

The Hammar Family

Sonny and Myrtle

and children Leonard Madelene and Dennis

When Sonny (Isidore) and Myrtle married in 1940, they first settled in Warrenton where Sonny practiced as a doctor. Myrtle went back to her family in Cape Town to have her babies. Their first son Leonard was born in 1941. When he was four the family moved to Kimberley where Sonny joined the General Practice of Julius Kretzmar and Shim Klein. Their daughter Madelene was born in Cape Town in 1946. Their second son Dennis was born in Kimberley in 1948. The family lived at 8 Olympia Street, Herlear, Beaconsfield. Here are the three children in that house in 1950.



Dennis found the photo of our family on holiday with the Klein family



On the left are Shim and Grace Klein, with children, Jack, Barbara and David (Alan not yet born), and on the right, my parents, Sonny and Myrtle Hammar, with Leonard, Madelene and myself.

Here are Sonny and Myrtle with their children at their 25th wedding anniversary celebration in 1965.



Leonard writes from Israel: I attended Kimberley Boys High matriculating in 1959. I volunteered in the Israeli army for a year in 1961, returning to South Africa to study accountancy. I am married to Estell (Friedman) and we have been living in Israel since 1973. We have three children Steven, Robert and Oren (below) and seven grandchildren all living in Israel.



Madelene (Albert) Writes from Israel:

I was born in Cape Town in 1946. We were living in Kimberley at the time, in Olympia Street Beaconsfield.

Here is a photo of Rabbi Oscar Werners' first Bat Mitzvah group in 1959 proudly carrying their



presentation siddurim in the foyer of the Kimberley Memorial Road Synagogue. From the left: Brenda Frank, Jose Shapiro, Sharon Werner, Madelene Hammar, Pam Hotz, Delia Brown and Pearly Goldenbaum.

I went to Kimberley Girl's High School until 1962. I left for Cape Town in 1963 where I met my husband-to-be Philip Albert. We were married in 1966. I have three children and four grandchildren. They are Mark, Kevin and Luanne. Two grandsons are in Cape Town one at varsity in Israel and a granddaughter in France. We are now living in Israel. My husband is a retired pharmacist and I studied hairdressing in Cape Town. My two sons did their army training in Kimberley

Dennis writes from Bantry Bay:

From my side, I was born in Kimberley on November 5, 1948. I attended Kimberley Boys High and matriculated in 1965. In 1966 I left Kimberley at age 17, for Cape Town, where I studied for a degree in Chemical Engineering. I graduated in 1969 with a BSc ChemEng. I married Cynthia Sher in December 1971, and have four children:

Tamara (Tami), married to Justin Morris and living in Sydney, Australia. They have 4 children, Samantha, Matthew, Isabella and Benjamin.

Gavin, married to Martine Lazarus, and living in London. They have 2 daughters, Zoe and Cayley.

Stuart, still single, is currently working in Singapore.

Mikaela, married to Stephen Joffe and living in Sydney, Australia.

Cynthia sadly passed away in January 2015. I re-married in January 2021, to Sharon Levin and we live in Bantry Bay, Cape Town. (Read the article on Dennis's school-boy radio scoop about Kennedy below on pages 5 and 6).

When our Dad retired from practice in Kimberley, they moved to Cape Town where he continued to work until he finally retired. They eventually settled in a retirement home called Woodside Village in Rondebosch.



The Hammar family, compiled by Geraldine Auerbach MBE, London August 2021 thanks to my cousin David Kretzmar who put me in touch with Roger Hammar and through Roger his sister Laura Konviser, (née Hammar) who connected me to their cousins, Leonard, Madelene and Dennis (above) who have sent their wonderful stories and pictures of life in Kimberley and after.

Laura also gave us material for the story of her father-in-law, the remarkable **Rev Maurice Konviser** who served with distinction in Kimberley from 1927 – 1935. You can read it here https://kehilalinks.jewishgen.org/kimberley/Families_files/Rev%20M%20Konviser.pdf

DFA PI
23 November 1963

Kimberley youth hears U.S. radio description

A KIMBERLEY boy was one of the first people in South Africa to hear of yesterday's shooting in Dallas, Texas, of the President of the United States, Mr. John F. Kennedy.

He is 15-year-old Dennis Hammar of Olympia Street, Beaconsfield. Dennis said he had his radio tuned into a New York station last night when the dramatic news of the President's shooting was flashed.

Dennis, describing last night's shock announcement, said: "I was listening to the hit parade and the programme was cut off at about quarter to nine. There was silence for a few seconds then a "Voice of America" announcer came on and said the President had been shot while visiting Dallas, Texas."

Dennis recorded part of a broadcast report by an American correspondent who was travelling in the motorcade three or four cars behind President Kennedy's limousine.

Dennis's recording of the report was: "The Presidential motorcade had just passed through heavy crowds in downtown Dallas and was passing through the business district when three shots suddenly rang out from the crowd."

"It was impossible to see from three or four cars back in the car in which I was riding . . . it was impossible for me to see immediately what had happened."

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Last night's photograph of Dennis Hammar and his radio and tape recorder.

Took out machine guns

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The Secret Service men took out machine guns and then gave the order to stop the motorcade and take the critically wounded President directly to Parkland Memorial Hospital.

"Mrs. Kennedy jumped up in the limousine, grabbed her husband and then cried "Oh no."

"When they stopped at the hospital he was lying in the back seat of the limousine, his head cradled in the first lady's lap . . . he laid motionless in the back seat for two minutes while the stretcher was wheeled out. The President was lifted out and placed gently on the stretcher and wheeled into the surgical area of the hospital. The first lady followed holding with one hand and followed other members of the party into the hospital.

STREET CROWDS

Commenting on the street crowds before the fatal shooting, Clarke said: "The crowds were extremely large and extremely friendly. I, riding in the Press car, noticed repeatedly the absence of any antagonistic signs . . . these were very few. I noticed one hand-written sign held up by a young man which read, 'I hold John F. Kennedy in utter contempt.' That was almost the only sign which indicated any bitterness to Mr. Kennedy's party."

Dennis's radio is a small bedside model with a large outdoor aerial which he attached himself. Dennis said last night that he often tunes in to broadcasting stations throughout the world. It was just coincidence that he happened to be tuned into America," he said.

"I am going to keep this tape," added Dennis, as the description of the historical shooting was slowly turning on his tape recorder.

Silence in