

Msomi HH overview notes
881007

Typescribed by: Steven Kotze for FHYA

Date: 21 July 2023

Key to FHYA typescriber's conventions:

- Where the typescriber edits/amends the original text, the edited/amended text appears in grey.
- The page numbers of the original text appear in square brackets, justified Right, and pertain to the text below them.
- Where the typescriber is unsure of a word, the word is placed within square brackets and a question mark. [word?]
- Where word/s are illegible, the illegible word is replaced with square brackets and a question mark. [?]

[TYPESCRIPT OF HEATHER HUGHES OVERVIEW NOTES FOLLOWING THE FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MR FRED GIJIMA MSOMI AT AMATATA ON 7 OCTOBER 1988]

[1]

DATE OF INTERVIEW: 7/10/88

DATE OF TRANSCRIPTION: 7/10/88

DATE OF TRANSLATION:

INTERVIEWERS: Sizwe Nkomo / Me

INTERVIEWEES: Mr Fred Gijima Msomi

PLACE OF INTERVIEW: His home, Amatata.

ANY FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE INTERVIEWEES: He is 82, and was dipping cattle when we arrived. We went to fetch him [and?] he arrived home in his dipping clothes to talk. At first he was [chary?] – he at present has a dispute with the church authorities who wish to remove the church (building right next door to his house), and the matter was with his lawyers. After assurances from us that we were not fishing [for?] info. he gave us a long interview. We then visited the graves of Madikane [and?] his wife (overgrown but, according to M's [Madikane's] wish, directly opp. [opposite?] the altar window of the church). Mr Msomi then took us to the house, just across a field, inhabited [by?] Rev QM Cele. It is now in ruins, walls only standing, [and?] he wishes to renovate it.

[2]

The main house in the Msomi homestead is square, tinroofed. In the lounge were the 'obligatory' artefacts: kist, chimney clock, display cabinet (displaying a tea [set?], plastic bowls, packet of curry powder) and velveteen-covered chairs. In the middle, a dining table. A daughter came in [and?] sat on the floor at the beginning of the interview, then reappeared later with tea. One got the impression of a once more economically secure setup, altho' Mr Msomi has land [and?] owns the small butchery nearby, this entrepreneurial activity has not led to comfort. The homestead buildings are all modest, neat, higgledy piggedly but really quite austere. Mr Msomi has just recently heard that he has been granted a pension.

His wife died some years ago; he has 13 children; he is a local induna under [Mzonjani?]. He thinks 'uhulumeni' [the government] has brought great benefits to the people; and jokingly as we left said that now that people could marry whom they liked, cld [could?] I find him a white bride?

We returned a week later. Friday 14/10. On this occasion we reported progress with the copying of the pictures he'd asked us to organize, [and?] to make this suggestion:

[3]

That I put [together?] all the information on Madikane, that I compile it into a booklet which they can sell to raise money for the restoration of the church / house. Mr Msomi was deeply impressed & in fact got [very?] watery eyes. He then did something most unexpected: he careered off on a long history of Mqawe, Bulushe [and?] Madikane – his heartfelt story, the "real history" which he had obviously been too guarded to tell us before! We had to stop him to get the tape recorder, but that did not seem to affect the flow.

Then we sat down to a very formal tea (grace beforehand) and Mr Msomi urged us to visit his imbongi / advisor, Mr Mzimela, immediately after, as it was not far. We drive about 4 kms, and found Mr M [Mzimela?] leaning on his hoe in his fields – a little, bent man with elfish features, someone out of a fairy tale. Very old wizened but kindly face. Mr Msomi obviously respected him very much, as he introduced us & our business by long preamble. When the [crux?] of the matter finally [out?], the

[4]

old man was much impressed; he said that he had told Mr Msomi that everything [would?] come right, just the other day when they had been talking about historical matters. So we set up a meeting for the next Thursday.