

Five Photos: Interview transcript

Marcus audio recording transcript

Image of the band at Moeng College, Bechuanaland Protectorate (INF 10/54/21)

Interviewer: The photograph (INF 10/54) of the band in South Africa: can you tell me more why you have chosen that?

Marcus: Yes, this reminds me of the music project that we've started in South Africa in a shanty town in South Africa, and to tell you a bit about the shanty town, it was for people coming from the rural areas of South Africa. Particularly it was for wives following their husbands who were looking for work in the cities. So we belong to an organisation which formed three projects, one of which was a music project and this reminds me of that.

Interviewer: Ah great and did you play a music instrument yourself?

Marcus: Yes, I played the guitar and so my role in the project was to teach people to play the guitar. But there was also another instrument, which was an African-related project called the Marimba, the African translation of the Xylophone.

But it's a massive instrument with large wooden bars, which produces different sounds and you beat it with a stick.

Interviewer: Was there any particular age when you did this?

Marcus: Probably in my thirties I think, but the music project was in particular for young people. Young people who were unemployed and looking for work and didn't have anything to do in the township.

Interviewer: It promoted a skill, first of all, an education and also probably, social well-being?

Marcus: Yes, it certainly did that because, once they learned to play these instruments, they would offer their services to organisations that needed the skill.

I'll just use an example: they offered their services to Trade Union Movements in South Africa where workers were out on strike. They would provide the music and keep the spirits up.

Interviewer: Whereabouts in South Africa was this?

Marcus: This was in the township called Khayelitsha near Cape Town. It's near the airport in Cape Town.

Interviewer: This would have been in the apartheid era or later?

Marcus: This was during the apartheid era, yes. And conditions were terrible, you know, people were living in shanty towns, in shacks and they were surrounded by insect-infected stagnant water which caused malaria and all kinds of diseases.