

Interviewed: Aubrey and Lucille Groll
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Theme: Jewish Life In Southern Africa
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(Lucille)

And we went to Hebrew school at the Reform synagogue in Johannesburg, with Hebrew school mainly being on a Saturday morning before Shabbat services. And then we'd go straight into services. And I think as we got older, we went to an extra day of Hebrew school, that was housed actually at our local primary school. We would go just down the road. We celebrated Jewish holidays mainly in the Reform temple, in some family homes, but it was mainly a community activity in the Reform temple.

(Interviewer)

Like seders?

(Lucille)

Like seders and that sort of thing, Rosh Hashanah, yeah, at the temple. Those are my memories and sometimes in people's homes. And not very much as I say emphasis on Zionism, went to school with a large number of Jewish kids at the schools I was at. Primary school was a mixed school, high school was all girl's school. My brother, all boy's school. We mixed almost entirely with Jewish kids and the message was always that you stayed within the Jewish community. But, and of course I'm talking about the 1950s, very little inter-marriage at that time.

(Interviewer)

What area in Johannesburg did you live in?

(Lucille)

In Saxonwold and Killarney. Which I think were more primarily Jewish areas. I think. I mean everybody I knew was Jewish in that area.

(Interviewer)

So it was easy enough to mix with Jewish?

(Lucille)

It was very easy to mix with Jewish kids. And I have no recall of the holiday of Hanukkah at all. Never, never, never remember hearing about it or doing anything with Hanukkah. I don't remember it, at all. Just the main Jewish holidays and for those we were kept out of school. And of course, in Reform it was only one day, that we were kept out of school.

(Interviewer)

And did you mix also with more Orthodox or traditional kids?

(Lucille)

No, I didn't. I think almost everybody, no, I didn't know any. Yes, I did. I knew in high school, I knew some Jewish Orthodox kids and one young girl who got married at a very young age and I remember going to a shower and then after her wedding she put on a sheitel (a wig worn by some Orthodox Jewish married women). But it was really very far removed from any of my own experiences. It was quite an unusual experience.