a drama group in Port of Spain. Years later he appeared in our movie "The Panman".



*Post Office*

**Suzanne Singh...** *Lennox Paul still lives on the site. It is a concrete house now.*

**Fayad Ali...** *We had to walk to the Post office to ask for letters. I remember OT&TGS on the envelopes which required no postage and the 2 cent stamp which required the envelope to be left unsealed. A sealed one required a five cent stamp. I had to make several trips. My father was secretary of the East Indian Society. He received more than the normal few letters. I hated it. Sometimes I would walk down the road, hide around by Pepper Street area and go back home saying: “No letters Pa”.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *We lived on Caratal*

*Road very close to the post office. We would go there to pick up mail and got very excited when we did get any.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I collected mails from Miss Paul to deliver to by uncles in Charles Street. My ajee always rewarded me with a cup of dahi and roti for my effort. Except for the light bill, we never got mail in Allen Street. I remember the Sunday afternoon George was sucked into that pipe.*

**(76c) The Long Mango Tree....** I must mention a particular long mango tree. It was one of the tallest mango trees I can remember. It stood on the corner of Caratal Road and the entrance to the Anglican Church. Many children would pass there looking for mangoes under the tree during mango season although there were bearing mango trees in abundance all over the village. Some claimed that mangoes from that tree were the sweetest in Gasparillo.



*Long Mango tree*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mango from the cemetery were always the sweetest. I could attest to that. At GGS we often foraged for mangoes in the cemetery. We never forgot to bite all our fingers if we pointed, to ward off the evil spirits.*

**(76d) The Anglican Church & the Cemetery....** Since I was a boy at Gasparillo Government School I'd known of the Gasparillo Cemetery and the St Peters Anglican Church. This was one of the areas where my cousin Fazal (Killers) and I used to roam around gathering jumbie beads. There was a track which ran along the drain from behind Mr Lakhan's parlor to the market. From behind Eric's house there was another track that passed in the bush behind Mr McFee's house along the edge of the cemetery to the back of the Anglican Church. That is where we used to get the most jumbie beads.

Although I'd never been inside the church I had climbed up and peeped through the window. I'd known several of our Gasparillo people who used to attend services there. I don't know if the cemetery was originally an official attachment to the Anglican Church. However everyone I knew of who had died in Gasparillo in those days, was buried there, whatever their religion. La Tousay or All Saints was a big celebration every year at the cemetery. That was when every grave was cleaned and lit up with candles. It used to be a big liming night for the village especially for the young people.



*Anglican Church & Cemetery*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *I remember Latousay was the only time you would look forward to going in the cemetery. We would walk around by all the graves that were lit to collect the candle wax to see who could make the largest ball. Also we would walk with sling shots that were made from rubberbands and using the knot grass to shoot at people in the crowded cemetery, then trying to fade into the crowd.*

**(76e) Miss Stevens Private School....** After the Anglican Church

was the home of Miss Stevens and Miss Baptiste. I think that they were sisters. They ran the most popular Private School in Gasparillo from ever since I can remember. Many people, including a couple of my siblings, can trace their earliest education to Miss Steven's/Miss Baptiste's Private School.

The family lived upstairs to the Private School. Their house was home to a number of people. They were very progressive and dignified people. The adults were also good friends of my father.

Among the people who I can remember as being residents of their home were Verna, Rolly, Reese, Jeffrey, Verlia, Patricia & Syl. I'm not sure of all the relationships among them. Verna Baptiste was involved in PNM politics; Rolly played cricket; Jeffrey & Patricia were classmates of my eldest sister Sally. By all accounts they were a positive influence to the community and laid the first seeds of education for countless Gasparillo children.





*Miss Stevens with son and granddaughter*

**Suzanne Singh...** *Miss Baptiste's private school is no more.*

**Fayad Ali...** *Back then the only kindergaten (Private School) was Miss Baptiste's on Caratal Road. At recess and lunchtime we would walk by the church and play among the graves. This was around 1958.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *All my siblings went to Miss Baptiste School. The smell of the pigs behind the school did not bother us.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Yeah, but I remember the piglets running through the classroom.*

**Phillip Allen...** *I went to Fat Miss and Thin Miss private school. The day we gained Independence, the entire school got chocolates wrapped in gold paper with the coat of arms printed on it. We also got mini flags. Anyone remembers the slate with the wooden frame?*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *We all used them, then graduated to the ink pots and fountain pens.*

**Phillip Allen...** *I went to pencil, checkered line and double line copy books. Wasn't lucky to use ink pots.*

**Shamshu Deen...**

# The pride of Gasparillo

I HAD to like school. Perhaps that is why I am still associated with education, students, curricula etc etc. But when I try to analyse why I might have gotten caught up in this calling — it had to stem from my very early association with those who really cared. In a previous article, I mentioned the love and attention I got from my first elementary school teacher, Miss Ursula Prime, at Gasparillo Government. But when I search more deeply, I realize that my very early childhood was blessed with another, Mrs Edith Stephens, my private school teacher.

I had long wondered what became of this dear lady, whose school on Caratal Road was to see many of Gasparillo's finest pass through its doors. Recently I found out that she was living at Charles Street and so I eagerly looked forward to seeing her. Our meeting revived some wonderful memories of the village and of folks who were so fondly revered by my parents and siblings.

Edith Baptiste (Stephens) was born on July 16, 1915, the first child of Clayton and Mable Baptiste. Clayton was a blacksmith who shod the horses for the cabs that traversed the Gasparillo-Caratal-Marbella route in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Such cabs drivers included a dear member of my family, Willie Munradin, my great uncle, and Rahaman Mann Ali and Aziz Ali, fondly called Cabbie. Edith remembered how her father also worked to put the iron tyre around the wooden cart wheels to make them stronger.

Clayton's parents were La Foray Baptiste and Ma Socat, a lady who had come from Africa. La Foray was a gifted herbalist skilled in the art of bush medicine, using such herbs as 'zebapek', chadon beni etc. to bring cures to headaches, colitis and even infertility. Ma Socat loved gardening and she would produce an abundance of vegetables for her home and to share with her neighbours.

Edith's maternal grandmother was Rebecca who had come from Carriacou, while her grandfather, Benjamin Gabriel, she said had come directly from Africa.

Edith's parents had settled at Bon Adventure Road just opposite Gasparillo Government School, which she attended. The headmaster then was Mr Fitzpatrick Ashby. By 5th Standard, she was the only girl in the class and always placed first. At age 14, she was about to leave school, when Miss Verna Austin asked her parents for her to become a pupil teacher.

By 1935, Edith had met and



SHAMSHU DEEN

fallen in love with Jeremiah Stephens of Williamsville, who was working at the oil stock office in Pointe-a-Pierre. On 2nd June, 1935, they were married. The marriage would produce nine children who were all successful in various professions: Jonette, Jeffrey, Patricia, Verina,

something so delicious to look forward to before the weekend. Now I appreciated it even more as Miss Stephens was telling me that her initial school fees were 25 cents a month per child, and that she grated the coconuts and squeezed the limas herself to make us these treats.

For thirty years Mrs Edith Stephens carried on this private school and recalled some of her favourite pupils. Dr Nadir Bakar has become a leading gynaecologist in North America, first in Montreal and today, Los Angeles. Jennifer Ali is an optician in Port of Spain. And of course, Mrs Stephens' own children also attended this school, and have done very well.

Jonette is now a computer programmer, Jeffrey is an engineer, Verina is a qualified nurse, Gilmore, an economist at Howard University, Joseph, a teacher in C. Washington D C, Robert worked at Texaco, and Calvin and Terrence are into computers as well.

Patricia has been a writer recently publishing her book, 'The Spiritual Baptist Factor, African New World Religions, Identity, History and Testimony'. This was launched last August at LWI St Augustine and Barbados, at the San Fernando Carnegie Library and at Howard University. Presently, she is doing her doctorate in theology and had worked as a Spiritual Baptist Priest in London. She is thrilled by the idea of the March 30th Baptist Liberation Holiday.

During her years in journalism, Patsy Stephens wrote for the *Trinidad Guardian*, *Evening News* and the *Daily Mirror*. She also was an advisor to former Government Minister, Muriel Donawa and in 1967 attended Expo 67 writing on the pavilions of the West Indian and African countries.

Patsy had taken her mother to this Expo and they toured the St Lawrence Seaway. Over years, Mrs Stephens continued to travel widely throughout Europe, North America and the Caribbean. But for all her journeys, the one which she talked about most was her 1999 trip to Carriacou to visit the homeland of her grandmother, Rebecca. The journey by boat took her over the rough waters of the famous Kick Em Jenny (undersea) volcano. At Carriacou, she had quite an emotional meeting with her mother's 92 year old cousin, Mrs Duncan.

Mrs Edith Stephens has definitely given a lot to the people of Gasparillo, especially in the formative years of the young children. She has been a tower of strength and an inspiration to many of us.



EDITH STEPHENS and son, Terrence, and daughter Francine about 1965

Calvin, Gilmore, Robert, Joseph and Terrence.

But Mrs Edith Stephens, though respected and known for these noteworthy offspring and their offspring as well, is perhaps more fondly remembered for the small private school she started in 1939. Today, more than 60 years later, though many others have sprung up all over Gasparillo to take care of a rapidly expanding population, this institution on Caratal Road is still in existence, now run by her younger sister.

Mrs Stephens got into the education of these young children due to her love and patience. She was always kind to children, especially those who found difficulty in learning. "Those I would keep near to my table, so I could coach them, more till they would learn," she said.

Julie Andrews mentioned so many of her favourite things in that song from *Sound of Music*, but she never did include coconut drops and lime punch. How well I recall being given a treat every Friday by Mrs Stephens and her sister, Verna Baptiste. Such positive reinforcement made learning more enjoyable, knowing that we had



## Caratal Road—Part 5

**(77a) The Lloyds....** Mr & Mrs Lloyd lived in the house next door to the Toon Ali home. I'd heard that, as a young policeman, Mr Lloyd came to Trinidad from Barbados. This was not unusual as both islands were members of the British Empire. Here he met Mildred, fell in love and they were married.

Their children were sons Ivan, Earl, Trevor, Carlton, Roylit & Clive and daughters Thelma, Norma & Gloria. Over the years, Mr & Mrs Lloyd also raised four grandchildren Phillys, Iva, Junior & Richard. Ivan & Carlton were policemen. Ivan rose to a very high rank in the Police Department. Trevor was an Engineer. He moved to Nigeria. Roylit & Clive migrated to Canada. Thelma became a nun. Gloria became a nurse.

At first they had a one story board house....then in the early 1960s they replaced it with a flat concrete house. They used to mind pigs in a large pen behind the house. They also had a large dirt oven in a shed in the yard where they baked breads, cakes & ponies. Their back yard contained a variety of fruit trees.

They were all friendly and well liked in the village. Roylit was a favorite with all the children who knew him because he was always friendly and jokey to us. Clive was a very powerful footballer. He was a member of BP club and a good friend of my eldest brother Boyie. The Lloyds and the Toon Alis used to live like one family. After I got married into the Toon Ali family, I started referring to Mr & Mrs Lloyd as “Daddy & Mother.”



*The Lloyds*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *When I was a little girl living by the Toon Alis, I used to be regular by Mrs Lloyd. We used to call her “mother”.*

**Phillip Allen...** *Everytime I passed in front of Mr & Mrs Lloyd's house I would greet them. If I forgot, by the time I got home Miss Lloyd would be by us speaking to my mother in Patois." Hilda like me and the boy have words?" There and then I had to say "good morning or good evening".*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Mr. Lloyd was the caretaker/cleaner at Vos for many years. I think he started at Vos when the school was first opened. His grandson Junior worked with him.*

**(77b) Miss Margie....** Miss Margie and her husband (or brother) lived in a small shack after the empty lot past the Lloyds. (That empty lot is where the Jaggans now live). Miss Margie and her husband lived alone. Their shack was on a hill. They planted cane on the land which extended down to the river behind their home. They had a donkey cart and during croptime they would cut their cane and take it on their cart to the factory in Reform. They also planted some garden.

**Phillip Allen...** *Poanay's son Jimmy and I went with Miss Margie's husband's "donkey cart" to sell cane at the Reform factory. I actually drove the donkey cart.*

**(77c) Mr & Mrs Abass Khan.....** Mr & Mrs Abass lived in the house after Miss Margie. Mr Abass was a son of LaulKhan. He was a well-known taxi driver on the Gasparillo/San Fernando route.

Their daughters were Zobeedah, Choonie, Moomie & Hazra and sons Toyah, Beedal, Hakim & Paddy.

Zobeedah was married to school teacher Mr Wahid, who was related to my mother. They built a house in an empty lot between Miss Margie and her father's (Abass) house. By the time I left Trinidad in 1966 the Abass children had all established their own families. Toyah was married to Sonah (Mr Parsan's daughter). Hakim was married to PooPoon (Theater Khan's sister). Paddy was married to Ina (Mr Moses daughter). I'm not sure about who the younger daughters and Beedal married. I had taught Toyah's sons, Bobby & Shane, at Vos.





*Mrs Abass Khan*

**(77d) Mr & Mrs Beharry.....** After the Abass house, Mr & Mrs Beharry lived in a board house. Mr Beharry was a tailor. He plied his trade from his gallery. He was related to the mother of Toon, Madat, Karmally & Dymally. The Beharry children were daughters Janice, Bernice & Eunice and sons Kenneth & Duckies.

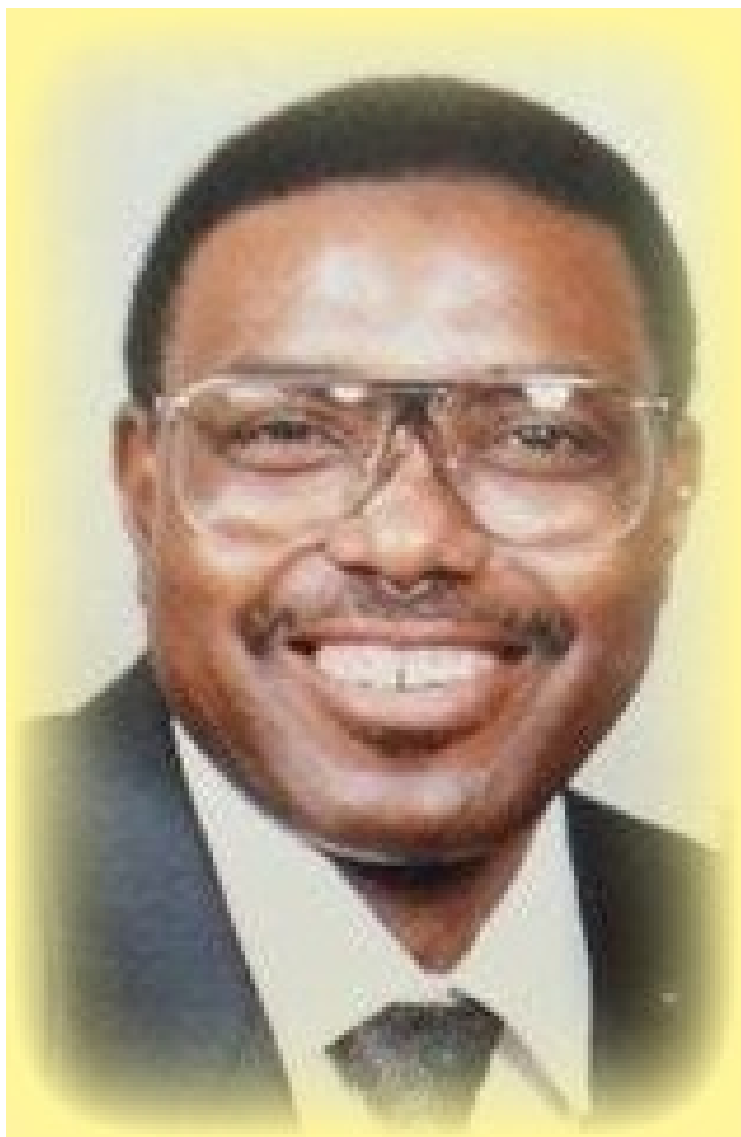
**(77e) Miss Anna....** The house after the Beharrys was a wooden shack. Miss Anna & her sister lived there. According to my wife Sherma: "We never saw them very much. What I remember most is her sapodilla tree. Whenever we passed by we'd have our eyes scanning the ground under the tree. If we saw any fruits under the tree we'd rush in, grab them and take off. Thinking about it now, neither Miss Anna nor her sister ever shouted at us or complained."

**Phillip Allen...** *As kids we thought Miss Anna was a soucouyant. We always tried to get her to pass us on the left side but she would just stand still.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *We had some in Charles Street. We will throw some salt on the road to see if they will cross it. Instead of being nice to them, we played pranks instead.*

## Caratal Road—Part 6

**(78a) The Henrys....** Mr & Mrs Henry lived with their children in the house after Miss Anna. Mr Henry was a tall heavysset man who rode a motor scooter to work in Pointe a Pierre. I don't remember if they had any daughters. I can recall their sons Amos, Jenzei & Brigo. There was another brother whose name I don't remember. Amos & Jenzie were my friends. Amos especially was a part of our liming group with Egbert Taylor, big Herbert Charles from Mahogany, Bullneck and a few others. This was during my teaching years before I migrated. Brigo seemed to be a bit slow but was extremely strong.



*Amos Henry*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *I remember the Henry young men and big Charles from Mahogany.*

**(78b) Mr & Mrs Ganpatt....** Mr & Mrs Ganpatt lived with their children in the house after the Henrys. Mr Ganpatt was named Mansayn and his wife was Latchmie. He was a carpenter by trade. He was involved in the building of several houses in the village. The family moved to Charles Street in 1969.

From what I remember they had fourteen children. Nine migrated to Canada in the 1960s & 70s. Mr Ganpatt had one brother Dean & one sister Deyah. Both lived in Charles Street. Salick is Mr Ganpatt's nephew.



*Left: Latchmie & Mansayn Ganpatt; Right: The Ganpatt Family*

**Ann Jagoo...** *The Ganpatt family consisted of fourteen children. Nine migrated to Canada from as early as 1970. All 14 are alive and well. I am one of them. Dean Ganpatt was my dad's brother.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mr. Ganpatt was the carpenter who built my dad's first house in Allen Street. It was covered with carat, but after centipedes and scorpions fell onto the bed while we were sleeping the carat was removed and a galvanize roof replaced it. All this happened at about 1952-3. Later in 1962 that house was replaced by a concrete structure.*

**(78c) The Brookers....** I don't remember the older Mr Brooker. His name was Edmund Joseph Brooker and he was an Overseer at the Pempaleh Estate. His wife, Mrs. Balwah, was a tall, very dignified-looking woman. She was always dressed in long dresses and ohrni. Their son commonly known as Poon and his wife Clemmy were the Mr & Mrs Brooker who I knew.

Their children were daughters Patsy & Marilyn and sons Kenrick & Andy. Mr Poon Brooker worked in Pointe a Pierre. Mrs Clemmy Brooker was a housewife. The children all attended high schools in San Fernando. They were a well-liked family.



*Edmund Joseph Brooker, Overseer of Pempaleh Estate.*



*Mr & Mrs Brooker Wedding Day*





*The Brooker Children*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mr Brooker was a tall dignified looking gentleman. I think he worked in Pointe-a-Pierre. The Brooker kids all attended GGS at one time.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *You could pick out a Brooker in a crowd anywhere in the country. My aunt Shahiba married Irwin Brooker who lived opposite Gasparillo Government School on the Main Road.*

**(78d) Mr & Mrs Thomas....** *Mr & Mrs Thomas lived in the next*

house. Among their children was a son Andrew who was a house painter.

**(78e) Miss Brooks....**The house between Thomas and Ms Divin was where Ruth Brooks, Ken, Sharon, Vera, Frances and Rupert lived. Frances was my student at Vos.

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Sharon & Ken Brooks migrated to USA. Sharon was a Long Island Chief of Police.*

**(78f) Miss Divin's parlor....** Miss Divin who lived in the next house had a small parlor downstairs. One of my students at Vos was a member of her family. His name was Maurice. I'm not sure of how he was related. He eventually became a teacher at the Technical School.

**Wendy Modeste...** *Maurice is Ms.Divin's grandson. Her son Hamil is his father. After that there was an empty lot of land where the area boys used to play windball cricket.*

## Caratal Road—Part 7

**(79a) Empty lot....** At the northeast corner of Caratal Road & Church Street, Mr Madat Ali owned an empty lot with just bush and some rough-skin lemon trees. Later on Hydar (Karmally's son) began cutting trees and using this lot as a place to stock some of his lumber. Years later, Hydar's son Timber with his wife Narida built their home on this site.

**(79b) Mr & Mrs Kissoon....** Mr & Mrs Kissoon lived in the next lot of land. Their house was a board house. Mr Kissoon worked in Pointe a Pierre. Among their children were daughter Sheila and son Ramjit. After them was an empty lot. I didn't know the owner.

**(79c) Miss Cuffy.....** Next was a small house where Miss Cuffy lived. She used to wash & iron for people. A couple of young people lived with her. I don't know how they were related. There was a boy from around there who we called Bayje. I'm not sure which house or family was his.

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *The Cuffy's lived in Charles Street. They then moved to Caratal Road.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *One of the Cuffy's built a house and lived in Razack Street for several years.*

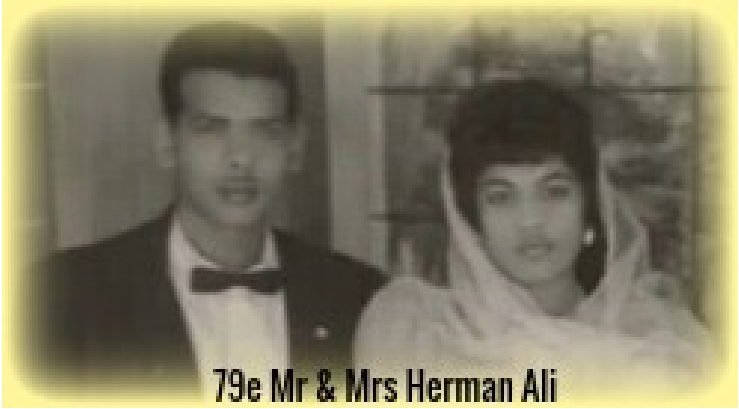
**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *When they first came in from one of the islands they rented from Dolly in Charles St.*

**(79d) Miss Angie....** *After Miss Cuffy was Miss Angie's home. Her daughter Thora lived with her. There was another small board house after Miss Angie but I can't recall who lived there.*

**Wendy Modeste...** *Thora was my mother. She was Ms. Angie's granddaughter.*

**(79e) Darling's House.....** The next lot was owned by Mr Toon Ali. Until the early 1960s Mr & Mrs Toon Ali planted garden there. As a child, one of their sons Herman (Darling) was among some Gasparillo children who were victims of a polio epidemic. This left him with a permanent limp. Despite his setback he worked very hard to complete a course at Sawh's Commercial School. This led to a job at Brisco Engineering on the Bypass. He then married Rookmin (Amina) a young lady from Reform Village. His parents gave him this lot of land so that he could build his house for his growing family. By the time I left Trinidad in 1966, Darling and his wife had two children, one son Derrick and one

daughter Joanne.



*Mr & Mrs Herman Ali*

**Derek Kenosha Ali...** #30 Caratal Road is where I grew up until I migrated to the USA. My dad (Darling), was the son of Toon Ali. Despite tremendous physical challenge he was able to raise five children. He also won an islandwide tabla drumming competition. Darling lived on that location until he passed away. My siblings Joanne, Camille, Angela, Natasha and my mom all migrated to the USA and Canada.

**(79f) Mr & Mrs Jandool....** Mr. & Mrs Jandool lived in a small board house in the next lot. They had a large yard and many fruit trees especially mandarins. They also planted garden and

used to mind cattle.

## Caratal Road—Part 8

**(80a) Mr & Mrs Moses Karmally....** Mr & Mrs Moses Karmally lived in a large board house opposite Mr Toon's land (Darling's house) by the standpipe on the hill in Caratal Road. Mr Moses was the stepson of Karmally from lower down on Caratal Road. His birth father was Sheikh Najmudeen of Princes Town. He was an avid hunter.

Both Mr & Mrs Moses were well-known and well-liked in Gasparillo. They were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. He was one of the regular roti cooks for the Mosque. Mrs Moses partnered with Mrs Toon to run the bara stall for the Mosque's annual bazaar. Theirs was always the first stall to sell out every year. Mr Moses worked in Pointe a Pierre.

Their children were daughters Zoyee, Ina & Shahaiba and sons Sylvan & Amrul (Tex). I think that all the children attended Gasparillo Government School. Sylvan worked as a Fireman for Texaco. He married Babylin from Happy Hill. Theirs was a

double wedding with his uncle Gustin & Haniffa. Amrul worked as a barman at the Texaco Club. He married Shaheeda. Zoyee married Sonny. Until I left Trinidad in 1966, most of them were living in the family house on Caratal Road.



*Mr & Mrs Moses Karmally*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Mr. & Mrs. Moses were my grandparents. I was born in that house. We moved to Razack Street in 1964 when my brother Nadir was born. The house always had room for family who didn't have a place from time to time. Pa died in 1980 and Ma died in 1981, Christmas Eve. Sylvan was only 17 years old when he got married.*

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...** *I am their oldest*



*great granddaughter, and granddaughter of Sylvan.*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *Papa (Gustin) was close to all his nephews and neices and at one time even lived with them for a while. I remember the house up the street with the big white goats.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *I remember Mr Moses and his Land Rover. He and my father were good friends. They were like brothers. Thinking seriously they even resembled each other.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *We knew the entire Moses clan when they moved behind us in Razack Street. The children were all close to us mainly because of mosque activities. I remember Moses loved his birds.*

**(80b) Zalimoon & Solomon....** From next to the Moses house the land broke away all along the west side of Caratal Road for about one hundred yards. There was a rough dirt track which dropped steeply to a wide valley where the Marie Dulay River spread into a ravine. Down there was a small shack where one of my elder cousins Zalimoon and her husband Solomon lived for a while.

When I was an ABC student I did everything to hide from school. I remember how many times Papa used to have to chase me all down by the black pump behind our home in Cocoa Street and down by the river to catch me and carry me to school. My elder

brothers would join in the chase sometimes. Once I even bit my teacher Miss Peter's hand when she tried to keep me in class. My cousin Fazal (Killers) who was Zalimoon's youngest brother was in my class.

One day after my brothers & sisters left me by my class and went off with their friends, Fazal & I took off behind the school garden and cut through the lash patch on the hill, past the Polo family house, down the track by Mr Natty who used to play Jab Jab for carnival. We then cut through Mr Toon's garden and emerged on Caratal Road. From there we climbed down the steep dirt track alongside the Moses house, to the ravine near where Zalimoon & Solomon lived. Fazal was the leader on that trek because he knew the way to his sister's home. But we didn't go to her home.

When they found us later in the afternoon, we were in the ravine hidden among some fig trees, catching "millions" and "seven colors" with some empty sardine cans and eating ripe pommeceetays that had fallen from Mr Moses' tree and rolled down the hill. That was my first experience at breaking beesh. It was around 1949/50 when I was about six years old.



*Neil....son of Zalimoon & Solomon*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Uncle Malo it's so funny to read your stories and imagine you running away from school. Your incident of biting the teacher's hand is so funny.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *One of my nicknames for a long time was "bite Miss Peter's hand".*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *That's why you know Gasparillo so well!*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Uncle Malo could only know all this from doing some serious roaming about. And it seems like he started early, from ABC days. I can't start to imagine a 5/6 year old doing that today. They don't even let children out of the school compound to come home for lunch anymore. Roaming around was a popular pastime back then. When we came home from school in the afternoons, after having a meal, we'd go roaming around the nearby lands looking for fruits, catching little fish in the rice "lagoon", playing all manner of dangerous games with no parents worried about kidnapping. They used to frighten you with duwen so you don't go too far. I don't know what memories the children of today will have.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *That's why grandparents should share their great memories with them.*

## Caratal Road--Part 9

**(81a) Jodo & Kitty Mohammed....** Jodo & Kitty lived in a small board house after the track leading to Zalimoon & Solomon's home on Caratal Road. Jodo was Olidad's son. He was a very tall, giant of a man. Kitty was the sister of "Theater" Khan the Cinema projectionist & Poopoon the wife of Hakim (Abass's son). Both Jodo & Kitty worked in Pointe a Pierre. They were very friendly people. Their children were daughters Haniffa, Showee & Lucy and sons Opah, Inshan & Maun. Jodo had an older son named Kalo with someone else. Kalo lived with them. Later on they built a home in Whiteland and moved there.



*Kitty Mohammed*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *I knew that Kitty was “theater” Khan’s sister. I never knew Jodo was Olidad’s son.*

**(81b) Hydar & Baby Ali...**Hydar & Baby lived for sometime in the house where Zalimoon & Solomon had lived several years

before. In their search for a permanent home Hydar & Baby had moved with their growing family to several locations in Gasparillo. Among these were the Carat House that my family had occupied near the Marie Dulay Bridge, Victoria Street behind the Dymally home and near the river on Ferdinand Street, before arriving at Zalimoon's house.

Hydar was a son of Karmally. Like his father he was a master tassaman. He was perhaps the best in the country. And just like his uncle Toon Ali was before him, Hydar became a travelling musician who was a popular singer & drummer at weddings throughout south Trinidad.

Hydar also worked for the Victoria County Council as a road worker. When he eventually moved his family to his permanent home at the riverside on Semper Street, he tried his hand at minding bees for honey before finally settling on cutting trees for lumber. Their children were Monica, Timber, Lovin, Shines, Anisha & Inshan. Hydar was also a highly recognized local golfer.



**(81b) Hydar & Baby Ali**

*Mr & Mrs Hydar Ali*





*Hydar Ali*  
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**Fiat Karmally....**Hydar and his wife Baby were excellent dholak drummers. The former High Commissioner to Miami (Chan) who always had a high regard for Hydar recalled that when he was the Government Protocol Officer in Trinidad, he was paid a visit by a notable musician from Africa. They went to his (Chan's) sister's home in Bonne Adventure where in a shed, the African musician and Hydar (playing dholak) jammed all night. Years later as High Commissioner in Miami, he attended a big music festival at Miami Beach where he met the African musician – he was the highlighted person at the symposium. When he saw Chan the first thing he recalled was playing music with Hydar. He said that it was one of his most memorable experiences.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** Baby's name was Badrunisha. I always thought it was beautiful and dramatic.

**(81c) Manny & Irma Ramjohn....**After Manny Ramjohn married Irma Bhagaloo they moved into an apartment in a building on Caratal Road, immediately after Jodo's home. Irma had three children prior to their union: Margaret, Ronald & Anthony. Manny's mother Sakeena, was once a common-law wife of my father-in-law Toon Ali. She and my father's mother were first cousins. So Manny & my father were second cousins.

Manny Ramjohn worked at Texaco. He had distinguished

himself as one of the country's most outstanding runners. He had represented Trinidad at the Olympics and has the honor of winning the country's first Gold Medal at an International sports meeting. He was also a distinguished member of the Scout Association of T&T. Irma was an accomplished Crafts creator who held classes at various schools & centers. They eventually moved to a large two storey concrete house further up on Caratal Road. Here is where they raised their family. Their children were daughter Lima and sons Rolf, Radcliffe, Reeves, Manny & Dinky.

In 1962 I founded 2nd Gasparillo Cub Pack at Vos Government School. Among my Cubs was Rolph Ramjohn, son of Irma & Manny Ramjohn. Manny was my father's cousin and I saw him and Irma fairly often during my teaching days. Manny Ramjohn used to be active in Scouting in San Fernando.

When I made plans to leave for the USA, Irma & Manny approached me and suggested that they would assume leadership of the Troop because they wanted their son to continue in Scouting. They took over 2nd Gasparillo and moved its location to their home on Caratal Road. Irma Ramjohn did all the necessary courses for her role in the Movement. They eventually grew 2nd Gasparillo into one of the best troops in Gasparillo.

The Union Park Horse Racing Track, on the outskirts of Gasparillo, was replaced by the beautiful Manny Ramjohn Sports Arena, named in his honor.



*Manny & Irma Ramjohn*

**Rocheal Ramjohn Ramoutar...** *Hi, I'm Irma and Manny's granddaughter, Dinky's daughter. My Dad (Dinky) left me (died) when I was 7 years old.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *We used to call Irma Ramjohn, Margaret Mother, it's only when I was in my late teens I knew her given name.*

**Ian Maharaj...** *I was in 2nd Gasparillo in the early 80s under Mr & Mrs Ramjohn. Amazing people. Mr Ramjohn was also recipient of a Hummingbird Silver National Award.*

## Caratal Road--Part 10

**(82a) Shauffie & Doris....** After Mr & Mrs Jandool's home on the eastern side of Caratal Road, there was an empty lot of land with a track running through to the back. About fifty feet down the track was a small board house where Shauffie & Doris lived with their children. I believe that Shauffie worked in Pointe a Pierre and Doris used to sell in the market. I don't remember the childrens' names.

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...***Uncle Shauffie and Tanty Doris moved from Caratal Road to Razack Street. They had 7 children to my knowledge, Duta, Nazarine, Meme, Sherry, Georgie, Nazim and Ricky.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...***When Uncle Shauffie, aka The Sheriff, was charged-up you could hear him singing from the main road. He worked at the workshop in Pointe a Pierre and he made metal bracelets with stamped patterns*

*for us, which was all the rage at that time. Tanty Doris sold greens in the market.*

**Faize Mohammed...** *One of Shauffie & Doris daughter Meme was married to my brother Fazal. They stayed for a while upstairs by our cousin King's Café.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *I often saw Shaufie balancing his bike going up the road and wondered how he did it.*

**(82b) The Manwarrings....** The next house was where Mr & Mrs Manwarring lived. They were quiet, friendly people. He worked in Pointe a Pierre. She was a housewife. Among their children were daughters Violet & Sheila and son Mopsy. The children attended Baptiste Private School, Gasparillo Government School and High schools in San Fernando. The family eventually moved away from Gasparillo.

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *Rodney Manwarring died in a car accident in the late sixties.*

**(82c) Haliman....** Haliman was an elderly woman who lived with her son Wackay in the next house. Two children who lived with them were Pascall & Leena. Pascall played football with us. He was a goalkeeper. Later on Haliman and Wackay moved to Ferdinand Street. I'm not sure what happened to Pascall and Leena.

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...** *My grandmother told me that Haliman was Shaufie's mother. Kutun's mother (Mrs Mack) and Haliman were sisters and Kutun's father and Shaufie were cousins.*

**(82d) Mr & Mrs Ramnath.....** After the Manwarrings there was an empty lot with a track running eastwards away from Caratal Road. Mr Ramnath & his wife Poll Poophoo lived about one hundred and fifty feet down this track. He worked in Pointe a Pierre. Their house was a large board house surrounded by some shade trees. They had moved to this site in the early 1950s from Pepper (Stewart) Street.

They had ten children: nine sons Chake, Chinee, Poonool, Ramone, Barlo, Siew, Harrylal, Bhola & Moonie and one daughter Roanie. The family was well-known and well-liked in the village. They were practicing Hindus who maintained their Indian traditions and were active members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Most of the children had married and started raising their own families by the time I'd migrated in 1966.

## Caratal Road--Part 11

**(83a) Mr & Mrs Rampersad....** Mr & Mrs Rampersad lived in a board house on the western side of Caratal Road opposite the Manwarring home. Among their children were daughter Sugar and son Indar. Mr Rampersad worked in Pointe a Pierre. There was one memorable Gasparillo story concerning Mr Rampersad from during those years.

According to the story, after being very sick, Mr Rampersad was declared dead at the San Fernando General Hospital. It appears in fact, that he may have been in a temporary coma. The grieving family proceeded in holding a wake at their home...men playing all-fours & rummy, ladies serving coffee & buttered crix. In the meantime Mr Rampersad woke up at the hospital in the middle of the night. Not knowing what was going on, he walked out of the ward when no one was looking and made his way to the taxi stand. You can just imagine the scene at the Rampersad home that night, when Mr Rampersad walked out of the darkness on Caratal Road and arrived at his own wake!!



**Sharlene Ali...** *I remember hearing that story about Mr Rampersad.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *I remember Mr Rampersad's episode. He and my father were hunters. Papa said when they went hunting in the forest he said he wasn't afraid of spirits because he "dead and live back".*

**(83b) Mr & Mrs Allison....** Mr & Mrs Allison lived in a flat board house after the Rampersad home. Mr Allison was related to Mrs Buddy Ramsawak. Mrs Allison was related to Dose Dardee who used to live opposite the Munradin house. Mr Allison drew house plans for a living.

They had three children, daughters Grace & Betty and son Donald. Grace and Donald died before I migrated in 1966. I believe that Donald had drowned. I can still remember the family's black old-time car, license plate # P 4444.

**Ron Ramsawak...** *Allison Bahadur was Buddy Ramsawak's brother in law. His last surviving daughter Betty who resides in Miami was married to Sonny Ali. I believe Sonny lives in Bedeau Street. They have two sons, Curtis and Randy.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Curtis Ali and I were in Mr. Maniff Deen's Std. 5 class at Vos. Both he and his brother were*

very bright.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Betty was in the choir at the Trinity Pres.Church. She had a wonderful voice.*

**Pamela Witcombe...** *Allison was my uncle. He and my cousins and my grandmother lived in the house next to the flat board house which was at one time a little church. Later on Betty lived there with her husband and sons. My aunt died when my youngest cousin Betty was quite young. Donald, their only son and everyone's favourite cousin, sadly died at 24 by drowning. Grace, Betty and Donald had lovely singing voices. Uncle worked in Port of Spain drawing plans for people's houses. Both Betty (the only one alive), and her son Randy live in USA. The other son Curtis lives with his wife in Australia.*

**(83c) Mr & Mrs Lochan....** Mr & Mrs Lochan lived in a board house about fifty yards after Mr Allison's home, past a stretch of breakland. He worked in Pointe a Pierre. He used to help build the Hosay every year and was a Gadka player (Hosay stick-fighter). He also sometimes played a "Piawoh" and sometimes a "Bag Mas" for Gasparillo carnival. Mrs. Lochan was a housewife. Among their children were daughters Dholah, Paddue & Roamin and son Bob. I believe that Bob became a policeman in Trinidad and later on a Preacher in the USA. I also think that another son, whose name I don't remember, became a pilot.

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Lochan had two more boys, Kendrick and Ding.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Behind the Lochan house was a smaller house in the back nearer to the shop. Jaja and his two children lived there. They went to Vos. He was the brother of Miss Alma who lived in a little board house just across from the Catholic Church after the Patricks.*

**(83d) Samdaye “Black Mammie”...** Black Mammie rented upstairs of a large concrete house right after the Lochan home. There was a shop downstairs. She lived there for a while at the end of the 1950s with her children. This was before she bought land and moved to Victoria Street (See #70).

**Sharlene Ali...** *I remember going to her house to sleep with her sometimes when she didn't feel well.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *As a little boy I lived in Masahood Junction, Siparia and during the August holidays, I always looked forward to coming to Gasparillo to spend holidays at my grandmother's house. The best part was that they had a shop, so sweetie was very abundant. My grandmother also made her own red mango to sell in barrels and I would often sample the mango. She also sold goods in the market and it was a great outing to go to market with her on Saturday to Brechin Castle and Sunday*

| *to Marabella.*

## Caratal Road--Part 12

**(84a) The Pantins....** In the late 1950s the Pantin family moved into the empty lot on Caratal Road at the front of the Ramnath family home. The family at that time consisted of Mr Ragoo Pantin, his wife (who we called Nanee or Moyah) and their children, daughter Fenzie and sons Sundar, Boyie & Ramesh.

Mr Ragoo was a quiet man but Nanee was pleasant & friendly. They were well-liked by everyone. Mr Ragoo's brother Ashby, and his wife also were members of the household. Ashby was a friendly and jokey man especially with children. However he and his wife didn't have any children of their own. They afterwards built a house in the lot behind Mr Ragoo's house. Both Mr Ragoo and Ashby worked in Pointe a Pierre.

They were a strong Hindu family with many original Indian customs. They were all members of the East Indian Friendly Society. I remember their large Hindu weddings for Fenzie & Sundar. Fenzie moved to Palmyra. Sundar, his wife Doodoo and their children stayed at the home in Gasparillo. Ramesh

migrated to Canada. I don't recall what happened to Boyie. Basdaye, who was married to Met and lived in Cocoa Street, was a relative.

Over the years Mr Ragoo and Moyah showed friendship to several new people who'd moved to Gasparillo. Among them were Ram & Shirley who'd migrated from Guyana, renting the Jandool house & later on, downstairs at Toon Ali's house. Moyah acted as Marajin in the movie "Bacchanal Time".



*Nanee Pantin*

**Alisha Ali...** *I remember how fancy Mrs. Pantin was. She was always happy and laughing.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *She was a real chic dresser, and had a very likable personality.*

**Nadiera Springer...** *The Pantins.....my cousins.*

**Donna Karamath...** *Boyie Pantin also migrated to Canada. Both Mr & Mrs Pantin are now deceased. The sons Sundar, Ramesh and Boyie are also deceased. The daughter, Fenzie now lives in New Grant.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Ashby's wife Batie was my cousin, she was my father's brother's daughter.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *Nanny Pantin and family were like family with us. My father loved her sweet rice.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *The Pantins used to have big prayers at their home.*

**(84b) Terry Lord....** After the Pantin house there was a track leading away from Caratal Road. At the northern corner of this track lived one of my friends, Terry Lord. He lived with his grandparents. I didn't know of any other relatives. He was a very good soccer player and played for Santos. He was also one of the most agile athletes in Gasparillo in those days. He

liked to roller skate and was very adept at it. He was our chief dancer for our Rock n Roll show "A Pound of Heartbeats" at the Community Center and at Zenith Cinema. For the shows he did all his dancing on roller skates.

**Fiat Karmally...** *Terry Lord had a neat afro hair style, I remember him playing keep-up with Santos in front of Hoin's house.*

**(84c) Butt & Molly...** Butt & Molly lived along the track which led away from Terry Lord's home. Butt was Shauffie's brother & Haliman's son. Butt worked in Pointe a Pierre. Molly was his wife. Abidh was their son. Abidh was a good cricketer. He played windball cricket with us. Butt's mother also lived with them.

**Fiat Karmally...** *Abid, son of Butt, drowned while fishing off the east coast. He was the groundsman for Guaracara Park at Pointe a Pierre, preparing the field for big games and cricket matches.*

**(84d) Mr & Mrs Hakim Khan....**Mr & Mrs Hakim Khan lived at the end of the track. Hakim was the son of taxidriver Abass who was a son of LaulKhan. I think he worked in Pointe a Pierre. His wife Isha, was commonly known as Poopoon. She was the sister of cinema projectionist "Theater" Khan and Jodo's wife Kitty. She worked in Pointe a Pierre. Their children were daughters



Tamina, Jamila, Narida (Fee), Cherry, Hafeez & Sheri and sons Sayad, Manzool (Dads), Taj & Zainool.

Sayad and I were classmates at Gasparillo Government School. He was an epileptic and died as a boy. Tamina was their only child to be married before I migrated. She was married to taxidriver Sprang from Whiteland.



*Mr & Mrs Hakim Khan*

**Chester Madhosingh...***Mr.Hakim was a very good carpenter. His son Manzool was my good friend.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Manzool (Dads) used to work for Inland Revenue.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Dads has not changed. He played football for Santos.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Uncle Paddy's brother Hakim and his family, Uncle Butt (Albert) and their family were so close to us. We had such a large network of people and resources that were rolled out at a moment's notice to support the community for weddings, funerals, births & illnesses. No one paid for cooking food and decorating for a wedding in those days.*

**(84e) Ramnath & Poll Poophoo's children....** Mr Ramnath & Poll Poophoo's children began marrying and growing their families from the late 1950s. They began building their own homes around their parents' house in the land that stretched behind Hakim's house. Their son Chake married Jaimoon who was a daughter of Mr & Mrs Ramdeen of Charles Street. Their children were Latchmin, Omadath, Partap & Danny. I don't know the details about the other marriages in the family.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *My Aunt Jaimoon (my father's sister) & her husband Chake Persad moved from Caratal Road in the 60s and built a house next to Dad's cafe on the Main Road. Their daughter Latchmin got married to Mr Pou's son Rasheed. Omardath migrated to America in the late*

*sixty's. He lives in Queens, NY. Partap lives with his mom. Danny got married to Chewing's sister.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Tanty Latchmin who married Uncle Boyie from Charles Street lived in Tanty Ena's house in Razack Street for a while.*

## Caratal Road--Part 13

**(85a) Ayee & Zimbo....** Ayee & Zimbo were brothers. They lived with their parents in a large flat wooden house right after Terry Lord's house on Caratal Road. Their parents were an old-fashioned Hindu couple who practiced many traditional Indian customs. I think they had a large family but I just knew these two brothers. They had a large pen behind the house. They used to mind cattle and goats. I remember that Ayee had drowned in Waracka (Guaracara River).

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Ayee ran down Caratal Road and drowned himself at the pumphouse side of the river. The carat shed in their yard had some weights. I had my first experience at weightlifting there.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *The children used to mind fish. I bought different kinds of gold fish from them.*

**(85b) Mr & Mrs Mitchell...** Mr & Mrs Mitchell lived in the next house around the corner on Caratal Road. They were a respectable & quiet family. They had a music band which was based at their home. Two of their sons were Desmond and Winfield. Desmond was my student at Vos Government School.

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *Winfield and I were in Mr Maniff Deen's class preparing for Common Entrance.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Vin Mitchell used to play music. We were living opposite him. On weekends a few of the musicians used to come by him to practice.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *The Mitchell's were talented musical geniuses. They had many aquariums of fishes. Mackey, Desmond, Winfield and Derrick are still alive. Miss Irma Mitchell is 98 years and well.*

**(85c) A Grassy Trace....** Following the Mitchell home was a piece of land about twenty five yards wide. From Caratal Road, through this land, there was a grassy trace which ran southwards to connect with the end of Henry Street. Along this trace were several houses.

**(85d) Mr & Mrs Bakr....** Just past this trace along Caratal Road was a house where Mr & Mrs James Bakr lived for a while. They had two sons Lesley and Nardo. They were related to us. I knew Mrs Bakr as Jeeree Chachee. Leslie & Nardo were very

bright students at Gasparillo Government School. They were both scholarship winners under the guidance of Mr Omardeen when he taught there. They went to St Mary's College in Port of Spain. Nardo won an Island Scholarship when he placed first in the country in his Senior Cambridge Exams. I can remember Nardo riding his bike from POS to Gasparillo.

On one occasion when I was about seven years old Suge, Sham, Fatty Kamal and I had walked through the Pointe a Pierre oil refinery, and over the main road in Marabella "to see the sea". As we were crossing the main road to the train line heading towards the sea, Nardo passed by on his bike and saw us. Well when he reached Gasparillo, he told my parents. We didn't get to see the sea at that time, but it was licks like fire when we got home!! Their family eventually migrated. Jeeree Chachee moved to Ottawa, Canada where she eventually passed away. Lesley is retired and living with his wife on their ranch in Tucson, Arizona. Nardo became a renowned gynecologist in Montreal, Canada and then in California, USA.



*Mrs Jeeree Bakr*



*Nadir (Nardo) Bakr*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Another fabulous article. They all bring back so many memories. Nardo was also an accomplished photographer and he once won an islandwide photographic competition. If my memory serves me right I think it was a closeup of a young girl.*



**From Nadir Bakar (Nardo)....** *I am your 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin, Nadir Bakar, and also grew up in Gasparillo during the years about which you write. You may remember that at one time we lived in the house at the corner of Bonne Aventure Road and Henry Street, just next to your Grandfather's house on Henry Street, and across from the Police Station. The gas station now occupies the lot where our house was located.*

*I am in the process of writing my memoirs and have written a short chapter on what I remember of Gasparillo.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *One detail I forgot to mention about our trip to Marabella "to see the sea".... On our way home we had gotten a ride from Boysie Nandlal who many years later would marry my sister Hafsa thus becoming my brother-in-law....He had picked us up in Union and dropped us home.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *If you hadn't gotten a licking, you wouldn't have remembered that incident so well.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Because of Marie Dulay and Waracka and all the other areas for "dangerous" boyhood adventures, there were many sessions of licks that came our way.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Every child who grew up in Gasparillo back then, was warned about Waracka, especially during the rainy season. With vivid tales of naughty boys who never lived to tell their tales.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *This whole adventure had begun with us picking dongs behind the watchman's hut. We then moved to another tree at the end of the pasture. Before we realized it we were hiking through PaP. In those days you could do that by hiding in the bushes whenever you saw an occasional police jeep approaching in the distance. Boys from down the road were very adventurous in those days. We had two rivers and lots of open land to explore.*

**(85e) Miss Canterbury....** Miss Canterbury lived in the next house on Caratal Road. She was originally from Tunapuna and had moved to Gasparillo to minister as a Pentecostal Preacher. She lived alone. One of the families who'd moved to this house after Miss Canterbury had left was the Manny Ramjohn family. They had moved from the apartment next door to Mr Rampersad where they had lived (see #81c). This eventually became their permanent home.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember Miss Canterbury. She was a very pretty lady, I guess that attracted a lot of young men to her assembly. Off course I went there with my cousin Boysie who was a follower.*

**(85f) Mother Sam....** Mother Sam was reputed to be a woman with super natural powers. I don't know exactly where she lived but it was somewhere on Caratal Road.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Children were warned that Mother Sam had powers to tell if they stole things.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *Mother Sam lived further up Caratal Road.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *My wife Sherma says that she heard that Mother Sam used to deliver babies.*

## Caratal Road--Part 14

**(86a) Toyee....** On the western side of Caratal Road opposite the Manny Ramjohn home there was a family who I didn't really know. Although I had been generally aware of them I can only remember that one of the girls who was around my age was named Toyee. My wife Sherma says that Toyee was her school friend. I remember her from the times when I'd gone to Latousay by the Catholic Cemetary.

**Wendy Modeste...** *I believe Toyee may be Florence George's eldest daughter.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Yes Toyee, Jean, Joan, Michael, Winston & Terry.*

**Wendy Modeste...** *The last one is Junior.*

**(86b) The Sookermannys.....** The Sookermanny family lived in the next house. I didn't know much about them. I remember some of the boys though. They were very dark, thin and tall Indian boys. I believe that they attended the Presbyterian Church. They travelled with us on the bus to school in San Fernando.

**Wendy Modeste....***The Sookermanys, a wonderful family, has one sister Pamela. The guys as I can remember are Alvin, Kelvin, Calvin, Melvin, Johnson, Murray & Winston. Just two that I know of live in Trinidad. Everyone else for many years live in Canada.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Winston Sookermany lives in the house.*

**Wendy Modeste...** *I spent an evening with him, his daughter and Melvin last November when I was there. Melvin's son was there as well. He was also visiting from the US.*

**(86c) Mr Fay Fay....** The next house was where a Negro family lived. The older gentleman in the house was a man named FayFay. I didn't know much about him and his family except that he was our chief JabJab mas at the Gasparillo carnival. He was an average-sized man but on Carnival days he was an imposing figure as he led his group of JabJabs through the streets. He carried a long whip which he cracked with authority. I'd seen

several clashes on the Junction with other JabJab bands from surrounding districts. FayFay always led our Gasparillo band to victory. He was a hero to many young boys at our Gasparillo Carnival celebrations during my boyhood years. This was in the early 1950s.

**Wendy Modeste...** *The Sookermanys then the Fleming / Stewart family. Mr. Fleming was a shoemaker. My mother Thora's house is next. We moved there around 64/65.*

**(86d) Miss Derond....**Miss Isa Derond was a tall, beautiful & imposing woman. Hers was the next house on Caratal Road. It was a board house which stood about forty yards away from the road.

Miss Derond was a schoolteacher who taught for several years at Gasparillo Government School. At that time she was known as Miss Patrick. I first knew her when we taught together at Vos Government School. By this time she had already adopted the last name Miss Derond. She was a truly dedicated Infant Class teacher.

She always seemed to be particular about her appearance. We became very good friends although she was much older than me. My father said that when he was in his early teens she was a little girl in Gasparillo. Their families were friends.

She had two sons Vern & Keith who used to attend Vos. Like

Lenora Lord, Isa Derond was always supportive of me and my projects. She acted in our movie “Bacchanal Time” and a scene from the movie was filmed outside her house.



*Isa Derond (Patrick) in movie “Bacchanal Time”*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *I was never in Ms. Derond's class. But I was always a little scared of her, maybe because of her imposing height. She really was a chic dresser.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Ms. Patrick taught me in Vos. She always spoke proper English. Keith was in my class.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Ms. Patrick used to have common entrance classes at her home. Keith assisted her.*

**Phillip Allen...** *The lessons were kept in a carrat shed. She gave me some licks one evening for long division. After that, any way a long division is stated, I could do it. The funny thing is whilst giving me licks she kept calling me Winston which is my father's name. Probably she really wanted to beat daddy.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *We went there together. She did have a love for making long division long.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *She may have taught your father Moosh at Government School.*

**Phillip Allen...** *I remember the mango Teen tree in the yard. One day while we were going home from lessons, there was this girl whose name was Marva. It started raining and I attempted to shelter under her umbrella. To this day I can't remember what I said or did but she cracked me a few umbrellas.*



**(86e) The Rogers....** Mr & Mrs Rufus Rogers lived next door to the Hem Lees on Caratal Road where they raised their ten children. Their history goes back for several generations in Gasparillo. The Rogers, Raphaels, Alexanders, Hillaires, Thomp-sons, Baptistes, Neptunes, Dougans/Lords, Hills are all one Gasparillo family.

The eldest daughter Merle was the Principal of St. Gabriels School. Both she and her sister Daurn, wife of Rupert King, were former teachers at Caratal RC School.



*The Rogers House*



*Mr & Mrs Rufus Rogers*

**Dennis Rogers (for the Rogers Family)...** *Our father Rufus Rogers, was born 106 years ago and grew up with his maternal grandmother, Mrs. Anora Spencer-Baptiste on Caratal Road, Gasparillo. Their home which was built in 1837 was located south of the Catholic Church and was bounded by the properties of Tanty Millie and Flemming. Rufus married Ominia Skeete, of Tortuga, and they raised their ten children in that house.*

*Rufus Rogers worked as a sailor on vessels plying between Trinidad and the British West Indian islands, Alabama and*

*New York. As his family grew, he took a job as a welder and fitter with the Trinidad Leasehold Limited in Pointe-A-Pierre (later known as Texaco). He retired in early 1970s and migrated to the USA.*

*Over the years he worked as a butcher, baker, carpenter, welder, sailor, builder, musician, artist, gardener, and a wannabe comedian for his children. Ominia Rogers, Besides being the home-maker was also a gardener, interior decorator, florist, baker, mother, and care-giver.*

*Daddy extended the house and Mummy kept a Trinidad style country flower garden. In order to supplement the family's income, our parents maintained a small farm at the back of the house rearing pigs, cows, chickens and ducks. Daddy built four large pig pens holding in excess of 100 pigs. At Christmas, Easter, and at other times of the year, Rufus Rogers the butcher, would slaughter pigs and sell the meat. Behind the house he also maintained a sizable garden of fruits and vegetables and purchased van loads of bananas to supplement the pig feed.*

*On Caratal Road we grew up next door to the Hemlees, who had eleven children with ages that were closely aligned to ours. We have great memories of playing together in our large yard. All the children attended schools in the village. Everyone knew each other and parents looked out for each other's children.*

*Each dry season one or two sports/athletic events were*

held in the village. Among the favorite events were the 100 yard race, bag-race, egg-and-spoon race, thread the needle, 400 hundred yards, three-legged race, roller or bike-rim race, the one mile run, the four by four relay, and the 20 feet high "greasy pole" with a ham tied at the top. Our family competed against the Hemlees in individual events and teamed up with them for the relay races. We all had lots of fun and together we would win quite a number of prizes.

Drinking water was often supplemented by rain water off the roof and collected by makeshift spouting into drums or water fetched from community "stand pipes" or by journeying with box carts and "half barrels" in search of potable water that was reserved mainly for cooking and drinking.

One year there was a fire at our wooden house. Our screams alerted the neighbours who rushed over and helped save the house. Our neighbours on Caratal Road proved that we were truly growing up in a place where "it takes a village to raise a child". We were truly coming of age in a time of togetherness and innocence.

Christmas time at the Rogers household was the best. For one thing, Daddy was born on Christmas Day and we all got to sit together at the "big people table" when the family gathered for the Christmas dinner. All the delicacies including roast pork, and ham were available. After dinner there was the traditional Christmas drinks, sorrel,

*ginger beer and shandy for the kids and puncha crème and home-made wine for the adults. There were also apples and grapes which were only bought at Christmas time. To this you must also add the smell of newly varnished furniture, new curtains, and the obligatory Christmas plastic table covering. The table cloth had a special oil-based smell which to me was unique to Christmas. The house was decorated with balloons and a home-made Christmas Tree hand painted in silver and white. After church, the members of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO), of which the older girls were members, stopped at the home for Christmas morning breakfast consisting of home-made bread, ham, and pudding. Our parents made Christmas very special. We each got only one present and to this day we can recall many of them – dolls for the girls, tops and or “caps guns” for the boys, and jigsaw puzzles and board games to be shared by all. It was also a time to enjoy each other’s company and to welcome relatives and family friends.*

*Throughout the year my grandmother was a regular visitor to our house on Caratal Road. However, each year our Christmas day ended with the entire family walking over to our grandmother’s house in Happy Hill, about two miles away, so that my Daddy could visit and spend some time with his mother, Mrs. Hilda Baptiste-Thompson, on his special day.*

*The Rogers family left Gasparillo in the early 1960s. However, we are one branch of a large networked family*

*with deep roots in Gasparillo. Among our many aunts, uncles, and cousins in the area are the Alexanders, Baptiste, Dougans, Hilaires, Hills, Neptunes, Raphaels, and Thompsons. If you carry any one of these surnames the odds are we are related. Gasparillo is a part of our DNA and we have grandparents and great grandparents buried there.*

*Life in Gasparillo of the 1940s to early 1960s was mostly rural and simple. We still reminisce about the movies we saw at the twenty-five cents Saturday matinee at the Zenith cinema.*

**(86f) The Hem Lees...** The Hem Lee family lived in the flat house after Miss Derond. They were a mixed-race family. I think they attended the Catholic Church. I knew some of the younger people in the family. Some of them were members of the Catholic Youth Organization (CYO). One of the children, Oswald Hem Lee, was my student at Vos Government School. Later on he became a Member of Parliament.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Ann Hem Lee was my French teacher at San Fernando Government Secondary.*

**Alisa Jankie...** *Did Mr Hem Lee have a cocoa estate somewhere in Gasparillo?*

**Arlene Francis...** *That estate is overgrown in Number 10.*

*I'm not sure if it was a cocoa estate but it did have cocoa trees and plenty citrus and provisions.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *Mr Hem Lee senior worked at Texaco and rode his bicycle to work. He would come by my grandmother's shop afterwork to catch up and discuss the news before heading home. I believe he later moved up to San Fabien with his family, still maintaining the home near the church.*

**Wendy Modeste...** *Next to us were the Hem Lees, Mama and Papa Hem Lee, as everyone lovingly called them, with their children. The ones I could remember were Zita, Aquí, Helen, Marie, Candi, Mikey, Lessey, Bertrand, Evans, Nora, Joanne and Edwin (Diver) who still lives in the house. Oswald Hem Lee's family lived in Springland. Zita Hem Lee's daughter is a Magistrate in Trinidad.*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *The Hem Lee boys from Springlands were good sports men. One of them, Mervin was a guitarist with the Mitchell's. Victor was a cyclist with the Joseph boys. George & Oswald were the backbone of Springland United. The last son whose name I can't recall was an athlete with Texaco S C.*

**Wendy Modeste....** *Hugh Hem Lee, the last son, was an Academic Scholar. He attended Presentation College and won Scholarships to study Microbiology/Chemistry. He does Clinical Research and lives in New Jersey. Oswald lived in Springland until the 80s, when he built his home*

*on Caratal Road. Before becoming an MP he was a teacher.*



## Caratal Road--Part 15

**(87a) Mr & Mrs Deonarine Maharaj...**The Deonarine family lived in a two storey house on the eastern side of Caratal Road just before Darneaud Street. The family lived upstairs. Downstairs to the house was a shop. I can't recall the childrens' names except for one son Sam and one daughter Vera.

As boys, Sam and my brother Suge were good friends. I remember going by them briefly on one occasion with Suge. I think that as a young man Sam had migrated to England and then returned home. Vera was a quiet, pleasant girl. After high school she became a teacher. We taught together at Vos Government School for a couple of years. I remember a brother who was younger than Sam. I also remember a sister who was older than Vera. She was married to a taxi driver named Shirley. They lived on the Bonne Aventure (main) Road on the hill just after the Jophar family.



**(87a) Mrs Maharaj**

*Mrs Maharaj*  
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**Ian Maharaj...** *Sam is my father and Vera is my aunt, both still alive. Sam still lives at the location. There were 14 siblings in all. I have limited knowledge of my grandparents as they died before my birth. My grandfather was Deonarine Maharaj and my grandmother was Chanerwattie Maharaj aka Popo. Their children were Sam Maharaj, Kenrick and Darum Deonarine (they reside in Canada), Chandrick died a few years ago and Krishna died around 1974/75. Then we have Basmattie aka Chin, Gene, Vera, Vashti (Texas) and Indra (Canada). Deceased are Lilla, Rosey and Naan....I remember as a young boy watching “Bacchanal Time” with my father. He showed me places in Gasparillo where some of the movie was filmed. A part was filmed just opposite our house from what he said.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Sam Deonarine was a very good friend in my early years at Gasparillo Government School. Sam, Bobby (Nandlal) and I would go up to the Nandlal place (next to the community centre) most Fridays after school. There was an abundance of fruits on the land and we would feast on the fruits. Sometimes we would go to Sam’s house. In later years I met up with Sam a few times while Caryl and I lived in Freeport. Again with Bobby we met Sam at a bar in Marabella one afternoon. We all spent a few hours reminiscing about those days. With a few beers of course.*

After the Deonarine home, Darneaud Street ran eastwards off the Caratal Road.

**(87b) Sacred Heart Catholic Church....**The Sacred Heart Catholic Church of Gasparillo is situated on Caratal Road immediately after Darneaud Street. During my years in Gasparillo, several of our family friends were members of the church. We played against their CYO football team several times. I had been inside the church on one occasion for a funeral.



**(87b) Sacred Heart Catholic Church CYO**

*Sacred Heart Catholic Church CYO Football Team*

**(87c) The Josephs....** The Josephs were a quiet respectable family who lived in a two storey concrete house right after the Catholic Church. Mr Joseph worked in Pointe a Pierre. Mrs Joseph was a housewife. Their four children who I knew were three sons

Lloyd, Clemmy & Babes and one daughter Kathleen. The three boys had different personalities. Lloyd was quiet, Clemmy was serious and Babes was the cheerful one. Their sister Kathleen was a quiet friendly girl. I think they all attended Gasparillo Government School and then moved on to Secondary schools.

Lloyd & Clemmy attended St Benedicts College in La Romaine. Because of travelling complications to get to La Romaine, Mr Joseph bought racing bikes for them to ride to school. Their cousin Errol, who lived in Union, also attended St Benedicts so he joined in. Because of their daily rides to and from La Romaine they developed great skills and strengths in cycling. Lloyd, Clemmy & cousin Errol became distinguished award-winning cyclists in Trinidad & Tobago. I believe that eventually the brothers all worked for Texaco in Pointe a Pierre. I also think that Kathleen got married and raised a family.



*Lloyd Joseph*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *Gasparillo has a rich history of great sports personalities. My father was a competitive cyclist in the 1960s. Two of the highlights of the year were Texaco's Southern Games in Guaracara Park and the Easter Cycling Grand Prix at the Arima Velodrome. Apart from going to see the internationals duke it out with the local cyclists, we also cheered the Gasparillo lads flying the National Colours - Lloyd Joseph and Anthony*

*Commisiong. The tradition of Gasparillo producing great national cyclists continues with Nicholas Paul, the current World Record holder in the Flying 200m Sprint.*

**Wendy Modeste...** *The Joseph family also has two other sons Keith and Ken. Babes real name is Oliver.*

**(87d) The Catholic Cemetery....** The Catholic Cemetery is on the other side of Caratal Road from the Joseph home. My only real connection there was for Latousay every year. In the Catholic Church it is called All Souls Day and is observed one day after All Saints Day at the Gasparillo Cemetery near the Anglican Church.

On those nights in November, all the graves in the cemetery were cleaned of bushes and lit up with hundreds of candles. Most of the villagers came out to the cemeteries, especially the young people. Every year Latousay, we had two nights of liming at the Anglican and Catholic cemeteries.

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *A lot of the Catholic Church goers, who lived out on the main road had to walk up Ragoobar Street to get there for Sunday service. I used to admire how well they were dressed.*

**(87e) The De Freitas Home....** The first house after the Catholic Cemetery is where Carmen De Freitas and Leroy Wise lived. Sometime around 1958, Carmen's daughter Merle was murdered

in Mr Madul's front yard in Charles Street (see Charles St, Part 1 #52d). Leroy was Merle's brother.

**(87f) Severino and Beatrice (Prosper) DeFreitas....** The late Severino and Beatrice (Prosper) DeFreitas home was next to the Joseph family home. Their children were Mabel Guy, Harold, Lola Chang-Kit whose first husband was Roy Fritz, Frank, Sybil, Valentine (Errol) and Rommel.





*Severino & Beatrice De Freitas*

All are deceased except Valentine who lives in San Fernando and Rommel who lives in Port of Spain.

The family land had different types of vegetables, fruits and spices. Severino also raised pigs, fowl, ducks and turkeys. The siblings had over 28 children as well as additional children that Frank adopted. A few years after Beatrice died Severino married Miss Carmen who is also deceased.



*Left: Lola; Right: Winston Anthony Fritz, age 13....1965  
(Confirmation picture at Gasparillo Catholic Church*

## Church Street—-Part 1

Church Street runs from Caratal Road just after Miss Baptiste Private School to Bonne Aventure Road by Lakhan/Conrad Parlor. It becomes King Street on the other side of the main road.

**(88a) Miss Agnes....** Miss Agnes was an elderly Negro lady who lived alone in the house on Church Street next to the Baptiste Private School. It was a dilapidated board house with an open, no-rail gallery to the front. From what I recall she lived alone and never had any visitors. I don't remember seeing her talking with anyone or walking out on the road. I remember that she had no teeth and seemed to talk quietly to herself as she pattered around the yard or as she sat alone in her gallery. Her dress was old and dark-colored and her head was always tied with a cloth wrap and crowned by an old hat. Many were the stories we children created about her. The truth is that she was an old lady who lived alone and had no problems with anyone. Someone like Miss Agnes would have had many great stories to tell about bygone times in Gasparillo.

Radcliffe Ramjohn... *That house is still there. Someone else lives there now.*

**Kamalo Deen**...*I know the house you mean. It replaced Miss Agnes' older house.*

**(88b) Miss Eastlyn**.... Miss Eastlyn lived across the street from Miss Agnes. She was a giant of a woman. She was so tall and strapping that she was often referred to by the nickname "Horse". She had a loud voice. When she talked, everyone listened. But she was a friendly and well-liked woman. I never knew her husband.

She had a daughter named Margaret. During the 1960s Margaret migrated to England. She studied and worked as a nurse. Eventually she married and settled there. Besides raising a family, Margaret became very active in social work and community activities in London. There was another young lady who lived at Miss Eastlyn's home in those days. Her name was Monica. I don't know how she was related or what became of her. I think that Miss Eastlyn was related to one of my students at Vos, Vera Frances, (see Caratal Road – Part 6, #78e...Miss Brooks).



*Margaret Stewart....Miss Eastlyn's daughter*

**(88c) Mr & Mrs Natty....** After Miss Eastlyn, on the same side of the street, there was an empty piece of land. A trace ran through it leading to where Mr Natty lived. He lived there in a small board house with his wife and children. I think he and his wife did gardening. He was a tall, strong man and was a regular mas player for Gasparillo Carnival as a Piawoh.

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *Natty was chief gravedigger in Gasparillo.*

**(88d) Mr & Mrs Polo....** After the trace there was a concrete house where the Polo family lived. They were a very quiet and respected family in the community. Mr & Mrs Polo were both members of the East Indian Friendly Society. They had several children. One of the boys, Roy, was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School. He later became a member of the T&T Police Service.

Mr Polo owned a truck with two huge metal water-tanks. He had a contract with the Government to deliver water to areas in Victoria County where there was no pipe-drawn water. I remember that he filled the tanks with water from a large pipe at the Gasparillo Market. This contract provided a good income to his family.

While I was still a boy, I recall one very tragic incident involving this family. One of the bigger boys in the family was killed when Mr Polo's water truck accidentally rolled back on him in the yard, pinning him against a wall. This might have been in the late 1950s.

## Church Street—-Part 2

**(89a) Mr & Mrs Manchoon....** After Miss Agnes' house, on the same side of the street, there was a large empty lot before the road makes a sharp turn. The first house just after the turn is where Mr & Mrs Manchoon lived with their children. He worked in Pointe a Pierre. She was a housewife. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society and were practicing Hindus. Among the children at their home were a girl named Molly and a boy named Baytah. There was a track between their house and the Ramoutars. We used to pass there from school to get to the long mango tree in front of the Anglican Church.

**Azam Mohammed...** *Uncle Malo I don't remember Molly or Baytah but there were other Manchoon boys that I grew up with, Basdeo, Krishna, Sato and Kenrick.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I remember Basdeo from later on. Molly & Baytah may have been relatives.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *We are very close friends with Krishna Manchoon. He is married to Doreen Samsoundar from the main road.*

**(89b) The Dougans....** The Dougans moved from their original homesite on the main road between Bolo's home and the Sookbir shop (See Post #36). That plot was being cleared to develop as a business site. They acquired a lot of land at the southeast corner of Church & Simon Streets where they built a two-story house. Some of the land they cleared was the lash patch on the Government School hill.

**Wayne Moore...** *I am a Dougan who grew up on Church Street. Now that is true true history.*

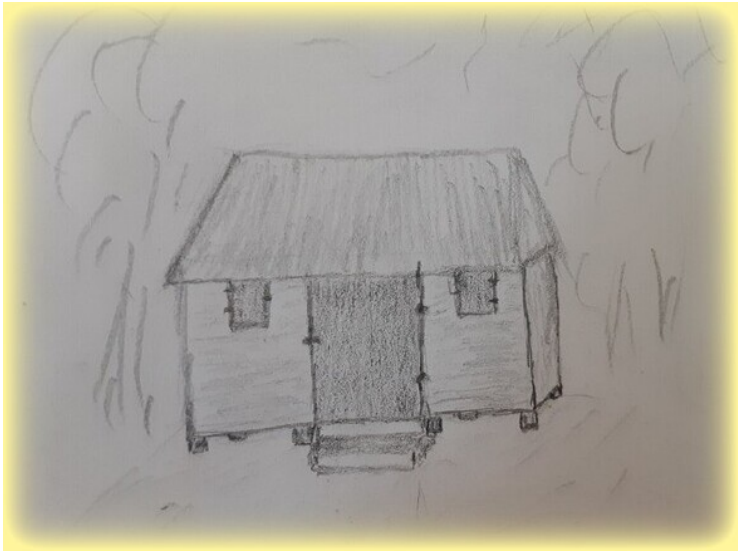
**(89c) The Ramoutar Family....** Mr & Mrs Ramoutar lived in a house next to the Manchoons. They were simple hard-working people. They were practicing Hindus and were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Among their children were sons Jayah and Taynah. Both worked in Pointe a Pierre. They both caddied at the PaP Golf course. Taynah became an avid golfer. After they married, and as their families grew, Taynah & Jayah built their own homes next door to each other on this location.

**(89d) Mr McFee....** Mr & Mrs McFee lived in a tiny shack down the hill from the Ramoutars. Their shack bordered the cemetery.



Both of them were heavy-set people. Mr McFee was a tall, giant of a man. They were a very mysterious couple who kept mostly to themselves. Rumor, among our school-friends, had it that they practiced Obeah. They had no children or other relatives who I was aware of. I don't know if he worked anywhere although he went up for elections as a member of the Butler Party in the 1950s. He got only about fifteen votes.

As children we always wondered about how those two big people could fit in that small shack. Our childhood imaginations used to run wild with explanations. One was that the hut was just the entrance to an underground chamber which connected to some of the graves among which they had built a huge and elaborate underground home... Children really do have limitless imaginations!! One fact however is that Mr McFee grew up there. I was told by several of the older residents that his father was one of the popular horse-cab drivers in early Gasparillo.



*The McFee House*

**Phillip Allen...** *Mr McFee also had a huge old car in the yard. I think it was dark green.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *He was always well dressed in either a black tweed or white suit.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *During all my years using the short cut from the school to my house on Caratal Road, I rarely ever saw them. Next to the Anglican Church was a sour cherry tree which I used to enjoy.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Mr. McFee's full name was*

*GUSTAVUS McFEE. I remember his election flyers.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Who could forget McFee and his POP (People Obeah Party). He had some great mangoes in his yard for those who were brave enough to venture there.*

**(89e) Government School grounds....** Across Church Street, from Simon Street to the Bonne Aventure (main) Road, was the Gasparillo Government School compound. When I was a child, up the hill, before the Dougans built their home, was the lash patch and pingwing (manicou fig) patch. East of the lash patch, bordering Simon Street on the north and the Police Sargeant's house on Henry Street, was our school ground. Opposite Church Street from the McFees was the school garden where we used to plant vegetables. Between the schoolyard and the garden were the school toilets. From there to the main road were several long mango trees.

## Pepper Street.

The street named Stewart Street today, used to be Pepper Street in my time growing up in Gasparillo. It used to be a tiny gravel road back then with few houses. Pepper Street was directly across the Bonne Aventure (main) Road from the Gasparillo Government School's main entrance. On the western corner of the street was the home of Mr Took Took and family. (See # 51b). On the eastern corner of Pepper Street was an old board house when I was a student at Government School. This was the home of Ma Jadoo who was the ancestor of several early Gasparillo families. The house has since been removed (See # 51c). I knew only two families who lived inside Pepper Street.

**(90a) The Noor Family....** I remember Mr Noor as a small man. I think that he used to mind animals because I recall him carrying bundles of grass. His wife was a short, fattish lady. I don't know how many children they had. I remember a skinny dark boy who may have been a son. I was also told by someone that Ming Pilling (who I'd mentioned in #40) was their son but I'm not sure about that.

**(90b) The Ramnath Family....** Mr Ramnath, his wife Poll Poophoo and children lived in a flat board house. He worked in Pointe a Pierre and they planted garden and minded animals. They were practicing Hindus and often had prayers. In the mid-1950s they moved to Caratal Road. (See #82d).

## Gasparillo Police Station.



*Gasparillo Police Station*

In the early years, Gasparillo & the surrounding areas were served by a small Police Post. This Police Post was located on Harmony Hall Road at Gasparillo Junction. It was in the approximate location of where the hardware is today (See #64b... Harmony Hall Road—Part 5). As the community grew, mainly because of the oil refinery in Pointe a Pierre, the Government

decided to build a new Police Station. The site chosen for the new Police Station was an empty lot at the northwest corner of Henry Street & Bonne Aventure (main) Road. At the time it was being used mainly as a playground by the children of the Gasparillo Government School.

The new police station was completed around 1947. It was a beautiful, government-styled building which faced the Bonne Aventure (main) Road. There was a paved yard at the back on Henry Street with a large gateway for vehicles. On one side of the yard was a stall for a couple of horses and a weights room where the policemen could exercise. I remember that one of my relatives, Mr Majeed Sadeek from Preysal, who was a teacher for a while at Gasparillo Government School in the late 1950s, used to lift weights there. Beyond the yard there were concrete steps and a long walkway up a hill to the Sargent's House. Among the early sargents, who were stationed there, were Sgt.Puckerin & Sgt.Harris. The sargents' families became part of the community while they lived at the Sargent's House. Their children attended Gasparillo Government School.

In the old days the police were not the same as now. People were different. Crimes were different. The police never carried guns. A police chase or an arrest in the village was rare and became a matter of much discussion among the villagers. Police vehicles were mostly bicycles. Most times the policemen walked.

I had been inside the station on only a few occasions. Once was when we received a phone call from my brother Boyie in England. My parents spoke. We just listened. I'm sure the younger folks won't understand this, but the truth is I had never spoken on a

telephone until I first arrived in New York in 1966. I was 21 years old at the time and had been a schoolteacher for four years yet I had never talked on a phone. How times have changed! One other thing I remember from my childhood was that we used to go to the back of the Sargent's House to pick sticking cherries from the large tree there.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *You know when you mentioned that you never spoke on a phone until you reached NY, that was common. I remember the night I arrived in NY, I went to wash my hands. It was common to have taps labeled "Hot" and "Cold" in Trinidad, which both released cold water. That night I turned on the "Hot" water tap just like I normally do in Trinidad and got scalded by 120 degrees water. That was my first shocker in NY! Many more came before I got acclimatized. I remember many of the things you mentioned about the Police Station. I had to go there a couple of times when the goat ended up in the pound.*



## Henry Street—Part 1

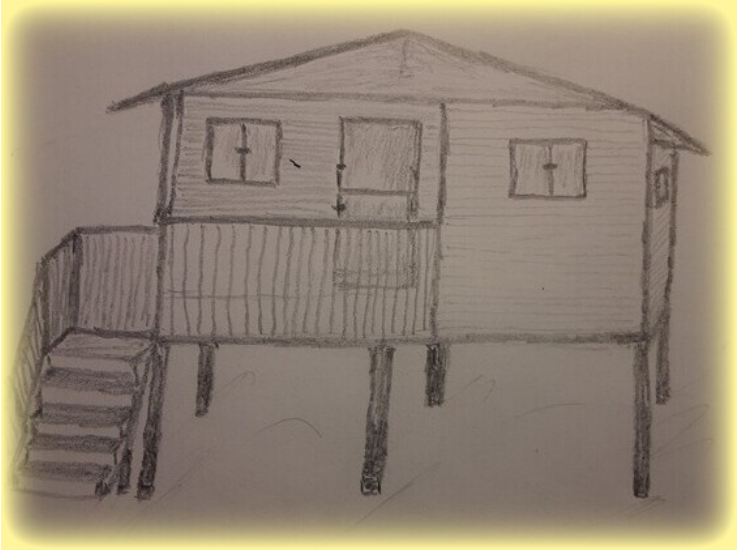
**(92a) Sam & Moosook....** In the two lots of land where the Gas Station now sits was the home of my father's cousin Sam. When I first knew him, he lived there with his sister Moosook and her baby daughter Zahida. I've learned that at one time their brother James also lived there with his wife Geeree and sons Leslie and Nardo.

My father's father was Jhoom Allaudin....Jhoom's father was Abdool....Abdool had an out-of-marriage son who was named Abu Bakr.... Among Abu Bakr's children were Sam, Moosook & James. Eventually James and his family moved to a house on Caratal Road (see #85d). Moosook moved with her daughter to a home on the Bonne Adventure (main) Road. (See #42....From Victoria Street to Marajhin). Zahida and my wife Sherma were best friends as children.

Sam was very hard of hearing so, as was common practice in Trinidad, he was given a nickname. He became known by everyone as "Deafy Sam". He was a tailor and practiced his trade

from the front gallery of his small board house. At the front of the house was a large almond tree. The next house on Henry Street, from Sam's home, was my grandfather's house where my cousin Fazal lived. He and I were in the Infant's Class together at Gasparillo Government School. In one of those early school days I had left the schoolyard and walked past the police station and up Henry Street to meet Fazal at home. Instead of walking back to school with him, we'd ended up going to catch fish in the Bobeeland rice cola behind their house. Well the adults soon found out, so after some licks, everyone was alerted to be on the look out for us "breaking beesh". Afterwards whenever I tried to go to my aunt's home to meet Fazal, on mornings before school, Deafy Sam would stand in his gallery waving his long tailoring ruler at me and directing me back to school. As a child I was really afraid of him. It helped to keep us in school though.

There was a popular joke about Sam that everybody knew.... Sam was hard of hearing and he had a good friend named Ralph who was also hard of hearing. One day Sam was in a taxi heading home from San Fernando. When the taxi reached by the Library Corner he saw Ralph across the street. Sam shouted through the window, "Ralph.... You going home?" Ralph shouted back, "No.....Ah going home." Sam shouted back: "Okay....I thought you was going home!"



Sam & Moosook's House

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *I don't know the relationship, but Mammy said that Sam and Moosook were her family on her father's side. A few times we'd visited them in Cocoa Piece where they had moved. I knew Sam when he was old and seemed more like a character from a Western film. He always ended whatever he was saying with "this, that, the other." Zahida had a son named Perry who was at Vos with us.*

**From Nadir Bakar (Nardo)....** *I am your 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin, Nadir Bakar, and also grew up in Gasparillo during the years about which you write. You may remember that we lived*

*in the house at the corner of Bon Aventure Road and Henry Street, just next to your Grandfather's house on Henry Street, and across from the Police Station. The gas station now occupies the lot where our house was located.*

*I am in the process of writing my memoirs and have written a short chapter on what I remember of Gasparillo*

**(92b) Mona Mootoosingh....**In the mid 1950s the two lots were bought by Mr. Mona Mootoosingh. Sam's board house was flattened and replaced by a large two-storey concrete house on the lot nearer to Henry Street. The Mootoosingshs moved-in upstairs. They opened the gas station on the next lot. They also rented out a doctor's office downstairs to the house. I think that the first doctor to occupy the office was Dr. Mike. After he left, the office was occupied by Dr. Armoogam.

The Mootoosingshs also employed a gentleman who we knew by the names "Zotan" and "TaTa Boy". He had lost all his front teeth so this affected his speech. "TaTa Boy" was his way of referring to himself as "Saga Boy". That's how he got his nickname. He was mentally challenged but very peaceful, still some children were afraid of him. I remember him playing mas on Gasparillo carnival days. It was a good opportunity for him and several of our braver youths to earn some extra cash from spectators. He also walked around on weekends selling ice blocks from a hand cooler. He would shout out "Plocks! Plocks!" as he walked from street to street.

**Kenrick Brooker....** *What I remember about Zotan was the way he walked like he is in a walking race.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen....** *Zotan, the Ju Ju warrior. He was a nice guy. We had so many flamboyant characters in Gasparillo. They really enhanced the mosaic of the village.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein....***Dr Armoogam was our family doctor, and when he eventually moved his practice to Mucurapo Street, San Fernando we remained his clients. His son is now an eye specialist at Gulf View Medical and said recently that at least one person tells him every week they were his father's patient.*

## Henry Street—-Part 2

**(93a) Jhoom Allaudeen....**The next house in Henry Street belonged to my father's father, Jhoom Allaudeen, (my Darda). He lived there with his wife (my Dardee), his mother-in-law (my Old Nanee), his youngest son Arthur (my Chacha) & his eldest daughter Zahina (my Poophoo), with her family. It was a large two-storey house with Demarara windows and was probably a Colonial estate house that was broken down, transported and rebuilt at this site in Gasparillo. Darda kept an "open house" for his family who needed a home. We too had lived there for awhile as did my cousin Fyzool Mohammed.

Dardee & Old Nanee died while I was still a baby. Poophoo's husband had died before I was born so she and her children moved into Darda's home soon afterwards. Fyzool was the only child of Darda's youngest daughter Doreen, who had died in childbirth. His father had migrated to the US soon afterwards. Fyzool lived with Darda & Dardee for a number of years before going to live with our Uncle Allan's family in San Fernando. Another of Darda & Dardee's daughters Minnie, was married to

Ramjohn. They were living & raising their family in Usine Ste. Madeline.

Darda was the Imam of the Gasparillo Jamaat before my father Imam Zool Deen. He was the teacher of the childrens Maktab (school) and initiated several programs like Ramadan caroling for the Jamaat youths. Like my father, Darda was loved and respected by his Jamaat members and the people of the community. He had very strong ties to Gasparillo, San Fernando & PrincesTown.

He'd owned and lived in several locations in San Fernando where he'd operated a butcher stall at the San Fernando Market. He'd also owned properties in Princes Town & Gasparillo and a cocoa estate in Tableland. He was a founding member of the Trinidad Muslim League, and the founder with Mr Petit Ali of the Gasparillo East Indian Friendly Society. He was also an advisor to several other organisations in the Gasparillo/San Fernando area.

As a young man he had visited the Empire State Building in New York soon after its opening. His name is registered in the records of Ellis Island in New York. My Darda, Jhoom Allaudeen, was a well-loved & respected person in the Gasparillo/San Fernando community. I was a student at the San Fernando TML Primary School when he passed away in 1956. At the time he was only sixty four years old.



**(93a) Mr & Mrs Jhoom Allaudeen**

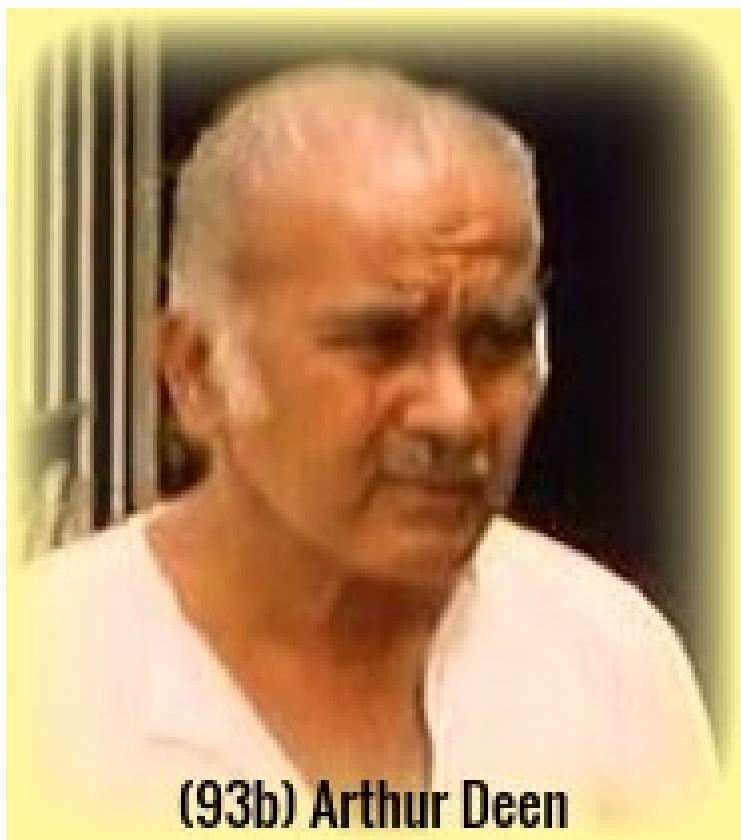
*Mr & Mrs Jhoom Allaudeen*  
554



**Shamshu Deen...** *May 16 is the death anniversary of our grandfather Joom Allaudeen who died in 1956. He was born in 1892 and attended Harmony Hall CM School.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I remember Puphoo (Zahina) but can vaguely remember our Darda.*

**(93b) Arthur Deen....** Arthur was Jhoom Allaudeen's youngest son and my father's youngest brother. He lived at the house in Henry Street. In his earlier years he was a Scout in San Fernando where like his father he was active in several organisations. In Gasparillo he was a founding member of the Gasparillo Islamic Group and was its Adult Leader for a number of years. He was also a member of the East Indian Friendly Society and the Gasparillo Sports Club. Arthur Deen never married and had no children. He was a favorite with all the youngsters in his circle. He was once the Resident/Caretaker of the St. Joseph TML Primary School before transferring to the same position at the San Fernando TML Primary School Primary School while it was located on Prince Albert Street. Arthur played the role of Maraj in the movie "Bacchanal Time."



*Arthur Deen*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Arthur Chacha was always a great influence on us young ones.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Our dear Arthur Chacha was the Muezzin of both the Jinnah Memorial Mosque in St Joseph*

*and the Prince Albert Street Mosque in San Fernando. He was an integral part of our lives.*

**Zenobia Doodnath...** *Before Arthur Mamoo died I visited him at Prince Albert Street mosque.*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *Your Arthur Chacha gave me a Holy Quran for my wedding gift and that's the only Quran I still read today. I can't think of any other gift that I have had for 40 plus years.*

**(93c) Zahina & her children....**Zahina was my Poophoo (aunt). Her husband had died as a young man leaving her with a large family to support. They eventually moved into her parents home in Henry Street. Her children grew up at this Henry Street house. As the years passed they all went on to their own lives and to develop their own families.

Ruby married Debideen and moved to Cedar Hill. Pearlie married Ram and moved to Williamsville. Zalimoon married Solomon and lived in several locations in Gasparillo. Farida stayed in Gasparillo with her mother. Kamroon married and moved to San Juan. Begum married someone up near POS.

Imran was a tailor and after working for Gabes Store on High Street for several years he migrated to England. Imkhan stayed at home and worked at the Credit Union. He never married. I remember that he was ill as a young man and had one of his lungs removed.

Abzal worked at Pointe a Pierre. He married Seeta and eventually moved to Monkey Town, Barrackpore (see #95...Island in the Jheel). Before he began working at Pointe a Pierre Abzal had endured a cowardly knife attack from a local hooligan named Fergie. He was assaulted near the Zenith Cinema. He received several cuts along his back and spent some time at the San Fernando General Hospital. This event had a traumatic effect on him and on our entire family.

Fazal was my closest cousin since we were young children. We spent much of our growing-up years together. As an adult he'd worked on a merchant ship for several years, traveling to several countries around the world. He eventually migrated to the USA. He was married to Carmen from Puerto Rico.



**(93c) Zahina**

*Zahina*

**Zenobia Doodnath...** *I remember a lot about that house. I grew up there for a while, going to the old police station for water since Mama had no pipeborne water in those days. I attended Gasparillo Government School and got married from that house. Your dad married me. Later I moved out to Claxton Bay.*

## Henry Street--Part 3

### WITNESS TO A MURDER....

The following is true. I've concealed the actual names of the participants to protect the families. I was approximately three years old when I was a witness to a murder.

From the time my parents were married Papa had been struggling to provide a stable and permanent home for his family. With no more than an Elementary school education, some skills he had picked up from apprenticing at various odd jobs and a driver's license, he was determined to chart a positive course for his quickly growing family. I was my parent's sixth child. Papa's latest jobs were all driving-jobs: as a chauffeur for Dr Beaubron and a delivery driver for Rahamut's in San Fernando, and as a truck driver hauling among other things, sand & gravel from Valencia. We had changed several homes through those years before he was hired in the Transport Department at Trinidad Leaseholds Limited in Pointe a Pierre. This new employment allowed us to rent one of the two apartments at the Carat house

in Gasparillo for a while and eventually to build our own home in Cocoa Street (see #5...The Carat House & #50....My Family). One of our family's final homes, before moving to the Carat house, was when we moved in to a room upstairs at my Darda's home in Henry Street. We were living there, when this incident occurred.

Next door to my Darda's home was a small wood & dirt house which stood on posts about three feet off the ground. Living in that house was a middle aged man named R..., his wife PN, the man's approximately ten year old nephew and a young girl named PH who was in her late teens. PH was PN's niece. She was brought there, from her very poor parent's home, to help her aunt with the housework. She was very pretty and very friendly to me and my cousin Fazal, who was my age and lived downstairs to us in my Darda's house. Although she did all the work in the house, PH always made time to spend with the two of us. She used to always hug us up and sing for us and have some kind of treat for us.

On the day of the incident we were sitting on the back step eating pieces of medium-hard coconut jelly that she had sprinkled with sugar and given to us. She was singing to us as she washed clothes in a half-barrel tub. She liked to sing.

I remember seeing the man R... and his nephew under an almond tree at the side of the house. He was sharpening his cutlass as he spoke to the boy. Then he peeled a piece of cane with the cutlass and handed it to the boy who took the cane and walked away. PH's back was towards them so she did not seem to be aware of them. R... stood there for a few minutes looking at her, after the boy had left. He paid no attention to me and

Fazal. Then he walked up behind her. He whispered something to her. She answered quietly without looking up and continued scrubbing the clothes. He whispered something again. This time she whispered back very firmly. Then his reply came like a hiss as he raised his cutlass. His last whisper must have alerted her. She spun quickly around as the cutlass came down. She screamed. With her scream, Fazal and I ducked under the steps and held on to each other. We didn't cry or anything. He kept chopping even after her screaming had stopped.

Then I heard another voice screaming. It was Mama screaming for me. Then my Poophoo and others could be heard shouting and screaming for us. R... walked up to the steps under which we were hiding. He was covered with blood. He didn't even seem to notice us as he climbed up and went inside. Everyone was screaming. Everyone kept calling our names. My Darda and other men rushed over. Darda pulled a sheet from the line and threw it over PH's body. They were still screaming our names. Finally Fazal and I crept out from under the steps. Mama and Poophoo rushed over screaming our names and hugging us so hard. Some of the men picked us up and carried us home next door as Mama & Poophoo followed, weeping.

The policemen came from the Station across the street. They confronted R... in his bedroom. He had changed his clothes and told the Sargeant he didn't do anything. He kept saying calmly, "I didn't do it." although his arms and face still had blood and the bloody clothes and cutlass were lying on the floor in a corner of the bedroom.

The Police Station was newly opened so this was probably the



first murder case they had to investigate. R... was tried and convicted. I believe he received the death penalty.

I'm not sure how this has affected me as I grew up. The memory has always been with me. Fazal and I seldom spoke about our recollections of that incident. Sometimes I've wondered what effects it may have had on him and how it may have affected his life.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *You've told such a vivid story of this incident. It must have been a very traumatic experience for you and your cousin. I felt as if I was seeing the drama unfold by the way you told the story. Did you ever wonder about the reason for his actions as you became older or did you just block it out? Did the adults speak about it to you? How did they handle the situation afterwards?*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I've heard that it was a big incident in Gasparillo at that time. I've been able to find out much about who & why & all the details of the act. I think it's unfair to say too much more at this late date.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *This incident aside, your memory and your memories are awesome.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *That is a horror for a child to witness. How sad for that girl though.*

**Patricia Brooker...** *My mother told me that story.*

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...** *I asked my grandfather (Sylvan) about this. He said he was about ten years when this happened and his penalty was by hanging.*

**Ann Sooknanan...** *This is so sad.*

**Marilyn Alexis...** *I suspect from just the way the world is that they were having an illicit affair and she spurned him at that time. So tragic.*

**Alisha Ali...** *Very tragic. Such a horrible end to what would have been a life of hardship for that young, pretty girl. They had her like a slave, doing all the work for free in the home.*

**Phillip Allen...** *Wow. Wow. this is the first time I'm hearing about this. Sometimes the elders would tell us about things that happened before we were born. Probably this was too scary.*

**Ann Marie Ramsundar-Radhay...** *I am so sorry you witnessed this but it is good to speak and get these things out of your system. I witnessed a murder in Couva next to where the Inshan Ali Park is. I saw a man get stabbed in the back.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Incidents like these remain embedded somewhere in your mind.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *I heard this sad story when my grandmother was relating it to her young grand daughters. She always warned us about staying with relatives. Our mother had died and we were very young and a lot of relatives wanted us to stay at their home.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Your grandmother was a smart lady. My grandmother couldn't read or write but she could read body language like an FBI expert.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I remember the incident though not as vivid as you. You and Fazal witnessed the murder. We just heard about it. Thank you again for sharing. As I have mentioned before, maybe you might decide in the future to make your recollections into a novel. It will make fantastic reading.*

**Ann Marie Ramsundar-Radhay...** *This sounds like he had his eyes on that young pretty girl and could not handle her rejection. Another friend related a similar story but that girl committed suicide.*

**Zenobia Doodnath...** *This is so sad. First time I'm hearing about it.*

## Henry Street—-Part 4

**(95a) Island in the jheel....** Along the full length of the eastern side of the old Henry Street, and towards the back to where Bobeyland began, was an expanse of rice kolas also known as jheels. The area was divided into large square jheels, depressions surrounded by dirt banks, that were filled with water for the rice plants that grew in them. About fifty yards past my Darda's house there was a high dirt embankment with a track which led about fifty yards into the middle of the rice kola to an island on which stood a large two story board house. I didn't know the people who lived there.

Just after I had started working, when I was in my late teens, I began liming with my elder cousin Abzal (Fazal's elder brother) who lived with his mother & his siblings downstairs of Darda's house. He had been working in Pointe a Pierre for a few years and was an active & founding member of BP Club. Because he was "settled", his mother, my Poophoo, had been insisting that it was time for him to get married and bring a dulahin into the house. Contacts had been made for him on a few occasions but

he had always been able to “escape”. He always claimed that he wasn’t ready yet.

On many evenings I would walk up to their home opposite the Sargent’s House on Henry Street. We spent our time liming on a large concrete wall along the street-side, opposite their home.

One evening, while we were there, a beautiful young girl came walking down Henry Street. We had never seen her before. We both stared at her in silence as she passed by. She was small and dark and very pretty. Abzal said “Good evening.” She smiled and replied softly “Good evening.” And hurried past us. I could tell that he was clearly moved by the fact that she’d answered so softly. We continued talking but his mind was absent. After a while she came walking back with a parcel in her hand. She had probably gone to Lakhan’s parlor.

As she was passing, Abzal climbed down from the concrete wall. “I could talk with you for a minute?” he asked. “You living in here?” “No,” she replied. “Ah spending holidays by mih aunt.” “What’s yuh name?” he asked. “Sita,” she said shyly. He approached her and began walking slowly with her. She stopped after a few steps and they began talking quietly. After a few minutes she handed him the parcel that she was carrying and he told me he’d see me tomorrow. I watched as he walked with her to the dirt bank where they turned down the track which led to the house on the island in the jheel. I didn’t see him the next day or the next day or the next... In fact the next time I saw him, he told me that his mother was right. He had decided that it was time to settle down, get married and bring a dulahin into the home.... Abbie & Sita eventually built a home and raised a

family in Monkey Town, Barrackpore her home village.



**(95a) Abzal Baksh**

*Abzal Baksh*



*Abzal, Seeta & Family*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *As children we spent a lot of time roaming around Bobeyland picking mangoes, sapodilla, leyley and manicou fig, walking around the embankments of the cola looking for lagoon fish and crabs. Old man Three Head Teermulliya used to pass through Tanty Ena's lot to reach his plot of riceland.*

**Nadir Ali...** *Three Head Kola!!!*

**Azam Mohammed...** *The man that lived on the island was Dan Malaya, some kind of way he was related to my friends that I grew up with, the Ballirams. From what I can remember they lived next in Stewart Street but moved*

*to Bedeau Street in the early sixties.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Abbey and Sita were always close friends to both Glenda and me. Abby never told me that he met his Monkey Town sweetheart in the jheels of Gasparillo. That's funny.*

**(95b) Baboonie Mammie....** During the first half of the 1960s there was an elderly lady who I knew as Baboonie Mammie. She was living by herself in a small wooden house on the side of the road just after the dirt bank which led to the island in the jheel. She was a friendly lady who enjoyed talking and laughing with everyone. I know that she had a middle-aged daughter who used to visit her sometimes. She was a member of the East Indian Friendly Society. After I got married I got to know her well, because she was a friend of my mother-in-law and used to visit her often.

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *I remember going by Baboonie Tanty. Sometimes I slept over.*



## Henry Street—Part 5

**(96a) Mr. Eddy Lake....** About 150 yards past the Jhoom Allaudeen house, on the same side as Baboonie Mammie's home, was a two storey board house that I remember from my childhood. Here is where one of my Darda's good friends Mr Eddy Lake used to live with his wife and children. I'd known him for only a short while, when as a young boy we would spend time visiting my Darda's family in Henry Street. My memory of him is that he was a tall, slim, dark gentleman with a shiny bald head.

One incident I seem to remember well was when there was a gathering of some kind downstairs in the front yard of his home. We the children were upstairs in the gallery. Fazal, who was one of the more wicked among us, sprinkled a few drops of water in the air and it fell on the people sitting in the front yard. Everybody looked up to see if it was beginning to rain. Mr Eddy Lake took out his handkerchief and wiped his head not suspecting where the drops came from. We hid in the gallery giggling at how it made his head shine. For five & six year old

children, that was very funny.

Years later when I was a teenager, Mr Eddy Lake's grandson Carl was one of my best friends. He was living with his parents and sisters in King Street at that time. We were members of the 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop Patrol that had won the Chancellor Flag as the top Scout Troop in the country. We had gone on several camps and hikes together in those days. After Carl's father, Mr Eddy Lake's son, died, Carl got a job in Pointe a Pierre. He eventually moved to a house on Rushworth Street in San Fernando.

**(96b) The Cuffys....** Across the Street from where Mr Eddy Lake had lived, and several years later, a family of new immigrants moved into a small house. They were Mr & Mrs Cuffy and their children. They had migrated from one of the neighboring islands. Mr & Mrs Cuffy were very hard-working people. To earn money they had begun collecting, cleaning and selling bottles. They were so conscientious in their work that their business grew quickly and provided a good living for them. They literally lived among bottles. Their entire yard & house were covered with boxes and stacks of empty bottles. Their children were all enrolled at Vos Government School. They worked alongside their parents collecting, washing & stacking bottles.

Mr & Mrs Cuffy took great pride in their children. Although to the casual observer, the home & yard might have appeared disorganized, the children were always neatly dressed and well behaved in school. I taught two of the boys at Vos, Cynell & Da-Costa. They were among the first members of our 2nd Gasparillo Cub Pack when we started the Troop at Vos Government School,

and were involved in all of our activities.

I remember when we were going on a few days camp to Blanchisseuse in the north coast in 1965. I had been fortunate to get my brother Sham, Bashir Khan (Solo) & Ralph Ramroop (Tobes) to accompany me to help oversee the boys. The bus was ready to leave at around 6:00 am. Most parents were tearfully kissing their boys and warning them to be careful. This was a new experience for the boys and their parents. The boys were going to a place where none of the parents had ever been before. Mrs. Cuffy, more than any of the others, was crying the most and begging me to take good care of her boys. Well, we had a great camp at the mouth of the Marianne River. After several days the boys returned as heroes to their families & friends. Mrs Cuffy cried again when she greeted her sons. Both Mr & Mrs Cuffy were very devoted to their children.

## Henry Street—-Part 6

Until the beginning of the 1960s Henry Street ended at a ravine that ran after the next two homes. The ravine drained into the rice kolas that used to stretch to Bobeyland. The two houses at the end of Henry Street were the homes of Mr & Mrs Mack and Mr & Mrs Fazool.

**(97a) Mr & Mrs Mack....**The last house on the eastern side of Henry Street immediately after Mr Eddy Lake was the home of Mr & Mrs Mack. They were well-known and well-liked residents of Gasparillo. They were both active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Their roots were set deeply into the activities of the Jamaat and their children and descendants had continued to carry on that involvement long after they had passed away.

Among their children were daughters Khutun (Mrs Jacob Mohammed) & Maimoon (Mrs Roy Mohammed) and sons Fayzee & Karlay. They were very hard-working people who used to mind cattle and do other jobs to support their family. I have two

distinct recollections of Mr & Mrs Mack from my early childhood that truly demonstrated their productivity. Besides taking care of their animals, they sold Indian snacks everyday from a table at the front gate of Gasparillo Government School. As students we would line up to buy their anchar, chana, sugar cakes, saheena etc.

Also Mrs Mack was pleasantly known in the village as the “dahi lady”. She made the best dahi possible. We’d look out for her on weekends when she used to pass around with a large pot of freshly made dahi which she sold by the cupful. Mr Mack was a good friend of my Darda and of my father.



*Mr Mack*

**Careen Chotalal...** *Thanks. I really like to hear about long time. I know my mom, Maimoon Mohammed, who is still alive will tell us about her growing up days and we all love to listen to her.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *I also remember Fuzzy's Nanee (Mrs Mack), everyone called her Karlay mother. She used*

*to mind goats.*

**Azam Mohammed...** *My grandfather Mr Mack and Mr Poti (See #106a) were brothers.*

**(97b) Mr & Mrs Fazool....** Opposite Mr Mack's house, at the end of Henry Street was a small two-storey concrete house where Mr & Mrs Fazool lived with their children. Mr Fazool was the son of Mr Rasool the butcher from opposite the mosque on the main road. He worked with his father in the butchering business. He owned a green van with which he conducted the business. Mrs Fazool's name was Michin.

They had three sons and no daughters. The sons were Sheriff, Kissee & Shedly. As teenagers we used to play underhand cricket together in Bobeeland. In the early years the family were all members of the Gasparillo Jamaat. The boys were regular members of the Gasparillo Islamic Group. Later on they converted to Christianity and joined the Pentecostal Church. Sometime later they all migrated.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *We bought beef from Mr Fazool on Friday. We cooked dhal and rice and curried liver on Fridays and beef soup on Saturdays. He was the trusted butcher for the Muslims in Gasparillo.*

**Kathleen Wandel...** *Sheriff and Kissee were living in Charles Street for a while and visited our shop a lot.*

## Henry Street--Part 7

**(98a) The Henry Street Trace....** Sometime in the early 1960s Henry Street was extended from its end by Mr Fazool & Mr Mack's homes to link up with Caratal Road which ran towards its north. This extended section was originally a trace which ran through the middle of a narrow valley. As children it was another area for adventure with my cousin Fazal and his friends whenever we visited "up the road".

On the eastern side of the trace was a hill which rose from the rice kolas which bordered Bobeeland. One major feature that I remember from those years was that there was a huge tamarind tree up on a hill on the eastern side of the trace. On the western side of the trace the land rose sharply from the back of the Ramnath's house (See #82d) to the back of the Mitchell's house (See #85b).

The extension added approximately 250 yards of paved roadway to Henry Street and changed it from a dead end street to an open through way. During my childhood years while it was still a trace



there were only a few homes along its distance. I remember four families who lived there in those old days.

**(98b) The Teelucks....**The Teeluck family occupied a high board house about fifty yards past Mr Mack's house. I remember hiking past their home a few times before the trace was paved over. Among their children, I remember at least two daughters and two sons. I didn't know much about them but I recall the girls going to school in San Fernando during the mid-1960s. The boys played underhand cricket with us.

**(98c) The Pantins....** A bit further up the trace nearer the tamarind tree was where the Pantin family lived before moving to their new home on Caratal Road. Theirs was a board house where the entire family lived. In the late 1950s they built a house on Caratal Road and moved there (See #84).

**(98d) Solo....** Bashir (Solo) Khan came to Gasparillo in the early 1960s. He moved in with his father and stepmother. Their home was in a small side-trace which ran off the top of the eastern side of the Henry Street extension near Caratal Road. It was a part concrete and part board house. Both his father and his stepmother were hard working people who had jobs outside their home. Bashir's mother had passed away some years before. He was related to our Princes Town family and to the Moses Karmally family (See # 80). He soon became a member of our families and a part of our Jamaat. He also became involved in all of our family activities. He'd accompanied my 2nd Gasparillo Cub Pack on a north coast camp in the 1960s. He, Sham & Ralph Ramroop went to help with the boys. I remember visiting his home on a few occasions during the 1964 -1966 period.



*Bashir (Solo) Khan*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Uncle Solo's sister is married to Uncle Hanif from Claxton Bay, Haniffa Chachi's (Gustin chacha's wife) brother. Uncle Hanif had a van and every fortnight he passed with it loaded with the latest fabric. We had a trust account with him. Uncle Solo's mother was my grandfather's (Moses) sister by another mother.*

*My grandfather was the only child from Saidwan's first marriage. Uncle Solo's mother had two other brothers. They were the second set of children and the last set was Umul Chacha and Aunt Moon group. After my great grandmother and Saidwan split, she married Karmally from Gasparillo. Over the years through marriage several families have become closely intertwined.*

**Shaffina Mohammed...** *Bashir (Solo) had three sisters, Mona who we all refer to as Bhabi, Tanty Pamela who also got married into our family and Katherine who I think lives abroad.*

**(98e) The Armoogams.....** After Solo's father's home lived the Armoogam family. I remember the man who was tall and dignified-looking. I didn't know much about them. I think Mr Armoogam worked in Pointe a Pierre. I remember seeing him walking up Caratal Road to his home. He had a daughter who attended high school in San Fernando. I believe it was Mod Sec. He also had a son who we all knew as Chanka. The son eventually married Maureen the daughter of Buddy Ramsawak.

After the extension was paved and opened for traffic, people began building houses along the roadway. Soon the trace was forgotten and the extension became just a part of Henry Street.



*Chanka & Maureen Armoogam*

**(98f) Mr & Mrs Asad Aziz....** Asad (Mabood) & Hazra Aziz and their children lived in a house next to the Teelucks (see #98b). He was the eldest son of Mr & Mrs Aziz (see #105a). He worked in Pointe a Pierre. Hazra was a housewife.

They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Mabood was also a member of Orion Sports Club.



*Asad (Mabood) Aziz*

## Simon Street

Simon Street is a short street that runs from west to east along the northern boundary of the Gasparillo Government School hill. Except for the Dougan house at the Church Street corner, the entire southern length of Simon Street borders the school compounds. In those days I was aware of only five houses on Simon Street, all on the northern side of the street.

**(99a) Miss Teresa & Neville....** There was a board house on the northern corner of Simon & Church Streets opposite the Dougans and up the hill from the Polos. I remember a quiet middle-aged Negro lady Miss Teresa and her son Neville used to live there. He was a mason who hired out for private work.

**(99b) Mr & Mrs Nabbie....** In the middle of the street was a house with a parlor at the front. Mr & Mrs Nabbie lived there with their daughter Grace and granddaughter Zinnah. They were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Mr Nabbie was a small man who wore glasses. He was a barber by trade. His wife was a short, plump woman. She ran

the parlour.

Grace was also named Nazmoon. She was in her thirties when she married a widower named Sackoor who later became the Imam of the San Fernando Jamaat. That was during the early 1960s.

Zinnah & I were classmates since we were in the Infant Department at Gasparillo Government School. She had a medical problem which caused her to be very overweight. I remember for a school Christmas concert our Standard One class did a skit on baby Jesus in the manger. I played one of the Wise men. Zinnah played Mary, the mother of baby Jesus.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Nabbie Mamoo was my grandmother's (Mrs Moses Karmally) brother. We used to buy hops bread a penny for one in his shop.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Nabbie was my grandmother's brother. He was always well dressed.*

**(99c) Mr. Olidad....** The first time I knew of Mr. Olidad and his family was while they were living on Simon Street. They were very hard-working people. He was well-known for having a marble-eye. Among us as boys, many jokes had been told about his marble-eye. I guess it's because none of us had ever known anybody with one of those before. I had also noticed that his wife had his name "Olidad" tattooed on her forearm. Their small board house was almost near the junction with Henry Street.

He had a donkey cart which he used for selling snow cones in Gasparillo & Pointe a Pierre. Everyday he would drive his donkey cart into Pointe a Pierre, where he'd make his rounds. On evenings he would park up in Gasparillo to conduct his sales. I remember that one of his locations was on the corner of Victoria Street and the main road by Mr Dadoo where he also had a vegetable stand.

Mr. Olidad & his wife had a son Jodo, two daughters Vera & Norysha and Jodo's son Karlo, who lived with them. Later on when Jodo got married he and his wife Kitty moved to Caratal Road (See #81...Caratal Road— - Part 9). Karlo moved with them. Around 1960, Olidad, his wife and daughters moved to a small house after the bridge on the south side of the main road, across from the gas station. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *I never knew that Jodo was Olidad's son.*

**Azam Mohammed...** *Olidad's wife was my father's half sister. Jodo and we were very close.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *What I remember of Olidad was that he was the man who sold press. (Nowadays the American term "snow cone" is used. But in my youth it was press.) He had a glass eye. This may sound cruel to some so I will apologise in advance. But as young boys we would say that Olidad used to wash his glass eye in the syrup. But as*



*the saying goes....boys will be boys.*

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *There was a joke that when Olidad was making the syrup, he used to throw his glass eye inside to “see” if it was sweet enough.*

**(99d) Mr King, the carpenter....** Mr King lived in the next house with his wife and children. He was a carpenter by trade.



*Mr King the carpenter's house*

**(99e) The Son Son Family....** After Olidad and his family moved

from Simon Street, the house was occupied by SonSon and his family. SonSon and his wife had just begun to raise their children. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Their sons used to play underhand cricket with us.

**Nadir Ali...** *My childhood friend and till today is Son Son's son Prakash. We used to laugh when we talked about Son Son's sons. There were six boys and three girls. Son Son's name was Jaspaul Ragbir.*

## Darneau Street.

Darneau Street runs eastward from Caratal Road just south of the Catholic Church to the Beadeau Street ASJA Mosque. Here it splits into Beadeau Street which heads east for about a half mile before turning south and Thompson Street which heads north. About halfway along its length Ragoobar Street branches off and runs into Ragoobar Lands. I didn't have any dealings with too many people from Darneau Street but two families stand out in my memory.... The Jardines and the DePiezas.

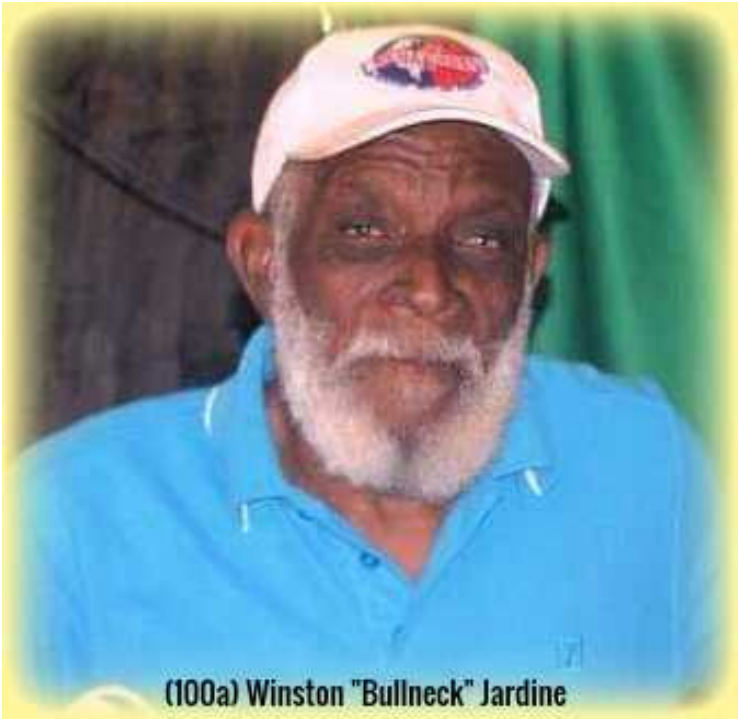
**Valmiki Ramsingh...** *Darneau Street and Lumsden Street are the oldest streets in Gasparillo.*

**(100a) The Jardines....** From since my childhood I have had a relationship with the Jardine family. At first I recall that my father and Mr Jardine were friends in the village. Later on a friendship developed between him and my brother Nurul. As Texaco Policemen they were co-workers. Then one of his

sons Winston (Bullneck) was my desk-mate for two years at Gasparillo Government School. We were friends then and remained friends over the years. Bullneck had even visited my home in New York. Bullneck was, for many years, a fireman for Texaco. I also became friends with Ellis, Selwyn and Eric. Whenever I met Eric on a visit home, we'd greet by doing a belly bounce. We were all like brothers.

I remember that in the early 1960s while I was camping in Mayaro (in those days I spent much time roaming around the country) I'd met Ellis who was living there at the time. He introduced me to a friend of his named Blacks and some of his other fishing friends and told me to seek them out if I ever had any problems in Mayaro. I never needed to seek their help though.

Ellis aka "Cobo-teeth" was a master shit-talker. Gasparillo was noted for its shit-talkers but Cobo was among the best. Whenever he "held court" among the spectators at a Sunday cricket match in the park, people would forget the game. The crowd would be massing around him. The park would be rocking with laughter. But he was not the only one. We had Fat-Dougla Frankie & Big-Belly Junior among others. Whenever they clashed and picong started to fly. Talk about fireworks!! Those were the days!!!



*Winston "Bullneck" Jardine*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *What was Bullneck's given name?*

**Kamalo Deen...** *My friend Bullneck's real name was Winston Jardine.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *Bullneck died last year. He was married to my elder sister Lystra Blackburn.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Again Malo, another memory-  
jerker. I was transported back to a time when I was trying  
to make a very important decision that would eventually  
change my life. Our brother Boyie was arranging with  
Mama and Papa for me to join him in the UK. But as you  
must remember I was not the easiest son to predict in those  
days. The decision was always mine to make but I was  
very unsure what to do. After weeks of Mama and Papa  
talking about it I planned to sit down by myself and try  
to work out what I really wanted to do. So I took myself  
off to San Fernando. Next to where Strand Cinema was  
(on Mucurapo Street) there was a cafe and bar. I found  
myself a quiet table. I had some lunch and then had a few  
beers. Out of the blue in walked Ellis Jardine. He sat with  
me and within a few minutes he sensed that I had a lot  
on my mind. We spoke at length and then he said to me  
that I should think what my life was during the past few  
years and if I was happy with what I had achieved. In a  
way I realised that my life was just standing still and not  
going anywhere. The conversation with Ellis helped me  
make up my mind. About your mention of the “shit talk”  
I can always remember when Ellis and Faye (Andrew) got  
together at Bobby’s. They could “shit talk” for hours.*

**(100b) The Depiezas....** The DePieza name is another Gasparillo name that had gained renown because of the accomplishments of one of its members. Johnny Depieza in his prime could have captured a world boxing title. I remember when Johnny used to exercise behind Vos on evenings. Some of us younger boys

used to sit there and admire his determination. Johnny could have gone on to much greatness (See #124 Boxing in Gasparillo). Theirs was a large family. I knew one daughter, Ernestine, when we were classmates at Gasparillo Government School. I got to know the other siblings later on in life.



*Johnny DePieza*





*Mrs Depieza...Johnny's Mom*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Johnny Depieza was a regular member at the recreation club. I only knew him as a person. I cannot say that he was a friend.*

**Robin Nagir...** *His Dad played guitar and sang at my dad's and his sister's wakes.*

## Gas Station to Razack Street.

**(101a) The Gas Station....** Around the mid 1950s Gasparillo got its first gas station. Mr Mona Mootoosingh bought the land at the northeast corner of Henry Street and Bonne Aventure (main) Road. He built a large concrete house and a Gas Station.

**Fayad Ali...** *The gas station came in 1954, possibly '55. I remember my father Asgar, telling me that when the gas station was opening there was a big celebration.*

**(101b) The Jagroops....** On the eastern end of the gas station a little stream (or large drain) ran. After the drain was a two-storey board house. Mr & Mrs Jagroop lived upstairs with their family. I had known their son Samuel. He was a quiet, well-behaved boy who used to be involved in one of the Christian Penticostal churches in the village. They had some other younger children but I didn't know them.

An incident had occurred at that house while I was still a child..... My Poophoo Zahina's daughter Zalimoon was recently married to Solomon and they had rented a small apartment in the downstairs of that house. While there, Zalimoon gave birth to her first baby. From what I understand, the baby was just about two weeks old when another woman living in an apartment upstairs sneaked into Zalimoon's bedroom while she was in the kitchen and stole the baby from the bed and took it upstairs. When Zalimoon returned to her bedroom and could not find her baby she became frantic and started screaming. Everybody rushed over and began searching for the baby. The police came over from the station, which was next door. It is only when the baby started crying that it was discovered upstairs. But the lady from upstairs insisted that it was her baby and refused to give it up. Although the neighbors and relatives insisted that they had never even seen her pregnant, it took a lot of insisting and police threats to return the baby to Zalimoon.

**Davis Coco P Deen...** *Jagroop was my grandmother's second sister's husband. Betty and Joseph and Andy still live at the house. They are my father's cousins. My father was among the first to buy a lot of land in Ragoobar Lands. My grandmother had a big family, the Jagroops, Nagir, Nagirdeen & Guyadeen. Uncle Tommy Nagir used to cook roti and he was a member of the Mosque on Bedeau Street.*

**Nadir Ali...** *I think the lady's name was Pusslin.*

**(101c) Mr & Mrs Jonas Mohammed....** Mr & Mrs Jonas Mohammed lived in the next house. Mrs Jonas' name was Baby. She was a granddaughter of John Munradin and my father's cousin. Mr Jonas & Baby had three daughters Hazra, Nazra & Tolley and no sons. The family was very active in the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Mr Jonas was the Treasurer of the Mosque Board for a very long time. Their daughter Hazra was the Secretary of the Gasparillo Islamic Group while I was a young member.

I remember hearing about an incident at a time while the girls were already in school. Mrs Baby became pregnant. There were many complications with the pregnancy but the family was eagerly awaiting the birth of the new baby. During childbirth, serious problems arose. At the hospital Mrs Baby drifted into a life-threatening situation. The doctors told Mr Jonas that she may lose her life if they tried to save the baby...who was a boy. They told him that he had to make an immediate choice...his wife or his son. Without hesitation he chose his wife.

During my mid-teenage years, their daughters were all very close to me & my siblings, as relatives and as members of the GIG. They were great fans of horse racing so it was no surprise that two of the daughters married men in that arena. Hazra married jockey Cecil Paul and Nazra married trainer Mal Lewis. Hazra and her family migrated to the USA. Nazra and her husband stayed at the house with Mr Jonas. Tolley married and lived in Marabella.



*Mr Jonas Mohammed*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I must admit that I really don't know much about the land and the people past the gas station. Except for Mr. Jonas and family. Nazra and Caryl became friends while we lived in Trinidad.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Brother Jonas and Baby Jonas had an interesting house. It was unlike what houses looked like back then. They were always gentle people and I always enjoyed visiting their home. They were also one of the few people in the village who had a telephone. Back then if you had to make an international call the whole process could take an entire day.*

**(101d) The Samsoundars....** The house after the Jonas home belonged to Mrs Samsoundar and her children. The names I recall are Krishna, Nicey and Doreen. I don't remember the husband.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *The Samsundars had beautiful daughters, especially Nicey, and Doreen who hasn't aged a day in the last 35 years.*

**Azam Mohammed...** *I may add that James Samsoundar was one of the brightest students from Gasparillo at that time. I believe that he became a doctor in Canada.*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *Yes. He is a doctor in Canada.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *The Samsoundars have lived at that spot for a long long time.*

**Fayad Ali...** *James Samsoundar was in class with Sasa and me...He's an oncologist abroad.... One of the older girls*

*(Nicey) was a nurse. Doreen was in a class below us.*

**(101e) The Ramkissoons....** Next was the Kisson family. They were nice people. Mr Kisson used to jharay. Kenrick Ramkisson was the founder of the 5th Gasparillo Cub Pack. Kenrick passed on in the early 80's from injuries sustained in a vehicular accident. He was accompanying his Scouts from a church service at the Pentecostal Church when he was hit by a car. He ended up on the road in front of the entrance to the Police Station. He died in hospital a few days later. Kenrick was an inspiration to many young men from the Gasparillo area, and his efforts in Scouting, though tragically cut short, provided a solid foundation to many who have gone on to excellence in their chosen fields of endeavor.

I knew Kenrick because my son Ishmael was a member of 5th Gasparillo. I was involved with the arrangements for his funeral at the request of Scout Headquarters.

**Fiat Karmally...** *Kenrick, Simon and myself had many adventures. His father was really good in cracking/therapy. Whenever I smell a balm I remember him.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *I worked with Kendrick at 5th Gasparillo. Bageera was my scout name after I did my training at Paxvale, Santa Cruz.*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *I am sure that all of us in that*

*first batch of 5th Gasparillo will have nothing but the best memories of our Akela.*

**Sharlene Ali...** *My youngest brother Joe and my cousin Ishmael were in his scout group. Kenrick was a humble nice man. The boys were so close to him. I remember my brother crying for weeks after he passed. It happened in front of the boys.*

**Naima Mohammed...** *I am reading this with tears. Sheldon Cruickshank is my son. He might have been the only cub who wasn't there on that fateful day. For some reason he cried all morning and refused to go to the church service. Kenrick was my brother-in-law and was a great teacher to the young men in our family and of Gasparillo. He was taken away from us at such a young age and he is still missed tremendously. It is so heartwarming to see that all of you have such wonderful memories of him.*

**(101f) Peeyarilal & Garcia....** After the Ramkissoons there was a small board house. The couple who lived there were a mixed Spanish man named Garcia and his wife Peeyarilal. I believe that she was the eldest daughter of Parsan from next door to the Zenith Cinema. I remember a tall skinny fellow named John who used to live there also. He used to walk up and down the Gasparillo main road. I think he was mentally challenged. He may have been their son.



**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *We always thought John John was either Pyari or Garcia's son. I remember we were always scared of him because he seemed to have a short fuse that could trip at any time. Pappy used to say he was a very brilliant student that went off the deep end because of too much studies.*

Later on in the early 1960s, when Bobeyland was being developed for housing, one section owned by Rex Razack Ali got an access street which ran from the Bonne Aventure Main Road. The street was named Razack Street. It was immediately after Garcia & Peeyarilal's home.

## Olidad to the Silk Cotton Tree

**(102a) Olidad.....** After Olidad & his family moved from Simon Street (See #99c), Jodo moved with his wife Kitty and family to Caratal Road... (See #81a...Caratal Road—Part 9). Olidad, his wife and two daughters moved to a wooden shack on the eastern side of the small bridge opposite the Jagroops on the Bonne Aventure (main) Road (See #101b). From there he continued his business of selling press on his donkey cart in Gasparillo and Pointe a Pierre.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Mr. Olidad had only one eye, and parents used to refer to him when trying to scare their children away from peeping through cracks and keyholes.*

**Nadir Ali...** *Olidad lived opposite the Jagroops, the house after the bridge next to the gas station, and next to Bro Jonas to the east.*

**(102b) The Poorans....** Mr & Mrs Pooran lived with their children in a two-storey board house which was surrounded by a large yard. The Poorans were quiet, private people. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Among their children were daughters Maimooda & Jayney and son Kennedy. During the early 1950s Kennedy was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School. One of my outstanding memories of the Pooran home was the peacocks in their yard. As children we used like to go there to see the peacocks displaying their feathers.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Mr Pooran and his blue Ford Prefect, I remember the peacocks. They had a guava patch in their yard too.*

**(102c) Mr & Mrs Buthru....** Mr & Mrs Buthru and family lived after the Poorans. Mrs Buthru was very good at making wedding cakes. Their land was sloping and had lots of fruit trees. They had a parlor at the front on the main road. They sold banga and a variety of snacks. The house was set way back from the road. Their son Prex, was a mechanic.

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *Their parlour sold fruits and bread & channa and a mean Mauby. I remember buying banga and the pang fruit we used to make manheads from.*

**Izzy Ali...** *Mr Buthru used to drive a very old antique car which rumour claimed it had bicycle brakes and he also*

*had pitch on the carhood for some reason.*

**Nadir Ali...** *Prex was a mechanic and there are many funny stories about the family. Sadly I think that after the children took the old folks to Canada, Mr Buthru ended his life longing to be back in Trinidad.*

**(102d) Hindu Temple....** On several visits home after I had migrated, I'd noticed a house with a Hindu Mandir on a site just after the Pooran home. I was told that it was the home of a father & son Pundit team. I don't seem to recall this being there while I lived in Gasparillo. It may be that I'd just never noticed it.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *The land with the mandir belongs to Pandit Ramesh Sharma and his family. Baba and his family lived at first in Razack Street. They were originally from Mayo.*

**Izzy Ali...** *When Pundit Sharma bought the land he practically diverted the river, and built up the surrounding land that was sloping towards the river. That must have cost a lot of money to develop.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *We attended a wedding ceremony there. Our friends, Eppy and Lucy, were invited guests and they took us along. Leslie and Maria, and Hafsa and Boysie were there too. But I must admit that I had no idea*

*who the bride and groom were. But you know what it's like with Indian weddings in Trinidad. It's sometimes a public event.*

**(102e) The Silk Cotton Tree....** There was an area, on the southern side of the main road, with about 100 yards of breakland. Here a small river from Ragoobar Lands met another small river as they joined on their way to the Guaracara. At this meeting place stood a giant Silk Cotton tree. Because we in Trinidad are overly superstitious people and because this type of tree bears an ominous reputation for evil spirits and jumbies, very many stories used to be related about this particular silk cotton tree. These stories so affected my childhood imagination and so embedded dark images in my mind that even today if I'm reading a novel about otherworldly ghouls and demons I sometimes think about that tree and the imagined world I had created among its roots & branches. Although there were other silk cotton trees that I knew of, this one on the main road used to carry a special significance for me.



*Silk Cotton Tree*

**Fayad Ali...** *I remember the big silk cotton tree opposite Ragoobar Street. It blew its cotton which we collected for pillow fillings.*

**Milton Zaifdeen...** *I'll never forget that "Silk Cotton Tree". I lived in Charles Street but had to go way up to Happy Hill to the Ramsingh's for Cub/Scout meetings once a week after school. After these meetings at dusk we would start on our way back home. We would "dilly-dally" on the way, steal "portugals" from the Mungals and took our sweet time going back home. Once when it was really dark and after Jang/Kello and some of the Ramsahai's,*

*Medford, Ali's etc. reached their homes, I had to continue that walk home alone. Well now trouble start. I started to jog from the Sinanan's house and by the time I got to the Bailey's, I was running while looking back to see if any car(s) were coming from the Allen Street side. That "Silk Cotton Tree" by the river was always dark and scary, especially with the land sliding away. There was always a depression on the road for about 150 yards. With no cars coming I was now at full speed, whistling as I ran. As soon as I passed the Silk Cotton Tree, I heard the loudest shriek. OMG, I was so scared, even Usain Bolt could not have outrun me that night. I got home scared and panting for breath. What an experience. To this day I have never forgotten that episode. It's been years after that. When I was recalling the incident to someone, I was told that someone's peacocks used to sleep in that tree or close by. That probably was the loud scream. Now everything makes sense, but not then.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember a hearse passing us near the silk cotton tree one night after seeing the "Horror of Dracula" at Zenith. Man, we turned around and ran back to meet the rest of the people walking home from that show.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *We used to go by Mr.Roop for Hindi classes in Allen Street. While approaching the silk cotton tree, we repeated special prayers until we reached home. On entering the house we went in backwards to prevent any jumbies from following us into the house.*

**Izzy Ali...** *I passed by that tree many nights past midnight on my way to Razack Street. I always tried not to look up at the tree, because I just didn't want to make eye contact with anything that might be up there. Once in awhile an owl might fly by shrieking. It was always scary.*

**Nadir Ali...** *I don't think I was ever afraid of the silk cotton tree. People used to just frighten their children with stories so that they would not stay out late. I was accustomed to jumbie stories. My mother was from real bush where she actually believe d spirits dwelt. We both have an uncanny ability to 'call' snakes.*

**Kimberly John-Ali...** *That tree burnt for days from the inside and nobody knew how the fire started. I was a teenager at the time.*



## Razack Street Development

As Gasparillo grew, blocks of land were developed and lotted out by their owners for new residences. A few such developments were created by Rex Razack Ali in the early 1960s. His blocks of land mostly carried his names, Rex or Razack. One of his developments was in Charles Street (see #58...Rex Street). Another was adjacent to the Gas Station and bordering Ragoobar Lands. It was lotted out and an access road, Razack Street, was built from the Bonne Aventure (main) Road. The lots were sold out and people began building houses and moving in.

Among the people who bought lots or made the initial move into Razack Street were the Moses Karmally, Bobat, Azim & Rajo families. Several of the children of Mr & Mrs Moses Karmally were among the first. I had heard that both of Mr Moses' sons Sylvan & Amrul after their parents' death, had promised to devote themselves to the propagation of Islam. This is a promise they kept. I'm not sure if Mr & Mrs Moses had eventually moved to the Razack Street development.

**Nadir Ali...** *My grandparents Moses and Saphiran did move to Razack Street as well in 1964 and lived out their days there. It was when my grandfather Moses was ill that my Cha Cha Sylvan and my father Amrul completely changed their lives and both eventually became Imams of the two Gasparillo Jamaats.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *That part about Pappy and Chacha making promises to their parents plays like a scene straight out of an old Hindi movie.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Most amazing is that they lived up to it and even became Imams of both Gasparillo Jamaats. Your grandparents would've been proud.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *I'm sure they were, because before Pa passed they had already turned around.*

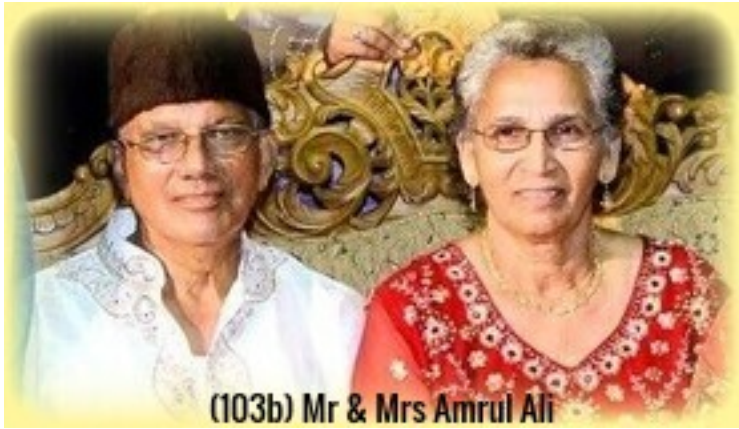
**(103a) Sylvan Ali....** Sylvan, his wife Babylin and their children moved to a newly constructed house in Razack Street. Prior to that they had lived at his parent's home on Caratal Road. Sylvan was employed as a Fireman by Texaco. Babylin was originally from the Buckradeen family of Happy Hill. They were both members of the Gasparillo Jamaat, where they were active as youths, and the East Indian Friendly Society. Among their children were daughters Raffina & Mobeena and sons Sham & Feraz.



*Mr & Mrs Sylvan Ali*

**Ann Sooknanan...** *Mr Sylvan two sons passed away a couple of years ago.*

**(103b) Amrul Ali...** Amrul was also known as Breda and Tex. He, his wife Shaheeda and their children also moved from his parents' home into a new home in the development. Their children are daughters Nazeena, Sephra & Lisa and sons Nadir & Nasser. At that time Amrul worked as a bartender at the Sports Club in Pointe a Pierre. They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society.



*Mr & Mrs Amrul Ali*

**(103c) Zoyie....** Zoyie was a daughter of Mr & Mrs Moses Karmally. Her husband's name was Sonny. They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Their children were daughter Shalima and sons Ashmead, Rasheed, Fareed & Izra. Zoyie & Sonny had lived for a short while in New York.

I'm not sure if Moses Karmally's daughters Ina who was married to Paddy, son of Abass (See #77c... Caratal Road—Part 5) or Shahaiba who was married to Erwin Brooker (See #51d) had ever lived in this development. Ina had migrated to the USA. She & Paddy had two children, daughter Charlene and son Fyzodeen. Shahaiba & Erwin had two sons Richard & Stanley.



*Zoyie Ali*

Among others who moved into the development were:

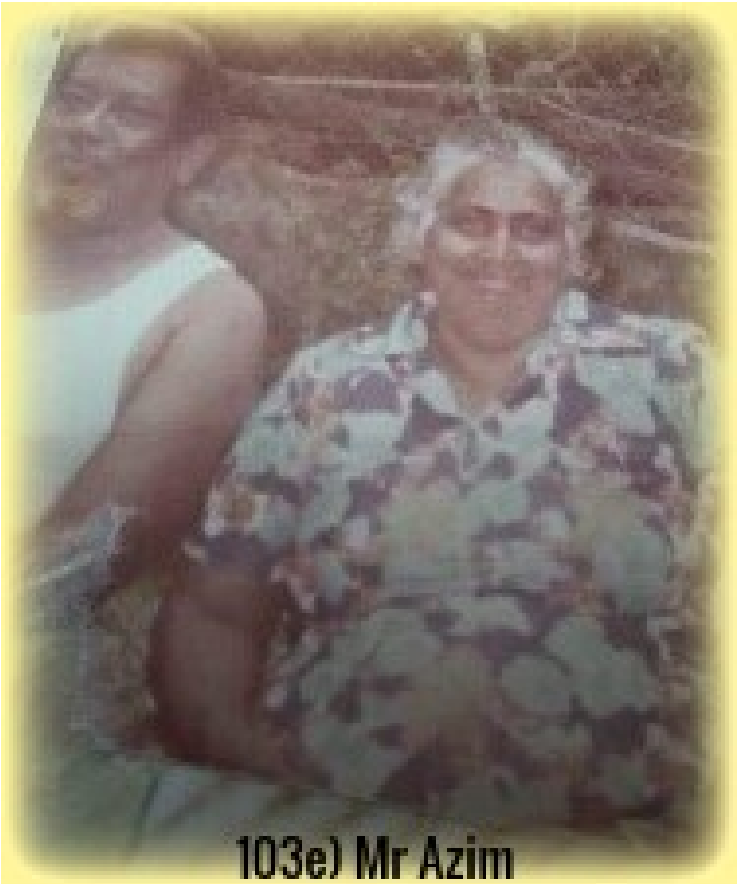
**(103d) Mr. Bhubat....** Mr & Mrs Bhubat and their children were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. He was also a regular roti maker at the Mosque. Among his children were daughter Eleanor and sons Mohammed, Ivan & Hollis. Eleanor was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School. The children used to be

members of the Gasparillo Islamic Group.

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Mr Bhobat and Uncle Azim's wives were first cousins and their houses were adjacent to each other. Uncle Bhobat's wife was called Jah. She was Mr Buckreedan's daughter.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *They also had a daughter Haniffa who was our age, and Vilma. Ivan is married to Phyllis a hair dresser. Tanty Jah was in the Ladies Group. I went there one evening to solicit donations for a charity event. The dog tied under the step kept barking and jumping. Scared, I stood outside the gate but she insisted I come in "and doh worry he wouldn't do you anything". He burst that chain and bit me on my ankle. My mother said she could hear me screaming from home!*

**(103e) Mr. Azim....**Mr Azim Shah was originally from New Grant. The Shah family to which he belonged was a large family there. He, his wife Ena and their children were devoted members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. He was a tall, heavy man, very pleasant and jolly. I remember him as one of the leading roti makers & cooks at the Mosque.



**103e) Mr Azim**

*Mr & Mrs Azim Shah*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Uncle Azim's wife, Tante Ena, was Cabbie's (Mr Aziz) daughter. For years when we were growing up the Bhubat and Azim families had a long running feud.*

**Kimberly John-Ali...** *I believe that the feud has long been patched up.*

**(103f) Rajo....** Rajo was a single woman who lived with Tanty Zama's family when I first knew her (See #32). She built a house in this development and moved there with her children. They built their house next to Sylvan. One of her sons, who I knew, was named Chucky (Boysie). I remember him as a boy by Tantee Zama. He was later married to Zorida, the daughter of Shaira from Cocoa Street. (See #47d).





*Rajo's son.... Boysie*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *The first house in Razack Street belonged to Tanty Rajo. Her sons were Devan and Boysie who were nephews of Tanty Zama. Both sons migrated. Tanty Rajo died in 2020. She was one of the ladies in the village who used to work on the sugar estate. I remember her coming home covered in soot from cutting cane.*

**Naseem Ali...** *The boys were not Tanty Zama's biological nephews. They grew up at our house. Aunty Rajo knew Tanty Zama's brother Lal. Back then if not related, they were sometimes adopted as a relative.*

**(103g) Mr Shuttleworth, the White Gentleman...** Mr Shuttleworth was a senior chemist at Texaco and lived on the refinery compound. He did not reside in Razack Street, but rented a lot of land on which he constructed a glycerine producing plant and later on a dry ice plant. His wife's name was Lorna and they had a step daughter named Fiona. He drove an old Austin car.

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *The "white gentleman" was the illustrious Henry Shuttleworth who from my memory was quite the character with a brilliant scientific mind. He worked at the Texaco refinery Lab in Pointe-a-Pierre and has a few Letters of Patent under his name for chemical processes he developed.*

**Nadir Ali...** *He met my father at the Staff Club and they became friends. He loved to lime in Razack Street with Pappy and Uncle Sonny. He also loved Mammy's cooking. He always made jokes about his wife's cooking and got toys for Nasser every Christmas. I believe he lived out his days in South Africa. He told Ashmeed and me many stories about his adventures during WWII and about his many escapades.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *I remember the day his plant exploded.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *He was so popular you had to say he was a Trini.*

**Izzy Ali...** *Mr Shuttleworth would usually fall asleep drunk under the car while doing repairs to it. Sometimes we would hear loud explosions coming from the factory making us think he finally blew himself up. He was a very intelligent individual. He was the goofiest white man I ever came across. I remember him drinking Buchanan's and Grand Old Parr with Pa. We used to patiently wait for the empty whiskey bottle to get the little marble out from it.*

**Nadir Ali...** *He used to be happy liming in Razack Street. He said his wife was a very serious woman.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *He always called Fiona his daughter. Once he brought her home for me to teach her to make paratha.*

**Nadir Ali...** *I wonder if she'd remember us and where she is now? Mammy spoiled him with local food. Remember the curry tripe?*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *That's when we learned that the British ate their tripe boiled.*

**(103h) Pundit Sharma.....** Pundit Ramesh Maharaj and his family occupied an area of Razack Development where he established a Hindu Temple. I was told that eventually he and his young son formed a father & son Pundit team. His location was close to the stream which divided the development from the gas station area. Later on he built a more elaborate temple on the main road (see #102d).

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Pandit Ramesh Sharma and his family from Mayo lived in Razack Street.*

## Ragoobar Lands

**(104a) Ragoobar Lands....** On one occasion, when I was around ten years old, my cousin Fazal (aka Killers) and I had hiked through bushes, fields and gardens of Bobeyland from Henry Street, where he lived, all the way to Beadeau Street. Never once crossing any streets or seeing the Bonne Aventure (main) Road along the way.

Later on, when they'd cut up and lotted out Ragoobar Lands, one of Gasparillo's adventurelands quickly grew into a community of modern homes. Bobeyland was gone forever. One major street, Ragoobar Street, ran from the Bonne Aventure Main Road through the middle of the development to Darneaud Street. Side streets with house lots branched out in both directions from Ragoobar Street.

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *When I was a young girl I remember my father Gustin saying that our house was for sale since he too was going to buy land in Ragoobar Lands. However we didn't want to move because, for me and my siblings, we lived "down the road" in the "town" where all the action was.*

Some of the people who'd moved into the new development were:

**(104b) Mr & Mrs Bakkey....** Mr Bakkey & his family from Victoria Street were among the first to move to Ragoobar Lands. He was a Victoria County Council road worker. His son Lindsay was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society (See #70e).

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Mr Bakkey had 2 other sons Krishna & Heads, and one daughter. I can still visualise Mrs Bakkey walking home midday with cutlass in hand and blackened clothes from cutting cane.*

**(104c) Mr & Mrs Asgar Ali....** Mr & Mrs Asgar Ali were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Mr Asgar was the son of Mr Ali Hosein from on the Main Road. He was the Secretary/Treasurer of the Gasparillo Mosque Board for several years. He was also the President of the East Indian Friendly Society and a founding member of

Orion Sports Club. Mrs Hanipha Ali was a Committee Member of the Gasparillo Muslim Womens Association. Asgar worked for Texaco in Pointe a Pierre. Among their children were daughter Zenora, who migrated to Australia, and sons Haroon (dec.), Fayad & Jazad. I remember Zenora as one of the Vos Government School children who every day had lunch with Mama at our home.



(104c) Mr & Mrs Asgar Ali

*Mr & Mrs Asgar Ali*  
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**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Br Asgar was one of the founders of the Gasparillo Islamic Group. Both Zenora and Jazad attended Vos and had lunch by us along with other Masjid children everyday. They brought their own lunch but they also enjoyed Mama's cooking. Br Asgar and Br Rashard were very good roti cooks. As a matter of fact my husband Fyzool credits Br Asgar for teaching him to cook roti.*

**(104d) Mr & Mrs Rashaad Ali...** Mr & Mrs Rashaad were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Rashaad was the son of Mr Ali Hosein from the main road and a brother of Asgar Ali. He worked for Texaco in Pointe a Pierre. Mrs Cecilia was a Committee Member of the Gasparillo Muslim Womens Association. Among their children were daughter Sadica and son Darryl.



**(104d) Mr & Mrs Rashaad Ali & Family**

*Mr & Mrs Rashaad Ali & Family*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Uncle Boyone (Rashad) and Tanty Cecelia and their children were very close to us while*

growing up. Their children ranged in age with all of us. They had a very interesting home. I especially remember their dining table which had a central part that rotated. Uncle Boyone had made it. Zenobia was my age and we were childhood friends. The children had very nice and unusual names.

**Kimberly John-Ali...** *They always had lots of animals and fruits that they shared.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Farida (Sadia), Shazaad (Romeo), Zobida (Nadira), me (Celine), Nowshad (Fidel), Zenobia (Sandra) and Daryl. You would notice we all had home names and real names. I never knew I was Sadica until we had to bring our birth paper to sign up for Common Entrance! My father built that table with the spinning centre piece by hand using a hand saw and it still works perfectly. Our house was unique because it was upstairs / downstairs with no steps outside... that intrigued everyone at the time.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *Also the aquariums at the front. And the house parties.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I also remember Br Rashad's wife Sis Cecilia. She was a great fan and admirer of her Imam, our Papa. She was such a kind soul and always supplied him with fruits from her orchard.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Mr and Mrs Benn lived in the house*

*after us. They had 2 children.*

**(104e) Mr & Mrs Nazir Mohammed....** Mr Nazir and his wife Rahima were both active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Nazir worked for Texaco in Pointe a Pierre. Their children were daughter Lisa and sons Nigel & Naiem. I remember them as among the Vos Government School children who every day had lunch with Mama at our home. Their home was almost opposite the East Indian Friendly Society lodge on Ragoobar Street.



*Nazir & Rahima Mohammed*

**(104f) East Indian Friendly Society Hall....** Towards the end of the 1950s the East Indian Friendly Society vacated their lodge on the Bonne Adventure main Road and moved to a new site on Ragoobar Street in the Ragoobar Lands Development. The building comprised of a large upstairs hall with a full kitchen and a stage. The downstairs was very high and open. There was a parking area for vehicles. All Society activities were now undertaken from there. It was also rented out for special occasions.



*Gasparillo Friendly Society Hall*

**(104g) The Ramjugsinghs house....**This house was built for rental by the Ramjugsinghs of Tortuga. Several Gasparillo

families rented the house at different times.

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *The first house before ours was owned by the Ramjugsingh family from Tortuga. Elaine Bailey, from the main road opposite Sasa hairdresser, rented it while teaching at Gasparillo Government School. Shahiba and Owen Brooker rented it after that and became good neighbors.*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *Yup, I spent the first three years of my life there. We moved to Marabella when Richard was born. Dad and Uncle Nazir Mohammed were among the pioneers of Amateur Radio (also known as Ham Radio) in Trinidad. They would have been among the first to be issued the 9Y4 licences that were designated for T&T.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Your mom sometimes took a lift from my father when she started working at Naparima Girls when he used to drop us. And Owen had that big antenna Radio Ham tuner.*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *At one time this house was also rented by Jattan Ramdathsingh and his family.*

**(104h) Miss Irene.....** Miss Irene was a teacher at the Gasparillo Hindu School. She was reportedly the very first person to build a home and live in Ragoobar Lands.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Miss Irene was my first year teacher at Gasparillo Hindu. After one term I was transferred to Vos.*

**(104i) Kelvin & Philomena Samaroo.....** Kelvin & Philomena Samaroo lived on Ragoobar Street. Kelvin grew up on the Main road (see #107e). Philomena was originally from Piparo. Both were teachers. She was Principal of Chandernagore Presbyterian School. He was a founding member and a driving force of Orion Sports Club. Kelvin's sisters were Jessie, Jean and Jane a nurse in Saudi Arabia.

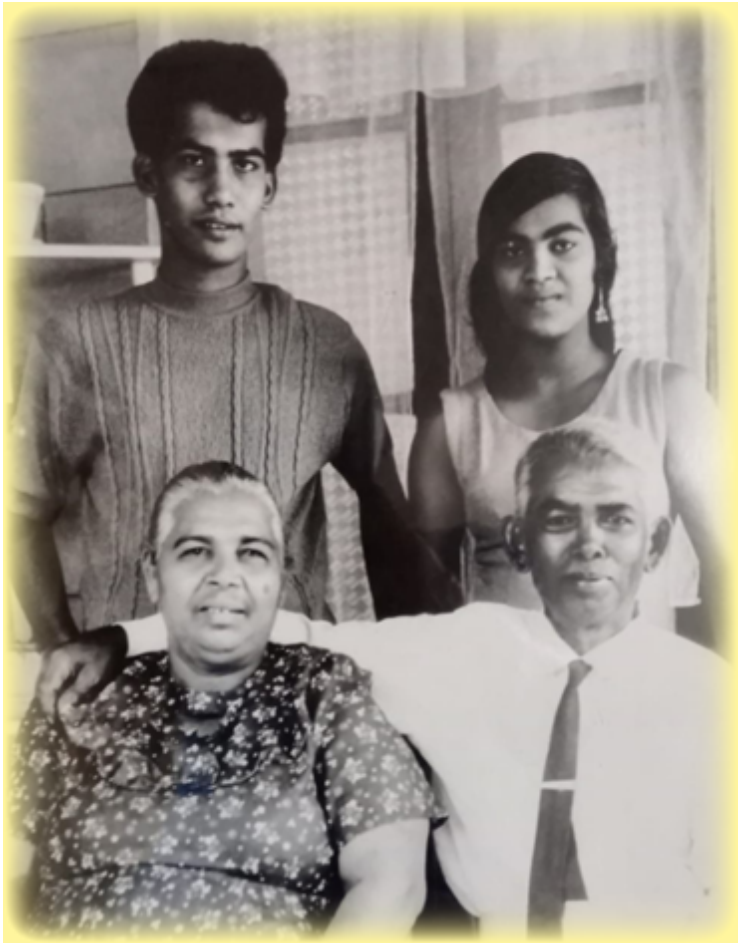






## Cabbie to the Baileys

**(105a) Mr & Mrs Aziz....** Mr & Mrs Aziz lived in the first house on the main road just after the entrance to Ragoobar Lands. They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Mr Aziz was commonly known as “Cabbie”. He may have been a horse-cab driver in his earlier years. He was a small dark man. He was also a brother of Mr Ali Hosein who lived next door and Mr Buckreedan of Happy Hill. Mrs Aziz was a heavy-set, fair-skinned lady. They were quiet and well respected in the community. Among their children were daughters Ena & Shaferan and sons Mahbood & Afzal.



*Mr & Mrs Aziz with children Afzal & Shaferan*

**(105b) Mr & Mrs Ali Hosein....**Mr & Mrs Ali Hosein lived in the house after Mr Aziz. He, Mr Aziz & Mr Buckreedan of Happy Hill were brothers. The Ali Hoseins were members of the

Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Among their children were daughters Nazra, Zainoon, Popolin & Darling and sons Asgar, Rashaad & Boysie. Their son Boysie was a mute.



*Mr & Mrs Ali Hosein & Family*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *The Ali Hosein daughters were Zainoon, Nazra, Darling & Popolin. Rashad and Nazra are the only surviving children.*

**(105c) The Baileys....** Mr & Mrs Bailey lived with their children in the house next to the Ali Hoseins. They were a family of mixed race surrounded by a community of mainly Indian people. I believe that Mr Bailey was of English or Portuguese ancestry

and Mrs Bailey was of mixed Creole/Spanish ancestry. Among their children were daughters Elaine, Eileen, Laura, Cynthia & Oriel and sons Hugh, Hollis, Winston & Steve. All their children have been achievers. Oriel was my schoolmate at San Fernando TML Primary School. Hollis, Winston, Steve & I were members of 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop together. Hollis and I were members of the Patrol that won the Chancellor Flag as the top Scout Troop in the country. We went to many camps throughout the country and to the Jamboree at Valsayn.

A young man named Edward Hochoy lived at their home during the early 1960s. He hailed from Blanchichuesse and was the grandson of Sir Solomon Hochoy, the Governor General of the Nation. He mixed with us as one of the Bailey family members.

Like most of our parents in Gasparillo, Mr & Mrs Bailey were cinema fans. During my earlier teenage years I had noticed a major difference with this couple as compared to others. They attended only Zenith Cinema and they went every night. They were a common sight every night slowly strolling, holding hands, heading home after their one sure daily entertainment. Sometime in the early 1960s this ritual came to an end. Television came to Gasparillo so their children bought them a TV.

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Hugh Bailey and my father were “partners in crime” as they say. They told stories of growing up as boys. One especially comes to mind. They were throwing knives like darts on a tree, and one flipped back and stuck Hugh on his face. My father ran home*

*innocently. Boy did he get in trouble after. They remained friends though. Hugh was a part of all his occasions until he passed away recently.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mr Bailey had a mechanized mill. My dad used to go there to grind corn to make chilli bb. People would also go there to dehusk lagoon rice.*

## Mr & Mrs Poti to The Sinanans

**(106a) The Poti Family....** Mr & Mrs Poti and their family lived in a board house after the silk cotton tree and directly opposite the Baileys. They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. I remember Mr Poti as a slim, tall & fair skinned man with white hair. Even though the whole family were Jamaat members, the regulars at the Mosque were Mrs Poti and their youngest daughter Sasa. Among their children who I remember, were daughter Sasa and sons Raffick, Vernon, Harold, Tommy & News (Naziff).

Raffick was the eldest child in the family and generally known as BROTHER to them. He was well respected by all his siblings. He was the one called upon to mend family disputes among its members. After him there was a sister but I don't remember her name.

Although I'd known all the sons, I knew News the most. He was a regular with the "down the road" Gasparillo community

ever since he was a little boy. Tommy used to be a golf caddy in Pointe a Pierre and a friend of my brother-in-law Node. Vernon, known in Gasparillo as Vernal or Poti was a Registered football referee. He officiated in numerous matches in Gasparillo.

I remember Sasa as a pretty young girl in her Naparima Girls High School uniform. Over the years she had created her own successful hairdressing business. She owns a salon next to the house.

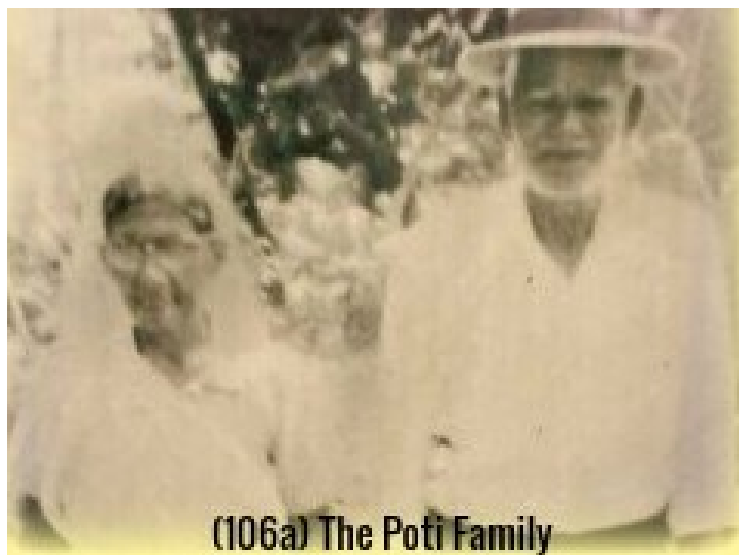


**(106a) Mrs Poti**

*Mrs Poti*



MR & MRS POTI TO THE SINANANS



**(106a) The Poti Family**

*Mr & Mrs Poti*



*Some of the Poti children & grandchildren*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *All that you said about the ‘Poti’ family is true. Except we don’t really know how my father got that name. His correct name is Isaac Dymally. BTW. I’m still pretty. I’ll try and do a little research about the name.*

**Mary Mac Quan–Mohammed...** *Even my husband Jason Mohammed is fondly known as “Poti”.*

**Marcelina White...** *I always wondered how Uncle Vernon got the name “Poti”.*

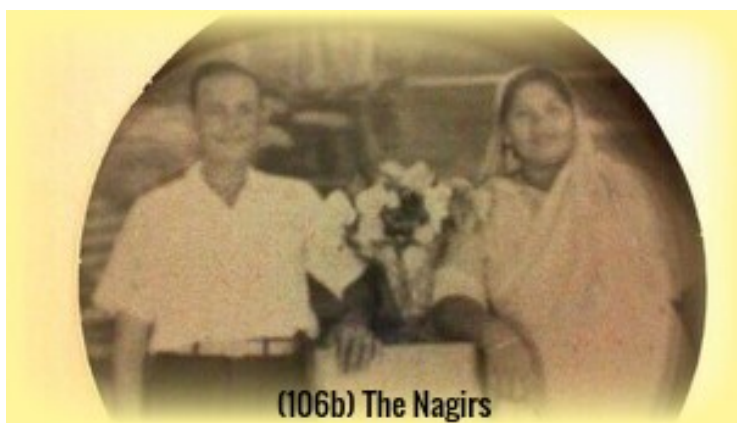
**Sasa Rampersad...** *It's because he was "Poti's" son. Lol.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Poti, meri Poth, Puthar means child, descendant. Pithr (like in pitri paksh when Hindus pay tribute to ancestors) is parents or forefather. So Poti is a name of endearment for a child. I myself call my daughter Puttar or Poti sometimes.*

**Azam Mohammed...** *My grandfather Mack from Henry Street (See #97a) and Poti were brothers.*

**(106b) The Nagirs....** Mr & Mrs Lewis Nagir raised their family in a simple board house in a plot of land after the Poti family home. They were originally a Muslim family which in the 1930s converted to the Presbyterian Church. Mr Nagir owned a donkey & cart and worked transporting goods.

Among their children were daughters Naomi & Gloria and sons Manny, Tommy & Frankie. Naomi was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School. Manny married my relative Rekha. They settled in Cocoa Street and raised their children as Muslims. Frankie raised his family in the original family location. Frankie's wife was from Oropouche. Her family originally lived near the Gasparillo Junction on the location of Jackson's Parlor (See #24). Among their children were son Robin and daughter Janet.



*Mr & Mrs Nagir*

**Alicia Nagir- Poon Hing...** *Hello thank you for sharing that wonderful piece of history of the Nagirs and the rest of the neighbours in the village. I am Gloria's daughter. My sister and I are the youngest grandchildren of Lewis and Sidwha Nagir whom we never knew. The rest of the Nagir siblings are Mini, Puslin & Golan and Uncles Boyah, Tommy & Willie. All are deceased except my mom Gloria and Naomi.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Shani Mother (Rekha), Manny Nagir's wife ran a parlor across from Vos.*

**(106c)\_The Sinanans...** *Mr & Mrs Sinanan & their family lived after the Nagirs in a board house. They were members of the*

Gasparillo Presbyterian Church and the East Indian Friendly Society. They were a quiet, respected family in Gasparillo. I believe that Mr Sinanan worked in Pointe a Pierre. Among their children were daughters Flora & Vanessa and sons Edghill, Baba & Darius. Flora married Razack Khan who was a descendant of Laul Khan (see #56c). He lived in Mahogany in Charles Street and was a school teacher at Vos Government School. He later became a Pastor in the Pentecostal Church. I taught Baba & Darius at Vos Government School. I remember that Baba was a very good cricketer for Vos. Most of the children migrated to Canada. Flora & Razack remained in Trinidad.



*Mr & Mrs Sinanan*



*The Sinanans*

**Darren Daniel...** *They also had another brother Luther, who was not mentioned.*

**Admurry Sinanan...** *I remember Kamalo Deen teaching me at Vos. This is so interesting, all of which is true. You missed Luther because he spent most of his time in*

*Tabaquite with our grandparents.*



## Asgar's House to Tox

**(107a) Asgar Ali....** The house after the Baileys on the Main road was owned by Asgar Ali and family before they moved to a new home in Ragoobar Lands (see #104c). He was a member of Orion Club, the East Indian Friendly Society and the Gasparillo Jamaat.



*Asgar Ali House on the Main Road*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *Asgar & his wife had four children, three boys Haroun, Fayad & Jazzad and a girl Zenora. From here they moved to Ragoobar lands.*

**(107b) Baby's home....** There was a two-storey board house after this which belonged to one of Tanty Zama's nephews who we knew as Baby and his wife Sally. She was the daughter of Mr & Mrs Azim of Razack Street. They owned a chicken depot.

**Sasa Rampersad...** *The chicken place is owned by Azim's daughter Sally. She was married to 'Baby'.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Baby was a member of GIG. He used to drive a taxi. He was Tanty Zama's nephew.*

**(107c) The Rubbish Heap....** After this house was the Rubbish Heap. This was a large area where the Victoria County Council had arranged for all its rubbish (garbage) to be dumped. Like the Silk Cotton Tree this was an area where stories of encounters with "spirits" used to be reported in the old days. I don't know when it was closed down. In more modern times I've noticed a building there which looks like an English castle. I don't know who lives there.

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *The rubbish heap was eventually purchased by the Rampersads (Junie). They opened a door manufacturing factory there.*

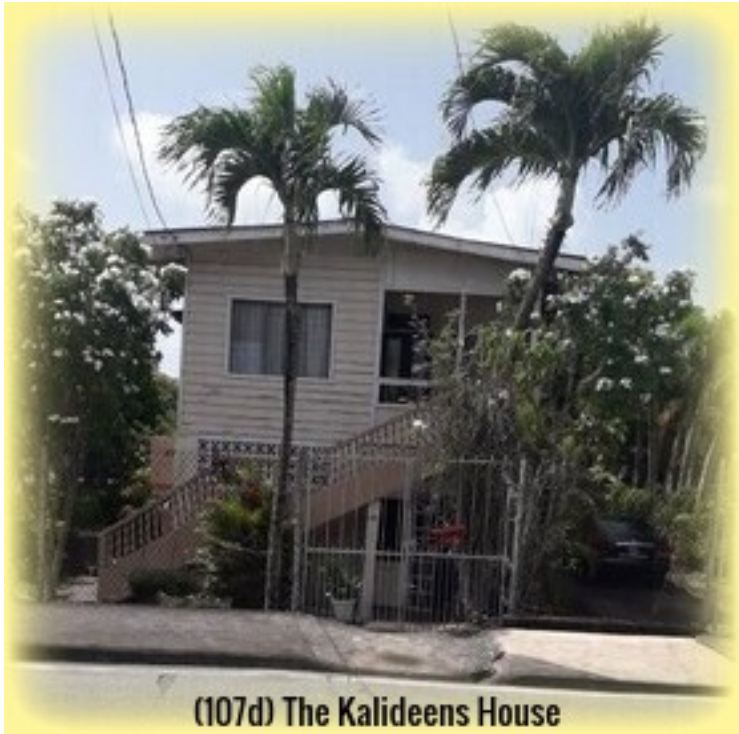
**(107d)The Kalideens....**I didn't know much about the family but they were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. I was aware of two of the sons. The older son worked in Pointe a Pierre. I don't know his name. The younger son was Joshua who we all knew as Babzoon. He was a tall, well-built man. He was married to Simon Parmace's daughter of Victoria Street (See #69i). He was the opening bowler, the cricket captain and a founding member of Orion Club. Later on he acted in

our movie “Bacchanal Time”, playing the part of a stickfighter named Tigerman Thompson. Babzoon was a quiet, pleasant and well-liked person who always expressed his pride of being a true “Gasparillonian”.



**(107d) Babzoon (Tiger)**

*Babzoon*



**(107d) The Kalideens House**

*The Kalideens House*

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *The Kalideens had a monkey on a chain on a pomerac tree at the front of the property. Children from school used to pelt the innocent animal with rocks.*

**Christine Ali...** *Joshua Kalideen (since the movie he is known as Tiger) grew up in this house, he is my uncle*

*and we had a monkey in front of the house and the school children used to trouble him until he grabbed Mr Chaitram's son and bit his head really bad . Babs was an icon in Gasparillo. He knew everyone and everyone knew him. He was born in Gasparillo and died in Gasparillo, (never left, he was so proud) and a member of the Orion club.*

**(107e) The Samaroos....** The Samaroos were also very quiet people who seemed to be focused on education. I can recall two daughters who were classmates of my eldest sister Sally & my brother Boyie. One of the daughters was named Jane. I can't remember the other's name. I believe that Jane went to Naparima Girls High School.

I recall a brother named Kelvin who was older. He was a school teacher. Kelvin was also the first elected President of Orion Club. Many early Orion meetings were held at their home and the club's first table tennis board was set up there.

**(107f) The Lochan Family....** Next was the Lochan family home. The men used to play cricket for Orion.

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *Next there was the house where Laloon and his brother grew up. I think their mother was named Joyce. After them was the Ramcharitars they had a parlor with a prominent soda sign on the door, the dome shaped kind. They also sold bread and Channa there.*

**(107g) The Bhagaloo Family....** The next family was the Bhagalooos. Theirs was a very large concrete house, probably the largest in Gasparillo at that time. Mr Bhagaloo was a successful contractor for Texaco in Pointe a Pierre. Mr & Mrs Bhagaloo were practicing Hindus and members of the East Indian Friendly Society. I remember them hosting Ramayan Yaags at their home. Although I know that they had several children, I knew their two eldest sons Ganesh and Ramesh. Ganesh was my brother Suge's good friend. He'd built another house & bar on the northeast bank of the Marie Dulay River in the early 1960s (See my Post #13). The site of the Bhagaloo home is now occupied by Tikki's Hardware.

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Ganesh Bhagaloo (Chase to his friends) was a friend in our 'down the road' circle. He was a very faithful and a very generous person. We had many adventures together. In my mid to late teens Chase was the only one who could drive and he had his own car. Whenever he had any business to conduct in POS or San Fernando he always took some of our lads with him. We also had a lot of beach trips. The first time I ever drove a car was with Chase in his car on the way to Mayaro. Chase could do something that all us boys tried and failed. He could drink a Carib without touching the bottle. He would lift the bottle with his teeth, tilt his head back and drink the beer down without spilling a drop. Do you recall that the day of my flight when I was leaving Trinidad, Chase along with a few friends took me to the airport? Of course we stopped on the way for a few beers. Sadly that was the*



*last time I saw Chase. He passed away before I made my first visit back to Trinidad.*

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *I remember the Bhagaloos. They used to have Bhagwats for almost a week. We went for the parsad. Theirs was a big concrete house with a long concrete railing upstairs. I think the house was light blue. There was a prayer room on the SE corner that had idols on the top. On one occasion I was actually a Saibala for a wedding and rode in Bhagaloo's touring-hood car to Tableland.*

**(107h) The Rampersads....** The home of the Rampersads was after the Sinanans. It was a large two-story concrete house. I believe that Mr Rampersad was a school principal. Mr & Mrs Rampersad had a few children. I remember two of the daughters were named Curly & Heidi. They attended Naparima Girls High School. There were a couple of other daughters. I'm not sure if they had sons. I think that they were members of the Presbyterian Church.

**(107i)The Geoffroys (Jophers)....** The Geoffroys (Jophers) were a mixed-race, light skinned couple. They lived in a two-story concrete house after the Rampersads. I believe that Mr Geoffroy (Jopher) was involved with the Trade Union organization. Among their children was a son whose name I don't remember and a daughter named Ann who became a teacher at Vos.

**(107j) Taxidriver Shirley....** Shirley and his wife lived in a flat concrete house at the top of the hill after the Geoffroys (Jophers). His wife was the daughter of Mr & Mrs Deonarine Maharaj of Caratal Road. I'm not sure if they had any children.

**(107k) Tox....**Tox was a tall red-skinned Negro man who I believe lived alone. He lived in a small wooden house and operated a bicycle repair shop. He was a well-liked and popular person. He had a successful business in those days when bikes were a major form of travel.

## Manohars to the Ramlal Shop

**(108a) The Manohars....** The Manohars was a very forward thinking family. Mr & Mrs Manohar were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. They had several children. I didn't know their daughters' names. Their eldest son was named Roy. He was a founding member and first Treasurer of Orion Club. Two other sons Bisoon and Jay were my friends. I'm sure there was another younger brother but I don't recall his name.

Bisoon, Jay & I were Scouts in 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop at the same time. We had been together on many camps throughout the country. Jay & I were in the Patrol that had won the Chancellor Flag in the mid 1960s. I remember that Bisoon & I were taking piano lessons in Vistabella. He was much better than I and had stuck with it after I'd quit.



**(108a) Mr Manohar**

*Mr Manohar*

**Kathleen Wandel...** *Carmen was Jay's sister. She studied Nursing in UK and then went back to Trinidad.*

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *The other son was Kenneth and a younger daughter named Pearl. Mr Manohar worked in the Refinery office in Texaco. I actually did his job one August vacation when he was on leave.*

**Kevin Manohar...** *I am the eldest child of the youngest Manohar son, Kenneth. My mother Carol Ramsawak-Manohar is the grand daughter of Buddy Ramsawak whom you covered in one of your earlier dialogues. My grandfather Surdass Manohar worked in the Labs at then Texaco where he reached retirement age. My grandmother Basmatia (nee Meighoo) was a housewife who took care of the household and the kids, Roy, Carmen, Bissoon, Jay, Kenneth and Pearl. All are still alive but Bissoon who passed away 3 years ago, well into his 70s. Education, hard-work ethic and humility played a vital role in molding the foundation of the family. From humble beginnings all children did well and paved a path for our generation to emulate and build on.*

**(108b) The Ramsumairs....**After the Manohars were the Ramsumairs, an old couple. The old man was called Three Head. He had a calabash mango tree in the yard. His grand children were Winnie and Shaft. They had a sister who went to live abroad. The father was the manager of Kirpalini's in Marabella.

**(108c) The Ramdathsinghs....**Mr & Mrs Lal Ramdathsingh lived in the next house. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Mr Ramdathsingh was a taxi driver on the San Fernando/Gasparillo route. Among their children were two sons Jattan & Sundar who I knew during the period when I was a member of Ist Gasparillo Scout Troop and BP Boys Club. I used to spend a good amount of time in that area. I remember that Jattan was a great admirer of Gordon Scott the actor who used

to play Tarzan and like other boys at the time, he used to do everything to copy his idol.

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Ramdathsinghs also had sons Vishnu and Narine who was a taxi driver.*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *Vishnu passed away in America a couple of years ago. Jattan was called Jetts and Sundar was called Caps.*

**Admurry Sinanan...** *Sorry to hear of Sundar's passing. We played cricket behind Mr Mats house.*

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *Mr Lal was a taxi driver. He had a white Cambridge Oxford. I think they had a palour at one time. There was a donkey stones mango tree in the front yard. One of the sons worked for Tatil Insurance and another, Narine, was a very popular taxi driver.*

**(108d) Mr & Mrs Ramlal (Kuarsingh)....** Mr & Mrs Ramlal owned a large shop after the Ramdathsinghs and opposite Allen Street. He was a founding member of the East Indian Friendly Society. I don't remember Mrs.Ramlal.

Mr Ramlal belonged to a family of businessmen. His brothers included Mr Bhagwan who owned the Zenith Cinema, Mr Leladharsingh who owned the Sookbir shop & Mr Madhoosingh. Among his businesses was wholesaling goods from Port of Spain

for shops in and around Gasparillo.

I knew his son Krishna who attended Naparima College and an elder son who taught at St Johns College in San Fernando. Krishna was later on the President of Orion Club. I also think they had a sister who attended college in San Fernando.



*Krishendath (Krishna) son of Mr & Mrs Ramlal (Kuarsingh)*



**Kathleen Wandel...** *Mr Kuarsingh taught me at St Johns College.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Fatty Shop, right? Great family, knew them all my life, great successes in education, management and business.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *The shop opposite Allen St. was Kuarsingh. The girls were Leela, Deokie and Gemma. Deokie and Gemma were nurses. Gemma and I went to high school together.*

## The Chinese Shop to The Bottle Dancer

**(109a) The Chinese Shop....** Opposite the Manohars was a Chinese shop. Although I remember this shop being opened at one time my recollection is of it being mostly closed. I remember sometimes passing on a track next to it to get to Chalta Park.

**(109b) Morgan....** Mr & Mrs Morgan Jagessar were simple folks who had a great influence in my boyhood life. Their home was a two-storey concrete house after the Chinese shop and opposite the home of the Ramdathsinghs. Morgan worked in Pointe a Pierre. Mrs Morgan was a housewife. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society.

Morgan Jagessar was a founding member of BP Boys Club and our Scoutmaster at 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop for my last few years as a Scout. For a time he had shared that position with Tom Ali from further up the road. When Tom became too occupied with other commitments, Morgan assumed full responsibility for the Troop. I have wonderful memories of our meetings in Chaltah Park, our many camps & hikes and the various

competitions we attended. For the duration of my time as a 1st Gasparillo scout we were consistently among the top Troops in the country.

I remember Mr & Mrs Morgan hosting a few Dutch parties at their home where some of the scouts got the opportunity to dance with some of the girls from the area. These were innocent affairs under their watchful eyes.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Rumour had it that the only thing that Morgan "MJ" didn't run into with his motorcycle was an aeroplane, and he almost did that at Piarco, LOL. Great family and a big contributor to the social upliftment of the village. We were blessed to have them among us.*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *Morgan Jagessar was one of the founders of the Baden-Powell Club.*

**(109c) Mr & Mrs Jagessar (Jahgay).....** On the southeast corner of Allen Street & the Bonne Aventure Main Road sat the house of Mr & Mrs Jagessar. It was a small board house in which they had raised their family. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. He was commonly known in the community as Jahgay. Among their children were sons Morgan, Harry, Maury, Jai & Nidoor and daughters Katelyn & Vangie. They'd worked very hard and succeeded in educating and providing opportunities for their children.

The children all went on to productive lives and in some cases to hold important positions in the Presbyterian Church & in the community. Morgan was the Scoutmaster of Ist Gasparillo Scout Troop. I believe that Harry mostly did gardening. Jai held a supervisory position with T&TEC. His family was active in Church matters. Nidoor later became a school teacher. I remember Maury used to ride a motorbike. I believe that they owned the parcel of land which included Chaltah Park.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Most of the family have passed. Murray was considered a crack marksman with the air rifle "pellet gun". Morgan, Jai & Harry were considered as the big brothers to most of us. They mentored and protected us.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Katelyn Jagessar is a nurse.*

**Shamshu Deen...** *I think I heard that Mr Jagessar came from India during indentureship.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I heard that too. But I cannot substantiate it.*

**(109d) Jean Wellington....** I recall a Negro family who lived in a house at the end of a track across the road from the Community Center. I believe their last name was Wellington. There was a daughter named Jean. She attended high school in San Fernando and travelled on the bus with us. She was a tall, athletic girl. I

remember her, getting into a fight with a boy in the bus.

Every evening the Gasparillo children who attended school in San Fernando would walk down to the Wharf to wait for the bus. There used to be limited seats available for the many children waiting for the bus to get home. Most children had to stand, squeezed together for the trip home. When the bus arrived there'd be a big rush to get on. There used to be much pushing and pulling and tugging to get on and grab a seat. Some of the bigger children would rush up as the bus approached and instead of scrambling for the door, some would rush to a window and throw their bookbag from outside onto a window seat (thus reserving that seat). Well Jean was one who did this regularly. One evening after tossing her bag inside, she pushed her way in through the door. When she'd finally worked her way inside and up to "her" seat, one of the big boys was sitting there and her bag was lying on the floor. A serious fight broke out. In the end Jean got her seat.

She had a younger brother named Olfie.



*School bus*

**(109e) The Dutchy Brother....** During the 1950s & 1960s, music bands and combos were very popular. One of the most popular combos in Trinidad was the Dutchy Brothers from San Fernando. The band comprised of a father and his sons. They had several popular recordings and were regular at fetes and other occasions. I recall that during the early 1960s one of the sons was married and living with his family in a house on the south side of the Bonne Aventure Main Road, opposite Beadeau Street. I think

that his wife Mary, was a teacher at Gasparillo Government School. That may be why they moved to Gasparillo.

**Milton Zaifdeen...** *The “Dutchy Brothers” AKA Pete DeVlugt and his Orchestra” was the best “Big Band” in the late 50’s and early 60’s. This was during my time of partying/music.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Pete’s wife taught us at GGS. Her maiden name was Miss Gomes. When married her nickname was “Flutie” for Mrs. DeVlugt.*

**Sheraz Karmally...** *Mrs DeVlugt taught me. She had two sons, Nigel who was in my class and Brent.*

**Therese Michele...** *I am Mary de Vlught’s daughter. She was married to Pete’s younger brother. She still quizzes me about history, geography and English grammar. I think that teaching was her life.*

**(109f) The Bottle Dancer....** There was an Indian boy living in a house near where the Dutchy brother lived. I don’t remember his name. He was a bottle dancer. I had gone with some friends one evening, to see him “perform his act”. They had spread out a heap of broken up pieces of bottle in an area of about 8 feet square. Then he stripped down to a pair of shorts and did a dance on the bed of broken bottles. His dance included throwing himself on the bed and rolling around on it and jumping and

dancing on his feet. There were no cuts on his body.



## Mr Nash to John Dookie

**(110a) Mr. Nash.....** Mr Nash lived in the house after the Kuarsinghs (Ramlal's) shop. He loved to listen to country & western songs which he played aloud. His next door neighbor was Mr & Mrs Joe, a quiet couple. Mrs Joe was a good baker. The District Midwife lived in the first floor of their house. She tended to her patients by riding around the village on her bicycle.

**(110b) Sonny Nandlal.....** This site, which was laden with a wide variety of fruit trees, was the home of Mr & Mrs Nandlal and family before they moved to "downtown" Gasparillo. At first they rented the site of Buddy Ramsawak's shop and ran their own shop there. Later on they bought land further down the road and moved their shop to its present location (See #14...Mr Nandlal's Shop). Their original "up the road" location was then occupied by their eldest child Sonny and his family. His brother Boysie is married to my sister Hafsa so we called Sonny's wife Bhowjee. Among his children were daughters Janice & Vijiyanti and son Mukesh. Sonny opened a successful car parts store at the front of their home.

**(110c) Community Centre....**The Gasparillo Community Center was opened in the mid-1950s at 121 Bonne Aventure Main Road. It is maintained by the Gasparillo Community Council. Fetes, concerts and shows were held there on a regular basis. I remember attending BP Boys concerts there when I was a boy. The center was also the preparation ground for the Prime Minister's Better Village Competition. I was involved writing a couple of skits for them. Several clubs, groups and organizations held meetings there. Arts & craft classes also were conducted there.

In the mid-1960s I had formed a group called The Gasparillo Beatnik Society. Our purpose was to propogate cultural activities in Gasparillo using the Community Center as a base. Among the events we presented there were a performance of Freddie Kissoon's award winning play "KING COBO" presented by his theater group The Strolling Players, and a rock n roll show with all-Gasparillo singers, dancers and musicians. the show was called "A POUND OF HEARTBEATS". Both events played to sold-out audiences.



**(110c) The Community Center**

*The Community Centre*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *It is rumoured, (I can't substantiate it), that the land on which the community center was built was donated by an old Indian couple who lived in a carat house next door to the Jagessars in Allen Street. I remember the day when the Governor came to open the center.*

**Milton Zaiffdeen...** *I remember when the Governor General came for the opening of the Gasparillo Community Center. I was then a cub with 1st Gasparillo. Also attending were some VIPs from Pointe-a -Pierre so my dad was there taking photos. I may still have some of these photos in my archives.*

**(110d) The Alis....** Mr & Mrs Kismet Ali lived in a two-storey concrete house just after the Community Center. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Their children were sons Tom, Nick, Manzur (Wilkie) & Mumtaz (Russel) and one daughter Sherry. A niece Shirley also lived with them.

Tom was one of our Scoutmasters at 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop. He accompanied us on several hikes and camps. He became an engineer, married Cynthia Bailey and opened an engineering supply company in northern Trinidad. Nick migrated to England. Wilkie & Russel were scouts with me. Wilkie was Patrol Leader when 1st Gasparillo won the Chancellor Flag. He'd later migrated to the USA. Sherry migrated to Canada.

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *During our time in Trinidad, Caryl and I along with Hafsa and Boysie were guests of Tom and Cynthia at their home. They lived up in the hills in the Maracas Valley area. They owned a vast area in the hills and they had the most beautiful home. The land was divided into lots for each of their children. We had a wonderful time with them and met a few of their friends.*

**(110e) Mr & Mrs John Dookie.....** Mr John Dookie was a founding member of the East Indian Friendly Society. He, his wife and children were active members of the Society. He owned a large shop at the northwest corner of Beadeau Street & Bonne Aventure Main Road. He was one of the pillars of the Gasparillo business community throughout his life.



*John Dookie*

**Robin Nagir...** *I used to buy kite paper from John Dookie's shop.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Between the Ali's and John Dookie's shop was a house which was occupied by some Baptist followers. John Dookie's shop produced some of the tastiest and biggest ice blocks.*

## Ramroops to the Hindu Temple

**(111a) The Ramroops....** One of my best friends in Gasparillo during my teenage years and until I migrated was Ralph Ramroop. His nickname to his friends was “Tobes”. The Ramroops lived in an upstairs concrete house on the northeast corner of Beadeau Street and the Bonne Aventure Main Road. Mr & Mrs Ramroop were hard-working, quiet & simple folks. Among their children were sons Sonny, Bob, Ralph, Kid & Perry and a daughter Tara. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society as were their older sons Sonny & Bob.

The boys were all members of various football clubs in Gasparillo. Sonny worked in Pointe a Pierre. He was a member of Orion Club. He was so strong on the football field that his football nickname was “Iron”. Bob was a member of BP Boys Club. He’d worked for Sissons Paints at their headquarters on the Princess Margaret Highway. He later opened a hardware in Gasparillo named 4Rs. Bob became actively involved in various community & religious activities in Gasparillo & throughout Trinidad. He’s been the President of the East Indian Friendly Society for a number of

years.

Tobes was involved in some way in almost all of my activities during my teenage Gasparillo years. We hiked and camped all over the country. Hitchhiking was our favorite past-time. He migrated to the USA and lives with his family in Florida. Kid was just like the other boys in Gasparillo. The last I met him was on one of my visits back home. He was working at 4Rs. Perry was the youngest son who I didn't know much about. Tara attended the Iere College & Home in Princes Town.



*Bob Ramroop*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Bob is my father's good friend and is one of the chosen few at our family events.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I remember Tobes very well because he was your friend and would visit our home quite*



*often. Bob became very involved in the NCIC and often invited our Mosque choir to sing at their various functions. Bob's wife, Pauline was very involved in the Vos PTA and served as President for quite a few years. All her sons came to Vos. I taught two of them.*

**Nalini C A Ramsingh...** *I have known Bob since I was a kid.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *As you may recall most of my friends in Gasparillo were from "down the road ". You were more friendly with the boys from further up Gasparillo. But over the years I got to know some of your friends and apart from cousins Kello, Jang and Ossie two of your friends who come to mind are Baal and Tobes. I will never forget when we visited you in New York you took us to see Tobes. It was so good to see him. What really sticks in memory was his collection of Country and Western LPs. The walls in his living room were packed with LPs on multiple shelves.*

**(111b) The Sinanansinghs....** I remember Mr & Mrs Sinanansingh as very nice people who were practicing Hindus and members of the East Indian Friendly Society. They worked very hard to give their children a good education and a good beginning in life. Among their children were daughter Seeta and sons Dhanraj & Rajpaul. I know that there was at least another younger daughter.

Seeta & I were classmates at Gasparillo Government School. I

remember her as a tall, pretty girl. I think that she became a teacher. Dhanraj and Rajpaul were scouts with me at 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop. They were both excellent scouts. Dhanraj, who was a member of our Ist Gasparillo patrol that had won the Chancellor Flag, was a teacher for a while. I'm not sure about what Rajpaul is doing.

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Radha Sinanansingh was one of the girls. We were friends and went to high school together. Rajpaul was a nurse.*

**(111c) 4Rs.....** 4Rs is a popular hardware in Gasparillo. It is located just after the site where the Sinanansinghs lived. Bob Ramroop & his family are the proprietors. I don't know for sure if the business was started before I migrated in 1966.

**(111d) The Seenaths....** The Seenath family lived on the main road just before the Lumsden Street junction. Mr Senate died in 1958 at a very young age. His wife's name was Sohagin. She lived to old age. They had eleven children ( six boys and five girls) of which one fell from a coconut tree and died as a teenager.

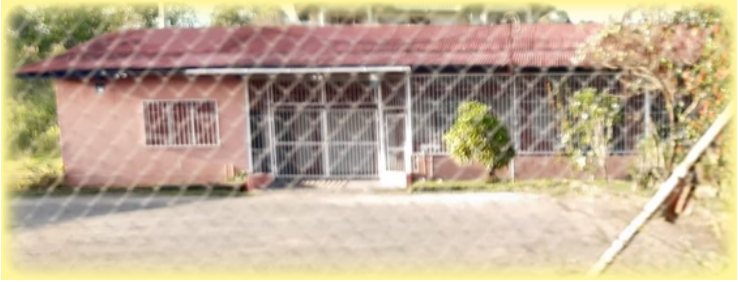
The first Hindu Mandir that I remember in Gasparillo was built on land donated by Mr & Mrs Seenath, opposite their home.



*Mr Seenath's Funeral in 1958*



*Sohagin... wife of Seenath*



*Hindu Temple*

**Vimla Mohammed....***The Seenaths were my grandparents. I remember my grandmother always wore white clothes with an orni on her head. She was always helping and taking part in many religious Hindu prayers in the village.*

**Dhaneish Ramdin...***I remember seeing the Matadors Combo live at the site of the temple at Lumsden Street junction at a bazaar.*

## Allen Street--Part 1

**(112a) Harry Jagessar.....**Harry was the second son of Mr & Mrs Jagessar (see #109c). He lived in the first house on the northwest side of Allen Street after the property on the corner of Bonne Aventure Main Road. Although he was a regular individual around the Chaltah Park area, I didn't know much about him. I knew that he was a friend of my eldest brother Boyie since they were classmates at Gasparillo Government School. He always seemed to me to be a very pleasant person.

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *After the Jagessars on the corner of Allen Street and Bonne Aventure Road were Motee and Dayah. Then followed Sookoor followed by the Fitzgeralds. On the opposite side was Mohammed and Radhee. Their children were Bathee, Narisha, Sauly, Yamin and Farouk. Bathee had gone to reside in England. On the same side of the road as the Mohammed's were the Dubisset's. I can only remember Jeffery, but there*

were other children. There was a track to Chalta Park and the next house was the Harrysinghs. Harrysingh was a taxidriver and his wife was Ruby. They had several children including, Ozzie, Rhadsie, Johnny, and several sisters, I can only remember Angie. They lived next to the Roop Narinesingh's whose children included Baal, the fella with all the parakeets Barney, and a sister I went to school with, Aukah. Then there was Mr. Western and his wife. After the Fitzgerald's, the next house going into Allen Street was the Kisoondaths. Khunti and Mohan lived there with Cragia. She was the lady who sold snacks in Gasparillo Government School (channa, sugarcake, poulourie etc.). Opposite the Kisoondaths, were the Coopers. Mr Cooper was a carpenter. The children were Jerry aka Manhunt and Pablo. There were two small sisters and an older brother. On the opposite side was Mr. West. Then on the opposite side was the Rampersads. Their children included Boysie and Frankie. Bahsie was their mother and she was the sister of Radhee. Then next to the Rampersads were the Seepersads. There was Gootoor and his wife. The children were Premchand, Mannichan, Betsy, Khimchand, Drupatee, Vashmatie and Vijay. Sonny and Rosie lived there. Sonny worked for the postal service. Then diagonally there were the Ramsinghs. Solomon Ramsingh worked for Readymix. The children were Monica, Jenny, Patrick, Marla, Lawrence (Larry), Fredrick (Freddy) and Ellen. I remember Solomon shooting his shotgun on oldyears night at midnight. Opposite the Ramsinghs were the Jagmohans. I only remember Sankar. I can't remember exactly when the big rental house was

built, but I remember Baal, Barnett (the police officer) and Abbey Baksh lived there. I used to play with Barnett's daughters upstairs and remember coming down the stairs, fell and broke a front tooth. Lisa and Clay, children of the Baksh's were born there. Vishnu Ramdeen... Mr Western was a blacksmith. I remember him repairing my grandfathers cart wheels. He and his wife Mrs May were very private persons at home. Dyah and Moti both worked in the sugar cane industry. They had a big yard with a large community oven. Next door was Mr & Mrs Sookor and his clan. He operated a parlor. Kirks was his son. He had a few daughters. Then there were Mr & Mrs Dubisete. Mustards hung out with us. They were nice people but very reserved. The Baptistes, Smokey a PH driver was one of the scions. Their mom was always discussing politics with Mr Mohammed across the road. The Mohammed children included Yamin, Farouk, and the girls. I ate many meals there. No child ever was hungry or was passed over at mealtimes. The Coopers hailed from Happy Hill. "Mangoes" hung out with us. Modeste at the top of the hill had a barahar tree on his land.

**(112b) Baal Singh....** The next people I was familiar with in Allen Street were the Roopnarine Singh family. Theirs was a simple wooden home on the same side of the street as Harry. Mr & Mrs Singh were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. They were a nice, practicing-Hindu family. Mr Singh used to give Hindi lessons. Among their children who I remember were sons Baal, Baldath & Barney and daughter Rekha. Both Baal & Baldath



were friends of mine while I was in the Scout troop and BP Boys. I knew Baldath well during the time when he used to lime “down the road”.

Baal however was a friend to me and my brother Nurul. We were members of BP Boys together. Baal & I also played football for Ist Gasparillo Scout Troop and later on for BP. He became an apprentice at Texaco in Pointe a Pierre. During my last few years before I migrated we did a lot of night liming in the Inns in and around Gasparillo. Our regular liming group for a time included Kenrick Durgadeen, Rabin Ramsahai, Tobes, Baal Singh and a few others. They all drank beer. My drink was an Apple J. We were liming at Mr Buddy’s shop on the night we learned that our friend Rabin Ramsahai was killed in an accident on the Bye-Pass.

**(112c) Harrysinghs....** Mr & Mrs Harrysingh lived with their children in the house after the Singh family. Theirs was a painted board house with a large gallery. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Mr Harrysingh was a popular taxi driver in Gasparillo. He was the brother of SK Ramsingh who was well-known in the Scout movement of Trinidad & Tobago. The brothers had grown up in Lumsden Street. Mrs Ruby Harrysingh was my father’s first cousin. She was the daughter of Dolly Dardee of Charles Street who was a granddaughter of John Munradin.

Among their children were daughters Patsy & Angie and sons Kello, Jang, Ozzie & Radzy. There were some younger ones whose names I can’t recall. Like me, Kello & Jang were at times members of both 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop & BP Boys Club.

The children were active in the Presbyterian Church. They all attended Secondary school in San Fernando. Kello and I were classmates for a short while at St John's College in San Fernando. Of the children, Ozzie was closest with us as boys because he lived mostly "down the road" with his grandmother Dolly Dardee. He was a part of many of our boyhood activities.



*Kelvin Harrysingh*

**Valmiki Ramsingh...** *The missing Harrysingh was Tyrone the former Orion and Naparima College cricketer and big land developer now. Angie is now living in Winnipeg where Jang and Ossie also live.*

**(112d) Chaltah Park...** Chaltah Park was situated in lands accessible through a trace on the side of the Harrysinghs home. It got its name because of several chaltah trees on the site. I think the property was owned by Mr Jagessar (Jahgay,, see #109b&c). It was, at that time, the official practice field for both BP Boys & 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop which held meetings and practiced for competitions there. BP usually held meetings at the Community Center, but cricket and some football practices were held at Chaltah Park.

BP had installed a concrete pitch in the field. I remember the concrete pitch because in practice one day while I was batting, Kello Harrysingh bowled (pelted) and hit me on my hand. I lost a finger nail. That was the end of my hardball cricket career. One good came out of that incident though. My girlfriend's sister was a nurse so I had an excuse to visit their home every day to have my injury cleaned and dressed.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Chaltah Park had two chaltah trees. Morgan and the scouts had built a log cabin there which was our hangout when we were not hanging out on the trees. It was the scene of all day cricket and football matches. Mangoes, oranges and sugar cane were our sustenance. Nobody wanted to go home, because they won't be allowed to return. Waraca was the cooling spot if it got too hot. I got hit in the face on those concrete pitches, broke my glasses and cut my face. I should add I got my first taste of likka' (somebody brought an "end" and we all had a taste) and first pull on a cigarette there.... boyhood experimentation. Our experiences were mostly drug and alcohol free though. We just had fun!*

## Allen Street--Part 2

**(113a) The Kissoondaths....**The Kissoondath family lived in a two-storey concrete house. I remember Mrs Kissoondath's name was Kunti. I knew three of their children, daughters Shanti & Sheila and son Devanand. I taught all three children at different times at Vos Government School. They were all very well behaved and bright students. Ms. Kunti had invited me to her home on one occasion to discuss the children and their work at school. She was a pleasant person who was seeking opportunities for her children. The ones I knew have all migrated and have done very well.

**Chester Madhosingh...** *The Kisoondath's last child is Shivanand.*

**(113b) The Ramdeens....**When I knew the Ramdeen family they were living at the corner of Allen & Guaracara Streets in a

concrete house. Mr Ramdeen worked in Pointe a Pierre. I knew him as Jash and her as Chingaria. Both Mr & Mrs Ramdeen were from Charles Street (See # 53c & # 55e). They grew up just houses apart. Was it an arranged marriage or a “neighborhood love affair”?

I knew both their families as hard working Hindu families who were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Both families were focused on educating their children and this focus was inherited by Jash & Chingaria. They worked hard to provide opportunities for their children.

Before I migrated I knew a couple of the children only casually as younger kids in Allen Street & Chaltah Park. I was more acquainted with their aunts and uncles on both sides since they all lived near to us in Charles Street.



*Dhaneish... son of Jash & Chingaria Ramdeen*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *My parents commonly known as Jash & Chingaria are Ramdeo & Rookmin Ramdeen. My father was one of the early apprentices in the Apprentice Scheme at Pointe a Pierre. He worked there for 45 years in the Maintenance Department. My mother Rookmin (nee Rampat) was a homemaker. Both of them hail from*



*Concord. They were relocated to Charles Street in the 30's. They moved to Allen & Guaracara Street in 1950 and spent the rest of their lives there. They raised eight children, Vishnu, Krishna, Radica, Sureish (Rusty), Gail, Danny, Vedash, and Jagroop (Kit). With the exception of two, all have degrees either in the sciences, engineering, or education. Three of the children have passed, (Gail, Vedash and Rusty). We all migrated abroad mostly to offer opportunities for our children. We were blessed. They followed our footsteps in the fields of science, engineering, education, business administration and computer sciences and all have successful careers in their respective fields.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *Danny and I were schoolmates from primary school to college and we worked for the same Government department. I knew most of the family well from our school days.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *The Ramdeen family was well known in Gasparillo, especially in Charles Street. Radica and I were friends. Our first job after leaving high school were population census officers. When we got our first salary we were very happy. Gail was like a little sister. She grew up next door to my in-laws. Vishnu has a good sense of humor like his mother.*

**(113c) The Ramsinghs....** One of my best friends at Presentation College was Patrick Ramsingh. Mr & Mrs Solomon Ramsingh, his parents, lived near the junction of Allen Street & Guaracara

Street with their family. Mr Ramsingh was the brother of Mr Isaac Ramsingh who lived at Gasparillo Junction with his family. They belonged to the Presbyterian Church.

I know there were other children but I knew Patrick because of school. Although he had a physical deformity from birth it never served as a disadvantage to him or to his friends. He was tough and he was always proving his strength to us. His pursuit of education was very aggressive. No wonder he eventually became a school Principal.



*Solomon Ramsingh in 1943*

**Nalini C A Ramsingh...** *My Uncle Solo and my Auntie lived at the end of Allen Street on the left side. There was a huge tamarind tree on the side of the house.*

**Sadica Ramlochan...** *Patrick taught at Gasparillo Government School for a while when I was there. He was well respected. I remember him coming home early Sunday morning with newspapers to show my parents the Common Entrance results. I'd passed for Naps Girls!*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *When we were kids we wrestled with Patrick. Woe be on to you if he caught you in a leg vise. Great family, active in the Presbyterian Church. Mr Solomon, worked in Penal, rode his bicycle from Gasparillo to Penal every day. Later he became the Manager of Readymix in Union. Mr Solomon fired his rifle every year to welcome the New Year (or maybe to shoot down the old year). It was greatly anticipated by the families and we all stayed awake for the event. Patrick won a scholarship to Presentation College in San Fernando. Upon graduation he entered the teaching profession and retired as a head teacher. A few of the daughters (Kamini, Mala, Jennifer) also became teachers. One of the daughters (Kitty) migrated to England. Their eldest daughter lived in Siparia. Another son Junior, lives in Claxton Bay. Other sons, Larry was an icon of Gasparillo and Freddy lives with his family in Allen Street.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *I attended high school with Kamini and*

*Jennifer.*

## Allen Street--Part 3

**(114a) Shilling & Grace....** Two young people I remember from my days visiting Allen Street & Chaltah Park were a guy named Shilling and his sister Grace. They were neighbors of Patrick Ramsingh. I used to see them during the few times when I visited him. We'd probably met up at Dutch parties by Morgan. I believe that Shilling was an apprentice in Pointe a Pierre. Grace eventually married Jai Jagessar. They were very active in the Presbyterian Church. I didn't know their family.

**(114b) Barnett the Policeman....** Barnett was known to most of the young people as a "bad policeman". In truth he was very strict and especially intolerant of young people liming on the corners. He lived in an apartment in the house after the Kissoondaths. When in uniform, he used to strike terror in most of the young limers around the area. There is a funny story which indicated his effect.....

During the Jayland Fair in Marabella my friend Mighty Wanderer who was in the early stages of his career, was making an

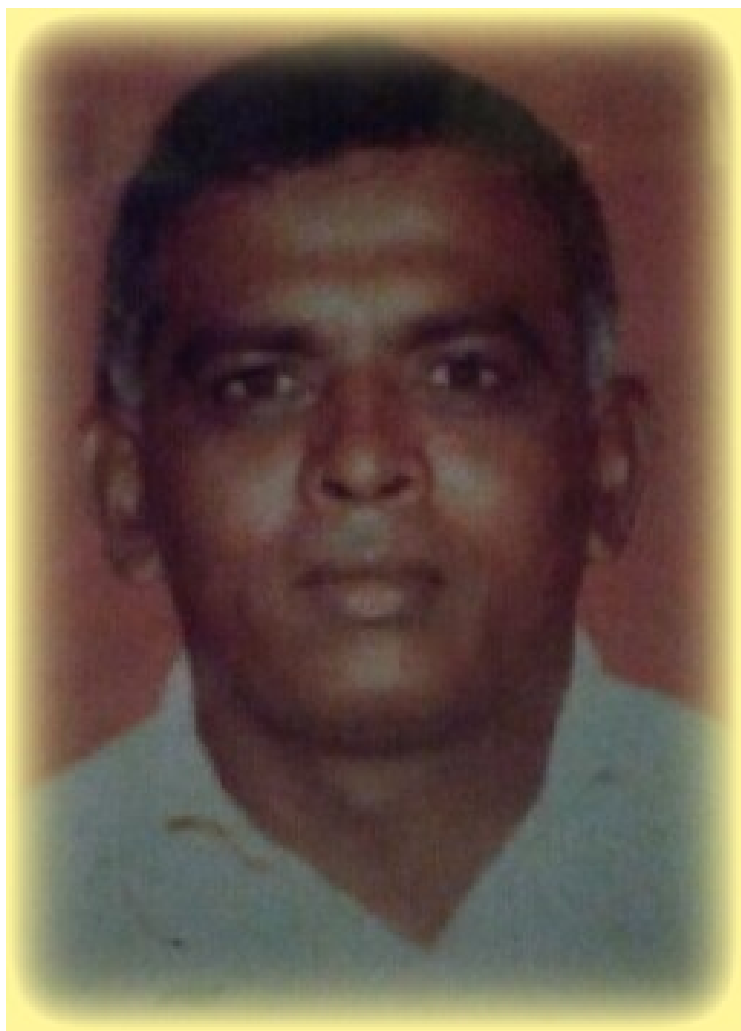
appearance on stage. His song's chorus was "Mr One King Donkey..... Mr Two King Donkey.....Mr Three King Donkey..... But Mr Four King Donkey..... After singing I King, 2 King & 3 King, he spotted Constable Barnett standing in the front row staring seriously at him. Wanderer quickly mumbled "But Mr Mmm King Donkey....".

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Barnett became a family friend when he moved into Allen Street. I used to run errands for both him and his wife. Yes he had a terrible reputation but at home he was quite normal.*

**(114c) Mr & Mrs Suran Bridgemohan....** Mr & Mrs Suran Bridgemohan lived on Guaracara Street. Mr Bridgemohan was employed at Petrotrin until he suffered a stroke. His wife worked in the sugar estates until she retired at her home on Guaracara Street. They were practising Hindus and members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Their children were Roach, Mowlah, Priscilla, Blacks, Kumar, Barboy, Boyie, Una and Makard. Roach was the eldest son. I was a member of BP with him in the early years.. He and my brother Nurul were very good friends. They were the dangerous & feared opening bowlers for BP's cricket team.

After marrying, Roach lived in Allen Street with his wife and three children, Debbie, Rickey and Donna. He used his first car, a Prefect, as a ride for BP boys in their many limes. His first home was a rental property at the corner of Guaracara and Allen

Streets. Across from the house was a huge Samaan Tree. A chair plane ride used to come there for the village every so often. He later bought a plot of land and built his own home to the back of the rental house. His next door neighbor was the Bissoon family. Mr Bissoon was once the president of the East Indian friendly society. Roach, was employed at TTEC until his untimely death at the age of 44. His younger brother Mowlah was also one of my friends in those days.



*Roach.... son of Mr & Mrs Bridgemohan*



**Donna Lee Ling...** *Great to hear about the residents of my home village, Allen Street. Thank you!*

**(114d) Teejia....** Teejia was part of a group of ladies that sang and danced in our film “Bacchanal Time”. Teejia wore a red dress and was dancing in her scenes. I believe that her son who was a friend of my brother-in-law Boysie Nandlal was married to Vanessa Sinanan from the main road.



*Teejia in "Bacchanal Time"*



*Teejia House*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *She was one hot mouth old lady, Lol*

**Gasparillo Chronicles...** *You certainly did not play the fool with her.*

**Donna Lee Ling...** *She, as well as my late paternal grandmother, were part of that famous singing group. They would frequent saffron/maticoor nights, farewells and also the wedding day, including the famous lawah ritual, usually performed the morning of the wedding. Their group performed at our home for my sister's wedding. Great memories of a golden tradition.*

**Nazim Nagir...***I used to visit her on a regular basis there. She was a nice person. You could have learned a lot from her.*

**Wendy Baboolal...***I know her because my mother use to go there. Nice and friendly lady. They use to cook and sit and talk memories.*

**Ramona Andrews...***She was my aunt's mother in law. My grandmother was part of that group. As a child I watched Teejia dancing and tried to dance like her.*

**Karen Pardy...***Wow! This was my grandmother's house, I grew up there as a little girl. So, so sad to see this house looking like this, many wonderful memories. My dad also lived there for many years. Oh how I miss them both. My beautiful Ma was also an extraordinary cook and she was very kind hearted. Yes she was vocal, but had a heart full of compassion. I am so proud to be her granddaughter.*

**Carolyn Ali...***Good old memories use to be afraid of her while growing up. If u passed her without saying a greeting she use to go by your home to tell on you and make u get licks lol. She was a nice woman. She cooked my wedding food.*

**Trini Jan...***I remember her hot mouth so vividly. My grandmother Poonia was her good friend!*

**(114e) Kenrick Durgadin....** I remember Mr & Mrs Durgadin used to live at the bottom of Guaracara Street. Their children were daughters Loreen & Annemarie and sons Kenrick & Danny Boy. Loreen was once “Miss Gasparillo”. Kenrick was a good friend to both me and my brother Nurul. We did a lot of liming at nights in the mid 1960s. A group of us which included Kenrick & Baalsingh spent the night together at Loreen’s home in San Fernando, when our friend Rabin Ramsahai was killed in an accident on the by-pass. We were waiting for him at Buddy Ramsawak’s shop when we got the news. Danny Boy, who used to be a good athlete, unfortunately ended up living on the streets and refused help from the family or friends.

**Ian Maharaj...** *I remember Danny boy. Stayed far from him. It seemed like he suffered from mental illness.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *When Danny Boy was younger he played football with us. He was a regular young boy in the old days. He was very strong and used to lift weights.*

**(114f) Karlay....** Karlay was also called Doc. He was the son of Mr & Mrs Mack (see #97a). He lived with his wife and family on Guaracara Street next to the Lumsden Street Cemetery. Among their children were sons Jamal, Calief and Imran.

## Beadeau Street

Beadeau Street runs north approximately 1.5 miles from the Bonne Aventure Main Road to Dalloo Road then turns west for approx .5 mile to the ASJA Mosque. It ends at Darneaud Street which runs south and Thompson Street which runs north. I can recall only a few sites along the street in those days.

**(115a) The Ramsahais....** Mr & Mrs Ramsahai lived on the eastern side of Beadeau Street about 100 yards from the Bonne Aventure Main Road. They were a progressive, respectable & well-liked couple in the Gasparillo community who were actively involved in the Presbyterian Church. They were dedicated members of the East Indian Friendly Society. He was the President and she was a committee member of the Society for a number of years. Mr Ramsahai was credited with introducing Scouting to Gasparillo and is also credited with being a founding member of the Ist Gasparillo Scout Troop. He was a school teacher and eventually the Principal of the Bonne Aventure Presbyterian School.

The Ramsahai children were, like their parents, well-liked in the community. Among the children were Tara, Kali, Prem, Kashie, Rabin, Anand, Vidya & Dave. The boys were all very active members of BP Club. Kali was a founding member. Prem was BP's leading footballer and one of the best in Gasparillo at that time. Anand was a member of our patrol of 1st Gasparillo Scouts which had won the Chancellor Flag. Rabin was my very good friend. He was a schoolteacher when he was killed in an accident. A car ran into him on the San Fernando By-Pass next to the Twilight Drive-in Cinema, where he had stopped to change a flat tire in his car. The boys were also well known for their motorbike riding skills. They have all migrated to Canada.



**(115a) Mr Ramsahai 1**

*Mr Ramsahai*





*Mrs Ramsahai*

**Gloria Singh...** *The oldest daughter's name is Palmatee. She migrated to the USA.*

**Jai Roopnarine...** *Mr Ramsahai ran a Commercial school in Marabella.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson...** *Yes. Marabella Composite College, I went there for a little while.*

**Diana Zaiffdeen...** *The other Ramsahai daughter was Pam, and I believe she is/was the oldest of all the children. Also the name of one son Kashi, is abbreviation for Kashinath.*

**(115b) Mr Sammy....** Mr Sammy was an interesting elderly man who used to frequent Bobby's Inn on Friday and Saturday evenings. He was quiet and drank mostly by himself or sometimes with a couple of his older friends. He lived in the small board house shortly after the Ramsahais.

His son was the infamous Rattan Lal who had built a reputation in the area as a bad-john and was convicted of the murder of a man on a lonely stretch of cane-lands between Norman Junction and the Harmony Hall Scheme. Rattan Lal went by the nickname "Cloak and Dagger". He'd taken the name from a popular American gangster movie starring Gary Cooper. I can only guess how that must have affected Mr Sammy. I had always looked at him with a sympathetic eye.

**(115c) The Lakhansinghs....** Mr & Mrs Lakhansingh had done well and were living in a large house at the top of a hill away from the road, after the Ramsahais. There was a long driveway just past Mr Sammy's house that led up to the Lakhansingh home. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. Their son Ronald (Kootchie) was one of my friends in those days. We

were members of the 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop and belonged to the Patrol that had won the Chancellor Flag. As scouts we had participated in several hikes and camps together. I had visited their home on a few occasions. His elder brother worked with my father in the Transport Department at Texaco in Pointe Pierre.

**(115d) Chick Medford...** Chick was about our age and spent much of his time at the Ramsahai's. I think he lived in a house across the street from them.

**Chester Madhosingh...***The Dinoos lived opposite the Lakhansinghs. They were Presbyterians. Dr Medford aka Rusty grew up there.*

**Milton Zaiffdeen...***Yes, Kenneth Medford aka "Chick" grew up in a house across from the Ramsahai's. Chick now runs all the remaining "Medford Gas Stations".*

**(115e) ASJA Mosque....** During the late 1950s to early 1960s the Anjuman Sunnatul Jamaat Association made an effort to establish a community of Muslims in the Gasparillo area. They recruited some of the members of the existing Gasparillo Jamaat and some others who were attending Mosques in surrounding areas to form an ASJA jamaat in Gasparillo. Land was purchased in Beadeau Street and eventually a Mosque was erected on the corner where Beadeau Street meets Darneaud & Thompson Streets.

## Dalloo Road

Dalloo Road branches off from Beadeau Street and runs eastward for about 1 mile to the Bonne Aventure Main Road near the Gasparillo Composite Secondary school. During my time I can recall only a few families who lived on Dalloo Road.

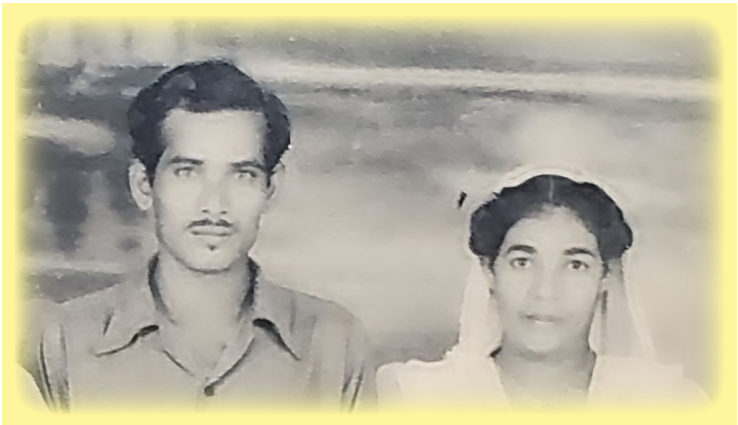
**Azam Mohammed...** *A prominent family from Dalloo Road were the Sue's. They have all migrated.*

**(116a) Mr & Mrs Asgar Ali Karmally...** Mr Karmally was known as Baytal and his wife was Jeanette. They lived at 79 Dalloo Road, immediately after the junction with Beadeau Street. He was the son of Mr & Mrs Karmally and brother of Moses, Gustin & Hydar (see #73c). They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and were both members of the East Indian Friendly Society.

Baytal worked in Pointe a Pierre. Among their children were

daughters Jessima, Rasheeda, Moonira & Kateja and sons Zainool, Jamite & Moonir. Zainool & one of the daughters had migrated to the United States. The others had married and began raising their families at home in Trinidad. Jamite, who was a member of the Gasparillo Islamic Group was killed in a car accident.

One incident I remember with Jamite was while we (GIG) were playing a cricket match in Vos Park. He was wicket keeping and Aziz (Bata) was the opening fast-bowler. The batsman missed the first ball bowled to him. The ball hit Jamite on his forehead knocking him unconscious. A bump almost the size of the ball immediately appeared on his forehead. Fortunately he survived that and was okay.



*Mr & Mrs Asgar Ali (Baytal) Karmally*

**(116b) Mr Lincoln Ross....** Mr Ross was a carpenter by trade. He lived with his family across the street from the Baytal Karmally home since 1951. One of his sons is John Ross.



*Mr & Mrs Lincoln Ross*

**(116c) Mr & Mrs Khan....**Mr & Mrs Khan lived just after the Karmallys. They were members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Among their children were daughter Shaharezad and son Niamath who both started in the

mosque as students in the Sunday School and later on were active members of the Gasparillo Islamic Group. They were just slightly younger than me and were my friends in those days. Shaharazad became a nurse. She was married to Abzal Khan (see #56c) who was also a member of the Gasparillo Jamaat. She died as a relatively young woman.

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Niamath was also a nurse at San F'do General Hospital. He is now retired.*

**(116d) Leslie and Maria....** Leslie and Maria live on Dalloo Road obliquely opposite the corner where it meets Johnson Street. I remember Leslie from the days when we travelled on the school bus to San Fernando. At that time he lived in Mayo so his friends on the bus were the boys he knew from Mayo. Maria was a relative of my wife Sherma.

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Leslie & Maria are our very good friends. We really became great friends with them when Caryl and I were having our house built in Freeport. We met at Bobby's and over a few beers our friendship really developed from there. We have remained very good friends through the good times and the sad times. As you know Leslie and Maria lost their daughter in 2008. We were there to offer our support. Very sadly they have since lost their second daughter. Even though Caryl and I are back in England we keep in touch by facetime. And whenever we visit Trinidad their house is our home.*

**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Leslie and Maria are our very close friends. Maria and I are very supportive to each other because we both do chemo. Safar is related to Leslie on his father's side. They are the strongest couple I know in spite of all their challenges.*

**(116e) Edwin & Agnes Blackburne....** Edwin and Agnes Blackburne lived in Dalloo Road where they raised their family. Among their children were sons Clyde, Frederick & Noel and daughter Annette.



*Left: Edwin and Agnes Blackburne; Right: Texaco Police Officer Blackburne*





*Left: Annette Blackburne-Alexander; Right: Noel Blackburne*

Mr Blackburne was a Texaco Horse Policeman in Pointe A Pierre where he was a colleague of my brother Nurul.

The children all attended Vos Government School. Clyde was one of my students there. The Blackburnes were devoted parents and this is reflected in the achievements of their children.

Clyde went on to be the Chief Safety Officer at Amoco Oil Company. Fredrick went on to be a Master Drilling Operator at Trinidad Oilwell Services. Noel became a Detective with the Atlanta Police Department in the USA. Annette Blackburne-Alexander was a head nurse at the San Fernando General Hospital and at the Tabaquite Health Center.

## Lumsden Street

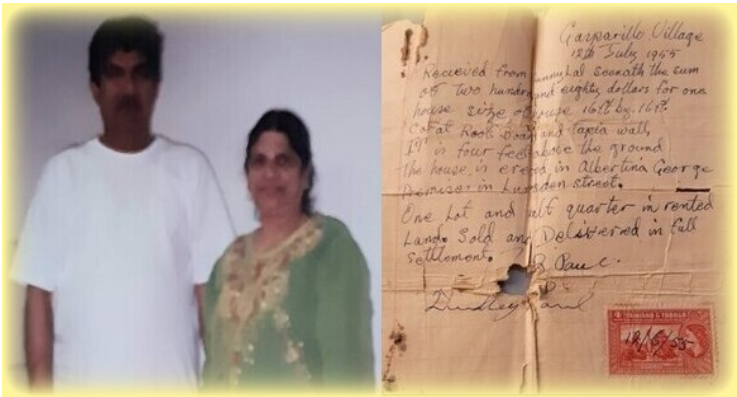
Lumsden Street was named after a Mr Lumsden who owned an estate there during the 1800s. A public cemetery and the Leo Thompson Recreation Park are located along this street. Following are some of the names I remember of people living there in my days in Gasparillo.

**Valmiki Ramsingh...** *Darneaud Street and Lumsden Street are the oldest streets in Gasparillo. Mr Lumsden is actually buried in his cemetery.*

**(117a) Martinet Hiliare....** The Hiliare family is an extended family in this area of Gasparillo. Among them are Mr & Mrs Martinet Hiliare and their children. Mr Martinet was a member of Maple Club cricket team. The family lived in a flat board house in Lumsden Street not far from the junction with the Bonne Aventure Main Road, at the bottom of Happy Hill. Among

the children was a son Delano and several daughters. One of the daughters, Madonna, worked for several years at Mr Omardeen's Regent Store on Gasparillo Junction. Some of the other children attended College in San Fernando.

**(117b) Sunnlyal Seenath Family....** Sunnlyal and his wife Minee Seenath lived with their family in Lumsden Street. They had nine children, six girls and three boys. Sunnlyal was also known as "Jack". He was an active member of the Red Cross and the Gasparillo East Indian Friendly Society.



Left: Sunnlyal & Minee Seenath; Right: Sunnlyal paid \$280.00 for his house in 1955



*Sunnylal Seenath Family*



*Sonnylal (front row on the left) was a Red Cross Member*

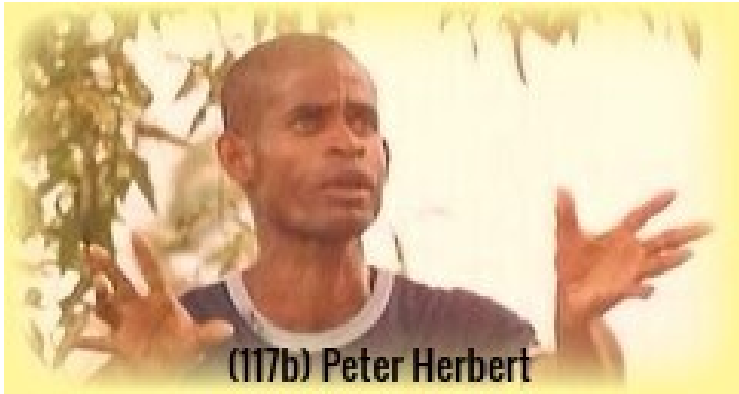
**Vimla Mohammed....***Sunnylal & Minee are my parents. My father bought his house in Lumsden Street for \$280.00 in 1955.*

**(117c) The Herberts....** Mrs Herbert was also known as Miss Halls. She lived with her family in a small house on the northern side of the Bonne Aventure Main Road at the base of Happy Hill. Their home stood on a lot of land opposite Lumsden Street. Mrs Herbert had three daughters and one son. The daughters were Patricia, Marge & Marjorie. The son was Peter who has been a very good friend of mine. He is the well-known Calypsonian, Mighty Wanderer. The family also lived in Charles Street at one time.

Peter suffered from the same physical deformity as Patrick Ramsingh (see #113c). Just like Patrick, Peter never allowed this to restrain him. He was a Guardian photographer besides being a calypsonian. He was never one to miss an opportunity. I'd seen him challenge the National Table Tennis champion Mansingh Amarsingh in a friendly game at the Texaco Sports Club. Peter lost really badly. But he played him. I remember him in a cycle race against riders on their racing bikes, at a sporting event at the Gasparillo Park. He half-pedaled on a regular lady's bicycle. Although he came in last, he finished the race to loud applause from the spectators.

There are numerous examples of Peter's determination. He's been with me on all my T&T projects. The Mighty Wanderer...

.you couldn't help but like him and his willingness to try anything!!



*Peter "Wanderer" Herbert*

**(117d) Leo Thompson....** Leo was a well established character in Gasparillo during my growing-up years. I'm not sure where on Happy Hill he lived but I knew that he was from that area. He used to be a County Councillor for the District. He had an excellent speaking voice and never hesitated to use it. I remember him mostly as our local Midnight Robber on Gasparillo Carnival days. All the boys used to follow his character around the Junction area to hear him deliver his speech detailing his heroic adventures in some foreign land. "Halt halt you mocking pretender!!.....". The words flowed like poetry from his lips!!!

**(117e) Raffick "Soto" Mohammed....** Raffick was the eldest son

of Mr & Mrs Poti (see #106a). He and his wife Amina lived in the lower part of Lumsden Street. Amina's maiden name was Hosein. Here they raised their five children among whom were sons Nizam, Wahid, Alimuddin and Hamzad and daughter Zira.

Raffick worked at times as a barber, a tailor, a bird cage maker and a general tradesman. He played cricket with his sons in their yard and after school he would take them to fly kites and walk through the bushes with his bird cage.

Both parents worked hard to send their children to school. Their son Hamzad was the only one of the children to acquire a secondary school education. At that time they were all members of the Gasparillo Main Road Jamaat, where the children attended Maktab classes.

They also attended Gasparillo Government School where they excelled in sports. Hamzad went on to become a schoolteacher and later in life was named the Nation's Teacher of the Year.



*Raffick "Soto" Mohammed*





*Left: Amina and her son Hamzad (late 1950s); Right: Amina with her 5 children in the 1960s*

## Happy Hill--Part 1

**(118a) Mr & Mrs Dooloosingh....**The Dooloosingshs lived in an upstairs concrete house along the northern side of the Bonne Aventure Main Road after the Herbert's home. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. He worked in the Transport Department in Pointe a Pierre and was a work-friend of my father. He played cricket in the Smith League. I think he played for Maple and liked to talk about what a good batsman he was. My father told us about how one Sunday Maple was playing BP and my brother Nurul clean bowled him with his first ball. Mr Dooloosingh didn't talk cricket for a whole month after that!

**(118b) Mr & Mrs Buckreedan....**The Buckreedan's Clan was a large extended family group who lived at the southern side of the Bonne Aventure Main Road at the top of Happy Hill. They were active members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Among its members, whose names I remember, were Mrs & Mrs Manna Mohammed & their children, Mr & Mrs Boyie & their children, Babylin who was married to

Sylvan Ali (see #103a) & Jugoloong. Mr Buckreedan was a brother of Mr Aziz (see #105a) & Mr Ali Hosein (see #105b). As a boy I attended several religious functions at their home.



**(118b) The Buckreedan Family**

*The Buckreedan Family*

**Shelly Ali...** *Jugoloong was actually Uncle Manna's son. Mr Aziz and Mr Ali Hosein was my grandfather's (Mr Buckreedan) brothers. My grandfather had four other daughters. Salina who lived higher up from us. She was married to Uncle Sooknali who I believe was Uncle Sylvan and Uncle Brother's cousin. Tanty Jah who was married to Uncle Bobat. They lived in Razack Street. My other two aunts moved out of Gasparillo. We had one other uncle,*

*Manshad, who lived behind us. He worked at Texaco.*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *Sooknali was their uncle. He was the brother of my grandmother Saphiran (wife of Moses Karamally). If you check back, of the “traditional” Gasparillo families, the ties of marriage would have almost everyone related to each other to some degree.*

**Shelly Ali...** *Yes that is very true. Take for instance Uncle Brother and Uncle Sylvan. My father’s sister is married to Uncle Sylvan and my mother’s sister is married to Uncle Brother.*

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *I still get kicks when allyuh call Mamoo “Uncle Brother”.*

**Shelly Ali...** *I always thought it was funny but that’s all I remember ever calling him.*

**Nazeena Ali-Hosein...** *Uncle Sooknali was my father’s mamoo. He was Sylvan Chacha’s mamoo as well as his saru bhai.*

**Azad Razi Mohammed...** *I’m the son of Mr & Mrs Manna Mohammed. My parents were well known members of the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. My father, a very respectable, upright man also worked at Texaco/NP as a Tanker Operator. He was the eldest child and adult leader of the above mentioned clan. Two of his children (Winston & Razi) were very active members of*

*the Gasparillo Jamaat and in the sporting community. My sisters Joyce and Joan grew up in the AYM/GIG. I continue to admire the work you have been doing. May Allah continue to bless you.*

**(118c) The Hiliares....** Mr & Mrs Hiliare lived opposite the Buckreedans. They were related to Mr Martinet Hiliare. Mr Hiliare worked in Pointe a Pierre. The family was descended from Ma Jadoo who was ancestor to several families in the Gasparillo area. They had several sons & daughters. Mr Hiliare and his sons used to play cricket for Maple.

Among his sons were Matan & Randolph. Matan used to be a policeman. Randolph was among my best friends. He was blessed with a very sweet singing voice. I remember him singing at Gasparillo Government School concerts while we were students. Later he became the popular calypsonian Count Robin. Randolph also played the part of “Jake” in the movie “Bacchanal Time”.



*Randolph Hiliare "Count Robin"*

**(118d) The Neptunes....** The Neptune family lived next door to the Buckreedans. One of the boys was my classmate at Gasparillo Government School.

**Shelly Ali...** *The Hilaires and the Neptunes had a cricket team named Darlington. My father didn't play but he was a member of the club.*

**(118e) Mr & Mrs Mohammed Ali....** The Alis lived in a house on the southern side of the Bonne Aventure Main Road just past Johnston Street. They had a son named Asgar who was a friend of

my eldest brother Boyie. I believe they had migrated to Canada.

**Imran Ali....** *Mohammed Ali was my cousin. His wife's name was Batoolan. They had 2 children, a son named Asgar and a daughter named Sakina (aka Hazoon). Mohammed migrated to New York City where he eventually passed away. Asgar married Joyce and they both migrated to Toronto with their 2 children David and Diane.*

**(118f) Mr & Mrs Kenneth Ramsawak....**Kenneth was the eldest son of Mr & Mrs Buddy Ramsawak. Their home was on the opposite side of the Ali home on the Bonne Aventure Main Road. I believe that like his parents, Kenneth & his wife were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. He ran the family newspaper distribution business. Among their children was daughter Carol Manohar and sons Ronny & Lindsay. Ronny was married to Marissa (deceased) who was related to me in the John Munradin lineage. Ronny & Lindsay have migrated. Ronny owns a restaurant in Toronto. Lindsay lives in the USA.



*Mr & Mrs Kenneth Ramsawak*

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali-Ballantine...** *Michael Ramsawak ran the newspapers distribution business.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Mr Kenneth is Michael's dad. Generations in the business.*

**Judy Kawal...** *When in Toronto I would go to Ronnie's restaurant just about everyday. It's called Roti Roti. My son loved dhal. From the time they see him they would repeat "more dhal please". That was always his request. But they have a variety of Trini food that we don't get here in Winnipeg, so I buy to freeze when I am leaving.*



## Happy Hill--Part 2

**(119a) The Mungal Family....** According to Alisa Jankie: “My great grandmother Mrs. Irene Mungal nee Sammah used to have Sunday School in Happy Hill. She was the daughter of Andrew Sammah and Hannah Parbati Sammah. Andrew started the Bonne Aventure Presbyterian Church. Hannah Parbati was Andrew’s second wife.

Andrew came to Trinidad from India with his parents when he was a boy. Irene was one of his children with Hannah. She married James Mungal and they had four children: Theodore, Russell, Iraneus and Evangeline.

Theodore Kelvin Mungal was also known as Sonny Mungal. He used to play tassa in a group with Toon Ali, Hydar Ali and Soondar. He was my mother’s father. He died in 1978. Irene died in 1978 also. My mom said you taught her in school. We live in Happy Hill opposite Mona Singh. When Irene was alive, the house was near the main road and she had given land to my grandfather Sonny, so there are six houses here.

Mr. S. K. Ramsingh married Evangeline Mungal. She was the only daughter of Irene. They used to call her Beti, so we call her Auntie Betty.



*The Mungal Family*



**(119a) The Mungal Family**

*Irene Mungal*  
741



**(119a) The Mungal Family 2**

*The Mungal Family*



**(119a) The Mungal Family House**

*The Mungal Family House*



*Tassa man Sonny Mungal*  
743

**(119b) Happy Hill Hindu School....**In response to the need for a Primary school in the area, the Sanatan Dharma Maha Sabha opened the Happy Hill Hindu School on the Bonne Aventure Main Road. The school opened on May 1st 1956. The school has performed very admirably and has become another valued educational establishment in the Gasparillo area, producing a steady stream of successful graduates.



**(119b) Happy Hill Hindu School**

*Happy Hill Hindu School*

**(119c) The Watermelon House....** On the hill just past the Hindu School along the Bonne Aventure Main Road was a board house whose owner sold watermelons during the season. Under

his house used to be loaded with large heaps of watermelons. During my late teenage years, in the early 1960s, one of our evening limes was to walk up the road to buy melons during the watermelon season. For about twenty five cents we could buy one of his melons. Each of us would buy a melon. We'd crack them on the road and eat and make jokes and laugh and old talk as we slowly walked back down the road.

**(119d) SK Ramsingh....** Mr & Mrs Ramsingh lived with their children at the northeast corner of the Bonne Aventure Main Road & Dalloo Road. Among his siblings was brother taxi-driver Harrysingh of Allen Street. Among hers were brothers Iranius Mungal (teacher) & Sonny Mungal (tassaman).

Mr Ramsingh began his career as a teacher. He later became a Probation Officer. He was, along with Mr Ramsahai, a founding member of 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop. When I joined 1st Gasparillo, Mr Ramsingh was our official Scout Master. In those days scout meetings were held at his home. My first scout camp was at Guayaguayare under his leadership. A few years later after he had moved on to an official position in the Scout Association, Tom Ali & Morgan Jagessar became the Scoutmasters.

Mr Ramsingh was present in Tabaquite when 1st Gasparillo won the Chancellor Flag. I'll never forget the pride in his face as he congratulated us. Mr Ramsingh was involved in my founding of 2nd Gasparillo at Vos Government School in 1963.

At Akelah Kenrick Ramkissoon's funeral in Lumsden Cemetary, Mr Ramsingh & Mr Ray Watkins the Executive Commissioner asked me to step in as Leader of 5th Gasparillo. I explained my

regrets because I was leaving in a few weeks for my home in New York.

Mr Ramsingh was a true leader in our Gasparillo community. He achieved a high reputation in World Scouting. He was a friend of my family ever since I could remember. Among his children who I remember were daughters Indra, Shanti & Vitra and sons Dave & Val. The children had inherited the positive drives of their parents and have become achievers in their own right.



**(119e) Lloyd Gay....**Mr Lloyd Gay grew up in a little board house on the hill after the Ramsinghs on the Bonne Adventure Main Road. His family was musically oriented so he grew up in



that environment. Among his siblings were, sister Norma and brother Pascal.

Lloyd as a boy began showing interest in our new T&T musical instrument, the pan. After playing in bands in Gasparillo & San Fernando, Lloyd began experimenting with the instrument itself. Lloyd was of great assistance to me during the filming of the movies “Bacchanal Time” and “The Panman”. His brother Pascal also acted in “Bacchanal Time”.

Today the name Lloyd Gay is respected internationally wherever steelband is mentioned. He is recognized as a gifted Pan tuner & Pan Manufacturer. His internationally famous pans are manufactured at his Shop right here in Gasparillo.



*Lloyd Gay*

**(119f) The Madhosings....** The Madhosing's home is at the corner of the Bonne Aventure Main Road and the side road to Parforce Road. Mr Madhosingh was a brother of Mr Lilladharsingh (shopkeeper Sookbir, see #37), Mr Kuarsingh (shopkeeper Ramlal, see #108d) and Mr Bhagwansingh (Zenith Cinema owner, see #9). He was the father of LaSalle, Simon & Anthony. I didn't know his wife or if he had daughters. The boys were members of BP Club. LaSalle was a football player for BP and for Presentation College. I knew the boys at BP. They were good friends with my brother Nurul.

**(119g) Gaindah.....** Gaindah was the eldest son of Mr Lilladharsingh (the shopkeeper Sookbir). He lived opposite his uncle Mr Madhosingh. I didn't know much about him or his family.

**(119h) Mr Poonwasie....**The Poonwasie family lived across the side street after the Madhosingh home. He built a sizable business collecting glass bottles for distribution to the various manufacturers & vendors. He owned a large enclosed truck which was used in the business. We'd hired him and his truck to transport our film equipment while making our movie "Bacchanal Time".

## Thompson Street & Upper Caratal

**(120a) The Rojan family....** Mr & Mrs Rojan lived with their family on Thompson Street. They were members of the East Indian Friendly Society. They were a Muslim family but I don't remember them attending the Gasparillo Mosque. When the Beadeau Street ASJA mosque was built close to their home they became affiliated there. I remember the patron of the clan. We referred to him as Mona Chacha. He was sometimes a fill-in member of Toon Ali's tassa group. Other family members were Polay, Hamid & Bogart. Polay had lost an eye. Hamid sometimes played tassa. Bogart owned a bar on Caratal Road.

**Christine Nanan...** *I live in Bedeau Street a few houses away from them. I know Polay and Bogart.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I knew Bogart very well from my days and nights at the Gasparillo Recreation Club. I also visited his bar on Caratal Road on one of my early visits to*

*Trinidad with our cousin Abby.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Cockfights Sunday mornings at Bogart's bar.*

**(120b) Gasparillo Hindu School....**Gasparillo Hindu School was opened by the Sanatam Dharma Maha Sabha in Thompson Street, Gasparillo in the mid 1950s. At a time when the village was beginning to grow rapidly the new Primary school was a welcome addition. My wife Sherma was a student there for a short while.



**(120b) Gasparillo Hindu School**

*Gasparillo Hindu School*

**(120c) The Farzan Ali family....** Mr & Mrs Farzan Ali lived in a large two storey building on Caratal Road opposite the beginning of Parforce Road. The family lived upstairs and operated a shop downstairs. They were active members of both the Gasparillo Jamaat and the East Indian Friendly Society. Later on they left the Gasparillo Jamaat and became affiliated to the Beadeau Street ASJA Jamaat.

Besides being a shopkeeper Mr Ali was also a cane farmer. Mr & Mrs Ali had several children. Among the names I remember were sons Alladin, Amzad, Tikki, Ding & Shauffie (David) and daughter Dolly. Alladin became a businessman. Amzad became a farmer. Tikki & Ding became hardware owners. Ding was also a Government County Councillor. Shauffie is a Doctor who owns a Medical Center in Gulf City. Dolly lives in Canada. Tikki's son was kidnapped from their business place several years ago.

**Sheriffa Naseem Ali - Ballantine...** *The owner of the Gulf View Medical Centre is Dr David Ali. I do not know him as Shauffie. He is a gynecologist. Tikki's son was found a year or 2 after the kidnapping. Ding is also a Justice of the Peace.*

**(120d) Dil E Nadan....** Dil E Nadan orchestra was a well-known Indian orchestra when those were popular at Indian weddings & occasions in T&T. One of its leaders was Tole Ramnarine of Bhagwansingh Trace. His home is the homesite of the band. Dil e Nadan, which is now a Ramnarine family band, has become one of the most popular crossover bands in Trinidad & Tobago.

**Christine Nanan...** *Raymond Ramnarine and I were school mates.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *One of the early members of the Dil E Nadan band was a guy named Frankie. I didn't*

*know him very well except that he used to visit Bobby's at times. His father who I knew as Moon, ran a bar and gambling club in Bonne Aventure. He could've been Frankie "Mandolin". He was a brilliant mandolin player and schoolteacher. He was a regular at the inns in Gasparillo.*

**(120e) Ann Marie Bachan....**In the mid 1960s, just around the time when I was making preparations to migrate to the USA, a girl from upper Caratal Road was murdered near her home. Her name was Ann Marie Bachan. She was about 12 years old at the time. According to reports, she had walked out to a neighborhood shop to buy pig rations. Her body was discovered in a drain near the junction just after Parforce Road.

A man was arrested and convicted for the crime. He was nicknamed "The Broom man" because he was a broom salesman. I remember that he was warded at the San Fernando General Hospital under police guard and people gathered everyday trying to get a glimpse of him.

After her body was discovered, I recall becoming very concerned about one of my students, Doreen Baird, who lived in the vicinity and walked to school (Vos) every day.

My friend The Mighty Wanderer (Peter Herbert) had composed a calypso about the event: "Ann Marie Bachan, went to buy pig ration. Ann Marie Bachan was attacked by a hooligan....."

**AL Wahid...** Bentick was eventually released, mother committed suicide by igniting herself above the stove because justice was not implemented..... “Criminal Appeal No. 90 of 1967 Bentick and R Appearances: Mr. V. de Lima appeared for the appellant. Mr. G. des Iles, Solicitor-General, and Mr. G.A. Stewart appeared for the Crown. Criminal law - Appeal against Conviction (Murder). Phillips, J.A 1 The appellant was arraigned before a judge and jury at the San Fernando Assizes for the murder of Anne Marie Bachan on November 21, 1964. After a trial lasting several days he was convicted and sentenced to death. The substance of the case for the prosecution, which was based entirely upon circumstantial evidence, may be summarised as follows. 2 Anne Marie Bachan was a girl of Indian origin, aged approximately 15 years, who lived with her mother, Mona Mahabir, at San Fabien Road, Gasparillo. Early on the evening of Saturday November 21, 1964 she left her home for the purpose of purchasing several articles at shops in the neighbourhood. She never returned home and was never again seen alive by her mother. There was evidence given by several witnesses of having seen the deceased at different points on or in the vicinity of San Fabien Road after she had left her home on the evening in question. On these occasions the appellant was observed to be either standing in close proximity to the deceased or to be following her. There was also evidence that she had made purchases of kerosene and cooking oil at the shop of one Joseph Roberts at San Fabien Road; that she did not take away the goods she had purchased but



*had left them in the shop and did not return for them. The deceased also purchased on that evening a ladies' half-slip and eight pounds of pig ration at the shop of one Sadhoo, which is situated at a point on the Maryland-Caratal Road near its junction with the San Fabien Road and is further away from her home than Roberts' shop."*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *It was a very sad time in Gasparillo.*

**Ann Marie Ramsundar-Radhay...** *This is so sad but at least you did not forget her.*

**Zenobia Doodnath...** *I remember that incident as a young girl growing up I was scared to walk the road in Gasparillo.*

**Rosslind Ramsubagh...** *We girls were banned from going out after dark.*

**Lucian Lord...** *That's a recollection it's ingenious start a book or something about Gasparillo.*

**Yarzman Moh'd Ghanny...** *So sorry to hear about this hope justice was done.*

**Admurry Sinanan...** *I remember that I think she was a bit older, because one of my cousins was dating her at the time he went to see her that day but she never came home.*

**Vijay Mohip...** *Anne Mary Bachan incident was in my time when I was in elementary school. Never forgot her name. The broom man sold brooms in my street.*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *I remember this clearly.*

**Buelah Wilson-Pooran...** *I remember that clearly.as though it was.yesterday. I remember Doreen Baird... .where is she today?*

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *So sad...never heard about this before.*

**Mustapha Mohammed...** *Living in Bonne Aventure so long, never heard of incident. Thanks for sharing history.*

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *The story I heard was that the rains poured down so heavily and the body was washed up onto Polo Shop compound. They say the culprit's skin was found under her nails where she scratched him. According to the older folks around there there's more to that story but I cannot say.*

## Hardball Cricket in Gasparillo



*Hardball Cricket*

Hardball or overhand cricket was played at the Gasparillo Park from its very opening. I was just a boy when activities at the Gasparillo Park were initiated by a friendly cricket match. It was most likely organized by Mr Cyril Smith and his associates. Mr

Smith went on to be the premier organizer of cricket and football in Gasparillo in those early years. Because interest in the village at that time was mainly for cricket, that is where he focused most of his effort. His creation of the Smith League produced numerous cricket teams which in turn developed a wide array of renowned cricketers in Gasparillo.

During all my growing-up years cricket matches at the park on weekends were big events. There used to be large, enthusiastic gatherings of spectators all around the field, cheering-on their favorite teams and players. Teams like Sports Club, BP, Orion, Maple, Gasparillo United, Harmony Hall & Darlington and Players like Kent Babb, Samraj, the Sankars, the Mohips, Dean Ganpat, Chum, Batch, Leon, Samuel, Nurul, Roach, Babzoon, Boysie Nandlal, Rolly Baptiste, the Remys & so many more.

For many years our home was actively involved because there is where the matting and the cricket implements were stored. A large roller was kept at the park. On weekends the players used to go to the park to prepare the ground. They would roll the pitch with the heavy roller, then lay out the matting on the pitch, stretch and tag it down, lay out the wickets and flag out the boundaries. Although there were no stands or pavilion there was a large official scoreboard constructed on the river side of the park. Those cricket matches attracted a wide variety of spectators, shit-talkers & vendors.

I have so many wonderful memories from those days at the Park. One in particular concerns a time when the Australian team was on tour in the West Indies. The team which included fast bowler Ray Lindwall was visiting the Pointe A Pierre Oil Refinery on a

Sunday. My father, who worked in the Transport Department, was the driver of their bus. He took the chance of bringing them to the barrier in Gasparillo at the time he knew the evening game in the Park would be over. He did this so that we, his sons, would have a chance to meet the Australian players. Well all the young fellas from the Park met them. Lindwall came out of the bus to greet Kent Babb, whose bowling he'd admired in their game against Trinidad. Papa looked around but couldn't see us. We had gone to swim in Waracka (Guaracara) that evening after the game. Well, you can imagine the result of that when he got home!

Sunday afternoon cricket matches during my youth were true community affairs. This was made possible mainly by the efforts of Mr Cyril Smith.

**Imran Ali...** *Excellent summary.*

**Milton Zaiffdeen...** *Great memories of my growing up in Charles Street.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *I love this Malo.....excellent.*

**Kevin Manohar...** *I am sure you will be happy to know after many years (+15yrs) without having competitive cricket at Gasparillo Park, The Baden Powell Club was allowed use and we have been playing competitively since 2011...*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Kent Babb represented T&T as a fast bowler in a few games.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember going to Lumsden ground to watch cricket in the 1950s. At that time the ground was where the cemetery is today. I also remember a women team from up the islands played a match on that ground.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *The Women's Cricket games used to be organised by Mr Bonifacio Raphael.*

**AL Wahid...** *I saw Joey Carew hit Ishoon "Batch" Khan a six over Guaracara, near the cement factory.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *The biggest six at the park was when Joey Carew hit Batch inside Redymix.*

**Joseph Remy...** *I was a youth watching that game. What a Shot.*

**AL Wahid...** *Yes, I happened to be there, a little fellow. A memorable game was Gasparillo Sports vs Okinton from Claxton Bay. Okinton had Harry Ramoutar and one of the Johns, I think it was either Neville or Leo (TT national player). It was sensational when left-hand bowler Benzin bowled Ramoutar for a duck.*

**Imran Ali...** *I wasn't much into cricket but I was always in the Park. My memory is Mr. Ram and his press.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *For me Mr.Ram's press was on evenings on the way home from school.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *School cricket was also very big while I was teaching. In those days Vos was winning everything. "Boonjie" Hyatali & Admurry Sinanan of Vos were among the best in that level of competition.*

**Admurry Sinanan...** *The Park brings lots of memories. I played lots of cricket and won the school championship as captain of Vos Government School, also in the Smith League playing for Orion.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I remember you as an outstanding player at Vos. You were my student there also.*

**Admurry Sinanan...** *Yes, and we had lots of fun. Vos was the top school in the area in everything.*

**AL Wahid...** *Darius had the best bowling average one year when we were both players with Overseas.*

**Admurry Sinanan...** *Those days I was playing for Spartans.*

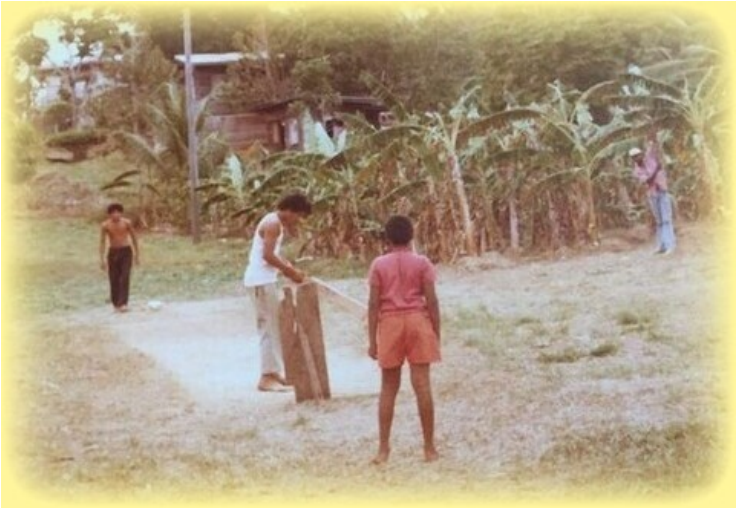
**Arnot Lord...** *Arnold Olivier a product of the Gasparillo League who represented the WI; Robert Neptune T&T Senior & Junior; Joseph Remy & Kenton Thompson T&T Junior... All great Gasparillo cricketers.*

**Jeff Khan...** *Uncle Chum played for South in the National competition. He and Batch went on to play for Orientals a top team playing out of Skinners Park. I met Kent Babb at Tesoro down in Siparia in 2014. Kenty as he was fondly called by my family surprisingly remembered me and ask about my dad Gaiz, Uncle Chum, Batch, Uncle Dix, Uncle Carlo and my 2 Aunts Anty Baytee and Anty Veena. This is great nostalgia. I remembered all these things. I must add a finals between Maples and Sports Club. The biggest crowd I ever saw in the park. Of course Sports Club prevailed.*



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## Underhand Windball Cricket.



*Underhand Cricket*



*Underhand Cricket*

Many of our hometown people like to claim that underhand windball cricket originated in Gasparillo. Whether true or not I can safely say that during our dry seasons, underhand windball cricket flourished in our village, outstripping most other sporting activities. This game was being played wherever a few boys & men (and sometimes even girls) could gather and put together two teams. The requirements were a ball, a bat and a wicket. The ball was a tennis ball. The bat was shaped from a piece of discarded board (in the older days a coconut branch would do). The wicket was usually two small cans placed about 2 feet apart or three pieces of board nailed together or a piece of galvanize leaning on a stick.

The games were usually played for fun but sometimes the teams gathered a few pennies from among its players, pooled it all together and played for the pool. Nowadays although there are leagues and competitions set up every year and sponsored by local businesses, the old-style games are still played for fun at

family gatherings, church outings and beach limes. If you grew up in Gasparillo, you had to have played underhand windball cricket at sometime. My brothers and I (and sisters) all grew up in this game. We had a commonly used field under the tambran trees next to our home in Cocoa Street. Games were played there and at several other locations in the village. Some of the outstanding competition teams over the years were Sunshine, Olympus, Hill Boys, Charles Street, Harmony Hall, Mango Valley & Scheme Boys. A few of the memorable players over the years were Toyah, Wahid, Andy, Boborn, Benzin, Sancho, Kissee, Timber, Mamoo, Roger Brooker, Bata, Shah, Forbes, Sam Errol, Ulrick & Troy. Timber held the record as the straightest and hardest pelted of the ball.

Competition matches were played in most of the regular cricket fields on Sunday mornings. Usually a corner of the regular cricket ground was reserved for those matches. I remember playing in competition games in Gasparillo Park, Lumsden, the Scheme, Government School Ground & Bonne Aventure. In unofficial games, I'd played in big and small fields from Mahogany to Bobeyland to Springland and numerous places in between. I remember as a boy, a few Sunday morning matches being played in any area we could clear a batting & bowling pitch. If we were playing too near a building, the catch-out rule would be "obstruction out (or not out)". If we were playing in the bush, the rule would always be "lost ball win". I remember matches being played in dried rice colas, burnt out canefields and even on the main road between Nandlal & Sahaboo shops. We didn't have to worry too much about traffic because there was almost none in those days.

**Chester Madhosingh...***Rillo Boys were a great force in underhand windball cricket in the seventies. Top players were Jappy, Feeraz, Bangas and yours truly. Mr F Rojan ran the tournament.*

**Ron Ramsawak...***Don't forget Devils Angels. In the waning days of underhand cricket one person that understood the true concept of the underhand bowling was Larry Sooklalsingh from Union Road. He came in with a "mama rollsay" that bewildered and befuddled all teams that year.*

**Kevin Manohar...***He still plays cricket.*

**Sadru Deen...***Some of the best matches were contested under our tambran trees.*

**Jai Roopnarine...***I clearly remember those good old days on a Sunday morning when there was fierce competition. I was lucky to play in a number of games because there were so many talented players.*

**Milton Zaiffdeen...***I won a lot of "pennies" playing on Bobbon and Bobby's teams.*

**Arnot Lord...***As a little boy I can recollect Sunday morning Lochos vs Hillboys on the Gasparillo Government Primary School ground which was virtually my back yard. I used to be the scorer. Men chipping up \$1 a man and*

*playing. Winner take all. Underhand cricket was a feature of lower Gasparillo. Glad you mentioned Timber. He was one of a kind. Love your writing bringing back so much memories.*

**AL Wahid...** *The fiercest underhand bowler was Goopie from Charles St N. Bobbon used to bowl a legbreak like a steering wheel. Very great games were played in Mango valley. The Brookers will confirm that. Even Gasparillo Sports club with their big guns showed up at Government School ground.*

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## Football in Gasparillo



*Football*

Recently I was thinking about football in my time in Gasparillo. When the Gasparillo Park was first opened I was a still a young boy. I wasn't aware of any local football teams or clubs in our

village at that time.

The first league which played games at the park presented out-of-town teams. A couple names that I recall were Shell and Rogues Regiment. The players were all dressed in colorful uniforms and the games were very official in their presentation. The local boys and youths grew so enthusiastic by these games that very quickly teams began to sprout up all over Gasparillo and leagues were being organized to encourage the young players. I myself played at times for Gasparillo Islamic Group, First Gasparillo Scout Troop, BP Boys and in later years for Olympus.

As the years went by numerous teams had their periods of glory and several of our local players gained recognition on the Inter-col, National Leagues and even on the T&T National Team. Over the years several new football fields have been opened all around the extended Gasparillo area. Pavilions have been built and lights have been introduced to allow for night practice and games. Some of the popular Gasparillo football teams over the years were BP, Orion, Darlington, Black Dragons/Santos, Bonavex and Olympus.

**Imran Ali...** *We owe a lot to Mr. Cyril Smith and his gang for the establishment of cricket and football leagues in Gasparillo.*

**AL Wahid...** *I agree, he was a great community leader. I remember when he approached me and told me to visit*

him at Texaco, adjacent to Guaracra Park to facilitate practicing with Texaco and offering an apprenticeship. There was a screening in Lumdsen by Officials looking at the Gasparillo youth. Dalip, too was very instrumental with the success of the Black Dragons/LBS teams. But a couple of weeks later I went to Canada. There were great rivalries in football in Gasparillo in my time (I might sound bias) by teams like PBO, Darlington, Springland United and us, LBS. They all had great players like Barrington (kassa), Arthur Regis & Leroy Walters. One of our most enthralling games was when Darlington imported a POS top of the line goalkeeper. LBS dropped five goals on him, lol. It was like a carnival cavalcade from Lumdsen to Gasparillo junction. I mean I will always remember that for sure. LBS had rivalries in Williamsville that included Leroy Spann as well as Union/Marabella.

**Chester Madhosingh...** Gasparillo produced a National footballer in Joel Rahim.

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** And Patrick Edwards.

**Sheraz Karmally...** Olympus was your brainchild. It gave boys who would probably never have the chance, to play football and cricket.

**Sradhanand Ramrattan...** I know that Olympus was the brain child of you and many others to name a few Ram, Ronie, Niki and others. We had started the ten overs competition cricket and football in the park as we called it



*then with the help of Roger Brooker who is now deceased.*

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## Boxing in Gasparillo



**(124) Boxing In Gasparillo**

*Johnny Depieza*

To my knowledge Gasparillo was not a boxing-enthusiastic community. We were as fan-oriented as any other but our young men seemed to lack the courage & expertise to face another individual in the pugilistic arena. We never had any trainers or gyms or avenues of contest to encourage our youth to participate. It is therefore extremely unusual and creditable that out of this lack of enthusiasm for participation in this sport, our little village of Gasparillo produced a fighter who stepped out into the world and almost rose to the very top of his game.

Johnny DePieza came from humble beginnings in a large family from Darneaud Street (see #100b, the Depiezas). I don't know what motivated him to pursue a dream to become a fighter but his dedication was sincere. I remember when we used to see him exercising and training behind Vos Government School. As boys we would look on and wonder. Then we began to read in the papers about his fights and his successes as he fought his way to the top of T&T boxing.

We were all excited when we saw a newsreel at the Zenith Cinema of his fight against Jamaican Bunny Grant. To all of us he was cheated of victory in that fight. A win would have placed him on the world stage.

I remember also that World Light Heavyweight Champion Archie Moore had taken Johnny to his Boxing Camp in the USA to train him for a future in boxing. I read some time later that that experience did not work out well for him. He'd spent more time doing menial jobs for Archie and the Camp crew than he did in training. I don't think Johnny ever fully recovered from that experience. With proper management and training Johnny

Depieza could have been a World Champion.

Clarence Thompson of Caratal Road, who was a boxer as well in his early years in T&T, continued after migrating to the UK. He was Knighted by the Queen of England and is now Sir Clarence Thompson. He's related to the Rogers family.

I don't remember anybody else from Gasparillo pursuing the boxing craft except for my neighbor Sham (Jannalie's brother) from Cocoa Street. I remember him training behind the house. He displayed good signs. I know that he had left home and went off to join a boxing gym. I don't know how far he pursued his ambition.

**Alister Narinesingh...** *That's my mother's uncle, the De Peiza clan.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *I remember Johnny Depieza fairly well. He was a regular at the recreation club (upstairs the present KFC) at the Gasparillo Junction. Johnny was not a gambler nor was he a drinker or smoker. He frequented the club as somewhere to meet people and do some shit-talking. I remember Johnny as a quietly spoken and respectful young man.*

**Dennis Rogers...** *I knew Johnny very well. He did become a Class Welder and worked in the Brooklyn Navy Yard with me as his Supervisor. We built 4 Super Tankers there, the first being the TT BROOKLYN. Theses tankers were built by*

*a predominantly West Indian work force. As mentioned in your article, the other Boxer who came out of Gasparillo, was my uncle Clarence Thompson. He migrated to the UK and continued till he got knocked out in one of his fights.*

**Winston Dayal...** *I knew Johnny well .He used to lime with our steelband Gondoliers. The Market Boys.*

**Arnot Lord...** *Don Smith represented us at the Olympics and Dave Johnson won a gold at Carifta.*

**Christine DePeiza Joseph...** *I knew Johnny very well as he was my eldest brother. He was my quiet giant of a hero, very respectful and soft spoken. He was a good man and loved his family.*

## Cycling in Gasparillo

I remember a particular incident one year during a Village sports event at the Gasparillo Park. There was a large turnout of spectators & vendors. Athletes from around Gasparillo and beyond turned in some very good performances. One of the final events was an open cycle race. As all the cyclists, well dressed in their cycling outfits and mounted on their racing bikes, lined up for the starting whistle, my friend Peter Herbert (The Mighty Wanderer) hobbled quickly into the group pushing a regular lady's bicycle. Much to the enjoyment of the spectators he half-peddled his bike to the finish line. Although he came in last, his determination made him the most popular cyclist with the spectators.

The Gasparillo youths who most distinguished themselves in cycling in those days were the Joseph boys. Brothers Lloyd & Clemmy Joseph from near the Catholic Church on Caratal Road, attended St Benedict College in La Romaine. No taxis ran from Gasparillo to La Romaine. Students had to travel to San Fernando and take another taxi from there to La Romaine.

Because of traveling complications and the extra cost to get to school, their father Mr Joseph, bought racing bikes for them to ride to school. Their cousin Errol Joseph, who lived in Union, also attended St Benedict so he joined them in riding to school everyday. Because of their daily rides to and from La Romaine they developed great skills and strengths in cycling. Lloyd, Clemmy & cousin Errol became distinguished award-winning cyclists in T&T. Clemmy & Errol were champions at road racing. Lloyd however was the National Sprint Champion on several occasions. I saw him beat people like Roger Gibbons and World Champion Daniel Morelon at Guaracara Park.

Southern Games at Guaracara Park in Pointe a Pierre was very popular with all of us while we were growing up. Because it was so close to our village and because admission to the grounds area was cheap (some of us still tried to storm), we all looked forward to the Games each year. Although we loved and followed with interest the activities of the wide contingent of foreign and local athletes, the most exciting events were the various cycling races. Among our local Gasparillo boys who tried their luck in the cycling arena during my years at home, the few who I remember were Kashmir, Erwin Brooker, Ghandi, Cochan and Guava. Although the Joseph boys had brought great pride and respect to our village by their record-breaking rides at Southern Games, there was another type of record set by two of our other cyclists. I remember Guava's older brother Steve Raphael used to love to tell this story.

Guava and Cochan had qualified for one of the long-distance races. They were riding partners who had created a plan to win the race. During the first lap Guava was among the lead group of



riders. Cochan was just behind him. Cochan shouted, "Outside!" Guava angled out to the outside of the pack and sprinted up to the front. Cochan then shouted, "Inside!" Guava angled sharply as he cut to the front of the pack, heading towards the inside track. But in his rush he leaned his bike too much. His pedal touched the ground and he skidded at full speed across the track, blocking the path of the other on-coming riders. Every rider, including Cochan, tumbled into a screaming, cursing mass on top of Guava or across the track. As the riders struggled to remove themselves from the twisted heap, one of them shouted angrily to them, "Why de ass all yuh doh go back and drive trace mules from way all yuh come from!!" Guava and Cochan had set a record that day as the only cyclists to throw down every rider in a race at Southern Games in Guaracara Park.

Despite such episodes, Gasparillo has followed in the path set down by the Joseph boys, producing several distinguished cyclists during the following years. Nicholas Paul of Dalloo Road is recognized today as one of the world's top cyclists.

**Randall Stanley Brooker...** *Gasparillo has a rich history of great sports personalities. My father was a competitive cyclist in the 1960s. Two of the highlights of the year were Texaco's Southern Games in Guaracara Park and the Easter Cycling Grand Prix at the Arima Velodrome. Apart from going to see the internationals duke it out with the local cyclists, we also cheered the Gasparillo lads flying the National Colours - Lloyd Joseph and Anthony Commisiong. The tradition of Gasparillo producing great*

*national cyclists continues with Nicholas Paul, the current World Record holder in the Flying 200m Sprint.*

**Imran Ali...** *Too bad our guys didn't have coaches. They did so well they would have been amazing with some professional training.*

**Sadru Deen...** *I remember the guy who would chase the school bus. Not sure of his name but all the students on the bus were rooting for him.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *I think that was Ghandi... He was from Caratal Road.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *The Mighty Wanderer was quite a gentleman and a talented son of Gasparillo.*

**Imran Ali...** *The Mighty Wanderer as a reporter for the Guardian put Dragons photo in the papers.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *I remember the "fat bike" races at the local sports. They were fun and funny...even entered a couple myself.*

**Arnot Lord...** *There were more recently the Commissioning brothers from Happy Hill who represented us internationally one of which is known as the "Bike Doctor" is currently a leading coach. Also Paul from Bedeau St currently the 2nd rank sprinter internationally.*

**Zakeya Deen Hosein...** *Nicholas Paul attended Vos.....I taught him there.*

**Dennis Roger...** *This is how the cycling to school in La Romaine began back then. As I recall, the Joseph brothers, Errol Joseph (from Union Rd.), Kenrick and Geoff Raphael along with myself all rode to St. Benedict's College from Gasparillo. Yes, transportation to school from Gasparillo was very expensive for our parents, but what prompted the riding to school really began when a strike broke out in Texaco and gas became very scarce, so it became very difficult to get transportation, so our parents bought us all bicycles to ride to school. I was the only one with a ladies bicycle, as my father felt that he should buy a bike that both the boys and girls could ride. Despite being the laughter to all, we became a group riding daily to La Romaine. The Joseph Bros. and Errol went on to make a name for themselves. The rest is history. Kenrick and Geoff were also good but our parents could not afford to finance us further with better bicycles. Great cycling days!!*

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## Athletics in Gasparillo



**(126) Athletics In Gasparillo 2**

*Athletics in Gasparillo*



*Manny Ramjohn*



*Manny as a soldier in 1944*  
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When I was around 11 years old I used to comfortably run 25 laps around the Gasparillo Park. We would high-jump over a bamboo rod and long-jump into a sand pit. One year my brother Suge even ran in a “marathon” from Marabella to Gasparillo. Sometimes we’d swim against the rainy season currents or dive from the trees overarching the Guaracara River and race against a traveling rainburst across the Park. These were our involvements in athletics.

The world of Athletics was for me a very local activity except on a few occasions when as a scout with First Gasparillo I and other members had been recruited to serve the needs of foreign athletes at Southern Games. I used to be excited to be there in close proximity to world-famous athletes like Milkha Singh of India or Wilma Rudolph and Bob Smith of the USA. Because we were so overwhelmed by the News coverage of the exploits of these foreign visitors, it had completely escaped my young mind that right here in our everyday presence was a Gasparillo-bred athlete who, more than those celebrated foreign visitors, should have had a much greater impact on us, the youth of our country.

Manny Ramjohn represented Trinidad & Tobago at the White Memorial Games in London in 1939. With little official coaching or training, he became the first of our countrymen to win a Gold Medal at an International Athletic Meet when in 1946, against great odds, he destroyed the opposition in the 5000 meters at the Central American and Caribbean Games in Baranquilla, Colombia. In 1948 this local Gasparillo boy was selected as one of five members of T&T’s first ever Olympic Team. Manny was active as a runner from 1936 – 1951. During this time he achieved

96 victories, 40 second-place and 13 third-place finishes.

His record & statistics are easily available on Wikipedia. These should be studied especially in the context of the period they were accomplished. Manny also served in the British Army in 1944.

Because of his achievements and his contributions to Trinidad & Tobago sports, a new stadium was built and dedicated to him in 2000 at Union Park, near our hometown of Gasparillo.

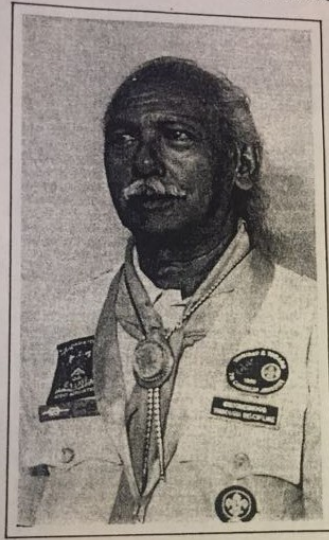
Manny was my father's cousin. As a boy and a youth he was a close friend to my uncle Arthur. They were scouts together in San Fernando and would remain friends for life. According to my father, Manny's quiet temperament was inherited from his father, Ramjohn. His mother Sakeena, my father's aunt, had a sharp tongue and in later years would often boast that "my son had dinner in England with the King".

Sakeena, was for a while the common-law wife of my father-in-law Toon Ali, while Manny was in his pre-teen years. According to Mr Ali, during this time they lived in Thicke Village, Siparia, where they had a couple of milking cows. On mornings before going to school, Manny would deliver milk to several clients around the Siparia area. He had to run long distances to complete his deliveries so that he could get to school on time. This probably contributed to his development in later years as a long-distance runner. Both men continued to maintain a close relationship in the ensuing years.



From Radcliffe Ramjohn....

**MANNY RAMJOHN**  
Born: November 15, 1915



of six consecutive three mile races at the AAA meeting which was held annually at the Queen's Park Oval and which was observed as the premier meeting of the year.

Returning to Guyana in 1938, he ran, what he considers, his greatest race. It was held during Discovery weekend and the line-up for the three mile included Dookie, Francis Dinzey the 1937 AAA winner of the event and Singh, the local favourite, called "Cattle Boy" because of his job. The early running was done by Dookie and Dinzey, but with two laps to go Ramjohn decided to make his bid and left the latter trailing by about 200 yards.

During the war years athletics continued and the AAA games took on an international flavour to be known as the West Indies Athletic Championships. He won his usual three mile in 1939 then left for England's White City Stadium. He came sixth in the one mile but was unplaced over the longer distance. When he returned home he found another rival in Wilfred Tull. He won the one mile at the W.I. Athletic Championships as well as at Barataria and Siparia, but Tull won the ½ mile at Barataria and turned the tables in the one mile at the 1942 AAA meet as well as the one held a year later.

Mannie Dookie came back to take the three mile title in 1944 and set the native and allcomers record of 14 min. 47 sec. for the distance, then promptly retired. Ramjohn meanwhile went to Barranquilla as a member of the Trinidad contingent for the CAC games. On December 12, 1946 he won the 5000 metres event, the metric equivalent of the 3 miles and gave the nation its first ever athletic gold medal in a major meeting. He had one other try in England, this time at Wembley for the 1948 Olympics where in the 10,000 metres he dropped out after the torrid pace set by Emil Zatopek and in the 5000m he finished down the field.

The lifetime scout who reached the rank of District Commissioner for Pointe-à-Pierre in the movement retired from active athletics in 1951. Although his scouting career has been more extensive than that as an athlete (he joined the 6th Naparima Boy Scout Group in 1930) he reckons that in all track meets he registered 96 wins, was second on 40 occasions and third 13 times. Over his pet distance, the three mile flat, he was defeated only three times.

Scouting has been the first love of this middle distance runner who sometimes ventured into longer distances. Born in San Fernando, he started athletics at the advanced age of 20 when he took part in the Southern Amateur Athletics Sports Meeting at Skinner Park on August 1, 1936. He won the one mile flat event, placed second in the three miles and immediately developed a second love.

On August 23rd he journeyed to Port-of-Spain to participate in the Iere Athletics Club meeting at St. James and met Mannie Dookie who was to become his great friend and rival. In that three mile event Ramjohn ran second to his more experienced opponent but was to register more wins over that distance against Dookie while conceding the advantage in the one mile flat.

In 1937 he competed abroad for the first time when visiting Guyana, where he won the half mile event but emerged second to Dookie both in the one and three miles. The following year he won the first

Another person who brought international athletic fame to

Gasparillo was Guinness Persad. This he did as a Trainer and Coach. As a teacher at Vos Government School and with Simplex, his Athletic Club, he drove and guided his students to excellence. This is manifested in their local and international successes. Mr Persad proved to be the type of Trainer/Coach needed in T&T's Athletics. He has represented Trinidad & Tobago in this capacity at various International Athletic Events. He was the 2019 recipient of the Alexander B Chapman Award for his contribution to T&T Sports.

**Imran Ali...** *Guinness and I were in Naps together. Besides being an excellent athlete he was also one of the cool guys in class.*

**Nigel Ishmael...** *Guinness was also my sister Debbie's coach, and a very good one.*

**Debbie Ishmael-Baksh...** *Guinness Persad was the PE teacher at Vos up until his retirement a few years ago. One of the most committed, gifted, patient & generous persons you will find. Guinness had an eye for spotting talent in students. He himself was a long distance athlete representing Naparima College and also competing at Southern Games. Vos developed a strong track and field team. We would have training after school for sports day. Guinness then started his own club called Simplex Athletic Club. I remember the last big Southern Games they had, I carried the flag for the club. I was 12 yrs old. I was so excited. My father (Clyde Ishmael) was the starter and all*

*these athletes from all over the world were competing. It is a memory etched in my mind. Winning did not come easy. I was training after school. Rain could be falling, we had training along the school corridors. Guinness was very strict. He was very committed. He was always present and pushed us to our full potential. Somedays we would slack off and punishment would be to do extra laps or more strenuous work than the others. I went on to Holy Faith Convent Couva after Vos where I continued my athletics and was the top sprinter for my time there representing the school at national level. Some of our training took us on the streets of Gasparillo, BonneAventure main road as far as the Presbyterian school and even Poonah, Canchan Hill, Caratal, through the cane field where Brian Lara Stadium now stands to what was once the end of the highway. Hence the reason a lot of people knew ‘the red girl’ with the 2 plaits who use to run. Simplex has produced some of the top athletes in this country. I am forever grateful to Guinness Persad for believing in me and pushing me to do better.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Brilliant history lesson about some Gasparillo achievers. Yes I remember running that marathon. I finished the course and beat some of the guys who looked bigger and fitter than I was. I think I finished in 12th place. Our big brother Boyie rode alongside me on his bike giving me encouragement and pieces of ice to keep me hydrated.*

**Ian Maharaj...** *Manny Ramjohn was indeed a giant*

*amongst men.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *Rich, Rich, Rillo and Rilloians. My hometown.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Two more of our National heroes. Proud to have known both of them personally.*

**Sylvia Paul...** *Mr Persad and my sister were teachers together. I also think that they were in training college together. Great guy, and thanks for the history on Mr Ramjohn.*

**Arnot Lord...** *Mr Persad deserves a national award. I hope we can do the needful and add Mr Oswald James a former student & Teacher of the Gasparillo Government Primary School; Outstanding Presentation College, Liners & Gasparillo Rep. Team footballer; Responsible for the formation of the Gasparillo Government Primary School All Stars later referred to All Stars which reached a national FA CUP Semi-final; Responsible for the development of Players who annually have been standouts in the SSFL and represented us internationally; His legacy continues with Ms Sandra Pompey and the Gasparillo Youths. I could go on and on. He was also responsible for the development of Don Smith who represented us at the Olympics in Boxing. He continues to work with the Gasparillo Government Primary School team which has been to divisional and national semi-final or finals annually. Mr James was Gasparillo born and bred and resides in Happy Hill,*

*Gasparillo. Although retired he continues his work with the youths with the same vigour, always looking for a football here and there and committing a lot of his personal finances also. Mr Persad and Mr James, two dedicated teachers who continue to bring glory to our Gasparillo community in the sphere of sports.*

## The Golfers of Gasparillo

Because of our nearness to Pointe a Pierre and its golf course, Gasparillo has produced a number of competent golfers. Most of our golfers began as caddies at the Pointe a Pierre Golf Club. The Club members were mostly foreign resident oilfield executives. The locals learned the fundamentals of the game by observing the foreign players while caddying for them. Some of the players from Charles Street were Ramdeo Mohip, Jokhan, Jash, Rock, Scamp, Shuffie, Baytoe, Raffique & Roy. Outside of Charles Street there was Hydar, Gustin, Node, Tommy, Poti & Taynah. They all started as caddies in Pointe a Pierre.

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *When the management of the refinery changed hands and the “white people” left the compound, locals took over the Staff Club and the adjacent Golf Club. The game became very popular with some of the Gasparillo boys. These guys became quite proficient at the game winning many championships not only in*

*Pointe a Pierre, but at Ste Madeline, Brechin Castle, Moka and Chaguaramas. They even had outings to Grenada and Barbados. When my father Jash died, quite a few of them attended his funeral. One even placed a golf ball in his coffin.*

**Matthew Ramgoolam...** *Other names such as Marbles, Roopdeo, Deosingh (Little Wah), Bona Rajkumar (his son Davy Rajkumar represented Trinidad and now teaches golf) and Manickchand Roopchand.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...** *What I remember is those golfers taking over one of the sheds attached to the staff club, overlooking the golf course, and erecting a fireside. Every Wednesday they made a cook. After his retirement, my father made golfing an important part of his life. I remember playing that course. It brought tears to my eyes to experience my father's course. A tough course, especially for us spoiled golfers in America who hit and return to the motorized golf cart. Those guys had it tough pulling their carts up and down those hills in the hot sun.*

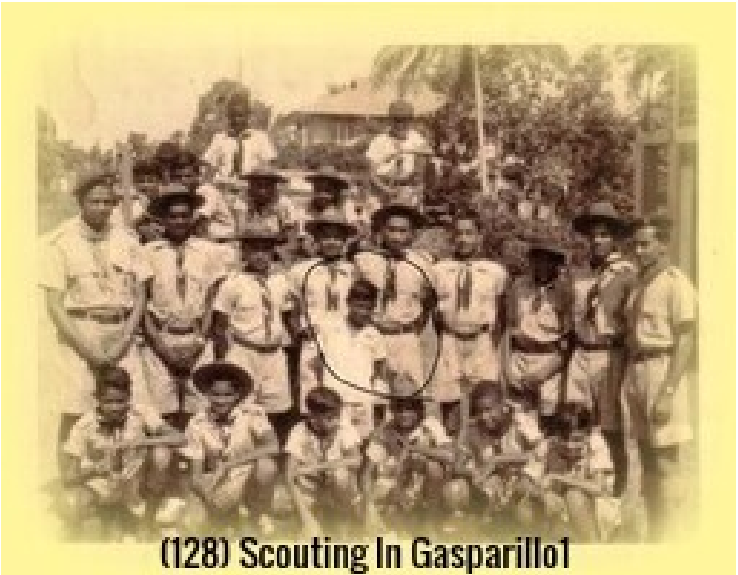
**Lilla Ogeerally...** *Vishnu Ramdeen, your mother and I and other golfers' wives attended all the tournament functions. I was an official driver who took some of the intoxicated golfers who lived in Gasparillo, including my husband Safar, to their homes after their functions.*

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Scouting & Associated Clubs in  
Gasparillo

**SCOUTING....**





**(128) Scouting In Gasparillo1**

*1st Gasparillo Scout Troop*

*ON THE TRUCK: Baal Singh, B Roach, Wilkie Ali, Anand Ramsahai.....  
STANDING: Mr Ramsingh, Kenrick Sookhai, Kenrick Durgadeen,  
Kello Harrysingh, Val Ramsingh, Hollis Bailey, Jang Harrysingh,  
Kamalo Deen, (?), Tom Ali..... FRONT ROW: Ronald Lakhansingh,  
Rabin Ramsahai, Russel Ali, (?), Carl Lake, (?)*



*Mr Ramsahai*



*SK Ramsingh*

Scouting has had a long and successful history in Gasparillo and the surrounding areas. Mr Ramsahai of Beadeau Street was credited with introducing Scouting to Gasparillo. He was a

school teacher and eventually became the Principal of the Bonne Aventure Presbyterian School. Along with Mr SK Ramsingh he founded 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop. Some of the surrounding areas that they influenced to form Scout Troops were Caratal, Bonne Aventure, Union and Marabella.



*1st Gasparillo camp to Toco 1957 approx.*

*BACK ROW STANDING: Clive Lloyd, Ousman Ali, Nick Ali, Kali Ramsahai, Mr SK Ramsingh, (a Ramsahai), (hidden), Kenrick Durgadeen...MIDDLE ROW STOOPING: Tom Ali, Wilkie Ali..... FRONT ROW SITTING: (?), Kello Harrysingh, (a Ramsahai), Bob Ramroop, Jang Harrysingh.*



*Ist Gasparillo's football team - approx. 1957*

*BACK ROW: Kenrick Sookhai, Carl Lake, Sookhai, Bob Ramroop, Tom Ali, Jai Jagessar, Kello Harrysingh...FRONT ROW: Wilkie Ali, Rabin Ramsahai, Kamalo Deen, Jang Harrysingh, Baal Singh.*

I first entered the world of Scouting in 1956 when I was 12 years old. My brother Suge and I had walked up to the home of Mr SK Ramsingh and joined Ist Gasparillo Scout Troop. The suggestion to join probably came from our uncle Arthur Deen who years ago used to be a scout in San Fernando and was also a friend of Mr Ramsingh. In those days scout meetings were held at the Ramsingh home on Bonne Aventure Road at the corner of Dalloo Road. Suge grew disinterested after a few meetings but I continued on. Mr Ramsingh was the official Scout Master but

later on when he became a Probation Officer, regular operations of the troop were taken over by his assistant Tom Ali. My first scout camp was at Guayaguayare under Mr Ramsingh's leadership. After that camp I was hooked. I participated in many hikes and camps with 1st Gasparillo in the following years.

After Mr Ramsingh had moved on to an official position in the Scout Association, Tom Ali & Morgan Jagessar became the Scoutmasters. Meetings were moved to Tom Ali's home and then later to Chaltah Park to facilitate Morgan Jagessar who took over the helm of the troop when Tom also moved on. The major highlights of my years at 1st Gasparillo were being in the patrol which won the National Chancellor Flag Competition and attending the International Jamboree at Valsayn in the early 1960s.

Mr Ramsingh was present in Tabaguite when 1st Gasparillo won the Chancellor Flag in 1962. I'll never forget the pride in his face as he congratulated us. Mr Ramsingh was a true leader in our Gasparillo community. He achieved a high reputation in World Scouting. Also in the early 1960s, 1st Gasparillo had gained some notoriety in the Gasparillo area through our football team.

In 1963, as a schoolteacher, I was the founder of 2nd Gasparillo Cub Pack at Vos Government School. During my tenure I had taken the boys to several trips and a week long camp in Blanchicheusse. Most of them had never experienced camping before. Through them I again felt the thrill of Scouting that I had experienced as a scout a few years before. But then an opportunity came for me to migrate to the USA.

I had grown fairly close to Manny and Irma Ramjohn during my last few years in Gasparillo. I had taught their son Rolph at Vos where he was also a member of my 2nd Gasparillo Cub Pack. The Ramjohns were both actively supportive of the Pack so it was no surprise that when I decided to migrate, they volunteered to adopt our 2nd Gasparillo and transfer it to their home on Caratal Road.

As a boy, Manny was a Kings Scout with the 5th San Fernando Troop and had retained his interest and involvement in Scouting. He wanted Rolph to continue and also to introduce his other sons to Scouting. Irma completed the necessary training and partnered with Manny in the leadership of the Troop. Over the ensuing years they developed 2nd Gasparillo into a reputable Troop producing numerous vibrant & successful young men in the Gasparillo area. Manny would eventually become a Field Commissioner for the T&T Scout Movement.

Strangely enough, I last met Manny at the Union Park Race Stands less than a year before his death. I had just released my movie "The Panman" and the Scout Association had planned to be involved in the distribution of its DVD. Manny had invited me to a meeting of the T&T Scouts District leaders which was being held at the park. This is where he introduced me and the project to all the attendees. Just 3 years later the Union Park Race Track was demolished and replaced by the Manny Ramjohn Stadium.

Kenrick Ramkissoo was the leader of 5th Gasparillo Scout Troop in the early 1980s. During my regular visits back home I became associated as a parent with 5th Gasparillo because my son Ishmael was a member. Under Kenrick's leadership

the Troop was victorious in most of the competitions that they entered. Their membership grew and 5th Gasparillo had become very popular with the boys and their parents. This was tragically interrupted on the eve of the Troop's departure to an overseas Jamboree. After he'd led the boys to a church service at the Gasparillo Pentecostal Church he was killed by a speeding driver as he led the boys back to his home. I was in Trinidad at the time and assisted in organizing his funeral. At the Lumsden Cemetery, Mr Ramsingh & Mr Ray Watkins the Executive Commissioner asked me to step in as Leader of 5th Gasparillo. I explained my regrets because I was leaving in a few weeks for my home in New York.

During my time of involvement, several others had contributed significantly to Scouting in our area. Among them were Mr Nagessar of Union, Mr Rueben & Mr Lalman of Bonne Aventure.

Over the years I've had close relationships with the National Scout Headquarters especially with Mr Ray Watkins the Executive Commissioner. The Scout Council was actively involved in the distribution of my books "For All Our Children" and "Curry Cascadoo". They were also involved in the school showings of my movies "Bacchanal Time" and "The Panman".

Gasparillo has had a long and honorable Scouting tradition. I'm proud to have been a part of it.





*First Gasparillo with Chancellor Flag*

*LEFT to RIGHT...Jay Manohar, Dhanraj Sinanansingh, Morgan Jagessar, Anand Ramsahai, Ralph Manoosingh, Ronald Lakhansingh, Cherril Ramsharitar, Kamalo Deen, Manzur (Wilkie) Ali.*



*Manny & Irma Ramjohn.... 2nd Gasparillo*



*5th Gasparillo*

**Vijay Mohip...** *I was a member of 2nd Gasparillo as a cub at Vos Gov't. You took the boys by train to POS to greet Lord Baden Powell's brother. I was a kid. It's the only time I rode the train. It was amazing but, alas, like everything else the brainless Gov't destroyed it.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *We had some good times. I wish the trains were still there.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Another great read Malo. Yes I remember joining the Scout Troop and attending just a few meetings. I stayed long enough to go to the camp in Tobago.*

**Izzy Ali...** *When Kenrick died, we were getting ready to go to the Caribbean jamboree in Suriname. Kenrick was*

*mere feet away from me when he got hit by the car. We were marching in formation on the sidewalk, and he was leading us from the edge of the road. It was very tragic for us to see our Mentor and leader taken away from us. Most of us today credit our successes in life because of the love and leadership he gave us. Another great contributor to scouting in Point a Pierre Scout District is Mr Jimmy Ramnath. After Kenrick died, he guided Shawn and Vidya Ramrattan with advice on continuing 5th Gasparillo and took leadership of the Scout section while they ran the Cub Scout section.*

**Sheldon Manchoon...** *That was a sad day. I was right next to him when he got struck. We had a great leader and 5th Gasparillo was a force to be dealt with.*

**Ricardo Young...** *Mr Lalman Nanan. Founder of 2nd Bonne Aventure Scout Group. May he Rest in Peace. He was a great man.*

**Ian Maharaj...** *I was a member of 2nd Gasparillo, and later on 5th Gasparillo. So many good years with these groups played an important role in my development. Thank you for your input in both.*

**Colin Mohammed...** *I will try to get this article to Tom Ali. He is my mother in law's (Shirley) cousin. You may remember her as she lived with Tom's family. My aunt's husband was Lalman Nanan who you mentioned, he was a wonderful human being.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Thanks...I knew all the people you mentioned....Tom was my scoutmaster for a while. I knew Shirley when she lived with the Kismat Ali family. Wilkie was my close friend. I also knew Lalman when he was SM for 2nd Bonne Aventure and when he taught nightclasses at Vos Government School.*

**Mark Ainsley John...** *As National Scout Commissioner I say thank you for your continued service to Scout Association of Trinidad and Tobago. We'd like to interview you to share your story with our current members.*

**BADEN POWELL CLUB....**



*Baden Powell Club with leaders*

*STANDING: Kali Ramsahai, Baal Singh, Jai Jagessar, B Roach, Jang Harrysingh, Ousman Ali, Kashie Ramsahai, Kello Harrysingh, Simon Madhosingh, Prem Ramsahai.... SITTING: Nurul Deen, Bob Ramroop, Mr JN Ramsahai, Mr SK Ramsingh, Mr Zool Deen, Raffick Ali, Shaffick Mohammed.*



*BP's Early Football Team*

*BACK ROW LEFT TO RIGHT: Abzal Baksh, Nazru Deen, Mr Ramsingh, Lasalle Madhoosingh, Prem Ramsahai, Bob Ramroop.... FRONT ROW: Tom Ali, Nick Ali, Ousman Ali, Nurul Deen, Clive Lloyd.*



*BP Clubhouse*

An important and positive outgrowth of Ist Gasparillo Scout Troop was the formation of Baden Powell Boys Club. This came about when several of the scouts had passed the age of eligibility as Scouts. Having no organization to belong to and wanting to continue the ideals of their Boy Scout years, they discussed with Mr Ramsahai, Mr Ramsingh and some of their friends about forming an adult boy's club based on the principles of Scouting. Among the original members were Karamchand Ramsahai, Morgan Jagessar, Ousman Ali, Nazru Deen, Clive Lloyd & Lasalle Madhosingh. Several fathers of the boys were also involved. The club was named after Lord Baden-Powell who was the Founder of the Boy Scout Movement.

The club quickly developed into one of the major football &

cricket clubs in the area. BP's Annual Concert at the Gasparillo Community Center was very popular during my boyhood years. The only 2 females I remember as members were Sybil Paltoo & Miss Jordan who both taught at Vos. I remember that they had applied and attended a couple meetings.

BP has remained a consistent force in Gasparillo from its very beginning and is still going strong. I'm proud, like my older brothers Nazru (Boyie) & Nurul, to have been a member of Baden-Powell Club.

**Kevin Manohar...** *Excellent as usual Kamalo Deen and the Baden Powell Club remains vibrant today because of this.*

**Gasparillo Chronicles....***The Baden-Powell Club is the oldest surviving club in Gasparillo. It was established in 1950 by a few young men of the community led by Mr. Morgan Jagessar. The first meeting was held on the 8th February, 1950. Those first set of members were young men who were once involved in Scouting and had grown up and wanted to have a club. Mr. Jagessar was a scout master who had taken the First Gasparillo Scouts to the Chancellor flag (an award for the country's best scout troop). The First Gasparillo Scout Troop had placed 1st in the years 1947, 1951, 1952 and 1962. The name of the club was Gasparillo Youths Sports Club at first. Mr. S. K. Ramsingh suggested the name Baden-Powell Boys Club in honor of Robert Baden-Powell who had introduced Scouting to England in 1907. Later on*



after two women joined the club the name was changed to Baden-Powell Club. Three mentors of the club in its early stages were: J.N. Ramsahai, Sherman K. Ramsingh and Zool Deen (father of Kamalo Deen and former Imam of the Gasparillo mosque). In addition to the promotion of sports, BP also conducts trips, fund raisers and social outreach programmes. They are a self-sufficient club in that they do not receive assistance from government. The members get together to raise funds. In 1965, a plot of land belonging to the Nurul Deen family was sold to the Club and their clubhouse was built there. At that time, the road was not developed and there was only one other house. The Club developed the street and used an area for cricket practise. Today, this street is named Antilia Drive, Bedeau Street. Hundreds of people have passed through the Baden-Powell club. 2 President gold medal winners from Gasparillo were part of the Club, Reza Mohammed and Matthieu Ramsawak. The Baden-Powell Club revived the Gasparillo Park in Charles Street South and used its grounds for matches. Because of Covid, some of the Club's activities have been put on hold. Hopefully when Covid is over, the Club will resume its activities and gain more new members.

Special thanks to the following:

Honorary President of the Club: Mr. Roopnarine Singh

President: Premchand Seupersad

Treasurer: Kevin Manohar

Secretary: Darrell D. Ramlal

Written by Alisa R. Jankie

## **ORION CLUB**

Orion Literary and Recreational Club was founded on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1956 by an enterprising group of young men in Gasparillo. They were originally known as the Oxford Cricket Club.

The new club soon became popularly known simply as Orion. The original members were Kelvin Samaroo, Frank Mohammed Ali, Joshua Kalideen, Boysie Rampersad, Roy Manohar, Sonny Rampersad, Himlal Chaitoo & David Ramroop.

The first meeting was held out in the open at Allen Street Junction. The next meeting was held at Kelvin Samaroo's home where the first election of officers was held.

The club's first executive comprised of: Kelvin Samaroo (*President*), Sonny Rampersad (*Secretary*), Frank Mohammed Ali (*Assistant Secretary*) and Roy Manohar (*Treasurer*). Subsequent meetings were held at various members homes until settling at the Gasparillo Community Center, where meetings were held until January 1968.

On 28<sup>th</sup> January 1968 the club's first meeting was held at the brand new Orion Building at Alma Street. Several people were instrumental in this major achievement of acquiring land and constructing an official home for their club. Among them were: Bridgelal Ram, Roy Manohar, Frank Mohammed Ali, Solomon Ramsingh, Boysie Rampersad, Krishna Kuarsingh & Kismat Ali. All labor was supplied by the members of the club.

Orion's main thrust were in the fields of football and cricket but

over the years they have pursued endeavors in Volleyball, All Fours and Table Tennis. Their first Table Tennis board was set up under the Samaroo's home. The club has distinguished itself in all these fields of endeavor.

In 1962 Orion won the Smith League Cricket competition under the captaincy of Joshua Kalideen. For more than 50 years Orion has enjoyed a friendly cricket rivalry match with Yorkshire Cricket Team of Cunjal. This game is played on Good Friday and the ground is alternated each year between Lumsden and Cunjal.

Orion Club has organized bingos and bazaars to raise funds to support it's various activities. Every year they host Eid & Divali celebrations and a Christmas Children's Party at their headquarters.

Orion Literary and Recreation Club has built a proud legacy in Gasparillo and beyond. It is in their plans to continue with much vigor into the future.



*Founding members: R Manohar, F M Ali, J Kalideen, H Chaitoo, S Rampersad*

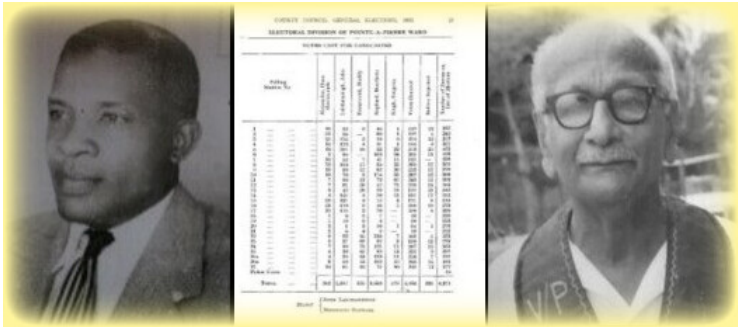


*K Samaroo D Ramroop B Rampersad*



*Left: Orion Club Football Team.....1958; Right: Orion Cricket Team....Winners of Smith League Competition 1962*

## Politics in Gasparillo



*Left: Bonafacio Raphael; Middle: Election Results; Right: Buddy Ramsawak*

Gasparillo politics, during the 1950s & 60s, was not unlike the politics of most other communities in Trinidad & Tobago. It was mostly divided by racial lines. The majority of Indians voted for one party while the majority of Negroes voted for another party. Chinese, Whites and mixed people wavered between these two groups. Sometimes there were a few crossovers from the

two major groups, like my father (Zool Deen) who from the beginning was a strong supporter of Dr Eric Williams.

In Gasparillo, while I was growing up, our politics was as much a comedic matter as it was serious. In my father's case, his choice of political affiliation brought many arguments to our usually stable family. Much to the delight and education of us, the younger ones, the heated debates between my father versus his brother Arthur and my eldest brother Boyie (Nazru) were sometimes epic.

My father, an early supporter of Dr Williams' People's National Movement, was considered by the Party to fight the Pointe a Pierre seat in the 1956 General Elections. This was announced in a Guardian newspaper article which even featured his picture. My brother Boyie suggested that he would campaign against him. My uncle Arthur threatened to counteract by volunteering his name for the PDP. All the ensuing warfare came to a halt when my mother put her feet down by banning all political activities from our home. She presented two strong and logical arguments for her stand. Firstly, she was convinced that Papa, who was Indian and the Imam of the Jamaat, would be promoted solely to divide the Indian vote and secondly, that the rumors created against our family members, by the opposing side during a campaign, would be too destructive for us. A truce was drawn up in the family in which no one was to become involved as a candidate in the Election.

The 1956 General Election and its results were presented as a comedy skit, much to the delight of the audience, at the 1957 BP concert at the Gasparillo Community Center. I remember my

brother Boyie playing Dr Eric Williams (named Dr Frederick Williamson in the skit). He was dressed in a black business suit, with a hearing aid, dark shades and smoking a cigarette as he spoke with the Prime Minister's halting, staccato speech. Also in the skit, much fun was made of Mr Gustavus "Zoonkin" MacFee (named Gustavus MacFraykoon in the skit) and the 15 votes he received. He had represented the Butler Party which in the skit was called the Obeah Party. I suppose because he lived next to the cemetery some people branded him, an "obeahman". I remember the audience rolling with laughter throughout. Even the children, like myself, were captivated by the portrayals. In those days the BP Annual Concert was one of the most anticipated events in Gasparillo.

In other elections in Gasparillo, Mr Buddy Ramsawak had run against his neighbor across the street, Mr Bonifacio Raphael. This led to some interesting campaigning slogans which resulted in several heavy picong-throwing and a few minor bottle & stone-pelting incidents across the Bonne Aventure main Road. Mr Ramsawak's slogan was "Vote Buddy or Nobody".

During my years as a teacher at Vos, politics was actively discussed by Staff Members. Affiliations to political parties among the staff were also dictated by racial or ethnic lines. Lots of serious discussions took place on break periods and sometimes even during Staff Meetings. Biases would often raise their ugly heads but Trinis are not usually people who carry grudges for long, so ill feelings always evaporated in short time.

Some of our more memorable politicians in the Gasparillo area over the years were: Leo Thompson from Happy Hill who had



a brilliant speaking voice. He is probably most remembered for his line “Stop, Stop! You mocking pretender...” from his speech as our Midnight Robber at Carnival time; Miss Verna Baptiste a dedicated PNM Organizer & Representative, who was better known as “Fat Miss” at the Baptiste Private School on Caratal Road; Mr Oswald HemLee, one of my students at Vos Government School, who later became a Member of Parliament for the Gasparillo area; Ding Ali and Feeraz Ali, who years later became County Councillors. I also remember a large banner on the Junction which read “Vote Nabbie Baksh Arman”.

In 1956 or 57, I recall seeing Dr Eric Williams give a speech to a large crowd from the gallery of Miss Brathwaite’s home on the Bonne Aventure Main Road (opposite where the Mall entrance is today). Years later, on a visit home, I had seen Mr Basdeo Panday address a rally on the Junction. He was introduced by loud music and tassa drummers. I believe it was during the campaign of Dhanraj Singh aka “The Sheriff”.

In those early days, election campaigns in Gasparillo were more about bacchanal & fatigue than substance & principles. At least so it appeared to many of us..... I’m not sure if much has changed since then.

Attached are election results showing Bonfacio Raphael & Buddy Ramsawak as candidates.

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar...** *Yes. We grew up hearing about the slogan of our grandfather... 'Vote Buddy or Nobody'...Our grandfather always supported community activities...Carnival, Stick-fighting, Tassa, Bazaars back in the days. I remember Mr. Raphael as a very reserved man...always smiling. From our home at 23 Main Road we listened to many political meetings. PNM meetings were held across the road from us.*

**Ron Ramsawak...** *I believe Mr. Isaac Ramsingh was his campaign manager. He and his family migrated to Canada in the early 60's. Mr. Ramsingh is 98 and he still lives in Rexdale, Etobicoke, Ontario.*

**Nayomi Deen...** *Love this, and love how it's clearly passed on in our family because we're insightful, perceptive and informed enough to discuss politics and current events.*

**Arnot Lord...** *You remind me of the eruption in our family home when my Uncle Ulric "Nello" Dougan was a DAC candidate for the 1976 General election. My aunt Jean "Monty" Dougan was a PNM Women's League officer and campaigned against him, my mother was neutral but my grandfather was proud and overjoyed and campaigned with vigour. As a 12 yr old it was a baptism. I consider myself deeply political but I hold my views close to my heart.*

**Perry Ramroop...** *"They sending their children in cowsheds" Dr, the right honourable Eric Willams, from*

*Brathwaite's gallery. The statement was quite true. I went to school there. Former air traffic controller/radar instructor TTCAA.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen...***Campaigned for the ULF in the national and county elections. Made announcements for the party and even spoke on the platform in favor of Mr Leo Thompson. Politicking then was fun.*

**Nalini C A Ramsingh...***Just reminded my Dad (Isaac Ramsingh). Apparently he came up with the slogan for Buddy Ramsawak... He was his campaign Mgr... .Memories.*

**Robin Nagir...***Mr MacFee had an old black car.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...***I don't know much about politics in Trinidad. In fact I was never really interested. Nor am I now. But I do remember the shenanigans at home when PNM wanted our father to run as a candidate. I also remember seeing Dr Williams delivering a speech from the balcony of the Brathwaite's house.*

**Ron Ramsawak...***To be blunt de Doc was as smart as they came. He used different Indian religions against each other, to the benefit of the PNM. To this day it works for them.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...***You are probably right. All politicians use some kind of angle to win votes. That's*

*why I never trust a politician.*

**Fiat Karmally...** *The last time I saw a political event in Gasparillo was a big theatrical lime. Music, tassa, food and actors.*

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## Music in Gasparillo



*Toon & Hydar Ali Tassa Group*



*Lloyd Gay at work*



*Milton Ellis Zaifdeen & The Matadors Combo*

The musical tradition in Gasparillo has always been very strong. Like my fellow-villagers, I was exposed to a wide variety of musical forms while growing up.

Campfire songs like “Yuh cyah get to heaven” with 1st Gasparillo Scout Troop; School songs like “Valerie” at Government School led by Miss Lenora Dougan; Mosque songs like “Ya Nabee” which we sang while house-to-house caroling with my grandfather Imam Jhoom Allaudin; Indian songs like “Manadolay” and Rock n Roll songs like “One o’clock, Two o’clock, Three o’clock, Rock” which we picked up from Zenith Cinema; Folk songs like “Dere’s a hell of a wedding right over de river” from the Best Village competitions; the Serenals at Christmas time and

stickfight Kalinda chants at the gayals were all common to me. I picked up American & British music from WVDI & Windward Islands Broadcasting Service, and local music from Redifussion, Radio Trinidad & Radio Guardian.

I was serenaded by the radio's Sam Ghany's "Sunday Serenade", Kamal Mohammed's "Indian Talent on Parade" & Auntie Kay's "Children's Program" along with Holly Betaudier's "Scouting For Talent" & Sham Mohammed's "Mastana Bahar" on TV.

I loved listening to calypsos on Rediffusion, Radio Trinidad & Radio Guardian, from Atilla and Lord & Lady Irie all the way down to Kitchener, Melody, Sparrow & Calypso Rose. The first time I saw calypso performed on stage was Lord Shorty and the Mighty Power at a BP concert at the Gasparillo Community Center in the early 1960s. Around the same time I saw Mighty Wanderer perform "Mr One King Donkey" at the Jayland Fair in Marabella.

We even produced our own Gasparillo calypsonians like: the Mighty Killer (Cephas Alexander) who won the Road March in 1950 with "In a Calabash"; Lord Companero (Reginald Best) who sang the hits "Saltfish Price" & "Footsie"; Mighty Wanderer (Peter Herbert) who sang "Primatee" & "King Boxer"; Count Robin (Randolph Hiliare) who sang "Dis Carnival Coming" & "Miss Universe"; KD (Keith Raphael) who sang "Indian Party" & "Rock yuh Bam Bam". We also had General Grant, Postman and two calypsonians named Mighty Guana (Palooka from the laundry & Alphus John from Charles Street); and later on Nerukhi & Ricky Lord.



“The Candies” was one of our local singing groups. Its members were Egbert Taylor, Vincent Bain, Winston ‘Bullneck’ Jardine & Tack. They were popular for a while, singing at weddings etc. and appearing on our two shows “A Pound of Heartbeats” at the Community Center and the Zenith Cinema.

In the mid-1960s and beyond, Kelvin Moosadie became a regular singer at several Port of Spain & Toronto night clubs before going on to much success on the International Cruise Lines. I remember my brother-in-law Farzan (Node) Ali & I taking him to launch his performing career at The Miramar & The Penthouse nightclubs in POS. He was also one of our stars at “A Pound of Heartbeats”. He still maintains a successful career.

My eldest sister Sally won an Indian singing competition at the East Indian Lodge on the Main Road. She competed against some more mature and seasoned classical Indian singers. This was in the 1950s and I was probably about 8 years old at the time. Her prize was a set of ware plates and glasses.

Religious music flowed freely throughout the village. We were accustomed to the sounds of Satsangs from the Mohips in Charles Street (in later years Rana Mohip would go on to become one of the most accomplished Indian musicians in the country), Hymns emanating from the various Christian churches and the occasional night time Baptist meetings on the street corners.

The Gasparillo Jamaat under the supervision of Wahid Omardeen had produced a couple of albums of Islamic songs. Some items are still heard on local radio. The lead singers were my youngest sister Zakeya and Nazeena Ali. Musical accompaniment was by

Mungal Patesar & Solo Gildharie.

Among our best known Combos was The Matadors which was owned & managed by Ellis Zaiffdeen of Charles Street. Among their radio hits were "These Boots are made for Walking" and "Ferry across the Mercy".

The Mitchell Family from Caratal Road had a popular dance band. Desmond, one of their sons, was my student at Vos.

Our most outstanding Indian orchestras were Naya Basant and Dil e Nadan led by Tole Ramnarine (see #120d). Among their early players were dholak & tabla player Herman (Darling) Ali & Subhan the doubles vendor. In later years Tole's sons would lead the band to become the most popular band in T&T.

Also, Sohani Sangeet, a lower Charles Street Indian Orchestra practised under the Ballyram's house. Members included, Ramdeo and Christendeo Mohip, Benzin, Kenny and Malo Ballyram and Pulchan. Frankie Sooklal from Poona was a guest mandolin player for them on several occasions. Another of their guest members was Goberdhan Gokool from Bonne Aventure. He went on to play his music in New York and Phoenix, Arizona.

Our Tamboo Bamboo groups are renowned for keeping this tradition alive. People like Neil Joseph of the Tamboo Bamboo Specialists, the Montoute and Henry Boys of Parforce and the Neptunes of Happy Hill would gain renown as the most accomplished Tamboo Bamboo Groups in T&T. They are the leaders in the Annual Canboulay Riots Pageant in POS on Carnival Monday mornings.

John 'Gandi' Modeste with Will & Ray Raphael had founded Gay Monarchs Steelband at the Raphael house. He then left to form Moonlight Sonatas Steelband at his home on Caratal Road. Shortly afterwards he moved the band's practice down to the unoccupied Gasparillo market. This became their practice location for several months. Moonlight Sonatas eventually migrated, as Sonatas Steel Orchestra, to Brooklyn, NY where it has become one of the top steelbands in the USA.

Lloyd Gaye, as a boy, began showing interest in our new T&T musical instrument, the pan. After playing in bands in Gasparillo & San Fernando, Lloyd began experimenting with the instrument itself. The name Lloyd Gaye became respected internationally wherever steelband is mentioned. He is recognized as a gifted Pan tuner & Pan manufacturer. His internationally famous pans are manufactured at his Panshop in Happy Hill, Gasparillo. His son Federico has joined him in the Pan business.

On the first Prime Minister Best Village Album which was produced by the Ministry of Culture in the mid-1960s, almost half of the musical items included, featured Gasparillo talent, including the rich voice of notable folksinger Esther Marshall, who was also one of the stars of our show "A Pound of Heartbeats".

Also featured on that Album was the Toon Ali Tassa Group featuring Toon Ali, Hydar Ali, Sonny Mungal & Sundar. For several decades from the 1950s, they had the reputation as the top Tassa group in T&T.

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *I remember The Matadors playing in a bazaar at the Hindu temple site at Lumsden Street junction. It was about 68 or 69.*

**Rana Mohip...** *Great research and information thanks*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Thanks. You are one of our treasured artists. The Mohip family has contributed greatly to our musical heritage.*

**Rosslind Ramsubagh...** *Very informative, you and your work are treasures. Keep it up. I can identify with those people. I belong to the era.*

**Dennis Rogers...** *I too was a member of the Mitchell Brothers Combo, playing the Guitar. Also, the Clive Villareul Combo with Robert Henry, Victor and others from Caratal Road.*

**Nadir Ali...** *Jody Doodnath accompanied Mungal Patasar on the tabla.*

**Kamalo Deen...** *Thanks for reminding me.... Weren't you also one of the musicians?*

**Nadir Ali...** *Yes I was.*

**Dennis Andy Kennedy...** *This is a very nice post. Great history of Gasparillo. Esther Marshal is one of Gasparillo's*

most recognizable folklore artiste. Songs like “Lilian” and “Naughty Little Flee” were some of her noted renditions.

**Milton Ellis Zaiffdeen...** *Thanks for the “mention” of The Matadors and your wonderful work on Gasparillo’s history. I also did some Indian Farewell Wedding stints with Suhani Sangeet as a guitarist at Fyzabad, Poona, Roussilac etc. Good times and wonderful memories.*

**Imran Ali...** *I hope you are compiling all these narratives into a single document (book) as you post them. Keep up the good work and keep them coming.*

**Mungal Patasar...** *Congratulations Kamalo Deen. Well researched and written.*

**Sylvia Paul...** *Thank you sir for the great Gasparillo history. Some that I know and remember and some that I just heard about. Thanks again Sir, for still being the good teacher you will always be.*

**Donna Marie Hilaire Julien...** *Thanks for your history of Gasparillo.*

**Lochai Roopchand...** *Too young to remember, but good history, Thank you for sharing.*

**Derek Kenosha Ali...** *Thanks for the information on Gasparillo music history. My dad Herman Ali aka Darling was an excellent drummer especially on the tablas. I was*

*fortunate to see him play a couple times. At that time I did not know how good he was. He told me in the later years that he was selected as one of the best tabla players in Trinidad. I remember photos of the Naya Basant band taken at Radio Trinidad. One of the band members was a person we called the doubles man in Gasparillo. If I remember correctly his name was Suban Ali.*

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## The Cadet Invasion



*Cadets*

In the early 1960s, Gasparillo faced a “peaceful invasion” by the T&T Cadet Corps. They visited us during school holidays in my early teenage years. For several weeks during the August holidays they set up camp at the Vos Government School Grounds which was directly across the street from our home.

There were hundreds of cadets from High Schools throughout T&T, dressed in their bright uniforms, camping in rows of military tents all across the field. Throughout the day they



participated in drills and exhibitions with their military rifles and the blowing of military bugles and the thunder of military drums. They were a sight to behold. The young girls of the surrounding districts would dress up and crowd the site during visiting times.

In general, we all enjoyed their visits although their early morning reveille calls, which disturbed our morning sleep, were not always welcome.

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen...** *I remember those days!*

**Imran Ali....** *Those were the days. It encouraged some of the surrounding youths to take an interest.*

**Vijay Mohip....** *The only thing military I had was your cub pact in those days. Those were good days. I remembered you taking us by train to POS, to meet Lord Baden Powell's brother.... To this day I can be heard telling people "I went to town on the train, you know"*

**Jojo Scar....** *Malo u really have good memory keep it up.*

## OTHER MEMORABLE CHARACTERS

Several itinerant persons attracted my interest during my growing-up years in Gasparillo. Some I'd mentioned in earlier posts. Following are a few more.

**(132a) Khamani...** A character from my childhood who greatly impacted my way of thinking was an old man who we knew as Khamani. Later on I learned that some people called him "Teelelam" and some called him "Sarangi Man". He was always dressed in Indian clothes and wore a dhoti. He was a tall fair man who probably came from Northern India. He carried around a long heavy Indian musical instrument called a sarangi which he kept well protected in a white cloth sack. He was a quiet, dignified looking man, and might have been a musician of note back in his old country. He walked to particular homes where the owners would provide a sleeping place for him. He would normally stay for a couple of days before moving on.

One of the homes he visited when in Gasparillo was ours. He would usually sit in the gallery and take his sarangi out of its sack.

Then he would carefully tune it by tightening its strings while dragging its bow across them. Afterwards he would play the instrument and sing some long, very mournful songs. Although I couldn't understand the language, I always felt that he was singing about a life that he once knew but had lost. My parents, who spoke Hindi, claimed that his songs were in a dialect which they did not understand.

I believe that he was a remnant of an earlier time when numerous indentured workers left the estates and wandered about the country, having no relatives in Trinidad and no way of returning to India. I remember several such individuals during my childhood. Some were lucky to be taken in by kind families. Many however just roamed about seeking a few days of food and lodging at homes around the country. I never knew where Khamani lived or if he had any family in Trinidad. He just showed up, spent a brief time and then moved on.



*Sarangi*

**Sadru Deen....** *A great blast from the past. I remember Khamani. And just the way you described him.*

**Zahara Mohammed....** *I remember him as the sarangi man. He visited our house too.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen....** *I remember him well too!*

**Milton Zaiffdeen....** *I remember Tee-lee-lam. He stayed with us under my grandmother's house for some time. We listened to lots of stories and tried to understand them. Nice old man.*

**Sally Umul....** *Kamani resided in Preysal. He did roam about the country. Everyone knew him. He also jharay children with two coceyay broomsticks. We used to like to make him jharay our little sister Zakey. He was a funny character, but we felt good with him because he was from Preysal, Mama's home village.*

**(132b) Bhongee Marajin....** She was a respected village masseuse in Gasparillo. Bhongee Marajin was only about 4 feet, 6 inches tall and weighed no more than 80 pounds, yet when she was finished with you, you would swear that a steam-roller had pummeled every muscle and bone in your body. And though the dexterity of her motions would produce grunts and groans and often bring tears to a grown man's eyes, you could never have enough. You kept yearning for more. Bhongee Marajin was an old woman when I knew her. She walked the streets of Gasparillo visiting her many "patients".

I remember her wearing her bodice & ghangree, an orhni, her brown glasses tight against her eyes, silver bracelets and alpagats on her feet. And her basket...She always carried a basket. She was a friendly lady though she didn't talk too much and

she was not loud. She smoked but used one cigarette several times, putting it out after a few puffs and saving it for another smoke later on. She was always in demand for massages and to help women after they had given birth. I was fortunate to have received several “rub-downs” from her. I remember her telling me about my parent’s wedding and how it was a very grand affair because my father was a “son-son” of a few generations (the first son of a first son, of a first son). She claimed that a bull was killed to celebrate the occasion. She was a person with a particular skill which she used to serve the people of the village.

There were a few others in the village, like Cry Cry, Mr Fyzool and Mr Kissoon, who also possessed and practiced this skill. However, I always turned to Bhongee Marajin for my rubdowns. I never understood how such a tiny, frail body could produce the strength and power that she had. And where and how she had developed her special skills. I never knew her family or if she had any children or relatives, but I think that I’d heard that she lived with a man named Mr James for a while.

**Ann Marie Ramsundar-Radhay...** *My massage therapist is also quite tiny and powerful. Never ceases to amaze me!*

**Imran Ali...** *This rub-down technique was partly a natural talent and a hand me down skill. It mostly disappeared with the passing of the older generation with a very few exceptions here and there.*

**Lucian Lord....** *That is exactly the same woman I'm talking about. My experience with her was phenomenal. Wish there was another like her now.*

**Fiat Karmally....** *She used to balance the basket on her head. She had hands of steel. You were guaranteed to cry if you had a narra rub.*

**Patricia Brooker....** *Marajin was a frequent visitor to our house. She was one of the best for a good rub especially if you have narra.*

**Chandrakalla Dickson....** *Is she the lady who used her feet sometimes to rub?*

**Kamalo Deen....** *I think she did mostly for women. Jai Roopnarine.... She used to come home to rub Ma.*

**Sohaila Deen Omardeen....** *We knew Cry Cry well. In fact Mama told us to call her Nanee. I am not sure I knew Marajin.*

**Chester Madhosingh....** *I remember Cry Cry well. She was my nurse as a baby because my mom had a stroke when I was born.*

**Sylvia Paul....** *Thanks for the information sir. My father called her Nanny.*

**Milton Zaiffdeen....** *Cry-Cry and Kissoon both lived on*

*my street. Cry-Cry tended to my mom after many of my siblings's birth. Only Clint, the last out of 10 was born in a hospital. Those were blessed people.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen....** *The Seenaths served the Allen-Guaracara-Lumsden Street sufferers. I remember Bhongee Marajin, Cry Cry, they were all friends (or gossip buddies) of my Agee and visited her often.*

**(132c) Gibbs....** Gibbs was a short, fair-skin man who was one of our better-known alcoholics (drunks) in the village. I have heard some people mention that he was the brother of Mynee (see # 71a). For a while he used to be a regular at our home doing odd jobs for my father. I remember him as being a great talker. My brothers and I liked him because he was always telling jokes or tying up our brains with puzzles. He never offered any simple, jokey puzzles like the ones that we were accustomed to. His were always well thought-out puzzles. Despite his drinking he seemed to be a very intelligent and educated person.

In one of his puzzles (which in later years I had used in a calypso I had written), he asked us to name one place on earth where the sun shined once and never shone again? We came up with all kinds of answers....all wrong. He tied up our heads for several days before giving us the real answer.... The Red Sea which God parted for Moses and his followers to cross. The sun shone on the seabed at that time and, after the sea closed, never shone there again.



We had two coppers in our back yard. As boys we sometimes tried minding fish in them and during the rainy season we'd use them as swimming pools. As 7/8 year olds, we shared many happy days splashing around in the water. One day while Gibbs & my brother Nurul were helping Papa in the yard and Suge, Sham & I were playing in the water, I tried walking along the edge of the copper. I slipped and fell on all my weight with one leg inside and the other on the outside. Gibbs shouted to my father and they all rushed up to pull me out of the water. As I drifted into unconsciousness I could hear Gibbs shouting, "See quick! See quick! He must be get it in he balls!" And he was right. Papa rushed me to the hospital. Fortunately, thanks to help from Mr Gibbs, I survived. Although Mr Gibbs was one of the "renowned drunks" of Gasparillo, I believe that, as one of the pioneers of (AA) Alcoholics Anonymous in our village, he had eventually stopped drinking and influenced several others to do the same.

**Carol Ramsawak-Manohar....** *He lived near the river behind our grandfather's home in Gasparillo. He used to walk up the 'hill' at the time and cut through by Mr Chester's home to get on to the main road. I remember as children we used to run down the hill and most times he was sitting outside his humble home reading the bible, always in white long-sleeved shirt tucked in his trousers and wearing a hat.*

**Judy Karim....** *I believe he was married but his wife left because of the drinking.*

**(132d) Cazaboh....** In my early years, the sight of beggars in Gasparillo was common. They were generally people who had been forced into poverty by physical or mental illness. Some walked around as individuals, quietly seeking charitable offerings. Most however moved about on weekends in small groups. They walked from house to house seeking “small change” or handouts of dry food items. We had grown so accustomed to most of them that we were able to identify some by nicknames because they visited our home every weekend. The best known from my childhood was a man who we called Cazaboh. I remember him as a small, dark, middle-aged Indian man who wore a dhoti. He carried a cloth sack strung over his shoulder for storing the dry goods he received and a stick to stave off dogs.

The groups were usually quiet, never demanding or requesting much. Some, like Dilip (aka Goodin), would sing quietly if requested and “Monkey” who delivered news about births, deaths, marriages etc. We knew very little about them or their personal lives.

At Eid celebrations, the several groups of beggars used to appear at the mosque and sit in line to receive charity from the attendees. They would lay out a paper or cloth sheet before them. Worshippers changed some dollars into change which they walked along the lines placing some coins on each beggar’s sheet. At times they would show up for “beggar feedings” when a full meal was provided. Generally they were quiet, well-behaved individuals who were accepted as part of the community. Cazaboh appeared to be a leader of one of these groups.

OTHER MEMORABLE CHARACTERS



Cazaboh  
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**Fiat Karmally....** *More than a ritual, it was a culture to give to the beggars on Sunday mornings. I feel so fortunate to have grown up with that experience.*

**Vishnu Ramdeen....** *I remember Cazaboh too! As I recall, often groups of folks seeking alms will move around the village accepting small change, dry food etc....villagers were very receptive to these folks, some believed that if God walked the Earth he will appear as a “beggar” to test you and the way you treated your fellow men, and for this reason these folks were not ignored. Not a bad idea if you ask me!*

## POSTSCRIPT

**Sonny Blacks...** *Great memories and history, really fantastic.*

**Sadru (Suge) Deen...** *Aaaah. What memories. Those really were the days.*

**Kevin Manohar...** *Thank you for sharing these wonderful memories for it has plotted a path to a gateway to the past, listing and detailing names and memories that helped shape the fabric of Gasparillo and has given us the younger generation a legacy to maintain and build on.*

**Chester Madhosingh...** *Gasparillo is a small village that produced many successful citizens and families.*

**Robin Nagir...** *I wish you could have stayed in Gasparillo for 10 more years so we can learn more.*

**Dennis Rogers...** *Hi Malo. Howdy?? Hope that all is well with you and yours. Been following your Gasparillo journey for sometime now. Great research and throwbacks. I commend you for your efforts and time to bring back the old time days. Days which I will never forget nor trade. Keep up the good work. Regards to Sherma. Blessings...ASE'*

**Steffen Paul...** *Reading these historical facts from Uncle Malo about Gasparillo and its residents has been one ray of sunshine during these incredibly testing times. I eagerly look forward to the rest.*

**Dennis E Zaiffdeen...** *Hopefully, you're collecting these memories and writing a Gasparillo history book.*

**Rajesh Balliram...** *I humbly thank you for posting said entries. I know my father in law (Kenny Ballyram) would have enjoyed it immensely had he been alive and would have added to your narrations as well.*

**Kathleen Wandel...** *How can you remember all these people so well? When you talk about them it brings back fond memories! Thank you for remembering our family Kamalo!*

**Yasmin Lynch...** *I am grateful to Mr Deen for all this info. Every day I read the article for my mom and we have a great journey down memory lane. 'It makes her day'. Stay safe, we are all under lock down.*

**Debbie Lora...** *Same here. I read the posts for Mom & Dad and they knew everyone. Good trip down memory lane. I am printing out the posts in large print so they can read at leisure. My parents Veena and Pity Roopchand really enjoyed the trip down memory lane. My dad would love to reminisce with you.*

**Zenobia Karmally Mohammed...** *These narratives are very interesting.*

**Deborah Ali...** *Great read Uncle Malo. (My dad) Zambo reads the posts everyday.*

**Hassima OmarAli...** *I really enjoy reading everyone's posts about your life growing up in Gasparillo.*

**Hashmin Ali...** *Gosh uncle, so love reading your stories from memory about growing up in Gasparillo, Trinidad. So sweet and innocent. And everyone's comments. Such pure, simple good ole days. When everyone regardless of race or religion respected each other and lived peacefully. It was about the same for me, growing up in New Grant, Princes Town.*

**Naseem Ali...** *So many memories Malo. Thank you for taking us back in time.*

**Sasa Rampersad...** *This is very interesting reading.*

**Donna Ramcharitar-Emison...** *So happy to see the*

history.

**Sarah Ali...** *I love reading about all the lovely things about the families and about Gasparillo.*

**Dhaneish Ramdin...** *I'd like to thank Mr. Deen for starting this discussion (nostalgic look at the history of Gasparillo) and encouraging me to relive the good old days.*

**Nazim Nagir...** *Hi, thanks for sharing the history facts of Gasparillo. Many people don't know the history.*

**Wendy Modeste...** *This is so great what Kamalo Deen is doing. Memory jogger for sure!*

**Radcliffe Ramjohn...** *And so it was through my growing up years. Amazing what a little time can do.*

**Arnot Lord...** *Always glad to read your postings. I see them as promoting our village's achievements.*

**Geetavie Raghoo...** *This is such an amazing and beautiful history and I thank everyone for such amazing contributions.*

**Nazira Fyzoudeen-Hasmath (Zira)...** *I truly admire the deep love, appreciation, consideration, joy and style in which you presented 'My Gasparillo 1940s-1960s' You have brought back such beautiful, vivid memories, during*



POSTSCRIPT

*that period of time. I want to commend you highly for producing such a magnificent narrative, inclusive of the great variety of articles, places and people. Excellent and interesting work! Love, Love your writing! Fondest regards.... Zira.*

**Sylvia Paul...** *Those were the good ole days!!*



## About the Author

Kamalo Deen was born in 1944 in the village of Preysal in central Trinidad and grew up in Gasparillo. He has worked at various professions, including schoolteacher, waiter, composer, director, taxi driver, filmmaker, businessman, actor, courier and writer. As a Caribbean filmmaker he's created three Trinidad and Tobago feature films: "Bacchanal Time", "The Panman" and "Jahaji Family". Among his published works are "For All Our Children" a children's book and "Curry Cascadoo" a novel. Among his songs are "The Patriot's Song", "Dear John", "Singer of Songs" and several others written for the movies "The Panman" and "Jahaji Family". He's traveled extensively and has worked and lived in Trinidad, Mumbai, Los Angeles, Las Vegas, New Jersey and New York where he presently resides. He's married to Sherma (Ali) of Gasparillo and has two children Shyama & Ishmael and five grandchildren.

**You can connect with me on:**

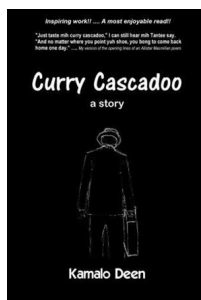
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## Also by Kamalo Deen



### **CURRY CASCADOO**

*A story told in letters, poetry and recollections.*



### **FOR ALL OUR CHILDREN**

*“FOR ALL OUR CHILDREN” is a collection of original Trinidad and Tobago songs and stories. One of its songs “The Patriots Song”, arranged and performed by George Victory, was chosen by The National Days and Festivals Committee as*

*its theme song for the 21st Anniversary of T&T’s Independence celebration.*



### **Our Adventure In India**

*A road trip of our family villages in India.*

A Trinidad & Tobago Movie



Kamalo Deen's

## BACCHANAL TIME

Color by Technicolor

Running Time: 101 mins

Cast: Calypso Boss, Shabou, Cassi Robb, Steve St. Hill, Gil, Nural Deen, Crazy, Trinidad Eto, Wanders, Sherma Deen, Gai Hagan, Lemna Land, Arthur Deen

Produced by Wajid Omardeen

Written, Directed & Edited by Kamalo Deen

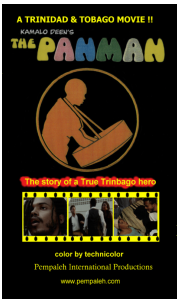
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### MOVIE.... "Bacchanal Time"

*A Trinidad & Tobago comedy set at Carnival time.*



A TRINIDAD & TOBAGO MOVIE II

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## THE PANMAN



The Story of a True Trinidadian Hero



color by technicolor

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### MOVIE.... "The Panman"

*A troubled young man seeks a focus in his life and finds it in the pan, the national instrument of Trinidad & Tobago.*



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## Jahaji Family

Directed and Edited by Kamalo Deen

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### MOVIE.... "Jahaji Family"

*A two hour long docu-drama which follows the exploits of an indentured immigrant from India to the sugar cane fields of Trinidad.*

