

INTERVIEW INDEX (TRANSCRIPT): Margaret Hoffman

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Themes / topics

(p.1)

- Father's (Meyer's) origins [born in Leeds, England – parents came from Lithuania/Vienna]; parents and siblings
 - o Early years in SA
 - o Education [SACS, UCT, Trinity College Dublin]
 - o Return to SA; opening of medical practice in Parow – one of the first doctors in the Northern Suburbs
 - o Marriage to Reeva; house in Parow
- Segregation in the community; relations with black and coloured patients

(p.2)

- First doctors in Northern Suburbs
- Development of Parow in 1930s
 - o Carnegie Commission
 - o Community clinics
- Election of the National Party in the 1940s
- Meyer's connection to the factories in the area: helped out occasionally

(p.3)

- Golf
- Dr Meyer Hoffman's practice
 - o Patients (many railway workers)
 - o Margaret's early years of medical school: used to help out in the practice
 - o Patients (cont.)
 - o (p.4) Interactions with black and coloured patients
- Margaret's youth
 - o Memories of accompanying dad on house calls
 - o Sister Ruth loved cooking
 - o Student years at UCT
 - o Early working years in Durban
 - o Marriage; move to Durbanville
- Meyer's hobbies
 - o Horse-riding, fishing, golf
- Religiosity
 - o Family went to the Sampson's in Maitland for all the high holidays
 - o Never had shabbat at home

(p.5)

- Dinner parties at home
 - o Parents' friends
- Memories of The Victoria cinema in Parow (segregated); and The Grand in Maitland (white-only)
- Grandparents in Maitland
- Parents' social life in Parow
 - o Jewish family friends: Kushliks, Kaplans...

(p.6)

- Jewish social life -- high school years, parties
 - o Zionism; Bnei Zion in the Northern Suburbs
- Parents' politics -- mother = Zionist, involved with Union for Jewish Women
- Jewish Youth Group; Norman Spiro...meetings in the Bellville Community Hall
- Parents' politics (cont.) – mother = “very political”, an activist

(p.7)

- Religiosity (cont.)

- Family joined the reform?
- Cheder
 - Rabbi and Mrs Lipshitz...
- Meyer's hobbies & routine
 - Golf -- founding member at Clovelly Country Club & King David
 - Friday nights – brought treats from Milly's
 - ...died at the Pillaner Hotel, from a heart attack

(p.8)

- Reeva's politics
 - Active in the United Party; knocked on doors to enlist supporters
- Meyer's hobbies (cont.)
 - Had a video camera, filmed movies
 - Keen gardener
 - Relationship with Solomon, their gardener from the Eastern Cape
 - Margaret: political formation came from interactions with poor whites and coloured staff who worked in their home?
 - (p.9) Solomon = fired under unclear circumstances [after 8 years]
 - Had separate plates...
 - Parents had a distanced relationship with the staff – but Margaret remembers being close, gardening together..he would bring her gifts and tell stories [development of political/racial consciousness]
- Relationship with dad (Meyer)
 - Brought breakfast in bed, go for walks in the garden [“he knew all the flowers”]

(p.10)

- Garden
- Community: parents did not mix a lot with locals; never went to shul in Parow [though did grow up around the Maitland shul]
- Jewish community in Maitland
- Education in Parow
 - Awareness of apartheid

(p.11)

- Friends
 - o Class differences – ‘poor whites’ vs middle class
- Social life in Parow: mixed with Afrikaans and poor white families; Bnei Zion with Jewish youth
- Education (cont.)
 - o Mother = snobbish, sent children to Rustenburg (traveled by train with the SACS and Wynberg boys)

(p.12)

- Antisemitism – no real memories of it
- Impact of Carnegie Commission
- Rotary (parents’ involvement)
 - o Royal Cape golf course: Jewish people could not go there

(p.13)

- Meyer: avid reader; wanted his children to do medicine as well
 - o Older daughter: started a BSc, dropped out...got married to Max Sher, moved to America in 1976
- After Meyer’s death: family stayed on in Parow, until Margaret did internship at Groote Schuur – then Reeva sold the Parow house & moved to Sea Point
- Margaret
 - o Married straight after internship, moved to Durbanville with Theo
 - o (p.14) University: “became much more aware of racial problems”; learned about and befriended black/coloured students, learned about communism
 - o Racial awareness
- Family feud with Walter Levy over land
- (p.15) Jewish community in Parow; later moves to Claremont
- Family connections in Parow

(p.16)

- Meyer’s practice
 - o Assistants
 - o Resentment at volume of doctors coming into the area = competition?
- (p.17) Jewish kids at Parow Primary
- (p.18) Parties in high school