

Interview: Lorraine and Alan Sandler

Oral History Title Clip: It's Not The First Place That I Grew Up

Theme: Ties To Southern Africa

Interviewer: Lisa Newman

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(Lorraine)

I went back strangely enough eight months after I arrived because I promised my elder sister that I would go back to her children's bar and bat mitzvah. So Alan stayed with the elder son and I took the youngest son with us. He was having terrible nightmares and we couldn't [sic] I couldn't leave him. He was too little. He came with me and we had a wonderful, wonderful time. Returning was frightful because we were suffering. It was painful. It was difficult. Again, I was indulged and spoiled and welcomed and encompassed in South Africa. [laughs] And we came back to the emptiness. There were things like that that we had to kind of get used to. We went—

(Alan)

But we didn't go back to South Africa often. What happened was that Lorraine's dad and stepmom would come for quite a long period of time and my dad definitely would come.

(Lorraine)

They both came to stay with us.

(Alan)

So what happened was that they were here more than we were going there. We started to go back to South Africa when our fathers got ill—well, elderly. And they would move in where they had caregivers, et cetera. Now we were going back. And then—

(Lorraine)

But they came to us a lot.

(Alan)

Then after they passed away, we went back for the unveilings. For eighteen years, I never went back to South Africa. I had not seen South Africa after Mandela had been freed. And we went back. At that stage the couple that Lorraine had meet way back at the beginning was very keen to see South Africa and we



said “Fine, come back with us. We’ll drive. We’ll show you.” And that’s what we did. And, of course, nothing is the same as where you grew up. Wherever you grew up, it’s not the same anymore.

(Lorraine)
It’s changed.

(Alan)
Nothing is the same. The stores aren’t the same. The place that you loved for lunch. So it’s not the same. It’s now big. It’s a much bigger city.

(Lorraine)
It’s beautiful...but it’s different.

(Alan)
Quite magnificent, but it’s not the place that I grew up. And, you know... I don’t miss Cape Town. I miss the people. I really had some very good friends. And I do miss the sea. I’m a sea baby. We grew up at the ocean and that’s what we’re used to. If you ask me what I miss about South Africa, it’s the sea.

(Lorraine)
The ocean.

(Alan)
The ocean.

OJASALP.ORG