

MMA Hlubi Oral History Project: summary index

Name of the location& date: PoPoPo

Name of Interviewer: Missing

Name of the interviewee: Mrs Qhethekile Mohlokaqala

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I understand that you are researchers of the history of amahlubi and in this case I think we need to have a solid plan. Q2: How long do you think it would take us to get some one who could come and help in narrating the history as time goes.

Good day grandma, I would like to kindly inform you that we would like to have a conversation with you about the History of Amahlubi, this will just be a normal conversation and therefore, we kindly ask you not to mind the machine that you see in front of you, we would like to record you as well as take videos of you so that your grandchildren in Maseru would be able to see you and listen to the news you have to share about the history of Amahlubi.

Interviewee: I am a bit reluctant for you to take videos of me because I know that my grandchildren will wonder how is it that you were able to convince me to take videos of me because they know that I do not like videos.

Interviewer: Grandma, do you know that it is possible that I could have been taking videos of you from the moment I sat here?

Interviewee: I know that you have started a long time ago and have captured me while refusing.

Interviewer: No Grandma, we are just joking, we would not begin filming you before getting your permission, we were just playing. So do you agree for us to take videos of you?

Interviewee: Yes I do agree and I know that we were just joking, I do give you the permission to begin recording and filming. I am a bit nervous that I may leave a few details behind.

Interviewer: Thank you Grandma please come sit here. This is how we are going to proceed; kindly tell us what your name is.

Interviewee: My childhood name is Qethekile, it is actually Qithikile, Qethekile is the "Sothofied" version of it. I am Qethekile Mhlokacqala although in the same way the Sotho have "Sothofied" my surname and pronounce it as "Mohlokaqala". I come from Matsitsing village (A village of the Tsitsi people), I am a Tsitsi of Tlokotsi from Mohlokaqala, that is where I was born and raised. Should I begin by giving you my background from childhood? I was born from the Makuoas and Motlaltoas who were leaders of that village we were left with during my childhood. These leaders then migrated from Mohlokaqala and settled in the Pathway of Ha Mafatla while some settled at Mpharane at Ha Mapotle. Some of them still live there up until today. These are our great grandfathers that gave birth to our grand fathers; they included Semae, Sekoati among others. I therefore, grew up in Mpharane,

where my mom comes from. She comes from the Tloung clan of Maloka. Due to calamities we ended up leaving Mpharane when my father lost a child and settled at Tsokung Harachakane, I was taken care of by my maternal grandma. My father was Hlubi, raised by her Mom's sister in Tsokung. He got married at the Maloka's of Tloung clan. Therefore, my mom was a Tloung while my dad was a Tsitsi, I am therefore a Tsitsi.

I then got married to a guy in this village where we currently are and was given a new family name of "Mamojela" as I had arrived among Hlubi people of Mthimkhulu. My great grandfather's name was Thapooane, who gave birth to Mosala.

Interviewer: Let me get this clear grandma, You said you are a Tsitsi who's been married to the Hlubi people. Would it be right for me to say that you have been married to the Ndebele people?

Interviewee: Yes that is correct, I have been married to the Ndebeles.

Interviewer: Are clan names of the Tsitsi's the same as those of the Hlubi?

Interviewee: No they are not the same and could not be the same as they logically belong to different groups of people.

Interviewer: Would you kindly recite clan names that belong to both groups, the Tsitsi and the Hlubi since you relate to both of them by blood and by marriage respectively; so that we may be able to identify the differences between the two.

Interviewee: I will do that with pleasure, although I have to admit that I will not be as fluent and recite them with ultimate precision as one the owners of these two groups would have liked, I could be doing a huge disservice to their culture. Nonetheless, I will try my level best. Moreover, it will be especially challenging for me when it comes to reciting clan names of the Hlubi side of my family as I am originally from the Tsitsi family by birth.

Interviewer: That is still okay with us, please go ahead and recite the clan names for us. Let us begin with the Tsitsi side of your family:

Interviewer: Where do you come from?

Interviewee: I come from Ha Mantila-tilane.

Interviewer: What did you eat?

Interviewee: I ate bread...

Interviewer: What did you have your bread with?

Interviewee: I ate my bread and drank rain water.

Interviewer: Please go ahead and recite your full clan name:

Interviewee: I am a Tsitsi of Tjama, of Tjapesa, of Mhlomakqala, of Sqato, of Langalibalele, the coming out of the sun.

Interviewer: Okay thank you, lets come to the Hlubi side of your family then.

Interviewee: How do you expect me to recite the Hlubi side when I am not originally Hlubi but only Hlubi by marriage? But its okay, I will do it. You guys have confused me because it looks like I will end up mixing the two.

Interviewer: I once had a debate with someone and I told them that when reciting one's clan name, one should go straight to the heart of the clan name instead of simply reciting the lineage of the family. So in the same vein grandma, please go to the heart of Amahlubi tribe.

Interviewee: I am a Mthimkhulu of Pokane, wena wa ka Duma Mhlaba, wena wa ka, Tjama, wa ka Mpondo and so it goes on....I am jealous at the fact that I remember my marriage clan names more than I remember that of my maiden family.

Interviewer: I think we have covered the clan names and need to move on. Grandma, kindly narrate the history of Hlubi people by telling us about their tradition and their customs. This means that you can tell us what happens to a Hlubi child from the moment they were born and how they grow up within the Hlubi society.

Interviewee: Hlubi people send a group of women to the river to undertake a process called "Hoqochela". The fundamental details of this process are protected by a confidentiality clause that is undersigned by older women who partake in this process such that even the typical Hlubi men of the village are completely clueless as to what it is that happens during that process. Moreover, the people that go there are afforded the privacy that they require, no one talks to them or laughs with them as they go there, it is treated as classified information and the secrecy around this process is similar to one that takes place with the process of "Lebollo" (initiation).

In those days, all traditional rituals would be performed to the child. The women would inform the men that the child is born and when the child grows up, it would be taken to the initiation school. The problem with today's children is that they are born at hospitals. The biggest threat to our culture is hospitals as children that are born there do not get to have their traditional rituals performed at them such as "Hoqocheloa". this was a highly secretive process which was performed by older women among themselves and men were not allowed to know what happens there. Up until today the information regarding what happens during the process of "Hoqochela" remains classified.

Interviewer: Grandma I understand that the process of "Hoqochela" was strictly confidential and hidden from men. But do you think that in today's time, you would be comfortable and willing to share with us by first defining to us what the process of Hoqochela means, what it entails, because I think it was an important process.

Interviewee: Unfortunately, nowadays everything is in the public domain, our culture is exposed and everything that used to be a secret is out in the open. During our times traditional rituals were highly secretive, the secret was kept by grandmas and grandfathers, no explanation was given to the youth regarding these secrets. But nowadays, we are living in the end of times, that is why the children of today know everything which they were not supposed to know and behave the way they behave. It is shocking to see what our children have become, sacred cultural practices have been reduced into a joke. This shows that we are approaching the end of the world.

Interviewer: Ok grandma, I sense that you are not comfortable in telling us what the process of “Hoqochela” actually means, but we can move on to the next question. Do you still speak Hlubi language back home?

Interviewee: Yes we still very much speak the language of Isihlubi.

Interviewer: Okay Grandma. Could you please tell us how old you are?

Interviewee: I am 93 years old this year.

Interviewer: You are really old although you still look very young. Thank you so much grandma for narrating this history to us as we need to wrap up, please tell us what you think about the Hlubis. Where do they come from?

Interviewee: What do you mean by what I think of Hlubi people? We all come from Natal.

Interviewer: Okay thank you very much for your time grandma