Big Williams 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 Kaffer Wars, and as a mission station. The language and traditions were English, and a visiting American author in the 1950s described it as a typical Victorian 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 kids on verandahs, or 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 16, when I went along with Hannah, Lelo, and her sister, Molly, to Miss Johnson's school, the G.R. 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 Kaffarian, Dale, and the convent had boarding establishments attached. There was also a Technical Training College which offered a basic two-year course, and more lately a Technical College for earning courses.
Our Principal, Miss Lowe, was much loved and generally
shy, but she kept almost all the times and was constantly
interacting with others, such as Class Council, Academic,
Musical, Appreciation, and a variety of clubs which
met during school hours and broadcast over the gym
she also used a social conscience in her pupils. Each
class had a project to help the less fortunate in
the town, and at one time every girl brought an entire
sandwich to school every day to go to the black school
where girls normally have 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 Club 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 9pm.
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 was convinced was real. The
Bushmen in South Africa had been deliberately
exterminated as savages. It never entered our heads
that there was anything untoward in that exhibiton.
But there was a Bank (apart from the Standard Bank and
Barclays) which donated all its profits to charity and a
Boerette Benevolent Society. The Evangelical and Mission
Society produced a Gilbert and Sullivan show every year.
and other interests were also served. Cain was almost
professional, there were recognized social roles and we
all had our visiting cards. Please don't hold it
against me that I love the TV show “Are You Being
Served?”, because in many ways even those shows were
like that, and one of them, “Healscamp”, both the C.I.O. had a
vast, ever increasing ledger, and an elderly, reliability must
never be lost 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 hall for public functions and a few, the young
people had our young Jewish Society, which would meet on
Sundays, and I think we were all Jewish. Of my generation
most of my family living in the east came to live
in Israel. I never saw evidence of anti-Semitism in New
I never attended school. I was no good at sports, very
interested, and a sportsman with most of the teachers.
But from the age of six, I never saw in my determination
to be a doctor. 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
highly recommended to me for its course in education. Then
the time I left school. I applied myself conscientiously to my
studies.

My first job was at a Kaffrarian Mission Station
in the country, not far from where I was an all-female
institution. Related to the mission was a training school.
for block teachers, all girls, who were boarding from far and wide, and a primary school for local girls. This was as a preaching school. The principal teacher and the housekeeper were Scottish missionaries, but the rest of the training school staff comprised four men with teachers and one girl who was also a graduate. Everyone else was black. My private garden was in a plot in the grounds and very often I would walk alone the mile to the Wellburn's trading station, which also housed the district post office. We had no cars. Every Saturday afternoon, the farmers from the vicinity came to the mission for bingo and very Sunday we all played tennis again at the Wellburns. On Saturday evenings there was dinner and bridge at the Wellburns. I was very happy at the mission, but I could not further my studies and until recently, see myself away from there for a long year.

However, as by now my brother was far away at the war, my parents persuaded upon me to stay at home and to take a part at Ube College to free one of the men for any service. In that time the government was divided in its sympathy with the Crown of British and had forced by a strong majority to order the war on the British side. The military service was optional, but before a student could go to the final and be qualified afterwards. I taught at Ube for a year in three different schools the arts, French and the staff. Then my dream post was exact at my old school. At Kaffraria and I was very fortunate to get it. I taught English and Maths. I stayed on the school hostel which gave me an insight...
into teaching school life. That took some 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, while I had until 1991, when I came to South Africa. For the first two years I taught at Mayfair High, a co-ed school in a lower-middle-class area. After that, I was lucky enough to get a post within walking distance of my home at Highlands North. That school, a boys-only establishment, then 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 became well known to my Dairy students, who were in the Debating Society, and I started one, and my boys did very well and usually carried the evening at the Inter-School Public Speaking Competitions. I was aware of the injuries suffered by boys at tobacco play, and especially in rugby games. I organized a squad of boys to serve as a First Aid Team, they were properly trained, and in Cross Country, which I also took until I had the Cold Outfit. Meanwhile, I also organized courses to keep my mathematics and teaching up-to-date, in the afternoons and evenings or during the holidays, and gave extra lessons, which helped with their work on a part-time basis and to my shock, my special subject was the teaching of children with learning difficulties, and my dedication was one Educational value for South Africa.
I came to Israel determined to earn a living and to
this end, I started my life here in Ashkelon. There I
began English to adults in some of the Community Centers
and this involved techniques new to me. I loved Ashkelon,
but after two years moved to Tel Aviv, which was nearer
to my relatives, and there I taught one-to-one, partly for
private gain, and partly on a volunteer basis attached to the
Municipal Welfare Department. I have never regretted my
decision to come to Israel to live.

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