



Interviewed: Richard Stern
Oral History Clip Title: Scouting
Theme: Jewish Life in Southern Africa
Interviewer: Lisa Newman
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(Interviewer)
Do you remember celebrating the holidays? Jewish holidays?

(Richard)
Yes. Very much so. Yeah.

(Interviewer)
What do you remember?

(Richard)
You really want to know? [laughs] I guess the highlight of the holidays was when they had the chopped liver. [laughs] Under the sukkah, okay? But I've never really... Should I say, I was never really imbued with the Jewish religion. I knew I was Jewish. I had lots of fights at school because I was Jewish.

(Interviewer)
Tell me about that.

(Richard)
That was later on. That was when I went to boarding school. Just by the way, part of [sic] one of our major activities when we grew up in Muizenberg was there was a Boy Scouts troop called Second Jewish [sic] Second Muizenberg Jewish. It was the only scout camp [sic] scout troop in the world that was only for Jews. It wasn't like Habonim. It was a bona fide Scout group. You started off in Cubs and then you went into Scouts. And my father, as I'd mentioned to you I think, was very involved in the scouting movement. But he was also the head of Habonim in South Africa. He was the [sic] what they call the *manhig*. Interestingly enough, he never wanted us to belong to Habonim and I can't quite figure out why and I never asked him. So here was [sic] you know, ask me about my Jewish life. My father was involved with Habonim but he wanted us to go to Scouts. And we had Scout camp three weeks, four weeks every year. We'd go into the Bush—remember this is Africa—and we'd go into the bush and we'd clear the trees and pitch our tents and have inspection every morning in maybe temperatures of thirty in the shade. It wasn't very comfortable. And then you'd swim in the river and at nighttime you'd go out and do all the things that scouting people do: find your way home using the stars, follow broken twigs as to how to get home. And so that was our major activity in the summer.

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