

Who: Rebecca
From: South Africa
When: 1998



I was born 25th July 1996 in Durban, South Africa. At the age of one, my family and I set off on an adventure to New Zealand, leaving our family, friends and treasures behind.

Mum and Dad were excited and ready for an adventure but also apprehensive about leaving all our family and friends behind, and needing to settle into a different culture. They had concerns about the safety of raising a family in South Africa as crime was escalating and education and health care were deteriorating.

The four of us had to slowly adapt to the colder weather. We were all pleased to be able to live in such a beautiful country as we enjoy exploring the outdoors and Mum and Dad have always loved the African bush and wildlife.

We left Johannesburg, South Africa, ready to start a new life in Auckland. After the long flights to New Zealand, we finally arrived in Auckland on 6th February 1998 - only realizing later that this was Waitangi day.

One year later we moved to Nelson as Dad had been offered a job. In 1999 Nelson became my home as I had no memories of Africa. Mum and Dad's expectations of New Zealand were met (good education for children, good standard of living and good health care).



Mum with her paternal grandparents



Bumpa when he arrived in South Africa

My Grandad (I call him Bumper) Jose Pinto Mendes Jr was born in Angola in 1938 in a small town called Mocamedes and moved to South Africa with his parents, Jose Pinto Mendes and Emilia Fernandes Neves, and his older sister Libby. His mother had been born in Mocamedes after her family immigrated there from Portugal, his father moved to Mocamedes from Portugal having left his own family behind to start a new life. They moved from Angola to South Africa for a better standard of living and better safety for the children.

My granny is Maria Botoulas. Her father had emigrated from Greece as a young boy of 13 after the WW11 to try to earn money to support the family. Gran's mother was a first generation Greek South African whose parents had emigrated from Greece and settled in Egypt for a while before moving to South Africa.

My Dad's Dad, Cecil (Sonny) Nott married my Nana, Mavournine Haines in South Africa and had two children, Greg and Richard (Dad). After Nana died last year, my parents brought back to New Zealand some of her precious jewellery that had been passed down from her mother.

Nearly every two years my Mum's parents, Granny and Bumpa, come to visit us in Nelson and stay for a couple of months. This is usually the only opportunity that we get to spend time together but we email, text and skype a few times a week so they are very involved in our lives, although from a distance.

Since we arrived in New Zealand, I have been back to South Africa once to visit my relatives and have traveled to Hong Kong and London to see family. Although I love the company of my extended family and miss them when we are apart, Nelson is my home and I love sharing life here with friends who have become a second family to us.