



CHOL – Community History On-Line

A forum for those involved in preserving the footprint of Southern African Jewish community life in digital form

Community History On-Line CHOL Newsletter #23 September 2025

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## ‘Share your stories’ – an Update

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Firstly I’d like to mention the loss of some special members recently whom I knew personally. **Alan Kantor**, a colleague of mine from Medical School at UCT, who was a keen CHOL supporter who was always active behind the scenes and with whom I enjoyed a continual correspondence. **Norman Barron**, originally from Bellville also passed away recently. He and Linda were committed supporters of our Zoom sessions and always showed interest regarding the upcoming program of CHOL. Condolences to the families. They will be sadly missed.

CHOL has been a remarkable and special platform for connecting to so many South Africans everywhere. At present there are more than 600 names on our emailing list. A daunting figure to be sure. It’s no wonder that connections have been made by so many of you with others. Yes, we are indeed all from a similar background, our roots seem to have determined this more than the physical geography of where we grew up.

On a personal level, it’s been truly wonderful ‘meeting’ so many new people from San Francisco to Melbourne, from the Gaza Strip in Israel to Ceres in the Cape! Our members have shared their personal stories with us but the amazing aspect for me has been connecting to people who somehow knew someone who knew someone who knew my Aunt Hazel (Shleime Kaplan, a GP in California, of 99 with whom I chatted not long ago and whose memory is far better than mine!). Or, the late Anthony Fagin, who passed away two years ago in London and whose stories on the CHOL website are special, who knew my Aunt Phyllis pretty well; or most relevant to the topic in question, meeting Geraldine Auerbach as a result of the Web Exhibition I did on the Kaplan Centre site about the Jewish doctors of the Northern Suburbs in Cape Town and who conscripted me onto the project of Share Your Stories!?

Connecting to these new friends via Zoom, reading their stories, I have come to understand that our growing up at the tip of Africa was a unique experience. There were some wonderful aspects, the common journey our forebears had taken, their success in building a life for themselves and their families, laying down the foundation for strong and vibrant communities, the emphasis on education of the next generation no matter what! The stunning achievements in so many different fields growing up in South Africa, spreading these far and wide.

And yes, realizing as I progress along my retirement and have more time to think, countless issues that weren't really discussed or dealt with by the community and which left many feeling isolated and alone. Here, I refer to dealing with health problems, both physical and psychological which were often terrifyingly real and needed outside support which wasn't there. There were members of the community who suffered pain and tremendous heartache which needed to be managed without professional or official community assistance and support and left its mark forever. I am sure that we all knew and remember the tough stories of abortion in unmarried women, financial difficulties that members went through, family issues that divided homes so painfully...

And yes, there are several stories on our website telling about these periods in our lives which you are invited to read.

Before mentioning some of the stories, I'd like to share with you that 3 members of our Share Your Stories group met with Sally Crankshaw, a lecturer from UCT, for a wonderful creative writing workshop which not only connected us, but encouraged us to sit down with a sharpened pencil and actually write!

So, now to mention only some of the lovely stories from **5785** on our site
<https://chol.website/stories.htm> (page 7)

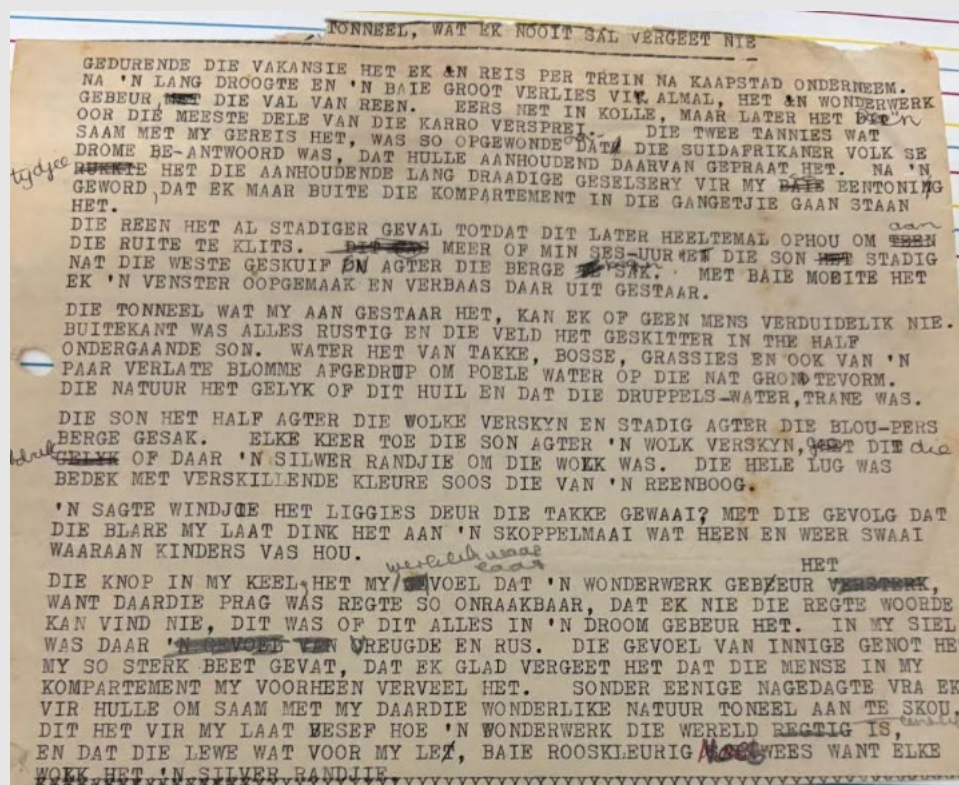
- ✓ **Linda Kantor's** Renata's piano which tells the journey that the family's grand piano made from Rhodes to Cape Town
- ✓ **Brenda Kerbel's** 'Chopped Herring' (say no more!)
- ✓ **Allan Wolman's** 'Africa' a narrative of taking the writer's family on a trip through Africa
- ✓ **Fonda Dubb's** 'The Grand Hotel' a delightful poem of Pietersburg where Fonda grew up.
- ✓ **Daniel Schwab's** 'From Shadows to Strength' where the writer shares the family's past in Germany which only revealed itself in Daniel's adult years.
- ✓ **Philip Lanzkowsky's** detailed memoir of growing up in Cape Town in the 30's-40's
- ✓ **Brenda Ginsberg's** who grew up in Somerset West's account of how she became an Antique Dealer in Florida!
- ✓ **Estelle Lewak's** story of travelling the Union Castle Ship line to England as a child – a far cry from her life today on a Kibbutz.
- ✓ **Your's Truly** – telling the story of my fascination and discovery of Thomas Hodgkin's grave which is in Jaffo, Israel

In addition , those who missed the delightful zoom presentation of Natalie Conyer in Sydney Australia as well as Orna Klein in Israel about their books, crime fiction and serving in the Mossad are invited to listen! <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHYB-8hNYvc>

Before I leave you for now, I'd like to tell you of some terrific stories that are about to be posted

- ✓ **Marion Polusky-Nakash** who grew up in Prieska in the Northern Cape whose charming description of an unforgettable scene of rain in the Karroo was written in Afrikaans at the age of 10! The translation will be posted
- ✓ **Issy Nochomowitz's** short memoir of growing up in London Road Sea Point
- ✓ **Harry Friedland's** 'Birth' a charming account of just that!
- ✓ Soon we will be connecting to a super range of stories published in the past editions of the Reporter magazine of the South African Jewish American Community (**SAJAC**) with whom we have connected via **Pamela Nathan**.

For those interested here is the link to the presentation about CHOL I delivered to the



forum of the community a few months ago <https://sajac.com/videos/>

- ✓ **Two anonymous stories** narrating painful issues experienced by the writer.

And yes, on a happy, lighter, nostalgic note on this very momentous day a few before Yom Kippur, I just have to tell you that just today I was reminded how much of a positive and happy influence Andy Capp was in our house growing up! Especially for my brother,

Stanley. Just today he sent me this stunning photo which I believe leaves all contenders out for the count.



Before signing off, just to say it will be lovely seeing you again when we get together for our **four November presentations on 4, 11, 18 and 25th at 7.30pm, South African time.** Excellent speakers, including author Ted Botha, and Professor Richard Mendelsohn, Boris Gorelik, as well as several CHOL members who will talk about agricultural entrepreneurship in South Africa. I, myself will be talking about the Bashew Brothers who made cool drinks. Do mark your diaries. Details will be on the CHOL website www.chol.website and more information on the zoom link with next month's Newsletter.

Shana Tova to you all! Take care and be well...

Gail Loon Lustig

Checkout the CHOL website: www.chol.website which now has on it:

- 59 [Communities](#)
- 64 [Memoirs](#)
- 175 original [Stories](#)
- 41 Videos of [Presentations](#)

also on the site are resources and journal articles and all our CHOL newsletters

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**CHOL – Community History On-Line** is a forum set up in 2020, under the auspices of the Kaplan Centre at UCT and the South African Jewish Museum – bringing together all those working on / or interested in creating an online presence relating to the **History of Jewish Communities in Southern Africa.**

see [www.chol.website](http://www.chol.website)

contact [info@chol.website](mailto:info@chol.website).

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