

Miss Glynn:-

24.1.11

CASE A

Name: Mr. Willie **W**ickerman.

Address: 59, 16th Avenue, Alexandra Township.

Father - European; Mother - African; Wife - African.

Five children - four registered. Last baby not yet registered.

Children attend Central School, Alexandra - mixed African and Coloured.

Works Railway laundry. Recently classified as African, afraid that wages will decrease.

S. A. R. asked for classification.

Holds letter from Ds. J. Reyneke, Pretoria, certifying he is Coloured.

CASE B

Name: Mr. George Hamilton.

Address: 63, Bernard Street, Sophiatown.

Father - European; Mother - African; Wife - African.

Three children - last child registered 18/12/54 as Coloured after full particulars had been taken.

Eldest child goes to private school.

Works S. A. R. - barrier attendant on coloured scale - will mean a drop of £10 in pay if classified as an African.

Has not yet been classified.

Both these cases have been referred by:

Father Guinness,
Community of the Resurrection,
Sophiatown.

via Father Guinness

p

Willel Vickerman, aged 43 years, male, 59 16th Avenue, Alexandra Township, Johannesburg.

States: I am employed in the South African Railways laundry at Braamfontein, Johannesburg, and I live at 59 16th Avenue, Alexandra Township, Johannesburg.

I was born at Mochudi, Bechuanaland Protectorate, on 10 July 1912, my father being Ted Vickerman, a European merchant there, and my mother Mathlane Molohe, a Mokgatla woman. As far as I know the union was a customary one between my father and mother, and was recognized by the Chief, my father having paid fifty pounds cash to my mother's father. When I was born, there was no registration of births in Mochudi. Surviving from the union, and domiciled with me, is my sister, Anna Vickerman, aged now about 37, and unmarried. She works at the Transvaal Clothing Factory, which employs Coloured people.

As a child in Bechuanaland I spoke English with my father and Sechuana with my mother. My father died in 1934, at Mochudi, and was buried there by the Revd J. Rynkeke. He was predeceased by my mother by about three years. I was educated at the National School at Mochudi.

In 1935 I left Mochudi for Rustenburg, where I worked at the Standard Bank as a cleaner, not for the Bank as such, but for the manager, Mr Dakers, at his home. Some years later I moved to Boksburg with him, but when he was transferred to Vereeniging I was unwilling to go with him and got a job with the Railways, in the Catering Department, which is a Coloured Department. I stayed with the Catering Department until 1950, as a "scully" in dining cars.

In 1951 I transferred to the Railway laundry, also a Coloured job, and I am still working there.

When I first joined the railway service I lived at Newclare, in the part where Indians, Chinese, Coloured, and Africans all live. I was boarding there with a Coloured family. Later I moved to Crown Mines, and boarded there with a Coloured family.

I got married in 1948. I married Betty Mathebe, an Msutu, born in Pretoria. I paid lobola to her father, cash to the amount of £40, and was married before the Native Commissioner at Fordsburg. It was a civil marriage, and a marriage certificate was issued by the Native Commissioner, Fordsburg. When I got married I went to live in Alexandra Township, an African township.

There are five children of the marriage: (i) Joseph, aged 10 years; (ii) Petrus, 6 years; (iii) Joyce, about 5 years, (iv) Mervyn, 2½ years; and (v) Winston, 10 months. The first four children were registered after birth, at Pretoria, because, when my wife was due to have each child, I sent her to a Roman Catholic clinic at Lady Selborne. She registered the births herself, and I have their birth certificates. They are shown on these certificates as of "mixed" race. I have not yet registered the last child.

In order to leave Alexandra Township, so that I could live amongst Coloured people, and because I had been unsuccessful in obtaining a house through the Johannesburg City Council, this year I bought land at Mid-Ennerdale, District Roodepoort,

a Coloured area, and have obtained transfer through the Deeds office. It is my intention to build myself a house there next year.

When I was a single man I paid personal tax, and never paid Native Tax. When I went to pay personal tax in 1950, I was called upon to prove that I was Coloured, and had to go to the Pass Office. There I was examined, in the same way as I have recently been examined, and was given a paper to say I was Coloured. I showed this at the Revenue Office and was allowed to continue paying personal tax.

On 4 August 1955 I was at work at the laundry in the morning, and all of us had to go and see Mr Morgan, some other men, and two women (Europeans) and two African policemen. They had been given an office at the laundry.

When I entered the office, a European man, standing with the two African policemen, asked my name. I told him. The conversation was in Afrikaans only. I was then told to have my fingerprints taken, just as was done in 1950. I made no objection. The actual fingerprinting was done by the African policemen. The fingerprint form was then passed to the other European man, who asked the following questions: My name, what race I was (I said "Kleurling"), where I was born, to whom I was married, my wife's maiden name, what race my father was, and what race my mother was, they asked my wife's race, where I lived, what was my home language (I said "English and Afrikaans"), he asked if I could speak Sechuana, and I said "yes"); then he examined me by looking at me, and made notes. Then the document was passed to Mr Morgan, and he said to me: "You were born in Bechuanaland?" I said "Yes". He said: "But in Bechuanaland there are no Coloureds". He said: "If you put milk in coffee, how does it look?" I said: "It remains coffee, but it changes colour". He then said: "You are the same as that chap. Go that side", and he gave me a form B.V.R. 30. It was the woman with him who handed me the paper. He said nothing more. It was only when I read the paper outside that I saw that I was refused classification as a Coloured.

I took advice from the African policeman, who said I should get evidence about my birth. On 9 August I went to Pretoria, and saw the Revd J. Reyneke, and obtained a letter from him stating that he had known me for many years, since my childhood at school in Mochudi, that he knew my father, and had personally buried him, that I was Coloured or of mixed race or a "bruin man", and that my father was a European and my mother a Mokatla.

On 10 August I took this letter to the Census Office in Schoeman Street, accompanied by my sister. In an office there I saw the very same man who had questioned me at Braamfontein Laundry on 4 August. I gave him the letter. He read it, and asked if I was from the Railway Laundry, and told us to wait outside. Later he came out and called us to another room, but we did not enter, but stood outside. Then we accompanied him to another place, and waited. Then a man came with the letter and a form with it and said to me: "We understand your coming, but at the moment we can do nothing. You must go back, and then write us a letter to say that you are a Coloured, and send it to us, then in a month or two months we shall give you an answer."

I left, and phoned the Revd J. Reyneke, who told me to get in touch with Dr Hellmann, of the Institute of Race Relations.

I produce the following documents:

Marriage Certificate, issued in terms of Section 40 of Act No. 17 of 1923. B 524733.

No. 917/48. Race of Husband: Kleuring. Wife: Naturel.

Marriage after publication of banns. 29 October 1948. Revd E. Boloko, as witness. Signed by marriage officer (name indecipherable).

Deed of Transfer in favour of Willie Vickerman. F 2815/1955

Containing the words

"sold to Willie Vickerman a member of the Coloured Group as defined in Act No. 41/1950.

Lot 114, situate on seventh and eighth avenues, on that portion known as the Township of Mid-Ennerdale, being a portion of the farm "Hartbeestfontein No. 20, district of Roodepoort".

Birth Certificate No. 703988 Pretoria 5607/45

Joseph Vickerman

male

Race of parents: mixed and Msutu. Date of birth 4 November 1945
Claremont, Pretoria. 7 May 1951.

Birth Certificate No. 461015 Pretoria Entry No. 1530/49 2/6

Petrus Vickeman (sic)

male

Race of parents: Mixed. Date of birth 12 February 1949.

Birth Certificate 703878 6394/50

Joyce Veckerman

Female

Race of Parents: Mixed and Msutu. Date of birth 16 September 1950
at Claremont, Pretoria, dated 7 May 1951.

Birth Certificate 910061 Pretoria 633/52

Marvyn Vickerman

Female (in fact male)

Mixed and Msutu. Date of birth 9 October 1952

at Pretoria

Form Revenue 1307. B 925485 2.11.1951. Johannesburg

W. Vickerman £1 9s. 4d.

Personal Tax

Form Revenue 1307 C 09485 29.8.1952. Johannesburg

W. Vickerman £1

Personal Tax

Form Revenue 1307 C 79985 24.12.1953. Johannesburg

W. Vickerman £1 5s. 4d.

Personal Tax

Mr. Ngubane: —

Handwritten notes: - Enclosure - Products - Assembly - House - 23-0314.

1

Mr. Lilienfeld, a Coloured man came to the Institute to seek assistance in connection with the confusion caused among the Coloured people by the classification that has been started at the Pass Office under Population Registration Act 30/1950. He did not speak for himself but for the Coloured community as a whole and feels that this is a question of race relations in which the Institute might interest itself.

2.

After discussing the difficulties and hardships that will follow in the wake of the classification, I suggested and he agreed that instead of my taking a statement from him, it would be very much better if he and two other men could attend a meeting of the Action Committee and state their case to indicate the lines along which the Institute might be of assistance.

3.

I further suggested that as Mr. Lollan, who is Secretary of the Coloured People's Organisation was reported in the press (See cutting 15/8/55 Rand Daily Mail) as having briefed attorneys to give legal defence when necessary, and as having arranged for advice for any members of the Coloured community who might be in difficulty, it would be wise to ask him to be a member of the deputation.

4.

Mr. Lollan and I met in Orlando last night and he made the suggestion that, while as a political organisation they would fight politically - and this would of course, be a long-drawn fight, the Institute might consider expedients which would give immediate relief from suffering. He suggested the following courses of action for the Institute:

Vertical line with three 'X' marks next to items (a), (b), and (c).

- (a) that the Institute should ask for the classification at present being carried on to be discontinued pending the establishment of a board of appeal in terms of the Population Registration Act.
- (b) That if the classification must be carried on, it be removed from the Pass Office.
- (c) That the government should discontinue the present method of "arrest" by the police and invite the people to go voluntarily for registration.

5.

We suggest that the deputation of Mr. Lollan, Mr. Lilienfeld and another come before this Committee now to present their case.

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