C.M.S. SCHOOLS, KASHMIR.

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORIES OF:
(i) Rev. C. E. Tyndale Bruce and his family,
pioneers of modern education in Kashmir. *
(ii) The then Teachers Fraternity of the C.M.S.
    School, Srinagar, our "GURUS" *
(iii) The then members of my family (particularly
    those who visited the Wular Lake with me). *

    *WHO ARE NO MORE.

A TRAGEDY OF THE WULAR LAKE
APRIL 11, 1934.
AN EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT

TRILOKI NATH ZALPUR
C.M.S. SCHOOLS, KASHMIR.

MRS. & REV. CANON C. E. TYNDALE BISCOE, M.A. (BRADFORD AND JESUS COLLEGE, CAMB.)
The gallant seven who faced a super storm on the Wular Lake and perished in their fight. They were defeated, but through their deaths many a Hindu widow will be enabled to re-marry and her children permitted to live.
WE'LL FACE THE STORMS TODAY

The clouds are banked on the mountains, the Wular is sullen and grey.
'We'll hoist the sail, and brave the gale. Come! Out and launch away.'
'We'll face the storms today.'

The white-winged gulls are wheeling, they glint in the murky air,
As far below they see them go, the waves of the Wular to dare.
To face the storms out there.

How did it happen? There's none can tell, save the gulls, the wind and wave.
'Oh Shahr Din! Had you ever seen such a fight 'twixt the strong and the brave?'
'Come fight, for there's none to save.'

The frisky craft is swallowed up; they're whipped with the spray and the rain.
With gasping breath they face their death, as they tussle and wrench and strain.
'Come, heave her up again.'

At last the task's accomplished, the boat's afloat once more.
But out of the crew remain but two; no rudder or sail or oar.
They fought, but they fight no more.

'Come, what shall we do, my captain? Can we reach the shore alive?'
'I care no more to reach the shore. We only two survive.'
'But what of the other five?'

'No, perish the thought,' he answered, 'for this we were not born.'
'They fought our fight. Have we the right to leave them alone torn?'
'Come, meet them beyond the dawn.'

When the wild wind lashes the water, and life is a stormy sea,
'in All Things Men' is our watchword then. And may it always be,
'Come, face the storms with me.'

Let the thunder crash in the mountains. Let the lightning hiss in the rain.
We'll never forget the example they set in our sorrow, our trouble and pain.
But we'll face the storms again,
And again,
We'll face the storms again.

1 Shahr Din, a saint's tomb on a hill-top overlooking the lake, to which travellers pray for a safe crossing.

SOURCE: LOG (1934–35)
A TRAGEDY OF THE WULAR LAKE
APRIL 11, 1934.

AN EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT.

TRILOKI NATH ZALPURI
TRAGEDY OF THE WULAR LAKE

APRIL 11, 1934.

AN EYE WITNESS ACCOUNT

TRILOKI NATH ZALPURI

I. INTRODUCTION

The subject topic as well as some details involved in the events were touched upon in the Esteemed Journal - KASHUR SAMACHAR - for the months of May and October, 2000, and January 2001. The related extracts would be repeated in this treatise later at an appropriate place to judge the exact position. Since February, 1997, I had been feeling latent inquisitiveness, being an eye-witness to the “unfortunate” event, to render step by step and point by point. Then, I had made hard efforts to get the requisite information from the source, but unfortunately, I could not succeed. However, a stage was reached when the position changed its course for better when, as per chance, I met Mr. Dwarika Nath Kaul, a member of our School Alumni and the Son of Late Mr. Namak Chand Kaul (Nana Batuk), the then veteran Boatman of one of the Six-Card Boats which got engulfed in the stormed Wular Lake on 11.4.1934. As he knew my longing desire of recording the eye-witness account of the whole episode, I again requested him for the said background material. Indelibly, I would naturally remain to him, as he managed to get, within a week or so, photostat copies of the relevant papers. Further, he attempted to arrange, as decreed by me, the required extracts (intended to be used in the write-up), from a deep faint (due to ageing) photographs of my 5th Primary Class (only precious remains of my school days for all other articles including numerous School photographs etc. were destroyed in our Rainawari residential house because of the military nineeties of the last century still prevalent in Kashmir). This photograph, interspersed embodied the images of late Mr. Nana Batuk and late Mr. Bugh Nath Zalpuri, my Father, (died in 1937), who (with others, perhaps, names not known) was assigned an important role, by late Rev. C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, of securing the drowned (dead) body(cis) from the Wular Lake site to Near Bagh (Chhatabal Cemetery Ground) in the reverse current direction for their last rites. But Mr. Kaul was not successful to have the photos lifted out. With this position in my mind, instantly a memorable flash — a scene before my eyes of
My thanks to Imperial Photographs Connaught Place, New Delhi, (established originally at the Bund, Srinagar). Here late Mr. Eric Bissoe, the second son of late Rev. C.E. Tyndale Bissoe and the Headmaster of the then Sheikh Bagh Preparatory School, a sister concern of our schools viz. C.M.S. Schools of Kashmir, used to stay on his Delhi visits (revealed to me by Mr. Eric on his wife's and his visit to me in 1959 at my Moti Bagh residence - then on his departure to New Zealand, their last residence). When I entered the Company's premises in Connaught Place, I was advised to meet their Manager - Mr. Madan Mehta, who happened to be Mr. (Junior) Bissoe's one of the students and also the classmate of Mr. Hugg (his Son). I introduced myself to him and explained to him the purpose of my visit. I was surprised to find in him the extra-ordinary affectionate treatment meted out to me, naturally, because I was being the student of the Teaching Fraternity imbibing in us the culture of Kashmiriyyat. He accepted the challenge with full enthusiasm at his command and did produce clean photocopies, as per my requirement. Leaving cost factor aside, his sincere effort brought a cheer on my face as I felt myself in a comfortable position because I could record now my rendering easily. Later, I showed the photographs to Mr. D.N. Kaul, who was, in turn, immensely happy. Convinced he would feel here that when the reader goes through this essay, he too will feel satisfied into the relevant impressions taken out from the said old (of 67 years now) and faint photograph. Therefore, both Mr. Kaul and me will remain obliged to Mr. Madan for his successful attempt.

Before I start rendering this sad narration, I consider it pertinent to say a few introductory lines on the C.M.S. Schools of Kashmir. Here I cannot depend on any written text like 'Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade' by C.E. Tyndale Bissoe or a similar record as I have never gone through one, but can only rely on my faded memory. One day when boys gathered in Primary Classes Hall of the Central (Fateh Kadal) School for prayer etc., Mr. Bissoe entered the Hall. He stood in a hush silence and sat down on the wooden floor, as per Headmaster's instruction.

Then, as I recollect now, he gave a lecture wherein he first mentioned about London and its schools around. By and by he turned to the topic of his travel to Kashmir. His speech in simple words conveyed that during the last decade of the nineteenth Century, he was deputed by the 'Church Missionary Society', London, to take up educational
ACTIVITIES in Kashmir. Perhaps, he reached Srinagar in 1998 or so. As is revealed in 'Need of All India Kashmiri Samaj (Issue January-February 1999) page 8,' it was Rev.
Dorey, who opened the Missionary School in Kashmir first in 1881. He was followed
by Rev. Knowles, who installed Pt. Anand Koul Banzai as the first head master
of the school in 1893. It appeared as if God had ordained so. One is thrilled to
note that so fortunate were they, that they successfully at that point of time establish-
ed by and by a net-work of Schools (HIGH - Anantnag; MIDDLE - Rainwari,
and Sheik, Bag; PRIMARY - Hubba Kadal and Naiza Kadal.) numbering 6 in all.
They gave these Schools a refined and respectable 'MOTTO'—"IN ALL THINGS BE
MEN," stressing on three ("body", "mind" and "so") ingredients of human beings. It depicted
two paddles, in crossed position meaning "SACRIFICE" to secure safety for others; for did
not Lord Jesus Christ offer himself for sacrifice as a saviour of humanity
It is heartening to see the logo of our 'MOTTO' as under.
In the course of narration of this account, I have attempted to
describe the House-Boat, Deengay Shikara with their details of interior space
designing for their proper usage. Similarly, I have provided you with
akin characteristic on Twelve-Oared, 23 Six-Oared and one Silvery (White)
Four-Oared boats. Though this may appear to be redundant for the
people of the contemporary age and those immediately following them, yet I feel it
necessary for the third generation and onwards, for Kashmiri Pandits
generally, who may, perhaps, not have any chance to resettle/return to
Kashmir, their mother land, what to speak of the said boats being
enjoyed by them. Of course, such persons may be able to see photographic
sketches in print or audio media but not virtually their inner cubicle
divisions for the desired utilisation.

During my busy time with preparation of this synopsis, one day
I came across an interview given by Prof. (Mrs.) Hina Hashia, Department of
Geography, University of Jamia Millia Islamia, in the Times of India, New
Delhi. (She is also a Member of the Indian Muslim Women’s Personal Law
Board). I posted a letter to her address for certain help in this endeavour.
Immediately I received a prompt and cooperative response from her. Later I
met her personally and got a few doubts cleared and also procured through
her a reference book “SYSTEMATIC GEOGRAPHY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR” by
Prof. Majid Husain, presently a Senior Professor of the Department of Geography
of the same University. (Earlier he happened to be the Head of the Depart-
ment of Geography in the North-East Hill University and University of
Kashmir and Jamia Millia Islamia). Indeed, I am very grateful to Drs.
Husain and Majid for their learned advice. To Prof. Majid I am highly in-
debted for allowing me to quote certain references from his book.

There was another important source in my mind about whom I have
specified the position now. Constant liaison with him proved fruitful. It was
tackled through Mr. D.N. Kaum, who happened to be in touch with the seek
the said source – Mr. C.H. Tyndale Bissex S/o Late Eric Tyndale Bissex, presently resident of Australia. The latter was contacted (through E-mail) and requested to arrange sending 'Log Book' for 11.4.1934, the day of occurrence of the catastrophe. (Now it is received and I have placed it in the end). But redeeming feature which I cannot but express to the Reader in this regard is that I avoided abridging the Log to lead my essay only with the requisite and to the point lines therefrom, because I felt it necessary for Kashmiri Pandits, in general, to be aware of the political controversies, shortcomings in their social code prevalent in their inner circles, the suppression of minority rights practised and the terror unleashed by communal forces through hard core miscreants then in vogue in Kashmir.

Pertinent point to mention here is that Mr. Hugh evinces interest even now in the C.M.S. Schools' topics, as and when their mention is made. Definitely I am thankful to him for making available to me the Log required. I hope he will continue to assist us, whenever we need it at the time of recording of topics on the C.M.S. School etc.

I will fail in my duty if I do not offer my sincere obligation to Mr. D. N. Kaul S/o Late Mr. Nanak Chand Kaul, who did check this manuscript and also made certain suggestions which were incorporated in this essay.

My eye witness account pertains to the gloomy event that took place on 11.4.1934 (about 67 years back). So, I feel it necessary to have no hesitation in admitting that there might be certain shortcomings in it. If so, I will crave for the Readers' forgiveness. Further, in case, it is found any part of this composition; written in good faith, hurting peoples' feelings, to them I offer my sincerest apologies, in advance.
The months of March/April every year, Kashmir, the land of hills and mountains, flora and fauna, springs and lakes, with majestic shady trees emanates fresh and cool breezes. In March every year right at the foot of the Hari Parbat hillock (in Srinagar) on one side almonds did burst in blossoms, turning the fields into vast sheets of pink and white. Nature has it — the flowers come before the leaves which is known as "Yaseman Phullai" in Kashmiri. On the other side of the hillock, Dal Lake with vast stretch of waters presented a smiling and a beautiful scene. On the bank of this lake, the Nageen Gardens — like Shalimar and Nashat; Springs — i.e. Cheshma Shaki, Inderber etc. with water canals dazzling in the sunshine in the middle, beautiful and grand trees full of flower blossoms and vast lengths of colourful flowers do present a picturesque sight. Towards the north and south, the mountainous ranges of Mahadev, Zabarwan etc. looked as if they were the sentinels for Srinagar. Equally fascinating was the charm of the meadows at Gulmarg, Khelemargar, Sonamarg, and Yus--
The visitors from overseas and India come for enjoyment. As regards locals, the couples along with their children dressed up in colourful costumes too move out for entertainment to the said places. The Kashmiri Pandits, however, celebrate the festivals of Navarat and Baisakhi on the slopes/bottom of the Hari Parbat hillock/hill near Nishat Garden respectively.

On their part, the C.M.S. Schools also used to move out to the Wular Lake for enjoyment as well as for conducting swimming competition by way of crossing this Lake. This competition was confined to the Teachers/Students. The names of successful competitors with the detail of the related year used to be listed on the ‘Honour Boards’ then exhibited in the Central (Fateh Kadal) School Hall. The winners used to be given unique ‘honour’ by affixing to their names ‘Wular Crossing’ in the C.M.S. Schools Annual Day or similar occasions like the yearly character rolls covering a boy’s body, mind and soul activities assessment awarded by the Principal to the future generations.

As it was destined for us too to witness the sorrowful event - when seven youths (teachers) died after their lives on 11.4.1949, we joined the group headed by Mrs. & Rev. C.E. Tyndale Biscoe, Principal, in a House-Boat, also followed by Mr. Frederick Jacob, Vice Principal, Miss Mallinson, Principal of C.M.S. Girls’ School, Srinagar, Teachers’ Group (3) and our family - all in Doongars. There was a retinue of other back-stroke boats and a mechanised (motor launch, as it was called). Going by their census, I now give their description. There was one Twelve-Cared Boat captained by Mr. Namal Lal Bakaya, a Senior Teacher, with its rudder in his control; two Six-Cared Boats; one with a Boatman as Mr. Namal Chand and the other (the name of its captain not stored in my memory now), One Four-Cared white (silver) Boat placed at the disposal of Mr. Jacob. While the motor launch (Driver – Mr. Tara Chand Tatpuny, my uncle) was used for plying the House-Boat, particularly on the occasions of storms or in the case of reverse-current direction travel, the Twelve-Cared Boat helped the Doongars when in movement in difficulties. All these Boats were utilised for joy rides also, whereas in the Sailing Boat, ladies like Mrs. Biscoe and Miss Mallinson enjoyed their evenings sometimes in this Boat. For the comprehension of the readers, I have tried to give exploratory details about a few of the boats that move in lakes, rivers, streams which cater to our
needs on our water travel in the footnote below.

(1) and (2) — House Boat and Doongas

Both are made of wood. Both of them are constructed in such a way that they form several cabins used as Drawing / Dressing / Dinning / Bed rooms with their floor level much above the water surface level outside. Their enclosed area. Their kitchens (pantry) is kept in stern area above the bottom water surface level. Important among all rooms is the Store Room between the lower surface level of the rooms and over the bottom surface level / boat. Sometimes Doongas / Shikaras served as kitchens for the House Boats, whereas the shikaras at times catered as kitchens for Doongas. The House Boat flat roofs furnished with chairs and tables and decorated with flower vases. These roofs are, in turn, covered by printed tapestry cloth, while sides have curtains being abrossed. In this way roof portion avoids the bright and hot Sun. A suitable stair case is constructed so that the people can climb it and enjoy themselves in the roof portion. The Doongas in turn have the sloping roofs of wooden planks, covered with mats of special type of grass. For plying the House Boat, its two sides long-wide are equipped with two platforms of about two feet width. The two boatmen, on either side, push the House Boat forward by applying force poles (with smooth and slippery circumference) of which one end is stuck in the Lake / River bottom with pressure and the other held close to the chest. Actually Newton’s third law of motion comes into play here. The forward direction of the House Boat is also guided with half of

The other boatman controlling the steering. St. Jankinath Kaul ‘Kaml’ in his article “Swami Ranji Mahamohobhushan Bha” (KOSBOR SAMACHAR - SPECIAL NUMBER 1979 - page 37) states in fact, Shri Narayan Das was first to introduce house-boat in Kashmir. Among Kashmiris, he was therefore known as ‘Navb Naran’.

3. Shikara

It is also made of wood. The shikaras used by visitors / travellers have a sort of a ‘parandah’ - closed space with a roof and curtains on two side. The Shikaras for enjoyment - use have very bright and dazzling tapestry around the ‘parandah’, whereas the front and back portions are kept open. On the back portion, the boatmen with paddles and seaters on one / two seats drive the shikaras to the required destination, control / regulate the
I have dealt only with the position of Beat Groups, having for the Wular Lake. Now, I will take up the topic of our journey to the Lake. For this purpose, it is better that I confine to the movement of our Doonga (to be supplemented later about the others as and when they appear on the scene) as the others started from various locations, unknown to me.

Core now: it is the turn of our Doonga and its forward journey. Apropos our Doonga, mention of its 14 members travelling therein: two members (Mr. Pughe Nath, my father and Mr. Zale Khan, my uncle stayed back).

hands of the steerer. There is another type of shikara: it has no "parandah" nor roofed area in it. A boatman with a paddle is both a steerer & a plyer. This shikara. It is generally used by vegetable vendors, fish sellers or horticulture sellers. Sometimes, fruit and dates are also sold with the help of this kind of shikara.

4) Twelve - Caned Boat

It is an impressive and grand moving structure on the water surface being paddled by twelve persons, sitting in pairs on six seats of the boat. The paddles are long, huge and weighty. The Boatswain is seated on the hind seat facing the twelve paddlers seated in his front. He holds the rudder in his hand. Then, the rudder used to fly two (Union and Maharaja's) flags. The salute often given were in the form of all paddlers in standing positions with their paddles held straight vertically pointing towards the sky.

5) Six Caned Boats (Two)

My presumption is, if it is correct, that both the boats were on the pattern used by the Cambridge and Oxford Universities in their annual racing competitions in the Thames River (London). Yearly, we used to witness photographs of these racing boats when exhibited on the "New Board" of the Central (Patekhadal) School. The delicacy of the boat is that both sides were approximately of the width of not more than six inches. The salute, whenever given were similar to those of the Twelve - Caned Boat.

6) Fever-Caned White (silver) Boat

It was a tiny boat being plied by two persons, each holding a pair of paddles in their hands. As both the persons paddled rhythmically and actively there was no rudder as aimed direction was itself maintained.

-114-
found imperative, as certain events, which I will narrate later, at the appropriate moments, revolve around them. They constituted one and the same family but belonging to four sub-divisions i.e.,

A) Mr. Tare Chand - my eldest uncle and the head, his son, Mr. Narain Joo, my cousin brother; his daughter, my cousin sister with an infant girl - all about 47, 17 and 17 years of age respectively.

B) Mr. Radha Ram, my mother, her three (Tulshi Nati - self, Hriday Nati and Ram Nati) sons and daughter, Oma, then of 13, 9, 7, 4 and 1½ years respectively.

C) Mr. Dwarka Nati, then about 7 years old) ¾ Mr. Aftab Ram (my second uncle) who used to reside separately away from our residential house at Rainamia.

D) Mrs. Leela Char (¼ Mr. Nefa Kantt) my aunt, with her three (Ms. Chaanda, Mohini and Kishni) daughters of about 7, 5 and 3 years of age respectively.

(Here, I must tell you that the survivors now are - Self, Dwarka Nati, Oma, Kishni and infant girl (presently 67 years old) and the rest have left for their heavenly abode.)

The Doonga topic is over; now let us come to important aspect of forward journey. While our residential house is at Karaporn Khushki, our Doonga had cast its anchor at a certain convenient point in "Kralayar Nalla" in Bagolej Mohalla basti. So, first task undertaken was to move all the articles of day to day use like bedding, utensils, eatables etc. to Doonga. When this work was finished, the articles etc. were stored and floors of the embankles, were set.

The Doonga started off, perhaps, on 7th of April 1934 (exact date now not remembered), from the "Kralayar Nalla" joint. Let me call it First Day’s - First Leg travel. As soon as the Doonga moved, both the ladies chanted some prayers, and as is customary with Hindus (particularly Kashmiri Pandits) they offered handfuls of rice into the stream (Varun Devta - water God) from both sides of the Doonga. The boat sped forward and, after covering some distance, we left behind Shiva Temple of Kralayar. The onward March through various