



- 1919
1. - Born in Pretoria, He was taken to the country when he was five (autumn 1924) to live with paternal grandmother in the village of Maupaneng , 75 miles out of Pietersburg. His father was a shop messenger in a firm of outfitters and his mother a domestic servant. They (parents) remained in Pretoria. His grandmother was forbidding and gave her orders sharp and clear. Ezekiel found comfort in the two goats his parents bought and which he and his brother used to take out every day. To Ezekiel the animals seemed to understand that we needed their company. Ezekiel hated school to which he had to walk seven miles to and back . He associated it with physical pain and he swore to himself that he would loathe it to the end of his life.
 2. When Ezekiel was thirteen his mother came to collect him and his sister and brother and took them with her to Marabastad. Her husband would not give her any money towards their maintenance and the Native Commissioner advised her to fetch the children so that living with them would remind him constantly of his responsibility.
 3. His father treated his mother very badly and when he threw a pot of hot stew and vegetables on her head and his mother had to go to hospital - they saw the last of him (summer of 1932) and went to live with their maternal grandmother in Second Avenue in Marabastad.
 3. Ezekiel had to do most of the domestic work because his sister and brother were still too small. He could never do his homework until about 10 O' clock at night when He had washed up and everyone else had gone to bed. The whole household consisting of his grandmother, aunt Dora and her husband and children and Ezekiel and his brother and sister slept in the same room. Ezekiel slept on the floor with his brother and sister and was plagued by a draught which came from underneath the floor and mice who considered their heads as a playground.
 4. Ezekiel's class teacher said he was backward. The principal said he was backward. He aunt said he was backward but Ezekiel loved to read and he used to pick up any piece of printed paper to read whatever it was and at the silent movies the other boys relied on he to read the dialogue and titles on the screen aloud so that they might all follow the story and often one of the boys paid for him so he should read for them.
 5. He passed standard six in the first class. An uncle suggested to Ezekiel's mother that she send him to St Peter's Secondary School in Rosettenville. He arrived in mid-January. He was very happy at the school and developed a passion for dramatics and he and his school friends (including Peter Abrahams) loved to act Form Room Plays. He passed his junior certificate in 1937 with a first class pass.

6. His mother worked hard to send him on to Adams College for teachers training and Ezekiel had to work for a year before starting there to save money for the school clothing. (19)

His job as a messenger in a lawyer's office made him aware of the humiliation suffered by Blacks in the hands of whites. He was called 'Jim' 'John' and 'boy' and had to use ~~Blacks~~ goods lifts or the stairs when the lifts were reserved for whites only. (20)

7. Dr Edgar Brookes was principal of Adams College when he went to study there. Ezekiel was not as happy as at St Peters - he felt that there was no freedom of expression there. In 1941 he went to work as a clerk at 'Ezenzeleni' an institution for the care of African blind run by Arthur William Blaxall. His years at 'Ezenzeleni' gave him a stability of purpose. In 1945 he took up a teaching post at the Orlando High School and married Rebecca soon after he started at the school. He started writing in the early 1940's and a selection of his short stories was published in 1947 under the title 'Man must live! He loved teaching and extra-mural activities such as dramatics which he introduced in the school. (21)

8. Four years after joining the staff of the high school he obtained a BA as an external student of UNISA. AS secretary of the teachers movement he was radically opposed to the 'Commission on Bantu Education' - which was to pave the way for the system of 'Bantu education'. He crusaded against the Eiselen report and was dismissed from his post. He got a job as a lawyer's second messenger and was sacked when he objected to being referred to as a 'boy' by a typist. (22)

9. He took up a teaching post in Basutoland but found that he had become too used to city life to be happy there and accepted a job as a journalist and literary but didn't enjoy the position. Drum (23)

10. In 1956 he began research for a thesis for a MA degree 'The Non-European Character in South African English Fiction'. and he graduated in the winter of 1957 - he was awarded the degree with distinction - the first time the department of English of the university had awarded a distinction for a senior degree. (24)

11. Feeling that he was being stifled - not being allowed to teach Ezekiel left SA with his family for Nigeria in 1957. He went to a teaching post - the beginning of 20 years of self imposed exile. (25)

12. He has held lecturing posts in ~~Zambia~~, Nigeria, Paris 1966 He was "listed" Denver (Colorado USA) and in Pennsylvania where he was professor of English. He has written (26)

Down Second Avenue - started in SA and finished in Nigeria 1958
The Wanderers - about a writer in exile
The African Image
Voices in the whirlwind and other critical essays about SA soc and culture. (27)

Various collections of Short Stories. (28)

13. Returned to SA after 20 years tired of exile and wandering about sowing seed without ever seeing things grow up. (29)

14. At present he is a school inspector for Leboa. (30)

Having been rejected by the Ministry of Educ & Training (31)