

King William's Town, where I grew up before the Second World War, is a small town in the Eastern Cape, which began as a military post on the frontier in the time of the Kaffir Wars, and as a mission station. The language and traditions were English, and a visiting American author in the 1950's described it as a typical Victorian ^{English} provincial town. Except for the weather; the winters were mild, but the summers were very hot and humid and several times each summer the temperature would reach 100° F, and when that happened before noon we schoolgirls were allowed to go home at 1 p.m. instead of 2. Air-conditioning was unknown. It was common in King to see beds on verandahs, as many people slept outside during the hot nights.

I spent my entire school career at one school, the Kaffrarian High School for Girls, except for the year before I turned six, when I went along with Hannah Gell and her sister Mully, to Miss Duckles. She taught us the 3 R's in winter in her dining room, and in summer in the stable, and it was not a play-school. The Kaffrarian was one of several schools in King - there was the brother school, Dale College, the Convent school for Girls, the Catholic Brothers' school, and two co-ed primary schools. The Kaffrarian, Dale and the Convent had boarding establishments attached. There was also a Teachers Training College which offered a basic two-year course, and more likely a Technical College for evening courses.

Our Principal, Miss Rowe was much feared and generally disliked, but she kept abreast of the times and was constantly introducing innovations, such as Class Councils, lessons in Musical Appreciation, and a variety of clubs which met during school hours and broadened our horizons. She also bred a social conscience in her pupils — thus each class had a project to help the less fortunate in the town, and at one time every girl brought an extra sandwich to school every day, to go to the Black School whose pupils normally saw food only in the evening. Our days were full. The afternoons were taken up with sports — in summer tennis and swimming, in winter hockey and netball, with matches on Saturdays — there were two Girl Guide Divisions attached to our school, and we had an active Debating Society.

In the town there was an excellent Public Library, open almost all day and every evening until 9 p.m. There was a museum which was said at the time to house the largest collection of mammals in Africa — and in a big case beside the elephant and hippopotamus stood a bushman, which I am convinced was really an African Bushman in South Africa had been deliberately exterminated as vermin. It never entered our heads that there was anything unbecoming in that exhibition! There was a bank (apart from the Standard Bank and Barclays) which donated all its profits to charity, and a Ladies Benevolent Society. The Operatic and Dramatic Society produced a Gilbert and Sullivan show every year.

and other interests were also served. Crime was almost unknown. There were recognized social codes, and we all had our visiting cards. Please don't hold it against me that I love the TV show "Be You Being Served" because in King there were three shops like that, and one of them, Beauchamp, Booth & Co., had a pompous floorwalker and an elderly ^{distinctly} ~~manly~~ ^{manly} ~~manly~~ ^{manly} given to bad language.

There was a small Jewish community in the town, but the numbers were enhanced by the families who lived in the countryside and came in for the holidays, so we had a shul and a kll for public functions, and a Rav. The young people had our Young Israel Society which would meet on Saturdays, and I think we were all Zionists. If my generation at least one of every family living in King came to live in Israel. I never saw evidence of anti-Semitism in King.

I hated school. I was no good at sports, very introverted, and at loggerheads with most of the teachers. But from the age of six I never wavered in my determination to be a teacher, so I spent three happy years at Rhodes University in Grahamstown, majoring in English and Psychology, and another at the University of Cape Town, which had been most highly recommended to me for its course in education. From the time I left school I applied myself assiduously to my studies.

My first job was at a Presbyterian mission station in the country not far from home. It was an all-female institution. Attached to the mission was a training school

for black teachers, all girls, who were boarders from far and wide, and a primary school for local girls: this served as a practising school. The principal, Faneba and the housekeeper were Scottish missionaries, but the rest of the training school staff comprised four white teachers and one black who was also a graduate. Everyone else was black. My private quarters were in a hut in the grounds and very often I would walk alone the mile to the Sedburg's trading station, which also housed the district post office. We had no fears. Every Saturday afternoon the farmers from the vicinity came to the mission for tennis, and every Sunday we all played tennis again at the Sedburg's. On Saturday evenings there was dinner and bridge at the Sedburg's. I was very happy at the mission, but I wanted to further my studies and with reluctance tore myself away after three and a half years. However, as by now my brother was far away at the war, my parents prevailed upon me to stay at home and to take a post at Dale College to free one of the men for army service. In South Africa the government was divided in its sympathy with the Crown or with Germany and had opted by a narrow margin majority to enter the war on the British side. So military service was optional, but before a teacher could go he had to find a qualified replacement. I taught at Dale for a year in three different posts, the sole female on the staff. Then my dream post fell vacant at my old school, the Staffaring, and I was very fortunate to get it. I taught English and Maths. I stayed in the school hostel, which gave me an insight

into boarding school life. That took care of the next three years, towards the end of which I got married, and as the Education Department did not employ married women I became a full-time wife and mother.

Ten years later we moved to Johannesburg, and it was agreed that I would teach again, temporarily, which I did until 1951, when I came to Israel. For the first two years I taught at Mayfair High, a co-ed school in a less-than-affluent area. After that, I was lucky enough to get a post within walking distance of my home, at Highlands North High School, a boys-only establishment. There was a very mixed population with many Jews and others whose parents had immigrated after the war from Italy, Greece, Lebanon, Portuguese East Africa, among other countries. I soon discovered to my horror that there was no Debating Society, so I started one, and my boys did very well and usually carried the evening at the Inter-School Public Speaking competitions. When I became aware of the injuries suffered by boys at boisterous play and especially in rugby games, I organised a squad of boys to serve as a First Aid Team. They were properly trained in Red Cross courses, which I also took until I had the Cold Certificate. Meanwhile I did enrichment courses to keep my mathematics and teaching up-to-date, in the afternoons and evenings or during the holidays, and gave extra lessons, which led me to visit him on a part-time basis and to my B.Ed. My special subject was the teaching of children with learning difficulties, and my dissertation was on Educational Facilities for Exceptionally

disturbed children.

I came to Israel determined to learn Hebrew, and to this end started my life here in Ashdod. Here I taught English to adults in some of the Community Centres, and this involved techniques new to me. I loved Ashdod, but after two years moved to Tel Aviv, which was nearer to my relatives, and here I taught one-to-one, partly for private gain, and partly as a volunteer attached to the Municipal Welfare Department. I have never regretted my decision to come to Israel to live.

Now I have retired. I always looked forward to my retirement. It is here, and I enjoy it.

It is here - enjoy it