

THE HAZARIKA'S OF MOTIJAN

PART 2

**Chapter 6 through 8**

## **SHARIF MOHAMMED SHAH HUSSAIN HAZARIKA**

Sharif Md. Shah Hussain Hazarika, the great grandson of Ali Ahmed Hazarika and grandson of Shanoor Hazarika. He was the fourth child and the third son of Tafazzul Hazarika.

This section documents the life of Sharif Mohammed Shah Hussain Hazarika although he is the fourth child to enable the reader to get a better understanding of the family descendents since he did the original research and documentation in the 60's. His work is subsequently being followed up by his son Tawheed Hazarika with additional information on the recent generations and short stories and memories of the older generation.

This section also documents the four sons of Sharif Md Shah Hussain Hazarika and their families. A similar format will be followed for his brothers and sisters and their descendents in Part 3.

### **Chapter 6**

## **SHARIF MOHAMMED SHAH HUSSEIN HAZARIKA**

married Sona Noorbahar Begum daughter of Dr. Mohammed Diamat Hussain of Sungi and later Heelika a small town three miles from Titabar..

Sharif Md. Shah Hussain Hazarika  
married Sona Noorbahar of Heelika

Children:

Tawheed Sharif Shah Hazarika (Biki) November 13, 1945-  
Dej Dada Hazarika (Boo) November 18, 1952- January 11, 2005  
Fafi Rahmatulla Hazarika (Kem) March, 1954-  
Bashir Ahmed Hazarika (Pnompeuh) March 3, 1962-

Sharif Mohammed Shah Hussain Hazarika was born at Motijan on May 21, 1909 and passed away on March 1, 1972 of post op hernia surgery recovery, most likely heart failure at the age of 63. He passed away on the same bed used by his father and mother in the main bedroom at Motijan. He led a full and happy life, always surrounded by his family and took great pleasure in having his children, his brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and their children visit Motijan and stay months at a time. His funeral was well attended by the surviving brother and sisters, his three youngest children and most of his nephews, nieces and the town folks of Titabar. His eldest son was in Portland, Maine, USA when he received a telephone call giving him the news. The telephone company, was able to get through to Titabar via a number of telephone exchanges after six hours of

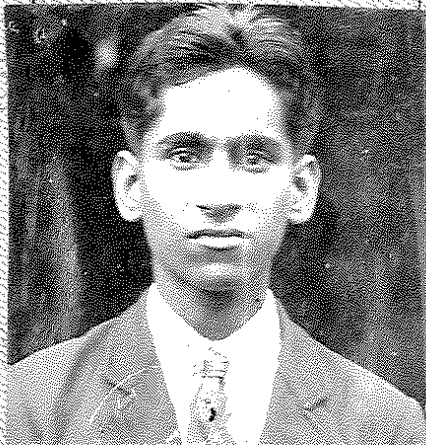

effort, just in time to talk to all the family members present and getting ready to leave the house for the Motijan kabastan.

After returning from England Sharif Hazarika joined the family business. He was involved with the tea estates for a number of years with his father and older brother Ali. It was a difficult period as the business income was not keeping up with the grand life the family led. After many disputes with his mother and brothers to tone down the family life style, Sharif Hazarika decided to join the Assam Bengal Railways as Assistant Traffic Superintendent. He was an eligible bachelor with many proposals coming his way from affluent families of that era. The Malia family of Calcutta owners of five star hotels were friendly with him. Known as Uncle Bital Malia to the family, they were frequent visitors. His daughter Prema Malia was smitten with Sharif but the family objected to a marriage. He decided to get married to Sona. It was a very small wedding with two brothers and two sisters attending since the wedding was not sanctioned by his mother or the family. His bride, Sona Noorbahar was a niece of Noorbahar Begum (Moina), Sharif's mother and came from the Minoor Hazarika line but was not well off economically compared to the descendents of Shanoor Hazarika. Sona was a village girl, shy, did not speak English and had little understanding of society etiquette of that time. They were married at his sister Daisy's house at Rabarbari, Tezpur in 1942.

Sharif Hazarika around 1928 on return from England:



Passport of Sharif Hazarika:

		2	
		DESCRIPTION SIGNALLMENT	Wife - Femme
Profession Profession	Student		
Place and date of birth	Morigaon Bakelgaon Assam, India		
Date of date of naissance	27-5-1909		
Domicile Domicile	Morigaon Bakelgaon, Assam		
Height Taille	5 ft. 8 in.		
Color of eyes Couleur des yeux	Browns		
Color of hair Couleur des cheveux	Black		
Visible distinguishing marks Signes particuliers	None		
CHILDREN - ENFANTS			
Name Nom	Age Age	Sex Sexe	
DIED 1ST MARCH 1972			
		3	
		PHOTOGRAPH OF BEARER	
			
		WIFE - FEMME	
		(Photo)	
SIGNATURE OF WIFE - ET DE SA FEMME		 Sharif Mohammed Shah Hussain Hazarika	

**PASSPORT**

These are to request and require in the Name of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India all those whom it may concern to allow the bearer to pass freely without let or hindrance, and to afford him every assistance and protection of which he may stand in need.

Given at Shillong  
the 6<sup>th</sup> day of July 1925

By order of the  
Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

*[Signature]*  
Chief Secretary to the  
Government of Assam

This passport contains  
32 pages.  
Ce passeport contient  
32 pages.

**PASSPORT.  
PASSEPORT.**

EMPIRE OF INDIA.  
EMPIRE DES INDES BRITANNIQUES.

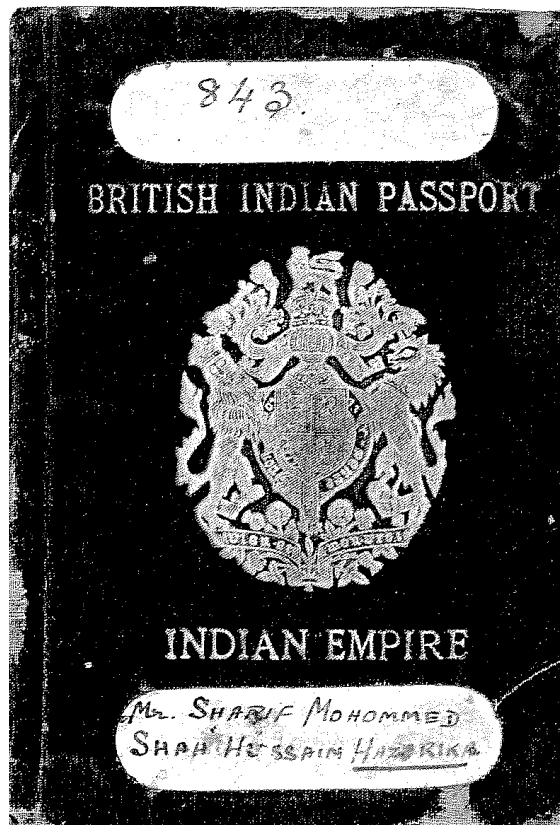
No. of Passport } 843.  
No. du Passeport }

Name of Bearer } *Mr. SHARIF MOHAMMED*  
Nom du Titulaire } *SHAH HUSSAIN HAZARIKA*  
son of Maulavi *[unclear]*

Accompanied by his wife } *Humaira Begum*  
(Maiden name) } *[unclear]*  
Accompagne de sa Femme } *[unclear]*  
(Née) } *[unclear]*

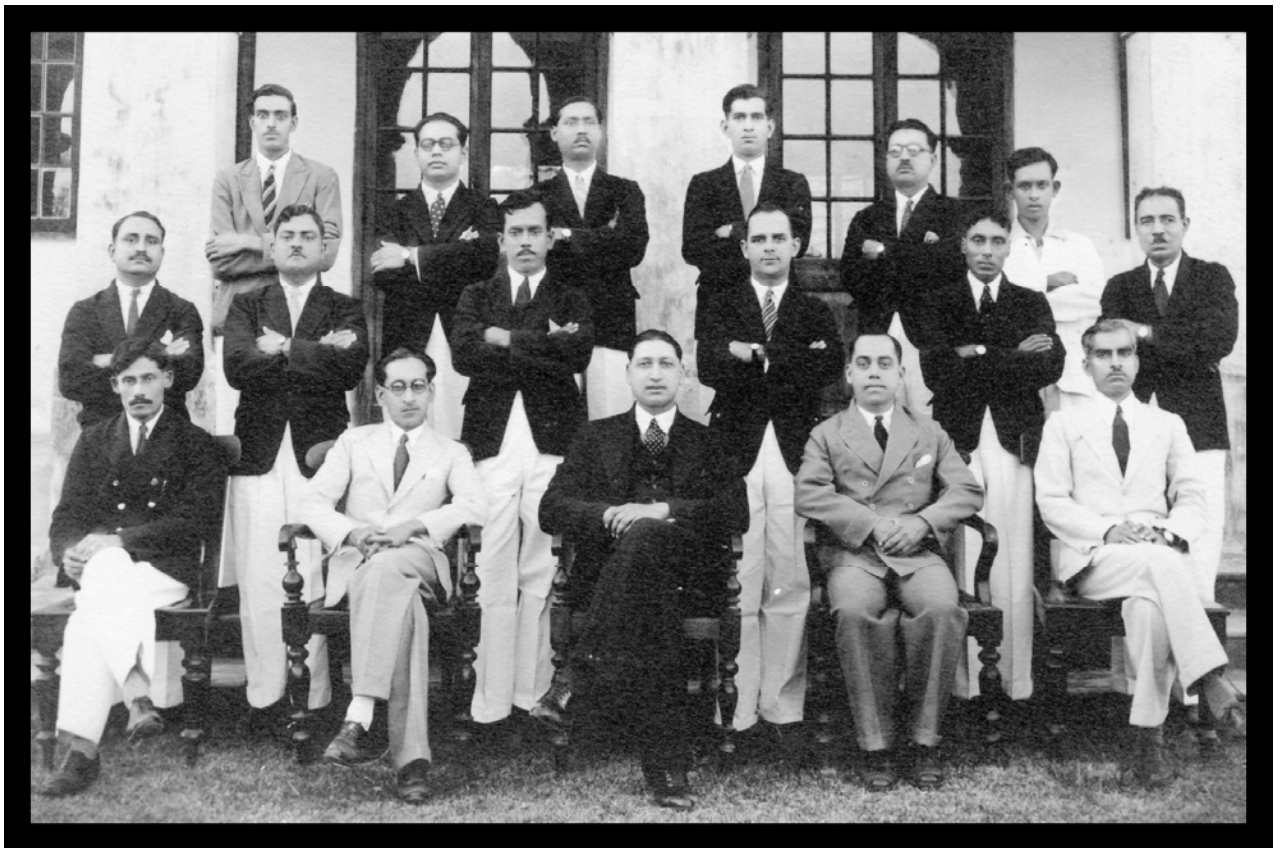
(and by children )  
(et de enfants )

National Status } *[unclear]*  
Nationalite } *[unclear]*



Sharif Hazarika was about 5'8" tall and medium built. Prior to turning thirty five, he, like his brothers lived a fast life of parties, cars and drinks. The only exception being his hard work ethic. As he aged, he became a man of faith and had immense love for the entire family especially his brothers and sisters. His ultimate wish being that one of his four sons would one day become a preacher and he could restore Motijan to its old glory. Partly educated in England, he came back to India to help his father and then later on become the District Traffic Superintendent of Assam Bengal railways a very coveted position. During World War II he served as rank of Captain in the British army in the railway logistics effort keeping the British troops supplied in Burma and the Americans dropping supplies by air from Assam to China. He was posted at Jalpaiguri, Bengal and was the senior officer at the Domohani railway complex, then at Chittagong and finally Sylhet (Bangladesh today). In 1948 he left the railways and got into the tea business by buying Degubber tea estate located near Silchar, Cachar, Assam.

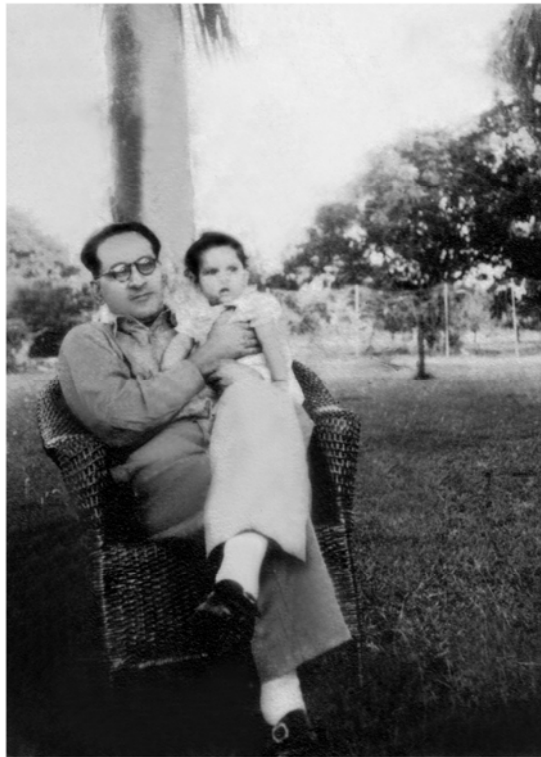
Sharif Mohammed Shah Hazarika is seated second from left with other railway officers of Assam Bengal railways when he was the District Traffic Superintendent



Farewell picture for Sharif Hazarika, with garland and seated sixth from left.



At Assam Bengal Railway DTS bungalow at Domohani (near Jalpaiguri, West Bengal, India) Sharif Hazarika and eldest son Tawheed Sharif Shah Hazarika.





The family, including his wife Sona moved out of Motijan after the death of his mother Noorbahar Begum in 1951. The Motijan house was soon vacant and was being looked after by the servants. In 1957 he moved back to the house to re-open the Motijan Tea Estate property.

### **Motijan under Sharif Hazarika**

Sharif Hazarika loved to be at Motijan. He documented every transaction with the family and friends in minute detail over the years and left the following records. Sharif Hazarika had not inherited any properties from his parents due to disputes on the way the business was run during his time with the family business. The only exception on inheritance being the family mosque and kabastan (grave yard). The move to Motijan from Degubber was sentimental with his burning desire to re-establish the family to its old glorious position of the past (also ethnic tensions between Assamese and Bengalese was a safety worry as he was probably the only high profile Assamese living in a Bengali dominated area of Assam). The move to Motijan was risky economically since he already had a thriving business in Degubber that was generating plenty of profits. It was viewed by the rest of the family as a property grab. To complicate matters he started opening the tea plantation and spent over Rupees two lakhs (a very large sum of money in the mid 1960's when the cost of a new Ambassador car was Rupees eleven thousand) preparing the land and planting new tea bushes on land that belonged to his brothers Faiz and Ali Hazarika. He then offered to buy the Motijan house and surrounding property land from his brothers and sisters. All family members were also offered the opportunity to stay at the Motijan house and he would leave. Finally, his sisters Daisy Aziz, Shirazy Ghaffar, Bulu Chapman, Georgina Dutt and Georgi Hussain sold their shares for rupees 12,000 but later on everyone was paid rupees 15,000 since he paid his sister Bulu that sum a few years later. Sharif felt that he should treated them equally, although Bulu sold her share ten years later. Zum Zum gifted her share to Sharif's second son Dej Dada Hazarika. The youngest brother Hassin Hazarika died in an air crash and his equivalent share of the house property was used to set up a school in Titabar in his name. That left the property legally to the three brothers since Faiz and Ali were unwilling to sell. Faiz and Ali Hazarika were not interested in their land being used to re-open the tea plantation. Vacant land could be confiscated by the Indian Government based on the federal land ceiling act and distributed to the locals, so Sharif Hazarika planted the tea bushes to ensure the land stayed in family procession.

If confiscated, their compensation from the Government would be then be at 10% of the real value. However, when it came to inheritance management this family was no exception. They felt no obligation to do anything and the maintenance of such a property was expensive. So Ali and Sharif continued to disagree. Faiz was not interested.

One good attribute of the family was the ability to keep their disputes to themselves and not get the rest of their sons, nephews and nieces involved. Although some of the wives and husbands did their share of mischief along with a few nephews and nieces. However, one could never tell the simmering family disputes as all Uncles and Aunts always treated



the next generation with much affection and generosity. In fact, nephews and nieces were constantly staying months at a time with their Uncles and Aunts and getting generous allowances when they left for school or college.

Unfortunately, due to continuing family disinterest much of the re-opened estate had to be abandoned and Sharif lost most of his invested capital. He then re-opened the rice mill that was originally run by his deceased brother Imam Hazarika (George). This became a profitable business, was finally taken over by his wife Sona Hazarika. This became her life and passion once he passed away and it produced good profits for the family but nowhere near the good old days.

Sharif then took over Noorbari Tea Estate, Tezpur the last of another family property in distress with a partner from his family. The tea estate was in ruins and had more debt than equity. Sharif Hazarika was truly emotionally involved with saving family property. This property like Motijan was owned by his brothers and sisters, he had no shares and it had no net worth. The deal was generous since many in the family had come upon hard times.

The records of Sharif Hazarika documented the transaction as follows. “ The property in 1963 was worth rupees six lakhs and had outstanding debt of rupees 5.5 lakhs to the United Bank of India. Mr. Botu Datta the Chairman of United Bank was a personal friend of Sharif Hazarika and felt a foreclosure would be a tremendous embarrassment to the Hazarika clan. The Indian word being “Izzat” or honor. Mr. Datta was firm that he could not work with the current Hazarika owners and would foreclose if Sharif did not take control of the tea estate. He agreed to transfer the debt to Sharif Hazarika only. So a deal was struck and Sharif took on the payment of 5.5 lakhs rupees, with his 50% partners. They paid the bank three lakhs, and the other Hazarika family members rupees two lakhs fifty five thousand (Faiz Hazarika one lakh, Ali Hazarika rupees 55,000 and the five sisters rupees 20,000 each. Zum Zum donated her share to Sharif’s son Dej Dada Hazarika). A plot of land near the city belonging to the estate was estimated to be close to rupees fifty thousand was given to his niece Binu Huq as a wedding gift. The bank in return re-wrote the debt in much more favorable terms. A great deal for the family but not for Sharif Hazarika. Sharif Hazarika loved to document everything in detail.

His new partners at Noorbari were Gunjanan Barua a leading (but crooked) attorney from Jorhat, his son Raja Barua, his son in law Hareswar Goswami (Speaker of the Assam Assembly and a leading Assamese attorney) and their wives, sons and daughters.

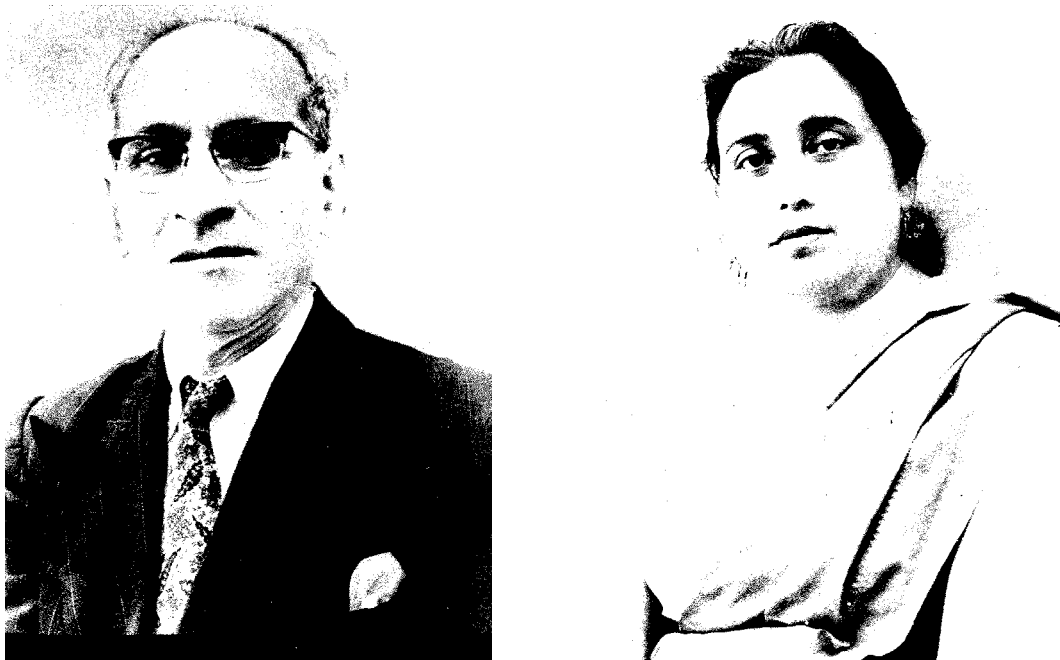
Around 1970 he finally sold his share of Noorbari to his partner Gunjanan Barua and family for a small sum, which they partially paid. Thus passed the last ancestral tea property of the Hazarika family almost 50 years after the death of Tafazzul Hazarika.

### **The Motijan House under Sharif Hazarika**

Sharif Hazarika lived a very simple life centered around his prayer schedules and reciting the Koran in the evening and early morning. His social life was with his family, brothers, sisters, cousins, nephews, etc. who all visited him and stayed months at a time at Motijan.

He was always pleasant to everyone no matter what problems he faced. He was an avid reader of newspapers and magazines such as the Assam Tribune, Time, Daily Mirror and other local Assamese papers. He always wore an Assamese “gamucha” (red and white cotton scarf) around his neck, no matter what the occasion. The scarf also served as a handy utility tool since he sneezed often, also to cover his mouth and nose when traveling the dusty roads of Assam and finally to cover his head during the magreb call to prayer if he happened to be outside. His food habits were very simple, mostly dall (lentils), rice, fish and “aloo hauna” (mashed potatoes with onions and mustard oil). The night meal was chapattis instead of rice. For breakfast he always had one half boiled egg and two pieces of plain white bread. Once in a rare occasion he would cook biriani for the family (providing directions to the cook).

Sharif and Sona Hazarika around 1965. A portrait taken at Motijan.



He loved going to Jorhat for his work and returning with a large row fish to be shared with relatives in Titabar. The Jorhat routine was the same, arrive at his sister Shirazy’s house, have a cup of tea, he would then board a cycle rickshaw and go the Jorhat Court and meet with his lawyer friends. After that he would come back via the Balibat section of Jorhat where there were at least five to six relative houses and he would stop at some of them or wave to them from the rickshaw. The next stop would be the United Bank to pick up some cash, go across the street to say hello to his cousin Rahat Ali Hazarika (Minoor Ali Hazarika descendent) who sat on a stool in front of his bicycle and watch store with at least three of his many grown children. Two shops away was the Sultan Bakery where he would then pick up fresh loaves of bread then to the open bazaar on Jorhat main street.

He loved to haggle with the vendors and always came back with a ten to fifteen pound row fish. Back to his sister Shirazy’s house for lunch, a small nap on one of her extended

armchairs on the verandah. Tea would be served at 3:00 pm with Abdul (Hadu) Sattar, Shirazy's stepson who lived in a separate house in the same compound joining him and then once again the family packed up to leave for the 45 minute return car journey to Motijan 12 miles away. Very often we would stop at Doss & Co to pick up butter, cheese, cornflake cereal and his British/American magazines and papers.

The house was run like a clock – breakfast at 7:00 a.m., snacks, fruits and tea (milk for the kids) at 10:00 a.m., lunch was served at 12:30 p.m., high tea at 5:00 p.m. and dinner at 8:30 p.m. No bright lights or radio/music in the house at dusk till the magreb prayer was offered by him and he finished his prayer beads. He had one cigarette at 6:30 a.m. and another at 9:30 p.m. before he went to bed.

We were allowed to listen to the radio and read the papers in the family den or mojia after the magreb prayer till dinner was served. Very often we had to participate in learning to play contract bridge with him, and his sister Georgina Dutt. Other times it was scrabble.

There was no television in those days so much of the conversation centered on the days events and stories of the family. On one occasion Georgina Dutt and Sharif spent every evening for a week with the boys teaching them the skills of tying a bow tie. Apparently high society gentleman tied their own bow ties versus wearing ready made ones! When we moved to Motijan in 1957 there was no electricity or running water or telephone. These services were rapidly brought in by special lines in 1960.

Although water was available in the pukhuri it was not enough during the summer months as all the neighbors and labors used it. So we needed a tube well to harness the under ground water. In order to find a suitable location for drilling the tube well he started the dousing project with his son Tawheed. With two forked sticks they went around and around the house till a spot was found that both felt the sticks dipped. It was a spot about fifteen feet on the east side of the house. The tube well piping company was called in and after months of hard work, labors pounding the pipes by hand to almost 200 feet below surface they struck water. A hand pump was installed at the end of the pipe and Motijan had plenty of water. Over time an electric motor and tank was installed.

The main house was also restored and western bathroom fixtures installed. The installation of a western bathroom was a tremendous convenience as we otherwise had to use an out house about 25 feet away from the house. Prior to the installation the house bathrooms could only be used for bathing and washing up.

The Motijan Pukhuri (water reservoir) and endless paddy fields behind it:



The installation of electricity at Motijan was also a big event since it took months of work wiring the house and adding fixtures. Previously there were large hand made fans attached to the ceiling that had to be dismantled. These fans were made of thick cloth and roughly 10 feet long by three feet wide with a rope attached to the middle of the frame. They were placed over the dining room, den and a few other rooms. During meals and in the evenings these would be pulled by a servant, usually a young boy for hours at a time to keep us cool and also keep any insects away.

Prior to electricity being installed, the lights were provided by kerosene lanterns and in the common areas by a “petrol max” (a bright light that came from pressurized kerosene, a mantle (a hurricane lantern), and had to be hand pumped every hour). There was this servant Kania son of the main cook Lalumiya Kai that kept these pressurized lamps functioning till about 9:00 pm every night. Once in a while it would malfunction due to impure kerosene or an insect getting in and fire would start coming from the top, but Kania was always near to fix these minor disruptions. Also, once the rice mill was operational the Motijan house received electricity from it when the power company failed to provide electricity, which was daily three to four hours at a time if we were lucky. The servants would start closing all the windows and doors to the house at dusk. They would then walk inside the house holding a small clay pot of burning wood coals (angata in Indian) where they would put mosquito repellent pellets that created a pleasant smelling smoke that drove the mosquito’s out and also kept them out. That was the ritual every evening.

They would light the fire place in the mojia at about 6:00pm during the winters. The mojia was a large room with a one foot high rugged table/bed about 15x15 feet with a thin mattress that was covered with a white sheet. On it was five or six round firm

pillows. Very much like the guddies the Marwaries used in their home. Also in the moja (family den) were at least 4-5 arm chairs for guests. There was a seating order on the moja table probably developed from grand parents time. On the extreme left corner facing the fire place sat Sharif Hazarika. When Georgina Dutt visited she sat in the middle but close to the fire place. When Faiz visited he always sat on the right side opposite the fireplace giving him enough room to play the card game patience. Ali always sat on one of the chairs. The rest of the family then availed themselves to whatever space was available. Generally about ten people could sit comfortably.

Dinner was also served at the moja. One of the servants would prepare the left hand corner of this sitting table bed with a table cloth. Then the food was brought in and served. When we finished eating the remaining meat and vegetables would be divided into small portions on a plate for the servants to eat with their meal back in the kitchen. Breakfast was also served in the moja with the same seating arrangement. After breakfast, Sona Hazarika would put out equal portions of sugar and bread on a plate (8 to 12 portions) for the servants to have with their tea and snack in the kitchen. Lunch was served in the main dinning room.

The Mojia fireplace. Sona Hazarika and son Kem Hazarika



The Mojia, Sona Hazarika sitting at corner, Saleha Rahman sitting on other corner:  
Sona's cash and account box near her.



The dining table was too large and over the years it was made smaller and smaller. The seating order here was more flexible. Sharif Hazarika sat on the chair at the right side of the head chair at the front of the table. The head chair was usually reserved for guests. The other end of the table was usually taken by distant relatives. When the table was full three to four servants had to run around getting the food to everyone as it was not possible to reach for the food. The distance from one end to the other end of this partially expanded table was a good twenty feet and the width was probably about 12 feet. Over time as the family grew smaller no one wanted to eat there so the table was made smaller and moved to a smaller room next to it. The dining room was converted to another living room for visiting guests. There was always plenty of food, mostly chicken and fish with a number of vegetable dishes.



Breakfast at Motijan with dining table opened at quarter of its size.

L to R: Dej (Boo) Hazarika(taking accounts from cousin Tahir Shah); Ataur Rahman, Sona Hazarika:



The property also had a fair amount of cows (for milk), a big black bull named Brutus, many dogs (notably Nellie and Tiger), goats, chickens and ducks that were the full time responsibility of quite a few servants. I remember always looking for eggs laid by the hens around the house and many chicks and calf's being born. Brutus was born in Motijan and quite friendly and could be patted. But as he grew older he only allowed his handler to touch him. He had a nasty temper and would charge anyone trying to approach him and would often jump over the five foot Motijan gate if he felt like visiting town. Everyone in Titabar knew Brutus the black bull. The cow is revered in India and Brutus took advantage of his status. The Marwari's loved Brutus and wanted to buy him. They were constantly taking him and his handler for breeding purposes. Finally one day Sharif Hazarika gave Brutus to the Modi's who had developed an affection for Brutus. He lived in style with them.

Training rooster's for the chicken fighting match nearby was a joint effort by the children and servant's at Motijan. These rooster's were groomed into fighting condition two days before the match by starvation and a diet of chili water and kept in a completed dark cage. They were angry when they emerged. The servants and the Motijan kids would walk to the chicken grounds on Sunday about a mile away. There were hundreds of people and hundreds of angry rooster's. An opponent was selected, the roosters were armed on both legs by an L shaped hooked knife, one inch long and the roosters and their handler's entered the circular ring. The spectators placed their bets. Within minutes one rooster would be wounded and either sit on the ground without moving or start running



away. Our roosters always lost. A brutal sport that on reflection was inhumane. But it still continues today.

It was the custom to have many chickens raised in a chicken house as chicken was served daily. The chicken slaughter was based on a strict ritual. Either Lalumiya kai or Abdul Mia the senior servants had to cut the neck partially, let some blood drain on the ground behind the kitchen, then release the chicken which tossed around draining the rest of the blood. As the neck was partially cut the person would say “bismillah”. This was an experience all the boys participated in as the same process was to be followed when going on shikars and shooting a wild animal. If the animal died immediately after it was shot and it could not be sacrificed properly with the blessing before it died, then it could not be eaten.

### **Shikars at Motijan**

These shikars were regular events when all the kids came back from their residential school in Shillong during the months of December through March. They were organized at Motijan, Tezpur or at any of the tea gardens that older cousins were now working at. The guns were usually shot guns with varieties of cartridges that could be used for birds, deer or tigers. The very young used the .22 bore rifle or pellet guns for bird hunting, usually doves.

At Motijan the shikars were more low key as the main gun , a five shot repeater shot gun had to be shared. Kania the servant would invariable organize these events based on rumors on where the best game was appearing. We normally set out at 4 am and four to five us would walk single line into the jungle which was barely a quarter of a mile from the house. By the first light we were in position by the edge of the jungle and paddy fields where flying jungle fowl (chicken) came to eat. If we were looking for deer we set off at 5 pm and waited by the jungle where it bordered the tea bushes with only a small dirt road separating them. The deer invariable came out at dusk to eat the grass under the tea bushes. It is amazing that over the many years when we went out in very thick jungle we did not get attacked by tigers or elephants. Tigers quite often attacked people in the area as well as killed many of the Motijan cows. Elephants on the other hand would damage the paddy fields as they ate the paddy. Occasionally we went after the howling jackals at night.

At Tezpur the shikars also began at 4 am. There were many more guns available here and we would go by jeep to the Brahamaputra river. The game was duck that would fly over to feed at the sight of the first light. They were easy to spot as they made a fair amount of noise. The hunter’s were usually Dipak Dutt (Bhakto), Rashid Dutt (Bhai) and Tawheed Hazarika escorted by an older relative called Diloo Ahmed of Nowgong. After we bagged a few ducks we would return to the tea estate, Noorbari. On the return journey, by the side of the road we could see lines of labors with their “ghoties” (small one gallon containers) heading for the paddy field near the side of the road. This was apparently their morning routine where they would line up by the small six inch elevated bath between rice fields and use it for their hygiene. Poor fellows never realized that Diloo Ahmed had them in mind on every shikar. He would bring an abundant supply of old

flash light batteries and take aim at them from the moving jeep while they sat at the edge of the paddy path taking care of their morning needs. Soon they would be yelling and cursing as Diloo was a good shikari.

At the tea gardens the best hunting times were with Naseem Hazarika and Mike Chapman. Naseem Hazarika was a Manager at Williamson Magor Tea Company and had access to the best hunting grounds in Assam. He was also a very good shot. On one memorable occasion we went “hytah” (a large partridge like bird that rested on high shade trees in the plantation) hunting and in less than an hour he had bagged close to twenty of them. He had trained Labradors that retrieved all of them. Our role was to do the proper sacrifice of the game. We always confirm to Naseem that all twenty went through the process of the bismillah sacrifice. Naseem’s mother always insisted on this ritual being performed otherwise she would give the game to the servants.

Mike Chapman also loved to hunt. His favorite was wild boar. At the Hitakhuli tea estate in Cachar, there were plenty of wild boars and very dangerous. These animals like to come out at dark to feed on the paddy fields adjacent to the jungle. On one excursion Mike, Dipak, Rashid and Tawheed set out of the bungalow around 8:00 pm with two seasoned garden labors. Mike led the way single file as it was fairly dark. We walked through the paddy fields on the elevated six inch wide and high paths towards the jungle. As we approached the jungle, Mike put out his hand signing for us to stop and go into a crouching position. Soon we could see three dark figures about 200 yards away. Then all mayhem broke loose as the three boars spotted us and began charging towards us. Apparently there were few young ones with them. We were petrified. Mike suddenly stood up and as the big one was about 50 yards away dropped him. Then the next one with the other bullet from his double barreled shot gun. The other boar and piglets fled. Our guns were silent as we were speechless and more concerned about our ability to outrun the boars. The labors started shouting and soon more labors came. The started tying the boar legs on to two ten foot long bamboo poles to enable two labors to care each boar back. They did have a nasty smell.

### **Weddings**

A family of this size had weddings almost every year till recent times. These weddings were at Motijan, Tezpur or Jorhat and they brought the family together for at least one month and they were extravagant affairs. The jewelry and sarie shopping was generally done at Calcutta and the shopping took on a life of its own since they were viewed as dowry and displayed at the wedding for guests to review. The wedding of a girl was a large expense for the family as it was a matter of honor for the family to provide the best, especially jewelry. There were many weddings at Motijan. More recent ones being the three children of Sharif Hazarika. The last wedding from this house was probably Fafi Hazarika (Kem’s) wedding. By that time many of the elder’s had passed away and the event was much smaller. The last big wedding at Motijan was Tawheed Hazarika’s wedding. The wedding events were fairly standard. The family led by Daisy Aziz of Tezpur started gathering about a month prior to the wedding. The first official ceremony was the pouring of rose oil through a small ring that a relative held over the grooms head.

All relatives poured a small amount and soon the oil started running down the face, neck and body. A person would wipe the eyes to ensure oil would not get into the eye. The purpose of this ceremony was tradition and had to do with blessings from the relatives and cleanse the body. The next event was the application of spices such as turmeric, ginger, etc, to the whole body by the relatives. Soon it turned out into a circus and everyone was applying these spices to each other. The women sang traditional Assamese songs and produced a loud whistling sound once in awhile. The final ceremony on this day involved bathing the groom or bride in an open enclosure outside the house. A stool was set in the middle of four cut banana trees and all the relatives par took in the bathing ceremony.

Oil and Bathing ceremony at Motijan back yard, family watching.  
In front is Binu Huq and behind her is Georgina Dutt:



The groom or bride was then dressed in the traditional dress and sat in the formal living room on carpets to greet well wishers and relatives. The next day the wedding party started for the brides house or if it was a bride waited for the arrival of the groom. The arrival was always greeted with fire crackers. The youngsters would create a temporary gate about 200 yards from the house. When the wedding procession arrived they would demand money before they would open the gate for the procession to move on to the event. This was a negotiated process and money was kept in envelopes to be handed to these kids of the other family. The wedding party was finally allowed to pass. There were usually two tents set up on the front lawn of the house, one for the men and one for the women. The wedding party would make them selves comfortable and nibble at the offering of pan and beetle nut. The ceremony itself was very simple. Two witnesses and the local Imam would approach the fully covered and jewelry burdened bride and ask her to consent to marry. After a fair amount of loud sobbing, joined in chorus by her relatives she would give her consent, a simple “yes”. The witnessing team would then approach the groom and ask for his consent. Upon his yes, the marriage contract was sealed and witnessed and the celebration started. The celebration was mainly the eating of enormous

amounts of food and sweets by everyone and fireworks. Late at night the groom would leave for his house or a guest house if it required a long return journey. Next day the same party arrived to collect the bride and after an elaborate breakfast the journey back to his house. After much crying and wailing by the brides relatives everyone settled into their cars for the wedding procession to begin the return journey.

Upon entering her new house the bride touched the feet of the elders, they blessed her and she sat in the formal living room for the family and guests to give their approval. The ceremony continued till early morning when all relatives were exhausted and allowed the bride and groom to retire to their bedroom. The reception at the grooms house was just as large as the main wedding from the previous day. The new bride was symbolically given a set of keys to the house in a silver key chain. The final phase of the wedding was the visit to each of the relatives homes for dinner, which invariable included the whole family. Finally the return to the brides home a few days later to spend a few days and meet more relatives and enjoy more fine dining.

As the relatives gathered for a wedding it was also time to settle old disputes. Georgi Hussain from Karachi and Georgina Dutt (see Part 3 descendents) were always prepared to start the process by picking on one of their preys, mostly their brother Ali Hazarika's wife. It would always start after dinner and before one could blink an eye you could hear the crying and yelling for an hour or two. The rest of the family including the "young" kept to their rooms. The next day everything went back to normal and Georgina and Georgi were happy that the weddings events were now official sanctioned and on track. They mercifully fought about the most silliest and foolish things in the world.

Additional servants were brought in. Food purchases for the main meal on the day of the wedding was the main goal. There were cows, chickens, goats and just about everything to be bought to feed the guests during the one month period they were in the house and also on the day of the wedding. Guests would be coming from other towns and cities. The house was full beyond capacity. There was also the shopping for jewelry and sari's and house hold furnishings that were obligatory by custom and were on display. The wedding was fairly grand with probably a thousand guests at Motijan being feed in groups depending on the community they came from. As in all weddings, it is always celebrated in both sides. In the case of my wedding the same preparations and meals at a larger scale were being done in Guwahati the brides home. I can just imagine based on my wedding how grand some of the weddings at Motijan were during the time of Tafazzul Hazarika. He had plenty of disposable income as evidenced by the high quality of furnishings in the house (ivory, marble tables, Burma teak furniture).

The wedding of Ali Hazarika's son Naseem Hazarika around 1955 was one that the family talked about for years. The wedding was at Noorbari, Jorhat and Motijan and no expense was spared. Naseem was given a new fiat car as a wedding gift, substantial jewelry purchases and the food & entertainment bills were prohibitive as the parties went on for over a month. It was estimated that Ali Hazarika spent a lakh and a half on the wedding. During the mid 1950's a nice tea estate could be bought for that amount of money.

Most of Tafazzul Hazarika's grand children were married in other parts of Assam or out of the state. The last few weddings at Motijan were, Binu Hazarika daughter of Ali Hazarika and the three oldest sons of Sharif Hazarika. Faiz Hazarika's children married in Calcutta. Junu Hazarika sister of Binu Hazarika at Noorbari. Shirazy Ghaffars children married from her home in Jorhat. Georgina Dutt's oldest child Dipak Dutt at Shillong. Georgi Hussain's, Zum Zum Adil's and Bulu Chapman's children were married in Pakistan. Daisy Aziz's children from her home in Rabarbari, Tezpur. Where ever the wedding, they were grand and the whole family came together.

The current generation (year 2000), great grand children of Tafazzul Hazarika, many now in their forties were married everywhere but Motijan, Noorbari or Rabarbari. The weddings are much smaller, mostly catered hotel affairs, attended by perhaps a handful of relatives. Perhaps this is intentional to avoid the cost of the wedding if they were held in Assam. The Hazarika wedding tradition passed away around the mid 1970's.

Dressed to attend Tawheed Hazarika's wedding at Guwahati in 1973.

L to R: Shirin Hazarika, Buni Rahman, Bulu Chapman, Bharoti Dutt.



### **The servants**

The servants at Motijan had their own hierarchy and stories. Kotiya Kai was the chief cook and all the servants looked up to him. He lived on the family land and passed away in the late 1950's. Prior to Kotiya Kai it was his parents in the 1920's. "Kai" is a revered term, means older brother and a title given to servants as they stayed with the family and got older. All the youngsters in the household understood that they were really not servants and had to be treated with respect. "Kotiya" meaning short was probably not his name and he probably got named as such when he was an adult because he was very short.

Lalumiya Kai was his son and second cook in command. They both looked fairly old in 1960 probably due to a hard life. Both Lalumiya and his father Kotiya kai had heavily stooped postures, almost a 60 degree angle and also walked in the same manner. He also lived on the family land and passed away in the mid sixties. Their house was the first house on the east side of the house and set aside from the rest of the other servants and labors of the plantation. It was a mud house with a thatch roof. The frame was made from bamboo's from the plantation. The house measured about 10 feet by 20 feet and was divided by a mud wall into two rooms. One room had a small mud made fire hole on which they could do their cooking. This room was also used by Lalumiya and his wife Bai (means sister) along with their youngest son Ahmed for sleeping. The other room was used by his other two sons Kania and Debu and their wives and his bicycle. They always had a small but lovely vegetable garden behind their house (the peas were very good). Behind their house was large tracks of open paddy land that was owned by Motijan and they used these lands as their bathroom. They had a small bamboo shed behind their house that was made from left over roofing tin and sides covered with burlap where they bathed after getting water in a round clay pot that held about five gallons (called citaul) from the Motijan pukhuri. Bai would invariably go to the pukhuri three four times a day to collect water put the filled pot on her hip and return home. These pots were made of clay and also cooled the water. Occasionally she would help in the Motijan house cooking when there were many guests. Before dinner the Motijan children would sit around the kitchen house with the servants and both Kotiya and Lalumiya would be puffing on the hand made hookah's smoking "kani". This was some kind of marijuana leaf he grew near his house in the estate and helped him relax, reduce pains and gave him a good appetite for dinner. They also had many family stories to share. Lalumiya would accompany Faiz Hazarika, eldest son of Tafazzul Hazarika on his numerous trips to Bombay. Faiz Hazarika led the high life entertaining many of the actresses of that time and Lalumiya acted as his butler. On these trips Lalumiya made sure the pillow cases were stuffed with enough marijuana to last him the three to four week trip.

He had three sons Kania, Debu and Ahmed who all worked in the house. However, the dynasty of cooks ended with Lalumiya Kai for many years till his son Debu tired of driving a rickshaw became the Motijan cook. He did not have the skills of his father and grandfather. Kania was the mailman and did errands around town. He was about 5'8" tall and very skinny, probably did not get enough of the right food. He also loved to go for "shikars" (hunting) with the Motijan children. He passed away in the mid 1990's. Debu decided to go into the driving a rickshaw and after much physical suffering came back as the head cook and passed away in the late 1990's. Ahmed did errands and then became the chief mechanic at the Motijan rice mill and passed away in the mid 2000's. Another servant called Buduha that delivered the water to the house, was deaf and unable to speak, got promoted to cook, drank the local rice brew "laupani" every weekend and finally passed away in the late 1990's. Buduha was quite a character and always yelling at everyone and constantly smoking his biri's (cheap roasted cigarettes smoked by the poor). His cooking skills required a fair amount of supervision and yelling by Sona Hazarika. Poor man would take all his money every week to his sister who lived a mile



away, she would give him back less than one tenth for his biri's and drink. Then he would go to the local brew shop, get drunk and sometimes not show up for work for two, three days. He rarely bathed and Sona Hazarika would have to have the other servants take him by force to the pukhuri to have his bath once a week. He was one of the few servants that wore a sandal, the others were always bare footed.

Ramazan was part of the household from the time of Tafazzul and was in charge of counting the in coming paddy in the 1930's. He counted the paddy as it came in during the harvest during the 1930's. A basket held one kilo and he would be heard everyday counting loudly ake, ake, ake (one) three time after filling the basket then two, two, two three times and on and on to the hundreds every day. A large silo was filled to the brim. In front of the paddy storage house (bhoral) was a large area that was covered with a combination of mud and cow dung (used to build the mud houses) where the paddy was put out to dry. After a few days two cows were tied in parallel and a person behind them would go round and round all day. The paddy was separates from the stalks in this manner, day after day, week after week during the paddy season. The paddy was then dried and converted to rice in the rice mill. The stalks were used to feed the cows as well as build the thatched houses. We the kids would take turns driving the cows round and round till we got bored and also made little flutes out of the stalks that could produce many nice sounds. This process still goes on in many places in Assam and in Rabarbari, Tezpur where Buni Rahman daughter of Daisy Aziz lives.

Motijan backyard where cows separated the dhan (paddy). Servant Ahmed with the cows; Boo Hazarika watching.



Agani was a part of the Motijan household, was Lalumia's sister and bathed and scrubbed Tafazzul's children and then his grand children. She died in the 1940's.

Other notables around the house that had about 10 servants looking after the property and lawn were new arrivals from Degubber tea estate. These servants were different. Mostly from Bihar and were treated as such compared to the locals who's parents worked in the house. Notable was Abdul Mia. Abdul joined the household when he was five at Degubber tea Estate. He was taught cooking by Sona Hazarika and became one of the cooks at Motijan for many years before he moved backed to Silchar around 1973 to open a small restaurant.



Muslai Mia who was the gatekeeper at Degubber, married to Hamida and had three children, two boys and a girl. Muslai Mia started his career with Ali Hazarika in 1942 as a young child, doing errands for him at Noorbari tea estate. He went on with Ali to Shillong, switched to working for Georgina Dutt briefly then moved back to Tezpur. He then moved as a cook to Motijan, then left to be a cook with the family at Tezpur for Daisy Aziz. In 2006 he retired but does cook on special occasions and lives on the Tezpur property occupied by Buni Rahman daughter of Daisy. His daughter is now the head cook. His two sons, Ratan and Bowna worked at Motijan. Ratan went on to work for Amanulla Ghaffar, Shirazy's son and one day disappeared. Bowna died young. Muslai's wife left him in the mid 1960's and married the Manager of Degubber tea Estate, Keramat Ali. Muslai was probably the best of all the cooks. Muslai had eight children in all. One son Suraj drives a road roller paving roads near Tezpur. One daughter, Jamilla works at the house in Tezpur and her husband Niranjan Ghosh is a plumber. Their two children are attending schools and one passed the metric high school exam. His other girl, Bhonti also lives in Tezpur and is married to a blood technician. Muslai is quite content, living on his rupees 500 pension plus free food and lodging and still talks about his wife Hamida who he apparently did not divorce. Muslai passed away in 2008.

The others were Motilal who made the beds, Lalchand who delivered the water, three women from the untouchable class in Titabar that cleaned the bathrooms and always stayed about twenty feet away from everyone. Hari and his wife looked after the lawn and flowers. Quite a few more that just kept cleaning the house all day long and bringing out the food.

The servants worked from dusk to around 9 pm. They had three meals a day with plenty of time to hide and goof off. But it was a sad and difficult life. One chore some of them did at the end of each day was to heat a small amount of mustard oil in a small dish and use it to rub the feet of the children from about 8:30 pm to 9:00 pm when the children went to bed. This way the kids had a good night's sleep. Some of these servants were just ten years old and would be falling asleep while rubbing your feet! Unfortunately these practices probably still continue in many households even today.

The final servant from the old days was Sukho who worked for Dej Dada Hazarika (Boo). Sukho's brothers (Somrah) had all worked in Motijan as mailmen and doing odd jobs around the estate. Sukho was an expert in running errands into town, making and serving tea all day long. He also served as watchman. One day he died at Motijan, probably just a few months after Boo's death. The house was now truly abandoned.

### **Other events and visitors at Motijan**

The Barber had a small shop that seated two people in his saloon on main street in Titabar. He came once every two weeks to the house to cut Sharif Hazarika's hair. He would arrive at around 3:30 pm and set up his equipment on the right hand side of the verandah where there was a fairly large piece of furniture that had a mirror, hangers for jackets etc. and holding areas for umbrellas. It was never used for this purpose. He would then move the reclining arm chair and put a smaller straight back chair till his customer

appeared. He wore a turban, white cotton shirt and a white dhoti (Indian pant) and a sandal. He started the hair cut by sprinkling some water provided in a mug by a house servant then a five minute head massage. He was trained by his father and knew only one style of cutting hair. He had a mechanical saw tooth clipper that he would use to go over around half an inch above the ear and about an inch over the neck. Then he took out his scissors and comb and trimmed the rest of the hair. Finally he sprinkled more water and provided a fifteen message head and body massage. When Sharif Hazarika's children and nephews were around he also cut their hair all afternoon. The women never cut their hairs or went to a hair dresser, must have been some kind of other arrangement that the men and boys were not aware of. After all this was 1960 in India. As the children became older and start having their hair cut in saloons in Shillong the Titabar barber ran into trouble. I remember one incident a few years later when the boys were fifteen/sixteen years old and on vacation from their school in Shillong. The barber was about to go through with his routine when Dipak Dutt (Bhakto) instructed him on the way he wanted his hair cut. No mechanical tooth saw, just scissors and comb and just touching the ear and above the shirt collar. Poor fellow had never heard of such a haircut. Within minutes we saw him fleeing the house with Dipak behind him trying to catch him to settle scores. He was a good runner, in spite of his age and he never returned. His son soon took over and he knew the old and new styles of hair grooming. Quite a lot of aggravation for just a rupee or two.

We knew him as Kola mama which meant deaf uncle. Very happy fellow that was always dressed in a black jacket, wore no socks and had the same torn sneaker for the ten years we knew him. He walked twenty miles every Sunday to visit his relative in Titabar, Wahid Hazarika a first cousin of Sharif Hazarika from the Minor Ali Hazarika lineage. On his way back he would stop for the highlight of his weekly trips, lunch and tea at Motijan. He was deaf but over the years we learnt to communicate with him by talking and signing. He must have done some lip reading. He loved to sing Assamese songs for us and tell us the story of his encounter with the tiger. Apparently one night while walking back to his home he was attacked by a tiger. He started screaming and fighting the tiger before help arrived and the tiger fled. He was slightly paralyzed on one of his arms and could still show us the deep scars. One day he stopped coming and we learnt he passed away. A very happy man, content with very little and worked very hard.

A regular visitor to Motijan was this very old lady called Madhon Baity meaning Madhon Aunty. She was married to one of Minoor Ali Hazarika's son. She lived about a mile away on main street in Titabar near the railway station. She was always at the house, especially when Daisy Aziz from Rabarbari, Tezpur visited. Her complaint was her son and daughter in law mistreated her and never gave her enough food. She always wore a simple white cotton sari and almost everyday around 5:30 pm appeared at the Motijan gate. A servant would open the gate and let her in. She would slowly walk the rest of the 25 yards to the main verandah and take a seat. It was tea time and she would be served tea, biscuits and other offerings. She kept a close watch on what the kids were eating and soon she would be asking for more food and the best pieces usually kept for the children. She was always served but occasionally when Daisy was around she would be emboldened to help her self to the food laid on the table. There was a small room off the

mojia and invariable she ended up staying there for a week, left for a couple of days and then returned to stay another week. When her friend Daisy Aziz was visiting she just stayed there the whole time. For some reason she was apparently the only person that was served food and not allowed to help her self. On a few occasions when parents were visiting Jorhat she would serve herself with disapproving looks from the servants since she insisted on filling her plate with the best cuts of meat and everything else. She was a very kind and lovely person, almost deaf, would tell us many stories and sing Assamese songs. Led a very hard and sad life since her son and daughter in law mistreated her. There were many occasions when the son, Jafar Hazarika who had a small store in town was summoned to Motijan by Sharif Hazarika and reprimanded for mistreating his mother and threatened with jail. However, it continued.

Daisy Aziz and Madhon Baity (rear) sitting at Motijan mojia:



### **The Marwaries**

The Marwaries are a class of business people from Rajasthan. They settled in Titabar during the time of Shanoor Hazarika and primarily dealt in rice mills, mustard oil and commodity grocery items such as corn, atta (flour), maida, haldi (turmeric), other spices etc. They also went into transportation e.g. trucking. The Hazarika's being in tea and paddy required supplies and the suppliers were the Marwari families. There were five families, the Modi's, the Jalans, the Hariprasads the Narayan's and the Baliya's. Their connection to Motijan were close just like one big family. At the time of Sharif Hazarika due to the close connection with all the Marwari's in Titabar he banned all meat except chicken at Motijan. Soon the Marwari's and the Motijan people were eating food in both houses. It was not unusual to find both families inside each others inner living quarters where only relatives were permitted. The Marwaries were treated specially during

weddings with a sanctioned cook preparing their meals and they also helped in the event planning and logistics.

The Marwari's were in Assam as long as one can remember and spoke the local language very well. They lived in joint family households that were always co-located with their business. They literally worked 24 hours a day and got their children (boys) involved very early in the business. They loved to have boys. I remember a conversation with Narayan. He had three boys, no girls and was the envy of the other Marwari families, although the others had more money. Narayan felt that if all three of his children graduated from college they would bring home at least three to four lakh rupees each.

The Hariprasad family was located on main street and had a sizable rice mill and their two story concrete house was adjacent to the mill. There were three brothers who ran the operation with their growing children. Satya was the eldest then Noru. The whole clan lived together in the same house. They, like all the Marwari families in the town started the day by going to the temple on main street, did the pranam or prayer, rang the bell and had a large red or yellow mark put by the priest on the middle of their forehead between the eye brows. Back home they sat on guddies (similar to the mojia at Motijan). This was the first room that one entered when going to the Hariprasad house. It had a thin mattress with a white sheet covering it and several large pillows for them to recline on. Only the household men were allowed to sit on it. Two or three chairs surrounded it and were used by the guests This was the first room of the house, behind the verandah, a fairly large room where business was conducted. There were at least two or three doors to enter this room and low wooden type windows that could be opened. From this room they could see the happenings on main street and their rice mill next door. There was usually one door that granted access to the rest of the house, their private dwellings. It was covered with a curtain and once in awhile one could see the women or children peak out to look at visitors. This was the standard set up in all the Marwari houses in Titabar.

Hariprasad residence, next door is their rice mill:



Over the years, Sona Hazarika and her children visited their inner home frequently. Each brother and their families had separate rooms and one would be treated to tea and Indian sweets depending on which family was being visited. Satya's family provided better food than Noru's.

The money box was strategically located on the guddie and someone always stayed with it. One hand was always touching it. Nearby built into the wall was an iron safe that was discreetly located to keep more money and jewelry. The first business item of the day as well as the last was to count the money in the box and transfer it to the safe and then the bank. They ate simple food, mostly rice, a little vegetable with ghee (a rich butter) and a some pickle (mostly home made from mangoes they picked at the Motijan house). They were sharp business people, always keeping an eye on the mill and on main street to ensure everything was moving well. As the villagers came with their two wheel carts driven by two oxen and laden with paddy they would go to greet them. Their trucks or cars were always accompanied by their grown children to keep an eye on the driver of the vehicle. Although they had cars, they rarely used them except for special occasions like weddings. They either used their bicycle, bus if they were traveling to Jorhat or walked. Over the years the Hariprasad's expanded to open petrol pumps. Although they were born in Assam and had integrated into the society the older generation would always talk about going to their desch "home" for a visit. Desch was the state of Rajasthan in India. It is interesting that they hardly ever visited desch and had now become Assamese. In 2005 Hariprasad's grand children were running the rice mill and doing very well.

The Modi family also had a rice mill on main street about half a mile from the Hariprasad's. However, two of the brothers fought with the older brother and moved to open a commodity shop at the other end of main street near char Ali. His name was Sundoria Babu. A short man that wore a dhoti (Indian pant), a long Indian shirt with four pockets which was filled with paper and one pencil and a pen (called a fountain pen that had liquid ink that invariable dripped on to his shirt). He was very frugal. He was always visiting Motijan with his three small boys. He expanded his business over the years and started owning a few trucks, a few cars and a petrol pump. He had plenty of money but would wear a worn out sandal, walk to the house and save his bicycle from wear and tear. On a visit in the mid 1990's I recall chatting over a cup of tea with him at Motijan. He had made a fair amount of money but his sons liked the fast life and had stopped going with the trucks and they hired a Manager for the petrol pump. They also drank whisky which never happened with the older generation and they ate meat another taboo. Sundoria was not happy as he felt all his life's work was going up in smoke due the modern ways of his kids. The kids also started wearing fancy western clothes. The influence of Motijan life had come to him and the other Marwari families! After all his kids as well of his community were always running around the Motijan house. Kuma Babu , Bhujia Babu were brothers and again due to family quarrels split from their family in Titabar. They had a run down rice mill opposite the Hariprasad's. Kuma was tall, dressed in the traditional white dhoti and long white shirt. He was impeccable, clothes were well starched and carried one no leaking fountain pen in his shirt. He was a talker and the only Marwari that did very little business and more involved in running for political office. Unfortunately he never won but he was always smiling and happy. His



mouth was always bright red from eating the combination of pan, lime and beetle nut. Had a large red mark between the eyebrows from visiting the temple everyday. Although distinguished looking and well dressed he had this habit of spiting fairly often because of the pan eating.

Bhujia Babu was a big heavy set man. A very jovial man, the whole town loved him. He ran the business. I would eat at his house quite often as although the food was the same the quality was better, especially the mango pickles. No one seems to know what happened, but one day Kuma and Bhujia quarreled and the mill closed down due to the bitterness of the quarrel. It was one of the busiest mills in town. All the business came over to the Motijan mill. All the Marwaries as well as Sharif Hazarika tried over the years to reconcile them but to no avail. It was an odd situation as they still lived together with their families, sat on the same front verandah of their business but just did not talk. Many times I would sit and chat with them but they never addressed each other and when I went inside it looked like the wife's and kids also did the same. Soon plants and shrubs grew around the rice mill, similar to what has happened to Motijan in 2005. Bhujia Babu passed away in the 1990's. I remember chatting with him on one of my visits. He was very interested in the U.S. and fascinated with life there. He still remembered the slide show I did for the Marwari families of Titabar ten years earlier on America. Bhujia was smart, both his sons became Certified Public Accountants (CPA), started practicing in Guwahati and he was wondering how much more money they could make if they worked in America! His dilemma was who would take care of him if they moved.

Anyway, one day he packed up and left Titabar to live with his sons and their family in Guwahati. Probably the first migration of a Marwari family from Titabar.

Bhujia Babu in front of his house.



Narayan Babu was a fixture at Motijan. He did not have a rice mill so he bought all his paddy to the Motijan rice mill and pretty much stayed at the mill to ensure no employee of the mill was taking advantage of his paddy. Soon he used the Motijan front verandah as his front office. It was an obligation to bring him a nice gift from America on all my

regular visits. He had a broken down bicycle that he used for transportation. Sitting on the horizontal bar and holding the bike handle would be son one; sitting at the rear carrier would be son two and three. He was frugal and always criticized Sona Hazarika for spending too much money on the Motijan house. He did all the wedding logistics for my wedding. A very kind man and very tight with money. He made pots of it, his three children earned the dowries he projected but they too had become western. Unlike their father Narayan who was up at 4 am and worked till passed midnight, they liked to sleep late and wear expensive clothes. A beer or two quite often. Narayan has passed away and his sons enjoyed the money.

The Balia's lived almost opposite the Motijan kabastan. He had an atta mill and would spend most of his time sitting on the outside verandah of his shop. He then bought a car for rental. Balia was low key and managed to get by. In 2005 his oldest son is running the same business and had many hopes of expanding into other areas.

### **Degubber tea estate**

Sharif Hazarika bought Degubber Tea Estate near Silchar, Assam, India from Duncan Brothers and ran the 1,500 acre estate as the Proprietor. He became friendly with Mr. Christie who represented Duncan Brothers on the sale. Mr. Christie was the Uncle of Julie Christie (actress in Dr. Zhivago) and also gave his son Tawheed Hazarika his first job at Lakhipara tea estate, Doors, Bengal after he graduated from college in 1966.

Life at Degubber was simple, he visited the plantation, the factory and spent the rest of the time in the office near the factory. Once in awhile we went to Silchar for shopping and visit the club where he picked up his international papers/publications and western goods such as cheese and biscuits. He liked to have lunch at the club and always selected the tomato soup with toast. During the months of December through March his son and his cousins came for vacation and the bungalow was full. I remember an incident with my other two cousins Dipak (Bhakto) and Rashid (Bhai) Dutt (sons of Georgina Dutt) tested the patience of my father at Degubber. We were about 10 to 12 years old and decided to try driving the estate tractor. The tractor was garaged close to the bungalow which was on a steep hill. I was elected to get the key from the factory, Bhakto to drive the tractor with Bhai and me as passengers. Bhakto assured us he had driving experience. We gave the tractor a slight push and jumped on. We thought it would be best to start the noisy tractor somewhere at the last 25 yards of the steep hill to avoid detection as my father's office and the tea factory was on the way. Unfortunately, as we sped down the hill the stick shift gears would not engage, loud metallic noises erupted, the tractor started skidding, kicking immense amount of dust and rapidly all the factory labors and then my father came to investigate. Spotting my father we decided to jump from the tractor and run back to the bungalow and hide in the kitchen complex. The tractor was slightly damaged. Later that night, after about six hours since the incident my mother summoned us to the main bungalow for dinner. Nothing was said by my father but we knew our tractor driving days were over. He was a man of immense patience and forgiving. The rest of our time at the plantation was devoted to riding our bikes and fishing in the many "bills" (ponds).



He made one trip a year to Calcutta to meet with his banker and tea auction broker, always staying at Broadway hotel and spending the evenings at his brother Faiz's house for dinner. Accompanying him on these trips gave me a good idea of the tea business as well as meeting people like Mr. Christie of Duncan Brothers, Mr. B.P. Khaund, Managing Director of Assam Tea Broker's; Mr. Botu Datta, Chairman of United Bank of India, Mr. Chita Das, Managing Director of United Bank and many others. I learnt that while it was good to know the people at the top in India, it was the people at the bottom that could get your work done or bog you down. The poor chaprasi (errand boy) sitting in front of each office was the key to keep the files moving for approval. These trips were also shopping trips for household goods, sweets and presents for the family. I accompanied him on many of these trips between 1955 and 1962. The purpose was: expose me to the business and his contacts, shopping for the upcoming school year and visiting with his elder brother and children.

At the end of each trip we went to the Molah Ali Darga (a holy man's grave) to give our thanks, pray at his grave and give alms to the poor. In those days we flew together from Silchar by the Dakota plane and then in later years from Jorhat by the Fokker plane.

Degubber was lost for very little money by Sona Hazarika and her sons Dej and Kem Hazarika trying to outsmart an experienced Marwari business man. They were stacked up against a crafty business man called Jalan from Jorhat. Jalan had been financing the Degubber tea crop for many years. When Sharif Hazarika passed away the two sons and Sona Hazarika decided to go to Degubber and take direct possession of the property being run by a Hazarika relative Kamal Hussain as Deputy Manager. Kamal had been working for the family in Degubber and Motijan for most of his life. However, he sided with Jalan and asked the labors of the plantation to support him. Even though the owners were the Hazarika's, Mr. Jalan shrewdly bought off the Judge and had him issue an injunction for the Hazarika's to leave the property. They were no match for him. In any event a year later Mr. Jalan finally came to Motijan with a proposal to buy the property (legally) for a small sum which was accepted by Sona Hazarika.

### **Sona Noorbahar Hazarika**

Sona Noorbahar daughter of Dr. Md. Diamat Hussain grew up in Heelika, a small village about three miles from Titabar. She came from the Minoor Ali Hazarika family and the family was not as well to do, but had enough and lived simply. She must have been quite a formidable person to be able to get married to a successful man such as Sharif Hazarika of the Motijan family.

She spent most of her life taking care of the Motijan house and her children. The children were sent to residential (boarding) school from March to December and came for holidays during January and February. A British school legacy system in India.

Sona Noorbahar Hazarika about the time of her marriage around 1941.



After her husband passed away she took over management of the rice mill at Motijan and became a successful business women. This was quite a challenge since the youngest was about eight and the next two were college age and they were a hand full. She restored the Motijan house and kept it in fine shape. In spite of her busy schedule at the rice mill, usually from 5:00 a.m. to about 7:00 p.m. she always managed to find the time to make sure the cooks served many dishes, some cooked by her. Unfortunately she was very kind to both her sons Boo and Kem who were busy spending her money and doing very little to no studies. They were busy riding cars and motorcycles like all teenagers.

When it came to the servants she was a task master. Poor fellows were unable to escape her daily scrutiny.

Motijan Rice Mill (side view, ashes are burnt paddy husk).



She developed lymphoma cancer in 1999, underwent treatment at the Tata clinic in Mumbai, went on to spend some time with her three sons near Boston. She returned to Motijan in January 2001 to join her second son and passed away in April of that year at the age of approximately 73. It was a long painful struggle and she fought her disease bravely till the end. The whole town and the school children showed up for her funeral. A fitting farewell to the last of the Motijan residents. She took a great deal of pride in being the one that kept the Motijan name alive and maintaining the large house during her life time.

Sona Hazarika with her four children, 1973, Motijan:  
Sitting L to R: Fafi Hazarika, Sona Hazarika, Dej Hazarika  
Standing: Basher Hazarika, Tawheed Hazarika



Celebrating Idd in 2000, Sona Hazarika's last Idd with the family at Andover, Massachusetts before she passed away four months later.  
L to R: Rukhsana Hazarika, Sona Hazarika, Hasnah Hazarika, Bashir Hazarika, Shaheen Hazarika, Salman Rafique, Fateha Hazarika, Shamsil Hazarika, Tawheed Hazarika:





Sona made numerous trips to the States and spent months at a time with her three sons as well as their families.

Sona Hazarika with grandson KC Hazarika at Niagara falls:



Shakeer Hazarika with grandmother Sona Hazarika:



## Chapter 7

### **TAWHEED SHARIF SHAH HAZARIKA**

Married Rukhsana Rahman daughter of Ataur and Saleha Rahman.

Children:

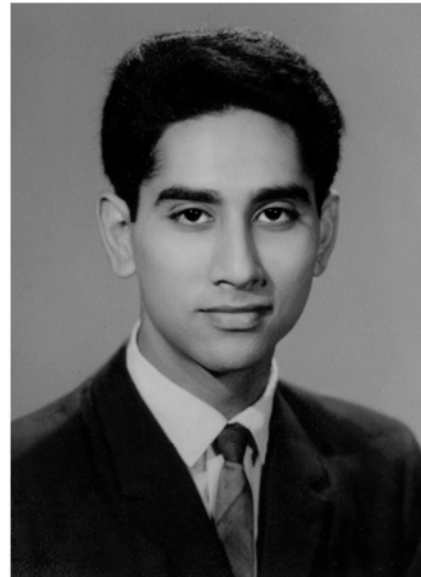
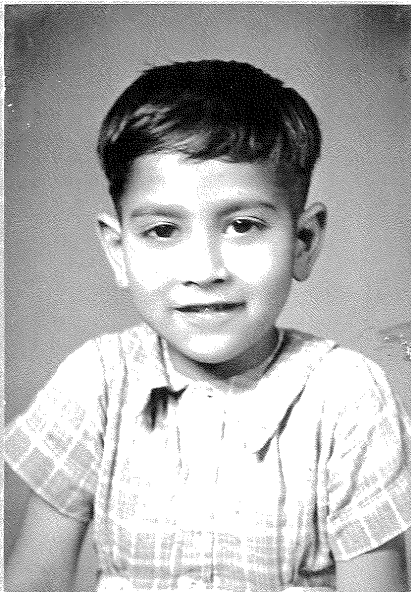
Kauser Faisal Sharif Hazarika

Shakeer Sharif Hazarika

Tawheed Hazarika was born at Domohani the Railway complex (near Jalpaiguri), West Bengal, India on November 13, 1945. He spent his early years at Motijan, Degubber tea estate (Silchar, Assam) and then back to Motijan. Was taken care of by a Governess from Kerala called Iris. Went to school and college at St. Edmund's, Shillong, graduating high school in 1961 and college in 1965. Spent six months on his first job, Assistant tea manager, compliments of Julie Christie's uncle. In 1968 received his Master's in Chemistry from Gauhati University and left for the U.S.A. in 1968. After receiving his MBA from the University of Maine he started working at Park Electro Chemical, Hillcrest Foods, Johnson & Johnson, Wang, Digital, Compaq and HP (the high tech industry) as a finance professional and traveled most of the world. He semi retired working for a non profit organization, ACCION International to bring microfinance to the poor globally, including India and Africa. He retired in 2009.

Tawheed Hazarika in 1949:

Tawheed Hazarika, 1965 graduation from College.



St. Edmund's was an Irish Catholic school. The teachers were very strict and being kids we were always in trouble and getting "canned". An English practice implemented in these foreign boarding schools. Of course, when we went on vacation for two months every year and mentioned the canning to our parents they were surprised we did not get

more “canning” for the things we did. Our Principals were Brother McPhilamy and Brother Oman. Many other teachers over the years were Brothers Cooney, O’Neal, Tynan, Curran, Vieyra, Miss Lewis and more. All very good. Brother Vieyra was exceptional and was also the Principal at the college and taught Chemistry. Brother Cooney was a math wiz. A great group of teachers that really cared and sacrificed for others. Going to chapel, sprinkling a lot of holy water, attending retreats were fun but probably did not help us much as we wished.

The move to America in 1969 was fate. I was at Calcutta and was thinking of going to the U.K. to the University of Leeds where I had admission for a PhD degree in Chemistry. My room mate, Madhab Dekha one day came in very excited since he was approved for an immigration visa to the States. He had applied almost eight years ago and his turn had come. He also went on to state the visa rules had changed with the passing of an old Kennedy bill to grant 20,000 visas per country instead of a world wide pool that favored the European nations. The back log of applicants in India was approximately 6,000 and he demanded I go and file an application. Why spend my family money getting educated in the U.K. when the streets of America were paved with gold.

Two weeks later I had the green card visa. A travel agent did all the work and I bought my six stop, air, hotel and meal tickets from his agency. Calcutta to Karachi (Zum and Georgi and a few cousins used their influence during the two hour stop to get me off the plane and visit them in the VIP section), Karachi to Cairo (stayed at the Hilton), Cairo to Beirut (stayed at the Phoenicia), Beirut to Frankfurt; Frankfurt to Paris, Paris to London (Holiday Inn) and finally London to New York. I finally reached New York, my baggage was lost, missed my scholarship at Brooklyn Polytechnic as I was one month late for the semester, also disappointed that the streets were not paved in gold as I was made to believe and with about a hundred dollars remaining of the two hundred my father had given me.

America was in the middle of a recession, a new word in my vocabulary, I had to do a resume (another new word) but the streets were paved with gold as I had three job offers within the week. The Director at Park Electro Chemical gave me a \$200 advance and I spent the weekend with my new found friends from India arriving by the plane load, touring the statue of Liberty and eating Puerto Rican food (closest thing to Indian food available). Within a month I sent my father the two hundred dollars and my first gift from my first pay check, The Godfather book. It was good to be independent at the age of 23 and to be financially independent from my family. Two months later I bought my first new car, a blue beetle and with my new Indian friends went to see Niagara falls on New Years day. It was frozen and none of us had experienced such cold before.

On December 4, 1973 Tawheed Hazarika and Rukhsana Rahman were married at Gauhati at the residence of her father Ataur Rahman, Additional Inspector General of Police for Assam. This was the last large and well attended wedding in the family.

It was an arranged marriage, sort of. Tawheed was making his first visit back to India in 1972 and while at Calcutta was approached by Buni Rahman about his thoughts on



marriage. A week later during a visit to Amanulla & Dipi Ghaffars tea garden at Jiajuri tea estate, Nowgong I met Ataur Rahman during a dinner and he invited me to visit him when I was in Guwahati next day. I already knew the family slightly since many of Ataur Rahmans nieces had married my first cousins. Met Rukhsana for the first time at his Guwahati residence during afternoon tea. A month later, after returning to the States, Nasem Hazarika my first cousin and married to Deepa Hazarika, Ataur Rahmans niece called to enquire on my thoughts on a formal proposal from our family to Rukhsana's family.

Engagement picture: Left to right – Dueta Rahman, Deepa Hazarika (middle, face turned right), Georgina Dutt, Binu Hazarika, Saleha Rahman, Sona Hazarika, Ataur Rahman, Abidur, Naseem, and others.



Engagement: Rukhsana Hazarika, Sona Hazarika, Georgina Dutt, Binu Huq, Nazma Ahmed.



Engagement picture



Engagement pictures: L to R: Buni Rahman, Deepa Hazarika, Bhonti Ahmed, Rukhsana Hazarika, Binu Huq, Nazma Ahmed, Dipi Ghaffar:



After a brief pause things started moving and the engagement ceremony was formally conducted by the two families. I returned to Calcutta sometime in November 1973 to meet her family and perform the legal registration to enable us to get her U.S. visa. A week later the official wedding ceremony was performed at Guwahati, a very extravagant affair with over a thousand guests attending.

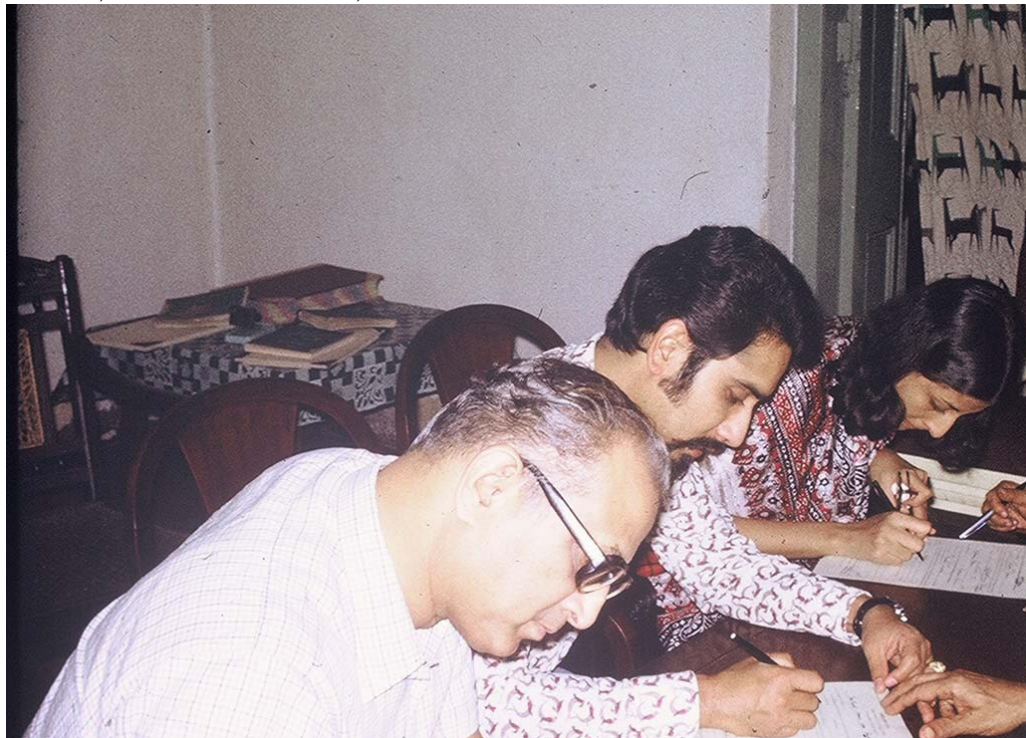
Wedding registration at Calcutta, 1973.

L to R: Ataur Rahman, Pervez Mohammed, Shagufta, Rukhsana Hazarika, Shirin Hazarika.



Signing and witnessing the documents.

Ataur Rahman, Tawheed Hazarika, Rukhsana Hazarika:





## **RUKHSANA HAZARIKA**

Rukhsana Rahman was born at the SP residence at Jorhat on April 30, 1950. In attendance was Bertha Zille from the Civil hospital, Jorhat. Weighing in about 6 pounds. She attended many schools in Assam due to her father being in the police service and transfers were the norm. She went on to college at Lady Irwin College in Delhi earning a Masters in Nutrition. She worked briefly in India prior to her marriage. She is a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist in the States worked at Mercy Hospital, Maine Medical Center, Mount Auburn Hospital in Cambridge, Massachusetts and is now an independent consultant to a number of hospitals/nursing homes.

Rukhsana Rahman in 1951:



Rukhsana Rahman with brother Md. Tanweer:



Deepa Hazarika holding Rukhsana Hazarika:

Rukhsana Hazarika, college picture:



Rukhsana Hazarika at Lady Irwin College, New Delhi.



Rukhsana Hazarika at wedding day on December 4, 1973.

Bride Rukhsana Hazarika:



L to R: Brinda Sachdev, Dipi Ghaffar, Ira Hussain, Rukhsana Hazarika





Waiting for the ceremony at brides house.

L to R. Toto Ghaffar (glasses); Rashid Dutt, Tawheed Hazarika, Bashir Hazarika, Kay Ghaffar, Dipu Ghaffar:



L to R standing: Asad Ahmed, Noor, Naseem Hazarika, Dueta Rahman, ?

L to R sitting: Rashid Dutt, Tawheed Hazarika, Bashir Hazarika



Witnesses at the wedding: Naseem Hazarika.(Rear sitting are Boo, Loong and Bhakto)



Bride Rukhsana Hazarika consenting to marriage:





Wedding ceremony at Guwahati.

Rukhsana Hazarika, Tawheed Hazarika with side and back of Aatur Rahman.  
Rear L to R: Boo Hazarika, Munu (Effie's daughter), Rashid Dutt.



The cousins and others, 1973.

Rear standing L to R: Kem Hazarika, Dipi Ghaffar, Amanulla Ghaffar, Bharoti Dutt, Dino Dutt, Bhakto Dutt  
Sitting L to R: Boo Hazarika, Rashid (Bhai) Dutt, Rukhsana Hazarika, Binu Huq, Tawheed Hazarika  
On floor front L to R: Bashir Hazarika, Singh Rahman, Dalima Rahman, Tadoo Huq



The family at Motijan in 1973.

Front row: Amini Ghaffar, Tatoon Huq

Second row L to R: Toto Ghaffar, Shirin Hazarika, Rukhsana Hazarika, Georgina Dutt,  
Bulu Chapman (face partially hidden), ? Faiz Hazarika

Last row L to R: Tawheed Hazarika, Binu Huq, Sona Hazarika, Boo Hazarika, Naseema Hazarika, Daisy Aziz:



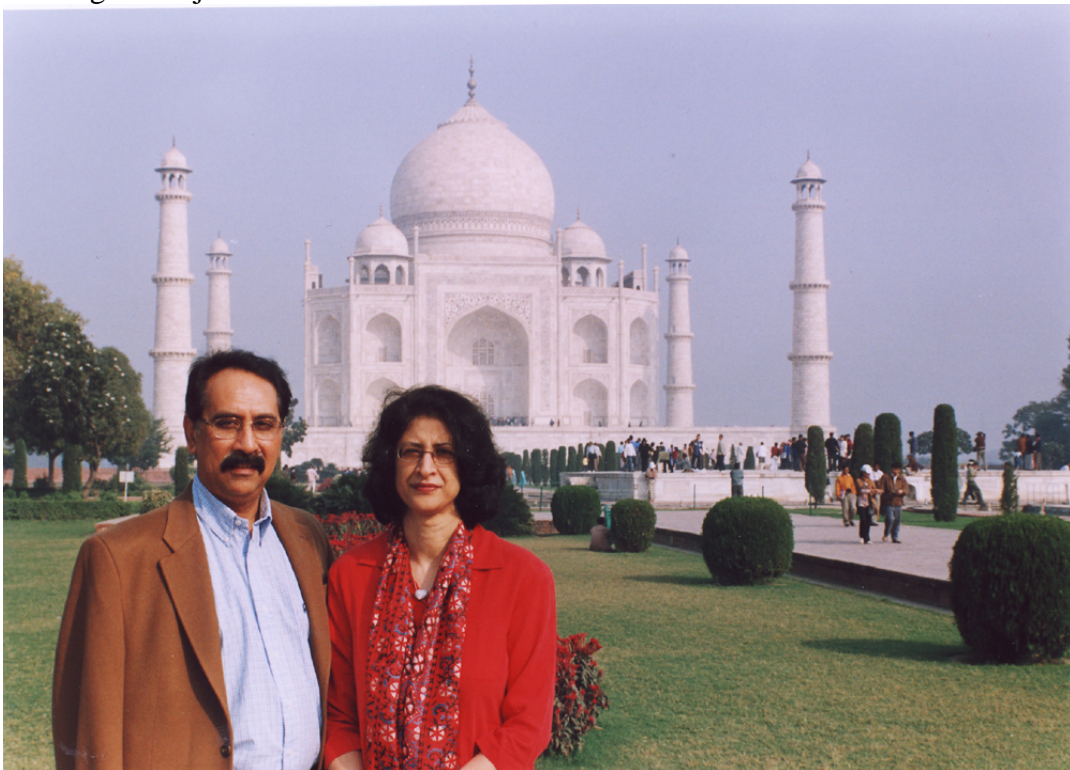


Memorable pictures:

Paris, 1999 – on the river Seine:



Visiting the Taj Mahal in 2003:





Rukhsana Hazarika and Tawheed Hazarika in 2004 at reception for Miriam Mohammed at North Andover, Massachusetts:



Tawheed Hazarika and Rukhsana Hazarika at Keukenhof, Holland:



With James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank in 2006 at the ACCION International launch event at Cipriani, Manhattan, New York:



With James Wolfensohn and Ms. Dianne Taylor, Superintendent of Banks in the State of New York:





Idd at Andover: Front: Shamshil, Salman  
Rear: Kem, Bashir, KC, Amir, Shaheen, Venesi, Hasnah.



Annual festival at Boston Higashi School, Natick, Massachusetts.  
L to R: Hasnah, Bashir, Fateha, KC, Salman, Rukhsana, Shakeer, Amir, Venesi, Shaheen,  
Shamshil, Fafi:



## KAUSER FAISAL SHARIF HAZARIKA

### Chapter 8

Kauser Faisal Sharif Hazarika was born in Portland, Maine on January 23, 1978 at 5:30a.m. A telephone call at 8:00 a.m. to Guwahati to his grandfather Ataur Rahman's residence resulted in him interrupting his prayers to answer the call. He was reading the Sura Inna Ataina Kal Kausar and so he requested KC be named Kauser for this Sura in the Koran. The second name was from the Saudi King Faisal custodian of the holy city of Mecca and the third from his father and grandfather's side. He went to school in Andover, Massachusetts and to college at Boston University graduating with honors in Economics in the year 2000. KC was a good student and excelled in his studies. He worked at Harvard University and then at Platinum Equity, a private equity firm. He worked for Governor Mitt Romney's administration then to Morgan Stanley, a New York based investment bank in their private wealth group. In 2006 he joined PlainView Capital a hedge fund and became a Partner and Portfolio Manager. In 2010 he went back to Platinum Equity as a Director.

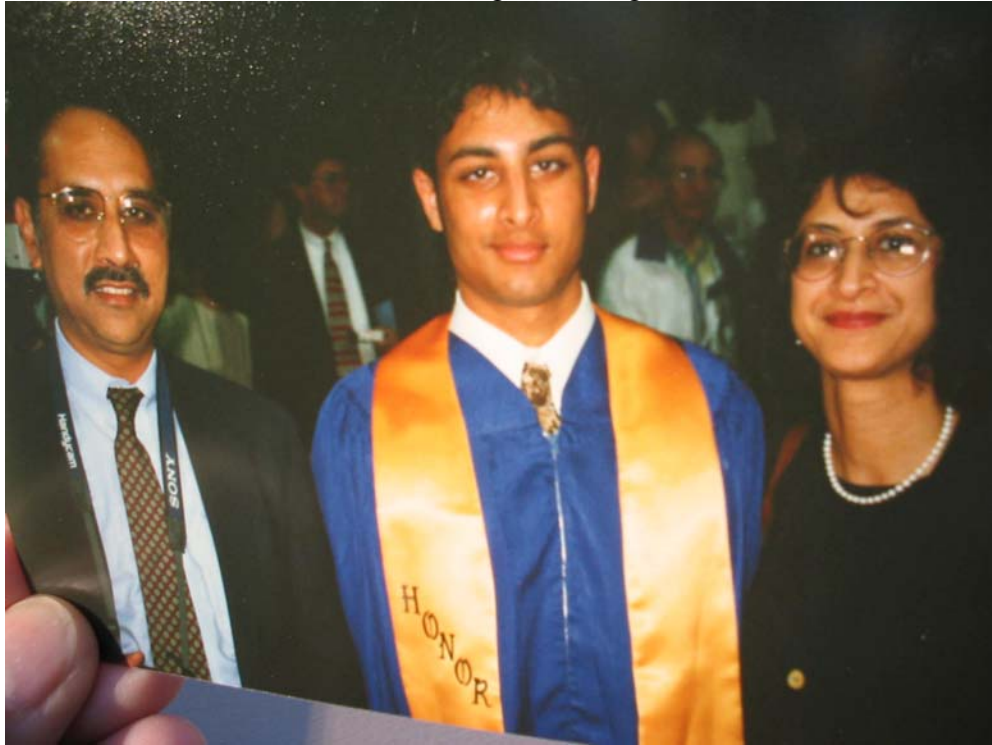
KC in 1981:

KC with Jedi saber sword from Star wars in Andover:





Tawheed, KC and Rukhsana at Andover High School graduation in 1996:



KC Hazarika high School Prom portrait:

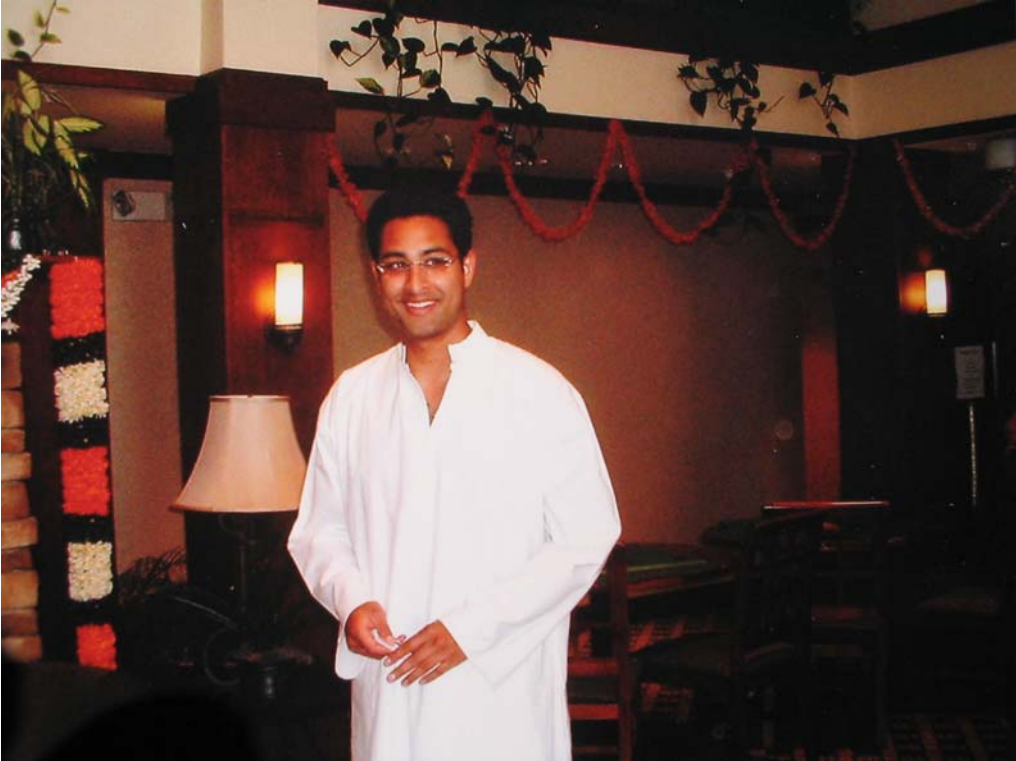
Tawheed Hazarika, KC Hazarika, Rukhsana Hazarika around 1979:



Rukhsana, KC and Tawheed at Boston University graduation in Boston in 2000:



KC in an Indian outfit at Miriam's wedding in 2004:



With first cousins at Andover.



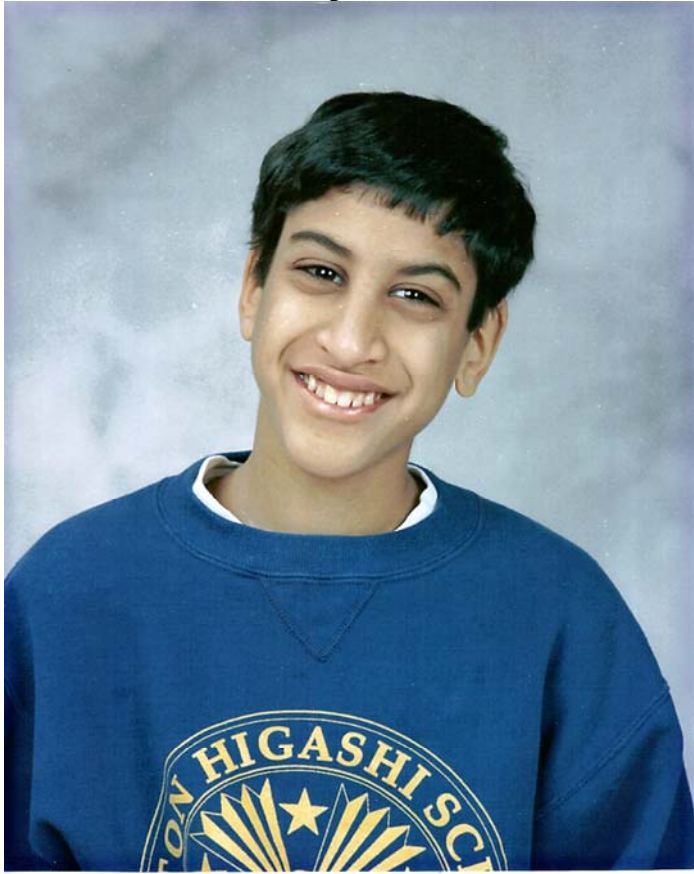
L to R: Miriam, KC, Tariq and Laylah



### **SHAKEER SHARIF HAZARIKA**

Shakeer Hazarika was born in Boston on November 29, 1984, at 6:00pm a preemie at 3 pounds. The name was selected by the Imam of the Quincy mosque, Talal Idd (a Lebanese) and Sacha (from Yugoslavia). Means Shukria in Arabic which is thankful. He attended the Boston Higashi School at Randolph, Massachusetts and graduated in 2006. The school is an International Japanese School. Shakeer loves music and swimming. He also likes to use the Spa everyday when at home.

Shakeer Hazarika school portrait:



Shakeer Hazarika at Andover home:



Shakeer Hazarika, Laylah Mohammed and Tawheed Hazarika at hotel visiting Disney world, Florida:



Boston Higashi School dance 2004:



Idd picture in Andover, Shakeer and KC Hazarika, 1985:





Shakeer and Shamshil Hazarika playing at the park:



Shakeer Hazarika riding his horse at Andover:



## DEJ DADA HAZARIKA

Dej Dada Hazarika (Boo) was born in Motijan on November 18, 1952. He went to St. Edmund's School in Shillong. A very mischievous fellow from an early age that had little interest in studying. He loved to party and stay at Motijan. During his first year at boarding school he was invariable caught by the school authorities making the 300 mile trek out of the school to Motijan and brought back. During his first day in school, one of the teachers, Brother Luram, a big burly Irish gentleman was walking the school grounds wearing the long white robe of a priest when Boo approached him, lifted his gown and asked what else is under there. He was six years old. He would always be sitting near the school swimming pool around 7:00am every morning observing the College dorm that I (Tawheed) lived in as an undergraduate. As soon as I opened the windows to my room he would show up. He had run out of his monthly allowance from home and needed another rupee or two. Within minutes of his departure, Fafi (Kem) Hazarika would be at the window with the same request. When asking Kem what happened to his money given by me only a few days ago, he would reply that Boo took it as a loan. Boo was a very smart kid, but studies were not his bag. He went to St. Paul's, Darjeeling to attend college but came back within the year, wanting to start a business.

He then bought a truck with money from his mother and instead of putting it for hire and earning a fair amount of income he parked it by the house and had the driver wash it every day. Boo was also not cut out to be a businessman. He liked to sleep late, around 2:00a.m. and rise at around 1:00 p.m., did something or another for two to three hours and then partied with his friends. He had a fair amount of business disputes with his mother and younger brother Kem. Both were spending a fair amount of money their mother had earned. Boo briefly left for Kohima after one dispute but returned to Motijan. He loved to drink often that ultimately resulted in liver failure and his early demise.

Although not a successful businessman he was very likable. Boo married Jinu Taijebulla granddaughter of Taijebulla who was the Education Minister of Assam. Further complicating Boo's business life was that Jinu wanted to continue living with her mother at Guwahati versus Motijan. By the year 2000 Boo had sold all his inherited properties and was in financial hardship and his mother suggested he get a job. He was over 45 and had never worked. He decided to look after the Motijan property which at that point was a shell of its former size.

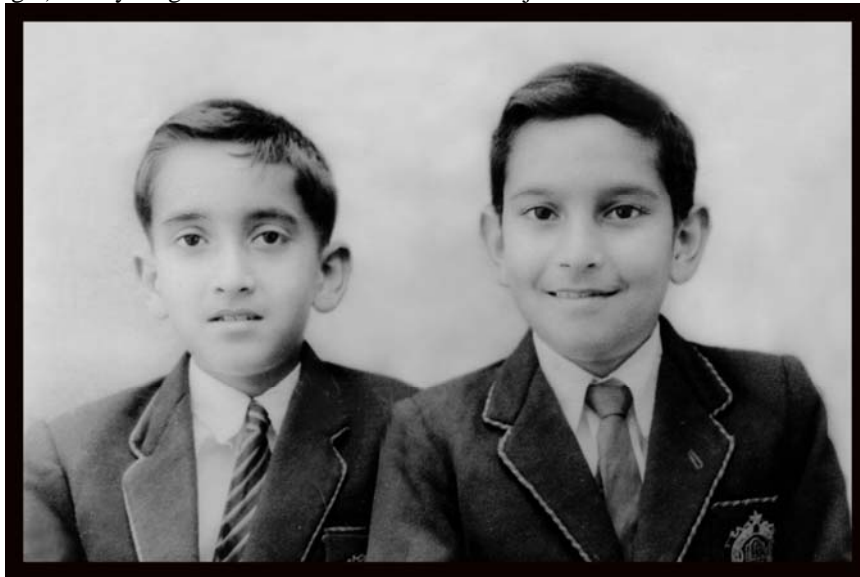
In 2001 when Sona Hazarika passed away Boo was devastated. Although both mother and son quarreled constantly they could not do without each other. He was very close to her. He started drinking. He finally sold most of the Motijan property except the main house and fortunately left the money to his wife and daughter. Boo was especially distressed with his relationship with brother Kem. They had both grown up together, married about the same time and were very close. He was very keen to resolve their disagreements on property issues. During his final days he was feeling slightly better. Bought a computer for his daughter Kamreen. Had his cars fixed. On his final day he went to the bank and opened a joint account with his wife and transferred his money. Later on during the morning he suddenly collapsed. With the help of his wife Jinu and



others they got into the car for the ride to the hospital. During the half hour journey he started massive hemorrhaging of blood from the mouth and was unconscious when they reached the hospital, He passed away within the half hour in the emergency room at the International hospital. He was bought back to the house and his brother in law Bhati, Kuchi Rahman, Tanweer Mohammed and others prepared his body for the final journey to the Guwahati Kabarstan.

In retrospect Boo had a good but difficult life. He had two cars, dressed well, ate well, had three servants following him around all day and he did not have to go to work. Boo was outgoing and had plenty of good friends. There was nothing Boo would not do for his friends. He was especially proud of his daughter Kamreen. She is a bright student that did exceptionally well at school and was constantly after her father to settle down. Kamreen Hazarika is studying law in Mumbai in 2006. Boo would be very proud.

Dej Hazarika (right) with younger brother Fafi Hazarika in Motijan around 1965:



Boo and Jinu Hazarika on wedding day:



Jinu Hazarika as bride:



Jinu wedding picture:

L to R: Shaheen, Deepa Hazarika, Rukhsana Hazarika, Jinu, KC, Sona Hazarika:



Jinu at Motijan.

L to R: Sitting , Dej Hazarika, Jinu, Sona

Standing: Bashir, Shaheen, Fafi, Rukhsana:

Boo and Jinu Hazarika with daughter Kamreen:



Dej Dada Hazarika in November, 2003, Guwahati, three months before he passed away:





Tawheed Hazarika with Jinu Hazarika and Kamreen Hazarika at their home in Jurpukhuri, Guwahati in 2005.



### **FAFI RAHMATULLA HAZARIKA**

Fafi (Kem) Hazarika was born on March, 1954. Kem was a big baby coming in at over ten pounds. When Kem was less than a year old many of the tea garden labors at Degubber tea estate came to see him. One of them quietly put a grain of rice into his ear based on some kind of superstition. Soon after Kem started running a very high fever and the Mission Hospital at Silchar was worried that he might not make it. Fortunately, on a re-examination Doctor Hazelblade found the grain of rice, removed it and a few days later he was back to normal. Kem attended the St. Edmunds School and went on to Cotton College. He rented a house at Guwahati and bought in the family servant Muslai Mia to be his cook while he studied for the BCom degree. Things become sketchy at this point since he was apparently studying, going to Motijan, doing some road construction contracts and going to Degubber tea estate with brother Boo and mother Sona.

Kem married Shaheen Duree Rahman of Shillong. Shaheen Duree Rahman father is an attorney in Shillong and his wife is from Dibrugarh and related to the Jalan family.

After his wedding he continued trying to finish his road contract work near Tezpur that was awarded to him by Buni Rahman's husband, Dhon Rahman. However, Kem was similar to Boo when it came to business, fortunately his mother was working with him and they were able to complete the contract at a reasonable loss.

Soon Kem and wife as well as brother Boo and wife as well as younger brother Bashir Hazarika were now all in Motijan. Sona Hazarika, Boo and Kem were in constant

arguments on how to run the business. It was a hilarious situation. Kem and wife along with Bashir and others started consulting a “Bej” (local witch doctor) to cast spells on Boo and remove any spells Boo might have cast on them through the Bej he had retained. They even spent time digging up concrete floors in some of their relatives houses thinking that the Bej bad luck amulets may be buried there. They never found any amulets to enable them to destroy and break any spells. They were very superstitious. While they were busy “out spelling” each other Kems immigration papers from the States arrived. Kem, his wife Shaheen and daughter left Assam in 1988 for Boston.

Kem started work on a number of jobs during his first six months and then joined Digital a high technology company in Andover. He moved around with them for a number of years, developing computer support software skills. He left to join Sun Micro Systems for a short period, then a few smaller firms and is currently a Consultant in the software field. He has a lovely house in Merrimack, New Hampshire and continues to live there with his wife and daughter. Kem loves the outdoors especially fishing and boating.

Lately he is also in high demand for his supernatural occult talents. His cousins say he can go into a trance every Thursday and tell them their past and future accurately.

He is currently managing the Motijan property and the cash deposits left by Sona Hazarika. The inheritors of all the properties of Sharif and Sona Hazarika were Boo, Kem and Bashir Hazarika. Kem is trying to find a solution to the property with brother Bashir. In any event Kem has settled down very well, has developed good software skills and enjoys his work. He is a good hearted fellow and very sensitive He loves to tinker and is very good at working around the house, car, motorcycle or his boat. Enjoys the outdoor life.

Fafi Hazarika and Shaheen at engagement ceremony, Shillong.





Fafi (Kem), Shamshil, Shaheen Hazarika in Andover, 1989:



Kem Hazarika, Jinu Hazarika (bride) and Shaheen in Motijan:



Daughter Shamshil Hazarika is studying at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts in 2006 with two more years remaining. She graduated from Clark in 2008 and joined New York University for her masters in social studies.

Shamshil Hazarika:



## **BASHIR AHMED HAZARIKA**

Bashir Hazarika was born in Motijan on March 3, 1962. Being the youngest and with an age difference of eight years from his older brother Kem he rapidly became the favorite. This was a big problem for Kem since he was very close to his mother Sona Hazarika. Kem was nursing till almost the age of six and would be constantly next to his mother till he was almost ten. When he was nine and Bashir was about a year old he was trying to sneak in his head between Bashir and his mother and start nursing. His term for nursing was “alm” (literally interpreted means mango) and he would insist on getting his turn when Bashir was nursing. Over the years Bashir and mother were inseparable. They filled the Motijan house with cats many of them strays. The cats slept with them and lined up next to the moji at meal times. Bashir learnt to drive when he was about ten. He would put a bunch of cushions on the car seat and drive his mother around town. Bashir also known as Pnompeuh (Numpah) was closely tied to his mother and Motijan. He just could not concentrate on any studies. He was always “home sick”. He went to St. Edmunds School, joined college and after that everything gets sketchy. He joined Xerox in Assam and became their number one salesman for the year he was with them. He won a number of awards and bonus trips to Thailand. He even considered marriage to the dismay of his mother. Fortunately, she brought him to the States in 1988.

After a shaky start Bashir finally down. He did many things, car salesman, opened a store in Cambridge, Massachusetts, Manager at Friendly’s, Manager at CVS and perhaps other positions. He finally settled down at Fidelity Investments in Merrimack, New Hampshire supporting their fund reporting database. He is now with Massachusetts Mutual. He bought a lovely house in Nashua, New Hampshire about five minute drive from brother Kem and lives with his wife Hasnah and two children, Fateha and Sophia.

Bashir Hazarika married Hasnah Musa from the town of Pasir Mas in the state of Kelantan in Malaysia and is the daughter of Musa and Mek Jah. They met at the Islamic Center in Lowell at a social event. The family was very lucky to have Hasnah as she provided the brunt of the day to day care for Sona Hazarika during her days in America. No mean feat since Sona Hazarika could be very difficult person. Hasnah probably transformed Bashir into settling down. Bashir is now a very religious person like his father and offers his prayers five times a day. His daughter completed her Koran reading at age 10. Bashir and Hasnah have a wide circle of friends from Malaysia and Indonesia and celebrate all the religious occasions as well as have regular special milad prayers and Koran reading. Sharif Hazarika would have been extremely proud of Bashir Hazarika. He has put things together successfully. America has been good to Bashir Hazarika, he has picked up good data management computer skills and he is quite happy at work. Also a lovely family that takes good care of him. Bashir also likes to tinker around with cars, trucks, lawn mowers and house projects.

Hasnah, Sofia, Fateha, Bashir Hazarika at Andover in 2004:



Bashir Hazarika with daughter Sofia, wife Hasnah, daughter Fateha in Andover in 2005:





Bashir celebrating his birthday in Andover:



Shamshil, Fateha, Bashir and Shakeer Hazarika celebrating Fateha's birthday:

Bashir Hazarika, 1964, Motijan with Motilal carrying him (domestic help):

