

**CONSTANTIA LAND,
GOVERNMENT HAND-OVER CEREMONY,
TO THE SOLOMON FAMILY - 12 APRIL 2014**



AGENDA

THE HAS (HADJI ABDULLAH) & HIS (HADJI ISMAIL) SOLOMON SETTLEMENT CEREMONY

THE AGENDA - SATURDAY 12 APRIL 2014

1. **PROGRAMME**
Welcome done by MC's Zeid Baker and Igshaan Akoojee
2. **OPENING DU'AA**
Sheigh Taliep Solomon and Hadji Hassiem Solomon
3. **QIRA'A**
Achmat Booley and Yaseen Solomon
4. **PURPOSE OF GATHERING**
Minister or Chief Director OR (?) – RESTITUTION
5. **SLIDE SHOW OF THE OLDER GENERATIONS INTERVIEW.**
What Life was like back-then
6. **SPEECHES**
Hadji Rashaad Solomon (HAS) and Sharief Solomon (HIS)
7. **QASIDAH** (NASHEED Group)
8. **SPEECHES**
Department or Constantia Community (*SELECTION TO BE FINALISED*)
9. **SLIDE SHOW OF THE OLDER GENERATIONS INTERVIEW.**
What Life was like back-then
10. **SPEECH**
South Peninsula Municipality (GUEST ?)
11. **TRIBUTE FOR THE DECEASED FAMILY MEMBERS** By ????????
12. **QASIDAH** (NASHEED Group)
13. **MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**
14. **SLIDE SHOW OF THE OLDER GENERATIONS INTERVIEW.**
What Life was like back-then
15. **VOTE OF THANKS**
Zeid Booley and Nasser Husain Solomon
16. **NATIONAL ANTHEM**
Professional singer along with younger members of the family
17. **CLOSING DU'AA**
Husain Solomon and Amaanullah Booley.

WELCOME

WHAT'S INSIDE

PAGE 4-7. Letter written on the 17 May 1999 by Hadji Rashaad Solomon.

PAGE 8-9 Article published in the Constantia/Wynberg Peoples Post 2007

Motivation for the return of Portion 10 and Portion 11 of "Sillery Farm" to the Solomon Family.

Members of the Executive Committee of the South Peninsula Municipality.

1. On behalf of the Solomon Family who have mandated me to address you today, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to do so in regard to our claim to the vacant land, previously known as portion 11 of Sillery Farm (now known as Erf 4724, Constantia).
2. The land measuring 6,3634 hectares, which is currently owned by your municipality, previously belonged to various members of the Solomon Family until we forced to sell the property because of the Group Areas Act and other racially discriminatory practices.
3. The legality of the claim is unanswerable. But for the Group Areas Act, we would still have owned the property.
4. The Solomon Family has decided to address you today in the hope of bringing about an amicable settlement of our claim. In doing so, we hope to avoid a possible lengthy and expensive case before the Land Claims Court.

History of the Property

I would like to sketch a brief history of the Solomon Family's tenure on the land in question. In fact, the family also owned vast other properties and farms in the Constantia area, all of which were also lost as a result of the Group Areas Act and other racial legislation and practices which existed in this very area where we are now gathered today, prior to the promulgation of the Group Areas Act itself. There were endorsements on title deeds of properties in this very area restricting occupation, let alone ownership by "any Jew, Asiatic, African Native, Cape Malay or any person who is manifestly a "Coloured" person.

That is the historical background to this area and the property owned by my family. Today it would be termed "ethnic cleansing". Hadji Abdullah Solomon and Saba Owen Solomon purchased Lot 10 and Lot 11 of Sillery Farm from the estate of the late Gottwald Heinrich August Albrecht for the sum of 340 pounds and 600 pounds respectively in 1902 for the purpose of both residing and farming there.

While continuing to reside and farm the property, Saba Owen Solomon subdivided portion 11 into six separate Lots. He then sold these Lots to each of his five children for the nominal sum of 5 pounds each, while Lot 10 remained intact.

Besides residing on the land, the respective families were involved in farming

and other economic activities as is set forth in my founding affidavits.

My family was widely respected for its farming abilities and many local White farmers purchased seeds for commercial flower farming from them. The cities top florist's also purchased their flowers from our farm.

Hadji Taliep Solomon, one of Saba Owens sons (UNCLE RASHAAD MUST THIS NOT BE HADJI ABDULLAH SON – ITS MY OUPA – I SHOULD KNOW?), progressed into being a renowned entrepreneur in the Constantia area. He was one of the few Black farmers who exported grapes through Deciduous Fruit Board (DFB). Such was his farming prowess that he won five medals for is grapes at the Imperial Fruit Show in London. We have picture of the medals which have been encased in a frame and which we are very proud of:

1937 – Silver for Red Hanepoot
1938 – Bronze for White Hanepoot
1939 – Bronze for White Hanepoot
Unknown year – Bronze for White Hanepoot
Unknown year – Bronze for Raisin Blanc

As entrepreneurs, my family provided employment for dozens of local people. Those workers who are still alive and members of their family, speak most highly of the fair labour practices and the caring attitude of their former employers.

My family's unselfish attitude is further manifested by the donation of a large tract of land in Spaanschemaat Road to the Muslim community for use as a cemetery and the mosque is still used by members of the Muslim community.

This property is still registered in the name of my family.

My family enjoyed a high quality of life in Constantia. We were able to eat fruit and vegetable – freshly picked from the farms each day. We made our own cheese and other fresh dairy products were readily available from the farm. The horses and other livestock as well as the open spaces provided a welcome source of recreation for our children.

For those of us like me, who were fortunate enough to have experienced life in Constantia, it is indeed with great sadness that we have to reflect on the history of dispossession and the destruction of a healthy community and family life by an inhumane system.

Yes, the financial implications of our forced removal were considerable, as I will point out later. However, the emotional trauma caused by the bulldozing of our houses and the subsequent scattering of the family to all parts of the peninsula is devastating.

Indeed the very place where other family members and I lived has now been converted into a rubbish dump.

The area, which was previously used for farming purposes, is mainly unused.

From living in complete harmony, the love for one another, and living so close to each other, we were scattered to areas as far apart as Athlone, Manenberg, Grassy Park, Wynberg, Atlantis and Malmesbury. Many members of the family, who saw each other almost daily, have not seen each other since they were forced to leave over 50 years ago.

Dispossession in terms of the Group Areas Act.

While the family and indeed the Constantia community were enjoying happy and productive lives, the warning signs of the devastation which was to follow, started flickering as early as 1951, when the Constantia Land Owners Association recommended that Constantia should apply to become a White area in terms of the Group Areas Act.

By the second half of the 1960's, when the full might of the Group Areas Act was being felt by Black communities throughout the country, estate agents saw the advantage by going from door to door in affected areas advising property owners to sell instead of having their properties expropriated by the Group Areas Board. Very often these agents would scare residents by pointing to the forced removals of people in areas such as District Six, Diep River and Claremont where these removals were already underway.

This tactic proved successful and several companies bought land at knock-down prices, only to resell them at massive profitable revenue a few years later.

In the case of Lot 10 and Lot 11, the purchasing company was Blue Ridge Centre (Pty) Ltd. Details of the dates, amounts paid and extent of each property is set forth in a schedule which is annexed hereto marked "A". The information set forth therein corresponds with the information set forth in the report prepared by Charlotte Blake dated 10 May 1999, a copy of which has been furnished to me.

These lots were subsequently in 1974. I respectfully submit that the compensation paid to the respective owners was in no way a fair reflection of the real value of these properties. In addition, it did not compensate for the

buildings, cultivated land, farming and other economic activities, which were conducted on the properties.

Request for Land to be returned

In view of the above, we request the South Peninsula Municipality, as present owners of the land in question, to return the properties to us at no cost.

We acknowledge that your council as it is presently constituted was not at all responsible for the hardship and suffering caused by the actions of an unjust system. We however believe that you have the empathy (and in fact some of you may well have been victims of Group Areas removals) to redress the injustice caused to us by returning our land to us.

Such gesture would be in the interests of national reconciliation, redressing the injustices of the past and would go a long way towards restoring the heritage of our family, which played such an important part in the economic and social development of Constantia.

We have not yet considered what to do with the land should it be restored to us. Although we firmly believe that we are both legally and morally entitled to the restoration of our land, we have not yet made a decision as to what to do with it upon the happening of such event. I say this because of the size of our family and the respective heirs; broad consultation will have to take place before such a decision can be made.

For the present moment, our sole concern is for the return of our land and your agreement in principle that we are entitled thereto.

As far as the question of compensation to the Municipality is concerned, I do point out, as appears from my Founding Affidavits that we are not seeking an order for the return of that portion of our land, which now comprises the Van Der Stel Freeway - M3.

We believe that once the Municipality has agreed that we are entitled to the return of our land, the question of compensation to the Municipality can be resolved by agreement or through a mediation process with the Municipality, with the assistance of the Judge who has been assigned to adjudicate upon our claim.

Our attorney will address you on certain legal aspects of our claim.

Finally, I once again thank you for having been afforded this opportunity of addressing you.

M R Solomon: 17 May 1999

Solomon family gets land back

AFTER being forcibly removed from their farm in the 1960s and nearly a decade of frustration and toil, the Solomon family is finally reclaiming their land.

In 1999, the Solomon Family Trust applied to the Land Claims Court for the restoration of their land close to Ladies Mile, Constantia. The land, formally known as Sillery Farm, currently belongs to the City of Cape Town and the provincial Department of Public Works and has been transformed from a thriving farm into a council dumping site.

Solomon Family Trust spokesperson, Rashad Solomon remembers, "When my grandfather bought the land in 1902, he developed the land over a period of 60 years. They took away our home with the stroke of a pen and it took years for the land to be returned. They took away a beautifully developed farm and they destroyed it, and we are given a dump," he says. Rashad Solomon says he is concerned that the residents in Constantia will give his family a hard time. "When you think of the name Constantia you think of rich estates, but the people [currently] in Constantia were not born and bred here. They are 'incomers' and they don't know what it was like before. We had heritage as well but this has been destroyed," Solomon says.

He says the family must look forward, not backward. "It is impossible to restore the land to what it was, but it must be replaced. The original land was three hectares, but we will be receiving is 2,3 hectares from the city.

Another hectare should be replaced as the land was separated by the M3," he says.

According to a Subcouncil 20 report of August 2005, the council agreed that the land in question be given back to the Solomon family on condition that they use the land for residential purposes only.

If they lease, alienate or otherwise encumber the property, they would have to refund the city an amount of R953 282,80, which is the current value of the land. The city paid R103036 for this land in 1983.

Regional Land Claims Commissioner Beverly Jansen is clear on the matter. "The job is done from the side of the Land Claims Commission, and the Solomons claimants will be getting their land back. They will not be given an empty plot of land and be left on their own to develop the land. They will be getting houses. The city and the restitution committee will be assisting the claimants with grants to assist them with this development," Jansen says.

"While the Solomon Family Trust has been settled, there are various other [family] groups and tenant farmers who are also re-claiming land in this area.

"We do not call meetings with the entire family, but only communicate with the spokesperson of the group. They need to hold meetings with the rest of the family," she added.

Time is running out for many of the aging Constantia land claimants who are still to receive closure on this matter. Many of them have already died while

waiting on an outcome. Abdullah Solomon is still waiting.

"It was my grandfather's land in Constantia. We shared the same name and he was also Hadjie Abdullah Solomon. We grew up in Constantia and were born and bred there. We were living among the 'white' people then. We were living under good conditions. We had a farm there.

"We lived off the land, grew fruit and vegetables, and then sold it on the market," he remembers.

"It was in 1962 when I left Constantia. I can't remember clearly what happened, but I remember they came all of a sudden and we were moved to

areas like Parkwood and Manenberg. Only those people that could afford to buy houses did," Abdullah Solomon says.

Councillor Neil Ross of Ward 62 says he is fully supportive of the principle of land restitution.

"There are other claimants for land in this area. We have two other restitution claims that have reached a finalisation point in this ward- they are Gabriel Road and Protea Garden," Ross says.



M3 separates land



Ladies Mile