

# TRANSCRIPT

Ref. Number	NBHOH-024
First Name	Hyman
Surname	Hoffman
Maiden Name	N/A
Suburb	Yokine
Gender	Male
Year of Birth	1918
Place of Birth	Perth WA
Occupation	Retired Medical Practitioner
Primary cultural identification	Jewish
Languages	English, Yiddish
Generation in Australia	First
Year of migration to Australia	N/A
Motive for migration	N/A
Father's Name	Morris
Father's occupation	Publican and Wool buyer
Mother's Name	Toby
Mother's occupation	Home Duties
Mother's Maiden Name	Zitzerman
Names of siblings and their gender	Six – four Brothers and two Sisters
Date and Time of interview	20 July 2006
Location	Perth Hebrew Synagogue
Interviewer	Dr Felicity Morel-EdnieBrown
Length of interview	9 min 38 sec. This interview had a time limit.
Language of interview	English
Notes	<p>**In some instances the transcript has been edited in a minor capacity for readability</p> <p>**Items corrected after the recording or information added is enclosed in square brackets and in italics, e.g. [<i>around the back of the house</i>]. This information will not be on the associated recording.</p> <p>**This is not a verbatim transcript. Summary of interview re-written by H. Hoffman.</p>

INTERVIEW OF HYMAN HOFFMAN ON 20 JULY 2006 FOR THE NORTHBRIDGE HISTORY PROJECT

HYMAN HOFFMAN: My name is Hyman Hoffman. I was born in Northbridge and lived there for about ten years.

INTERVIEWER: What year were you born please?

HYMAN HOFFMAN: I was born in 1918.

INTERVIEWER: Where did you live in Northbridge?

HYMAN HOFFMAN: I lived in Monger Street, Robinson Avenue, Palmerston Street. I don't know why we kept moving around all the time.

INTERVIEWER: Did you parents rent premises?

HYMAN HOFFMAN: No. We usually bought them

INTERVIEWER: What did your father do?

HYMAN HOFFMAN: Well, my Father, he was born in the Ukraine and he was trained as a wheelwright and coachbuilder. He came to Australia and got a job with one of these firms for a while. He had an elder brother who brought him out and that elder brother ran a wine saloon down Wellington Street near what was then Boans. What was it called now? I can't remember, but that got him interested in the liquor trade so then he went into the hotel trade and he ran the Esplanade Hotel in Fremantle, which I remember very well. I think I started school there. Then he bought the Maylands Hotel in Guildford Road, Maylands. We lived there and he also ran the Broken Hill Hotel in Victoria Park. Then he divested himself of all of those. The Maylands Hotel he had for a long while and he leased it out. Then he decided to go into the country and buy bags and bottles – he'd go to the farmer's estates and bring them to bottle yards.

The interesting thing is he knew nothing about wool. He used to go to the farmers but he just would say "Have you got any empty bags or sacks to buy?" or things he could take home. He went into a shearing shed there and the farmer said "Do you buy wool?" and my Father says, "I know nothing about wool". So the farmer said, in the shearing shed, "Look, if you sweep all the wool on the floor after the shearers have left there, take it away and you can have it for nothing". So he felt he had nothing to lose by doing that so he swept up all the wool on the ground from the shearers and he took it to I think was Wesfarmers here and they bought it off him and he made a good profit. His mind went "Well, there's something in this, I'm going to continue buying wool" so he bought a motor truck, went around to the farmers and he'd say "I'll buy your whole clip, I'll pay you cash, you won't have to worry about putting it onto a train or anything, I'll take it on the back of my truck which is here, you'll get the cheque and you've got no worries" and he made a lot of money.

He did that from home, 15 Robinson Avenue and then 160 Palmerston Street, Highgate. The clip of wool was on the truck and then he took it to the wool buyer *[in]* Fremantle. He did very well and he was the first Jewish wool buyer in Perth, in Western Australia. After that, a lot of the new immigrants came, they didn't know what to do and people would say "Why don't you buy wool, Mr. Hoffman made a lot of money out of it". So a whole train of the Jewish immigrants that came in went and did the same thing and they did alright buying wool from the farmers. He started a *[trend]*. What else did he do? Oh yes, he bought an orchard. He was a man of all trades. He didn't do so well out of that and so he sold that.

INTERVIEWER: What did you end up doing?

HYMAN HOFFMAN: My career was a GP, a medical practitioner, which I'm still doing because I tried to retire. I retired four times and the patients would come to me and I'd say "Well look I'm retiring now so find somebody else". They ignored it and they'd come back the next day for a cough or a cold and they kept coming back to me and I'm still doing GP because they won't let me go.

INTERVIEWER: That's a great compliment.

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# TRANSCRIPT

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** It is.

**INTERVIEWER:** What do you remember about Northbridge, what are your earliest memories?

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** Well, Northbridge was really the residential Jewish section of Perth and a lot of the descendents are still all around. I see many of them here – the Krasnosteins. There were some people called Gleedmans. They've all left now. I of course there were the Cohens. Cohens are like Smith's in non Jewish people. Cohens lived there. I still have got memories of a lot of people that lived there. The Krasnosteins were one. Zeitlins were another; they lived in Brisbane Street near William Street. The Mossensons ... David Mossenson, they were there. I have a list I brought with me. A shoe repairer called Fred Pashkoff who had a shoe shop on the corner of Brisbane Street and William Street.

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** Near La Mottes? Yeah, the south-west corner. Across the road almost, yes.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you were living in Northbridge and you walked around the streets what was it like?

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** Quiet – not impressive. Not much different to what it is now, you know. They are still the same streets, except that it is busier now with traffic. It was quiet in those days but now of course there's just the thoroughfares, but it hasn't changed.

**INTERVIEWER:** Did you have much communication with people who weren't Jewish in the area?

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** No, not really. We Jews tried to stick together, well, it's natural, because you've got so much in common.

**INTERVIEWER:** What sort of activities did the community do in the area? You had two synagogues and there were .....

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** Well, yes, the main synagogue which had just started in Brisbane Street but there was a section of the people who thought it wasn't strict enough - they thought it wasn't orthodox enough - and they built another synagogue in Palmerston Street ... they called it the little school and they built a congregation there but eventually the members went back to the central synagogue here and they closed down; they sold it. There was an active Jewish life there. There was a Jewish debating circle, a Jewish acting stage and, of course, a lot of Jewish sporting teams. I was in one myself as a young.... [*There was an adjunct of Brisbane Street Synagogue called Prince's Hall where celebrations took place*].

**INTERVIEWER:** What sort of sporting team was it?

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** Soccer; yes I played soccer when I was about fifteen or sixteen. What else? 'Course, there was the kosher butcher but he wasn't really; he sold ordinary non-kosher meat but he was the only one that dealt in kosher meat.

**INTERVIEWER:** So where was he?

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** He was on the corner of William Street and Brisbane Street ... La Motte it was called but it has closed down- L\_A- M\_O\_T\_T\_E -. Now of course there are several good butcher shops and he's finished. The early Jewish people lived around Northbridge and some of them were quite good in their business. There was a cabinetmaker by the name of Mr. Borrisoff; he made first-class furniture and the Atlas's.

**INTERVIEWER:** What street was he in, Mr. Borrisoff?

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** Where did he live did you mean?

**INTERVIEWER:** Yes, and where did he have his premises?

**HYMAN HOFFMAN:** Now where did he have his premises? I can't tell you his premises but he worked - he had his workshop in Bayswater. Yes, he lived in Northbridge, yeah. [*Monger Street*] I knew Borrisoff and who else, Fred Pashkoff, he was a shoemaker, he was on the corner opposite La Motte on the corner of William Street and Brisbane Street and there was Mrs.

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Gottlieb, a dressmaker, she is dead now. She lived in...was it... Beaufort Street,...oh, I can't remember but she lived in Northbridge. We had quite a lot of skilled workers, in those days.

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