

VISITING



Figure 1. A photo collage I created to introduce the film "Visiting" using Adobe Express. These photos are from Ruth Runciman's personal collection.

Top left: Ellen Kaumheimer with Joseph Hellmann, undated. I think this photo booth snapshot was taken while Ellen was still a teenager. It was probably in the late 1920s. In 1928, she turned 20. It was definitely before she was married. She looks a lot older in her marriage photo (to be included later). She married Joseph in 1932. Andrew Bank notes in his book *Pioneers of the Field: South Africa's Women Anthropologists* (2016, 113) that Joseph was a Lithuanian Jewish lawyer. In her 1982 interview with historian, Riva Krut, Ellen remarked, "...one of the troubles, not the sole one, about my first marriage, was that he

was an *Eastern Jew*. He was a Jew of Eastern Jewish descent.” She added that this was considered "not good" (see page 4 of the transcript). Ellen emphasized the word "Eastern" as she differentiated between Eastern and Western Jews.

The middle photograph is of Ellen when she was a baby with her mother Clothilde (Theilheimer) Kaumheimer. Since Ellen was born August 25, 1908, I estimate this photo was taken in 1909. She looks approximately 6 months to 1 year old in this photo.

An undated photo of Ellen is at the top right. She is in a living room or sitting room next to two paintings. On the verso of the photo is scrawled "Last of the Mohicans" though it is difficult to read, so I'm not sure if I got that correct (see below). Perhaps this was the name of one of the paintings in the background.

Bottom right: A portrait of Ellen taken by *The Star*, also undated but it was probably taken in the 1930s or 1940s.

In the bottom center is a professional family photograph (ca. 1919-1921). Ellen is at the bottom right and looks between the ages of 11 and 13. Inez was born May 28, 1913 (her birthday is one day before mine), so she was 5 years younger. Inez looks between 6 and 8 years old.

The photo at the middle left is of Ellen and Ruth. Ruth's first husband Dennis Mack-Smith is also in this photograph. However, his image is covered by Ellen's baby photo. Ruth was married to Dennis from 1959 to 1962. Therefore, this photo was probably taken during or slightly before this period. Bodo Koch, Ellen's second husband, is to Ellen's right (the viewer's left), see full photo below.

The following is an imagined monologue of Ellen describing her relationship with her father. It is based on several sources I used for my dissertation, including Andrew Bank's *Pioneers of the Field: South Africa's women anthropologists*, an interview with Ellen Hellmann conducted by historian Riva Krut, in June 3, 1982, my interview with Ruth Runciman in January 29, 2018, and an article by Pat Schwartz, "A view from both sides of the fence," published July 10, 1981 in the *Rand Daily Mail*. The piece of information about Chlothilde's father's property in Munich comes from a website called "[Jüdisches Leben in Gunzenhausen](#)" about the Jewish community in Gunzenhausen before and after the Second World War. Andrew Bank's book and Pat Schwartz's article are available on the coffee table in the sitting room within the exhibit. The interview with Riva Krut is playing on a loop in the room, while my interview with Ruth can be listened to by picking up a telephone on one of the side tables, next to the couch.



Figure 2. Set design idea for the central sitting room. It has a more mid-20th century feel, but with a similar color palette as the "list of inspiration" parlor described earlier, with a red couch, and green chair. The footrest is covered in a black and white zig-zag pattern, with dark wood legs that point away from the cushion. The coffee table is an old trunk, and atop it is a brown bowl, and a stack of books with a dark blue, bottle vase, holding small white flowers. The pillows on the couch and the painting behind it have a Mexican theme.

This photograph of Ellen holding an Irma Stern painting, *Arab in Black* (1939), is displayed on the coffee table, and the painting, *Maid in Uniform*, is hanging on the wall behind the couch.



Figure 3. Ellen Hellmann holding Irma Stern's painting "Arab in Black" (1939) for the Treason Trial Art and Antique Auction, published in *The Star*, February 19, 1959 [Image 32 film version].

According to LaNitra Berger, Irma Stern is one of South Africa's most famous artists, though she is mostly unknown outside of South Africa. White people in the art and literary world both inside and outside of South Africa praised her portrayals of South Africa's racial diversity. Yet she "held deeply racist views and supported segregation through apartheid."¹ Stern was both financially and critically successful and received support from the apartheid government to represent South Africa at global exhibitions.² Just to provide one example, Stern's most expensive work is *Two Malay Musicians* and is valued at over \$1.5 million.³ Like Ellen Hellmann, Irma Stern "was emotionally connected to her female subjects while being gradually socialized as a Jewish South African into white supremacy through the colonial and apartheid systems." Also like Ellen, Irma struggled with "self-denigration."⁴

According to the [Irma Stern Museum](#), Irma held "paternalistic" views toward Black South Africans, depicting them as "primitive." Yet she also engaged "with people on their own terms." This painting analyzes themes of race, class and gender, portraying the defiant stance of a domestic worker. Ellen Hellmann depicted a highly similar demographic of South Africans in her ethnographies. She was also paternalistic and condescending. Unlike Irma, Ellen opposed apartheid, though Hellmann was not "radical" in this

¹ LaNitra M. Berger, *Irma Stern and the Racial Paradox of South African Modern Art: Audacities of Color* (Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2020), 2-3.

² Berger, *Irma Stern*, 3.

³ Berger, *Irma Stern*, 1.

⁴ Berger, *Irma Stern*, 5.

opposition. Just as Irma depicted her subjects' agency while simultaneously advocating for their subjugation to apartheid, Ellen wrote critically of her participants' behaviors and philosophies while revealing their agentive power. This will be explored in the chapter on Lobola.



Figure 4. Irma Stern's "Maid in Uniform" (1955) Oil on canvas, 69 x 63 cm

THE UGLY DUCKLING IN A FAMILY OF BEAUTIES

Ellen: My father, Bernard Kaumheimer, came to Johannesburg in 1894 at the age of sixteen. He was poor, and uneducated, an immigrant from a town near Nürnberg, Germany. Born in 1878, and orphaned, he came from a trading family and started to work in the retail industry with some cousins upon arrival in South Africa. He worked as a messenger boy on a donkey. He was so poor that he only got to eat an egg once a year on his birthday, which he often reminded my younger sister, Inez, and me of, whenever we had eggs for breakfast.

After working with his cousins for twelve years and building up his savings, he returned to Germany to find a wife in 1906. This was the custom at that time. He married my mother, Clothilde Theilheimer (she was called "Clottie").



Figure 5. Clothilde and Bernard Kaumheimer, wedding photograph, 17 December 1906. This photograph is extraordinary because in it you can see both Ruth Runciman and me holding the wedding stationary of her grandparents. In the background you can see her parents' wedding photograph (on the right) from 1932 and underneath that on the left is a photo of Ruth with her boyfriend at Wits, Jacques Berthod. The unmarked envelope that these photographs were stored in, is at the top left of the photo. This was on top of Ruth's kitchen table, and her garden is in the background (out of focus). This photo was taken on July 15, 2024 when I visited Ruth Runciman's mews house in London.

She was considered to be exceptionally beautiful and her parents were very much opposed to the match, since they did not want her to marry down. They thought of Africa as a way-out, wild, and even a "one-eyed" place, full of wild animals and monsters. My mother's parents were part of the petit-bourgeoisie in Munich, Germany. They were not terribly posh, though perhaps they thought they were. They didn't know much about Africa in 1906, but neither did most of the people they knew. My mother's family owned a farm in Munich, which was confiscated by the Nazis and so my mother ended up receiving restitution after the war.

My father eventually became very wealthy and so my younger sister and I grew up well off, part of the privileged minority in South Africa. My parents, and especially my father, were very strict and used the Victorian style of parenting [MORE ON THIS PARENTING STYLE].

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They thought that children should be seen but not heard. I fought with my father constantly. I was stubborn and difficult and believed that argument was the spice of life.

My father doted on my sister and made me feel as if I were the ugly duckling in a family of beauties. My father and I also disagreed when it came to politics, since he considered me a communist. Though, ironically, later my daughter, Ruth, complained that I was not radical enough. I identified as Liberal and eventually was a leader in the Progressive Party.

FAT JEWESS: THE RACIALIZED DISGUST THAT SEEPS TO THE BONE

My fat body disgusted my mother (or so it seemed). She tried hard to make me white, right, to make me thin, no butt, since she hated her own. But my face was fat and so was my belly. This reminded her of the Jewishness she had tried to escape through having children with my dad. She removed a piece of herself to fit into whiteness. She wanted me to remove many pieces of myself. She constantly reminded me and complained to the pediatrician, “Why is Abby’s belly so big? She can’t fit into any normal (white) girls’ clothes.”



Figure 6. Abby, age 2.75, February 16, 1985, listening to a Bert & Ernie record & cleaning in between my toes (a favorite pastime learned from my dad). This is labeled [Image 4] in film version.

In the bathtub, when I was five, a white girl from Brownies pointed at the fat rolls on my belly and called me a “five-layer cake.” In middle school, a group of popular white boys yelled “Earthquake” as I passed by in French class. Walking to school with two boys, one white, one black, the white boy spit in my hair.

My fat (white?) Jewish female body caused this: ridicule, existing outside my body, inadmissible for acceptance.

~

Critiquing Jewish daughters' bodies is common practice in Jewish families; dieting is connected to the desire to become like the idealized, white, blond, skinny women, to assimilate into white normative femininity: "Dieting was about my and my mother's aspirations to blond-people standards of feminine beauty," Karen Brodtkin described in her book *How Jews Became White Folks* in 1998.⁵ Rachel Bloul recounted in 2013: "I was destined, according to my mother, to become a 'dirty Jewess': I would grow up fat, unkempt, trashy." Bloul, a sociologist, felt she disgusted her mother and developed anorexia because of the revulsion she felt for her own body.⁶ In a 2012 study by Maya Maor, Jewish daughters in Israel described how their mothers perceived fatness as a "menace" that only dieting could cure; to be fat was to be unbeautiful.⁷ Even Ruth Landes depicted the "hostile" antagonism between Eastern European Jewish mothers and their daughters; Landes, who wrote this article for *Psychiatry* in 1950, maintained that the mothers felt threatened by their daughters' rising power within the home.⁸

My mom recalls being teased mercilessly as a girl, subject to anti-Semitic jokes, and still has low self-esteem. She wanted to be blonde and tall, not short, with dark hair and an olive-complexion. She hates when people ask her, "What are you?" She married my dad, a white man, raised as marginally Christian, so that her children would not "look Jewish." She wanted us to pass as white to escape what Rachel Bloul described as a "racialized disgust [that] contaminates its victims to the bone... [that] invades and structures one's corporeal schema."⁹ Brodtkin traced how antisemitism becomes engrained in Jewish families' communal memories¹⁰ and Thomas Fuchs explicated in "The phenomenology of body memory" how embodied memories construct how we conceptualize ourselves.¹¹ My mother's racialized disgust for her body stemmed from her internalized gendered anti-Semitism and became her aversion for my not-white-enough body. This transferred into my own revulsion, which invaded and structured my racialized self-identification.

Racialized bodies are perceived to be polluting, not belonging, revolting, and in need of expulsion.¹²

⁵ Karen Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What That Says About Race in America* (Rutgers University Press, 1998), 17.

⁶ Rachel Bloul, "Do I Look Jewish in This? A Phenomenological Approach to Intercorporeality and Racism," *Identities* 20, no. 5 (2013): 527, 533-534.

⁷ Maya Maor, "Fat Women: The Role of the Mother-Daughter Relationship Revisited," *Women's Studies International Forum* 35, no. 2 (2012): 101-103.

⁸ Ruth Landes and Mark Zborowski, "Hypotheses Concerning the Eastern European Jewish Family," *Psychiatry* 13 (1950): 456-457.

⁹ Bloul, "Do I look Jewish," 539.

¹⁰ Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White*, 3, 7.

¹¹ Thomas Fuchs, "The Phenomenology of Body Memory" in *Body memory, Metaphor and Movement*, ed. Sabine C. Koch, Thomas Fuchs, Michela Summa, and Cornelia Müller (John Bejamins, 2012), 9.

¹² Bloul, "Do I look Jewish," 540.

White male bodies are unmarked bodies, while black bodies of all genders are marked as inferior, and black people are seen as being solely their bodies.¹³

Though I could not be classified as black, I experienced a similar process: I felt my female body was marked as other, even if it is a “white” Jewish body. Sophie Tucker, a Jewish vaudeville singer and blackface performer, was so “big and ugly” her producer forced her to perform in blackface because of racist audience associations between black women, fatness, and supposed lack of femininity.¹⁴

¹³ Radhika Mohanram, “Chapter 2: The Embodiment of Blackness,” in *Black Body: Women, Colonialism, and Space* (University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

¹⁴ Pamela Brown Lavitt, “First of the Red Hot Mamas: ‘Coon shouting’ and the Jewish Ziegfeld Girl,” *American Jewish History* 87, no. 4 (1999): 259-260.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN DOMESTIC SETTINGS

Ellen's teacher and mentor at the University of Witwatersrand, Winifred Hoernlé, was a proponent of "Christian Trusteeship."

The White Man was the "trustee" for the Backward non-White races, his "wards."¹⁵

The Context: African women were prohibited from commercially brewing beer, allowing white authorities to monopolize production and sales through government-controlled municipal beer halls. The profits from these beer halls were used to fund police surveillance of Black communities, with law enforcement frequently raiding slums to enforce these restrictions.¹⁶

While studying anthropology with [Winifred Hoernlé](#) at the University of Witwatersrand, Ellen conducted her master's thesis research in 1933-1934 in the "slum yard" called [Rooiyard](#), in the center of Johannesburg, South Africa. This project grew out of the South African Institute of Race Relations's (SAIRR) enquiry into the experiences of women beer-brewers, who had been imprisoned because of liquor laws.¹⁷ Ellen would be the president of SAIRR from 1955-1956.

Ellen's dissertation was entitled, *Problems of Urban Bantu Youth: Report of an Enquiry into the Causes of Early School Leaving and Occupational Opportunities amongst Bantu Youth in Johannesburg*. Conducted in 1937-1938 in Pimville and Orlando¹⁸ location in Soweto (a

¹⁵ Kelly Gillespie, "Containing 'The Wandering Native': Racial Jurisdiction and the Liberal Politics of Prison Reform in 1940s South Africa," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 37, no. 3 (2011): 505, 508.

¹⁶ Paul La Hausse, *Brewers, Beerhalls and Boycotts: A History of Liquor in South Africa* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press, 1988), 22-23, 35, 42.

¹⁷ Hilda Kuper, "Function, History, Biography: Reflections on Fifty Years in the British Anthropological Tradition" in *Functionalism Historicized: Essays on British Social Anthropology*, ed. George W. Stocking Jr. (University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 195-196. Andrew Bank, *Pioneers of the Field: South Africa's Women Anthropologists* (Cambridge University Press and International African Institute, 2016), 105, 115, 195.

¹⁸ Orlando was the largest "Native" location in Johannesburg, with a population of 40,000. See Ellen Hellmann, *Problems of Urban Bantu Youth: Report of an Enquiry into the Causes of Early School Leaving and Occupational Opportunities amongst Bantu Youth in Johannesburg* (South African Institute of Race Relations 1940), 2.

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Black Township to the southwest of Johannesburg), and Alexandra Township near Sandton (a wealthy northern suburb of Johannesburg), and published in 1940, this project, too, emerged via the SAIRR. It was funded by the South African Council for Educational and Social Research.

Ellen investigated the reasons for school leaving and job opportunities for “Native children” and youth. With the assistance of Conference Setlogelo, she interviewed mothers of children who had left school to better understand their economic conditions and marital status.



Figure 7. Noatsi and Setlogelo. Alexandra Township, November 1937. Ellen Hellmann Papers (A1419) at the Historical Papers Archive, University of Witwatersrand, William Cullen Library, Subseries 8.1.1, File 31, Item 20, Reference code: [ZA A1419-8-8.1-8.1.1-20](#)

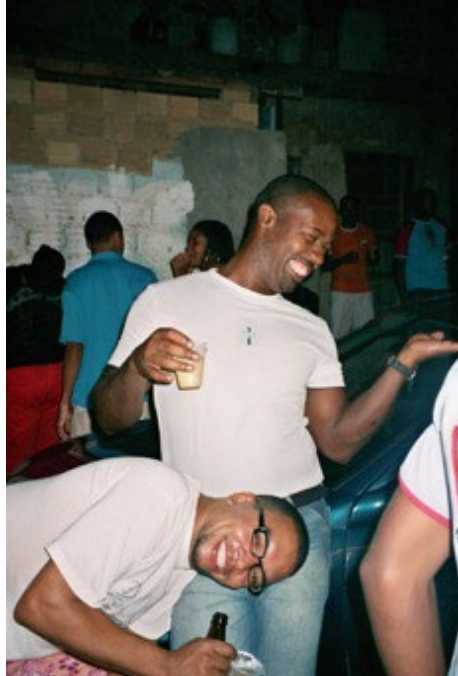


Figure 8. Jair with Marcos in Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, on Sept 20, 2005, during a visit to Brazil in the year after I graduated from Brandeis University (all names are pseudonyms).

She interviewed three groups of families:

- 216 “school leaver” families
- 100 “sample area families” from four parts of Orlando, the largest “Native location” in Johannesburg, to answer the question: were the school leavers different in a significant way from the “normal” population of “Natives”?
- 28 “economically better families” from two mine compounds and Alexandra Township, where the economic standing was “well above average”¹⁹

She did not stop there. She also examined school records of 12 schools in Johannesburg, thus covering about half of all African school children in the city. She ran essay contests for students in or above “Standard 5” (ages 10-11, so like 5th grade in the U.S.) to get children’s point of view on school and home life, and their relationships with their parents. She had questionnaires sent to all pupils in Standard 5 and 6 at five large schools in Pimville and Alexandra Townships. She interviewed teachers, principals, advisory boards, and both Africans and Europeans.²⁰

¹⁹ Hellmann, *Problems of Urban Bantu Youth*, 1-2.

²⁰ Hellmann, *Problems of Urban Bantu Youth*, 2

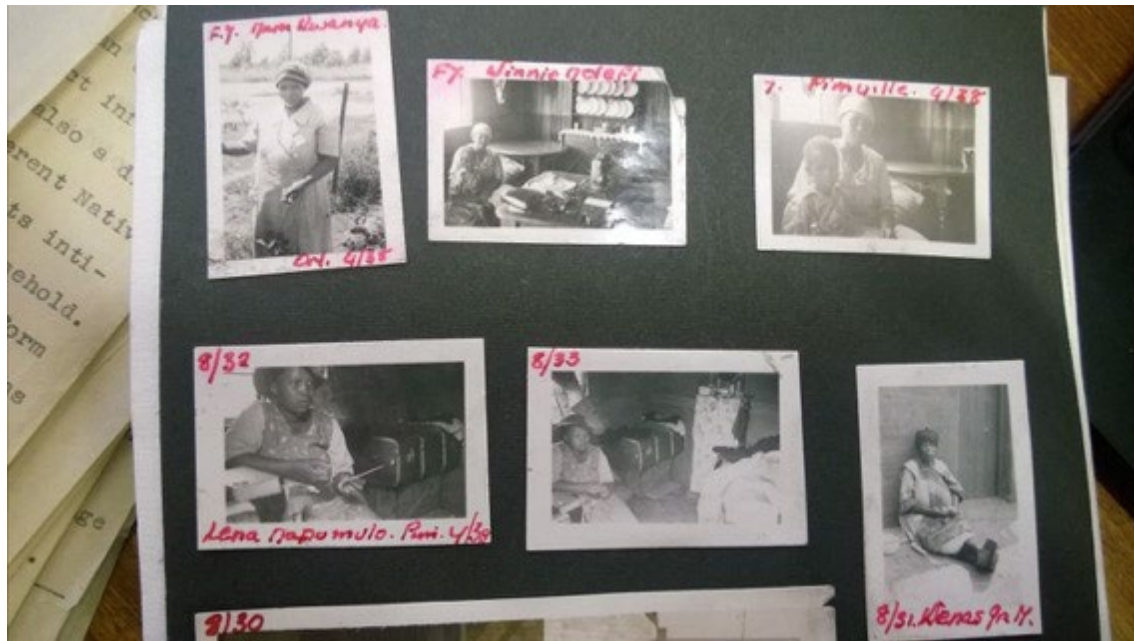


Figure 9. Women and children in domestic settings in Pimville and Orlando. These photos were taken in Soweto Township to the Southwest of Johannesburg in 1938. Series 8, photo album 31.1, page 17, Ellen Hellmann Papers, Historical Papers Archive, University of Witwatersrand, William Cullen Library, Johannesburg. [Image 2 in film inventory] Reference code: [ZA HPRAA1419-8-8.1-8.1.1-48](#)

Ellen's photographs of "Women and children in domestic settings" are available online, but holding the page in my hands versus solely looking at it on a computer screen was a completely different experience. The online catalog for the Historical Papers Archive doesn't list the names of the featured women and children. However, the red captions do name some of the people, but certain letters are unclear. I am not sure who wrote these captions. The following is my attempt at transcription. From top left and going clockwise:

- F.4. Nam or Mam Kwanya DM? or DN? 4/38 (April 1938)
- F 7 Winnie Nolefi.
- 7. Pimville 4/38.
- 8/32 Lena Napumulo Pimville 4/38.
- 8/33 is a zoomed out version of the previous photo of Lena Napumulo.
- 8/31. Wenas? Gr M (grandmother)



Figure 10. Ellen Hellmann's home at 14 First Ave in Lower Houghton, a wealthy northern suburb of Johannesburg. I snapped this photo when researcher Jill Weintraub took me to the historic site, Feb 26, 2017.

Upon seeing the house where Ellen lived, I thought it ironic that Ellen's maternal grandparents thought of Africa as a "way out" place. 14 First Ave is a heritage site in Johannesburg that Swiss architect, Theophile Schaerer, built for Ellen's father, Bernard Kaumheimer, in 1936. In a letter from Hellmann to Ruth Landes in December 1956, Ellen commented that she and her husband sold their "small, but rather charming home" [in Dunkeld] and moved into "the parental mansion so that my Mother could keep the home she likes and the occupations of looking after it which she needs now more than ever."²¹ Bernard had died in the spring of 1956 while Ellen and her daughter were visiting Barcelona. Ellen and Ruth visited other places during that five-week trip, and Ruth looks to be about 20 in this photograph.

²¹ Ellen Hellmann to Ruth Landes, Dec 27, 1956, Ruth Landes Papers, Box 3, National Anthropological Archives, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.



Figure 11. Ruth and Ellen Hellmann, Italy [?], ca. 1956, from Ruth's personal collection

I spent a month in Johannesburg in February to March of 2017. I stayed in Parkview, near Tyrone Avenue, on Athlone Road, in a studio I rented on Airbnb from a couple who ran a creative writing business. Their home, as well as all the others on the street, were enclosed behind walls, reminding me of Brazil.

Parkview is north of central Johannesburg, and west of Houghton, where Ellen's parental "mansion" is located. Parkview is also the suburb where Ruth, Ellen's daughter, grew up. Inez, Ellen's sister, lived next door to Ellen and Ruth Hellmann on Tyson Road in Parkview. Ruth lived with Inez for approximately a year from 1944 to 1945, when her mom traveled to the U.S. to attend the World Jewish Congress.²² (This also could have been when Ellen and Ruth Landes met.) The following year, from 1946-1947, Ruth lived with her mother and grandparents at 14 First Avenue in Houghton before Ellen and Bodo married in 1948. She listed it as her address in the records of the Joint Council of Europeans and Africans in 1946.²³ The next year, in 1948, Ellen married Bodo Koch.²⁴ During 1948-1949, Ruth stayed with her grandparents at 14 First Avenue, while attending the elite girls' school, Roedean, as a day student. Then she became a boarding student between 1949 and 1953. She attended Wits from 1953 to 1956, and began Girton College at Cambridge that same year,

²² Ellen Hellmann to J.D. Rheinallt Jones, Jan 23, 1945, AD843RJ, Box 26, Aa 3.3.5 SAIRR Head Office Correspondence: Subjects, Visits by SAIRR staff, File 6, 1944-1945, Historical Papers Archive, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

²³ List of office bearers for 1946 of the Joint Council of Europeans and Africans, 1947 Correspondence, AD1433, Box 23, Cj 2.1.27, Johannesburg Joint Council Correspondence, 1944-1948, Historical Papers Archive, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

²⁴ Andrew Bank, *Pioneers*, 134-137.

graduating in 1958.²⁵ Ruth showed me the *Who's Who* entry of herself from the 2015 edition when I last visited her, July 15, 2024. She was struggling to remember all the organizations she had once been so active in, and the dates, so retrieved the book to show me.²⁶

How might the perception of the photographs from Ellen's fieldwork in Pimville, Alexandra and Orlando shift when they are paired with images of Ellen and her child in "domestic settings"?



Figure 12. A family photograph of Ellen Hellmann (far right), with her second husband, Bodo Koch, her sister Inez Gordon, her mother Clothilde, her daughter, Ruth Hellmann (later Runciman), and Ruth's boyfriend at the time, Jacques Berthoud, from Wits. Ruth studied at Wits between 1953 and 1956. From Ruth's personal collection.

²⁵ Abby Gondek phone interview with Ruth Runciman, Jan 29, 2018.

²⁶ "Runciman of Doxford, Viscountess; Ruth Runciman, DBE 1998 (OBE 1991)" in *Who's Who 2015*, 167th edition (Bloomsbury Yearbooks, 2015), 2008.



Figure 13. Ruth Hellmann with her mother, Ellen, ca. 1946-48. Ruth looks about 10-12 years old in this photo. She was born in 1936. From Ruth's personal collection.

[Pimville, South Africa](#)

[Orlando, Soweto, South Africa](#)

Alexandra is next to [Sandton, South Africa](#)



Figure 14. Members of the Tshabalala family and houses in Alexandra and Orlando. Alexandra is a township next to the wealthy Sandton, Northeast of Johannesburg; Orlando Township is in Soweto, Southwest of Johannesburg. Series 8, Photo Album 31.1, page 13 in the Ellen Hellmann Papers, at the Historical Papers Archive, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. **[Image 3 in the film inventory]** Reference code: [ZA HPRA A1419-8-8.1-8.1.1-33](#)

Ellen explained that as women worked outside the home, their mothers cared for the children. They indulged their grandchildren, leading to a complete loss of control over the

children's behavior. (See figure 19, of a grandmother with her grandchildren in Orlando Location.)



Figure 15. Tshabalala's grandmother with her grandchildren in Orlando Location, January 1938. This photo is one of the seven photographs on page 13 of Photo Album 31.1: Members of the Tshabalala family and houses in Alexandra and Orlando. Alexandra is a township next to the wealthy Sandton, Northeast of Johannesburg; Orlando Township is in Soweto, Southwest of Johannesburg. Series 8, in the Ellen Hellmann Papers, at the Historical Papers Archive, University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. **[Image 3 in the film inventory]** Reference code: [ZA HPRA A1419-8-8.1-8.1.1-33](#)



Figure 16. Ellen Hellmann Koch with her second husband Bodo Koch, and Ruth Runciman's children, Ellen's grandchildren. From Ruth's personal photograph collection. Undated, but David, Ruth's middle child, looks to be approximately 6 [?] years old. He was born in 1967, so this was approximately 1973. Ruth's youngest Cathy is in the middle and Lisa is at the bottom right.

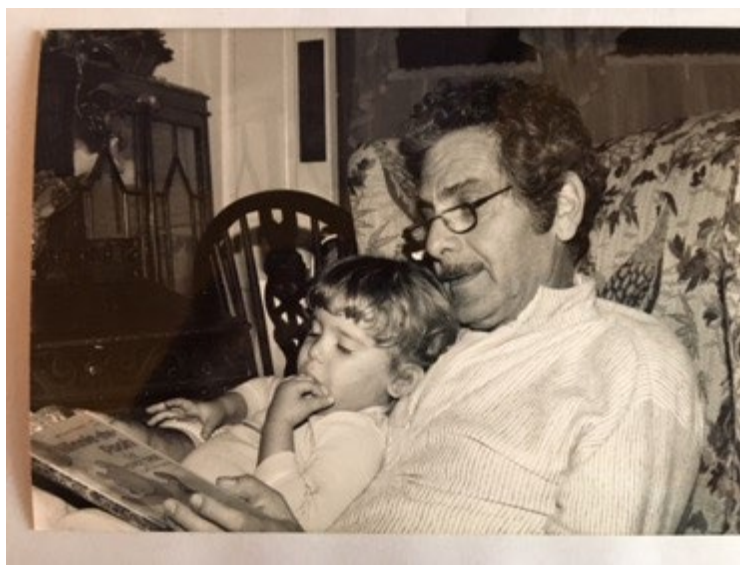


Figure 17. Abby (the author) with her maternal grandfather, Larry Bubar, ca. 1984. Reading Winnie the Pooh.

Ellen: “many informants have pointed out to me the bad effects on the child of a grandmother’s upbringing”²⁷

Ellen: African women should attend women’s clubs so that they may learn the proper way to bring up children and care for their homes.²⁸ They must be instructed in how to maintain household budgets.²⁹ The women in Rooiyard feared I was a spy for the police and that my presence triggered police beer-raids.³⁰

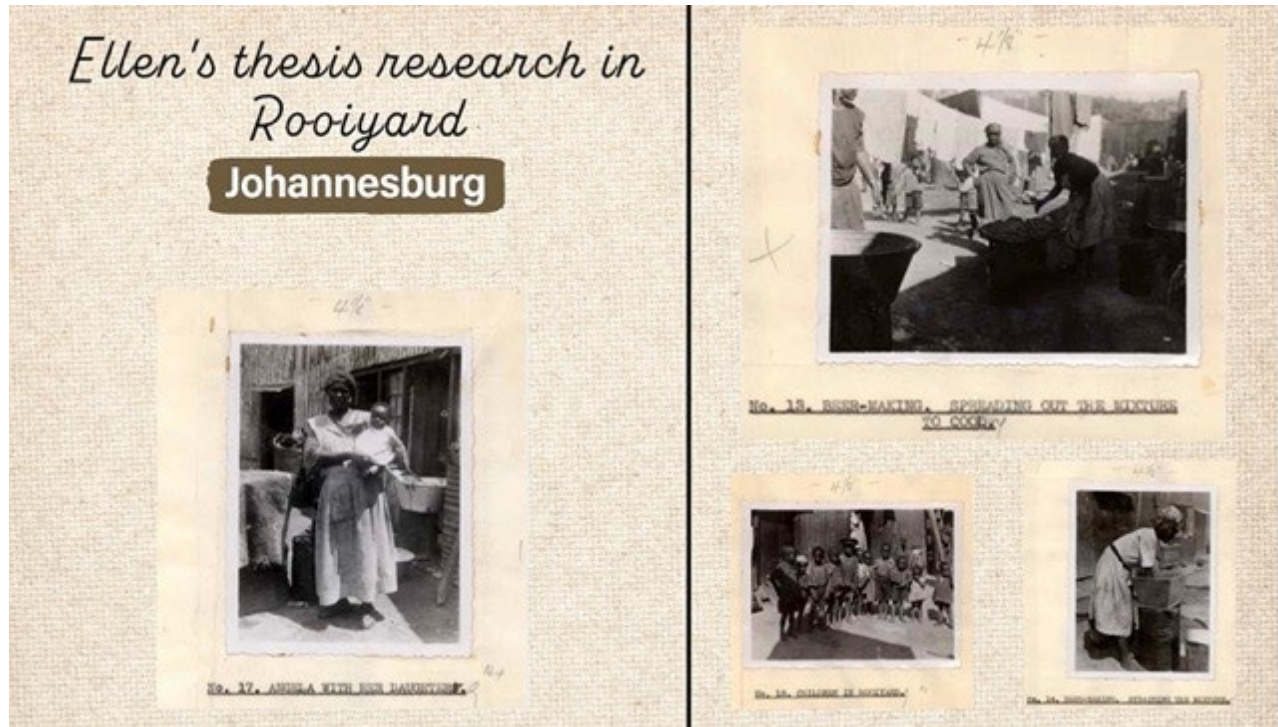


Figure 18. A collection of Ellen's photographs from her Rooiyard fieldwork, 1933-34. Includes the following photographs: No. 17. Angela with her daughter; No. 13. Beer-making, spreading out the mixture to cool; No. 15. Children in Rooiyard; No. 14. Beer-making. Straining the mixture. From the Ellen Hellmann Papers, Historical Papers Archive, University of Witwatersrand, File 35, Sub-series 8.2, Items 13, 14, 15, and 17. <http://historicalpapers-atom.wits.ac.za/13-51>

“Although it would be an exaggeration to speak of danger-actual or potential-to the investigator at night or over the weekends, the drunken disorder of the yard and the definite hostility to my presence at these times did discourage me. At night, especially, in the gloomy alleyways in which the swaying and stumbling forms of drunken Natives were dimly discernible, I felt compelled to agree that Rooiyard is a difficult place for a fieldworker.”³¹

²⁷ Hellmann, *Problems of Urban Bantu Youth*, 8.

²⁸ Hellmann, *Problems of Urban Bantu Youth*, 91.

²⁹ Ellen Hellmann, *Rooiyard: A Sociological Survey of an Urban Native Slum Yard* (Cape Town and Livingstone, Northern Rhodesia: Oxford University Press and The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute 1948), 24–25, 29–37.

³⁰ Ellen Hellman, “Native Life in a Johannesburg Slum Yard,” *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 8, no. 1 (1935): 37–38.

³¹ Hellmann, *Rooiyard*, 1.

African women
Women's clubs
Learn to keep house
The right way to bring up children
Adjustment in family relationships
How to keep a budget
European-style household maintenance
Was she to blame for police raids?

John Chavafambira was Ellen's research assistant in Rooiyard. He told Wulf Sachs, who was a German psychoanalyst:

"A rich young woman who comes here in her grand motor car and looks at you as if she didn't see you properly. They say she is a spy working for the police. They are all talking about it. She questions all the time; silly questions about what we eat, how many children we have, what money we earn..."³²

Hellmann's argument that 'African' women should be stay-at-home mothers (in her 1940 dissertation) was contradicted by her statement in *Pioneer Woman* (1945), that white women workers could rely upon 'non-European domestic employees' who would be 'available to carry out routine domestic chores.'³³ Who would do this reproductive labour if Black women remained in the private sphere as stay-at-home mothers? While she acknowledged that 'non-European' women were 'faced with the necessity of rearing a family on hopelessly inadequate resources, herself becoming a wage-earner to supplement her husband's income,' her solution to this problem was that the South African economic structure should become 'attuned to meet the real needs of its peoples' through 'educational and social services.'³⁴

³² John Chavafambira as quoted in Wulf Sachs, *Black Hamlet* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company 1947), 123.

³³ Hellmann, 'South African Canvas,' 7.

³⁴ Hellmann, 'South African Canvas,' 9.