

Boston University

Special Collections
Mugar Memorial Library
771 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
617/353-3696



1839 | 1989

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SESQUICENTENNIAL

June 2, 1989

Bernth Lindfors
Department of English
University of Texas
Austin, TX 78712

Dear B. Lindfors:

Enclosed is a listing of what we hold of Bessie
Head manuscripts. We would not photocopy an entire manuscript.

Sincerely yours,

Howard B. Gotlieb
Director

HBG:rms
enclosure

Boston University

Special Collections
Mugar Memorial Library
771 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
617/353-3696



1839|1989

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
SESQUICENTENNIAL

The Inventory
of the
Bessie Head
Collection

Boston University Libraries

HEAD, BESSIE
1937-1986

Gift of December 1970

Box 1 I. NOVEL MANUSCRIPTS

- A. WHEN RAIN CLOUDS GATHER. Simon and Schuster, 1969. (Novel)
1. Carbon typescript, 237 p. (#1)
 2. Letters: Head, Bessie 4 CTL re Publication, Oct. 3, 1967-April 8, 1968.

Addendum: September 1971

- B. MARU. McCall's, 1971. (Novel)
- Carbon typescript, 115 p. (#2)

Addendum: September 1973

- C. A QUESTION OF POWER. Davis, Paynter, Ltd., 1973. (Novel)
- Carbon typescript, 249 p. (#3)

Addendum: October 1977

- D. THE COLLECTOR OF TREASURES AND OTHER BOTSWANA VILLAGE TALES. David Philips, c. 1976. (Short stories)
- Carbon typescript, photocopy typescript and tearsheets from ESSENCE used as a setting copy for "The Special One." 158 p., incl. 2 prelim. p. (#4)

Addendum: March 1981

- Box 2 E. SEROWE: THE VILLAGE OF THE RAIN-WIND. Heinemann Educational Books, 1981. (Historical chronicle in fictional form)
- Carbon typescript with a few holo. corr., 4 prelim. p., 338 p. and 3 p. "Some Facts About Botswana." (#1)

Addendum: December 1984

- Box 2 F. A BEWITCHED CROSSROAD. An African Saga. Craighall: Ad. Donker, 1984.
Carbon typescript with 5 prelim p., 290 p., 3 p. of references. (#2)
Fiction treating the history of Botswana up to 1966.

Boston University

Special Collections
Mugar Memorial Library
771 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
617/353-3696



July 27, 1989

Professor Bernth Lindfors
Department of English
University of Texas
Austin, TX 78712-1164

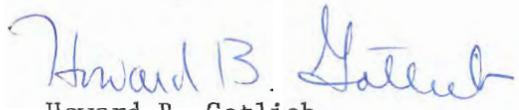
Dear Professor Lindfors:

Enclosed are xerox copies of several pages from the Bessie Head manuscript SEROWE. We are not enclosing copies of WHEN RAIN CLOUDS GATHER correspondence.

Would you please complete book publication permission forms and return them to me. I will sign them and return one to you.

These manuscripts came to us because, having admired Bessie Head's work, I asked her to place them here. Had Ms. Head not died prematurely, her other manuscripts and papers would be here as well, rather than in the African research center where they are now placed.

Sincerely,


Howard B. Gotlieb
Director

HBG:wlr
Enclosure



Boston University

Mugar Memorial Library
771 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, Massachusetts 02215
617/353-3696

RULES FOR THE USE OF MANUSCRIPT COLLECTIONS

Special Collections

PERMISSION TO EXAMINE: Permission to examine manuscripts will be granted to any qualified scholar upon completion of the application form provided for that purpose. This does not carry with it permission to publish such material in whole or in part.

The use of manuscript material is restricted to the Department of Special Collections reading area. No bags, briefcases, coats, etc., will be allowed in the reading area. The use of a fountain pen for taking notes is strictly forbidden. The researcher is responsible for maintaining the order of all materials as outlined in the inventory. Any problems or discrepancies must be reported at once.

PHOTODUPLICATION: The Library will entertain requests to photoduplicate reasonable amounts of manuscript material for individual scholars engaged in specific research. The photoduplication of unpublished manuscripts and letters is generally prohibited without written permission of the donor of the materials. The photoduplication of unpublished materials no longer governed by copyright laws will be generally permitted.

PERMISSION TO PUBLISH: Permission to publish manuscripts of which Boston University has literary copyright, will ordinarily be granted to qualified applicants. Specific written request for the right to publish must be made on the application form provided, and scholars wishing to publish manuscripts from the Boston University collections are urged to make such application before proceeding with research and publishing plans. In those instances in which the author or literary executor has retained copyright, it will be necessary to obtain permission to publish directly from these individuals.

COPYRIGHT: In granting permission to publish a manuscript, Boston University does not surrender its own right to print the manuscript or to grant permission to others to print it; nor does Boston University assume any responsibility for infringement of copyright laws, or of the publication rights for the manuscript held by the writer, his heirs, executors, or assigns.

EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS: The Library may grant a qualified scholar exclusive right to publish manuscript materials from the collections.

DEPOSITS: Manuscripts deposited in the Library may be consulted under the same regulations as other manuscripts, subject to prior restrictions that may be made by the depositor. Manuscripts given to the Library with restrictions on their use may be examined only subject to such restrictions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: If permission to publish is granted, the location of the manuscript shall be indicated in the published work (i.e. Boston University, Mugar Memorial Library). A copy of the published work shall be presented to the Library as soon as the work is published.

SEROWE:

THE VILLAGE OF THE RAIN-WIND

-- BESSIE HEAD

was called Photho-Photho -- that was the sound the water made as it poured down from a rock in the hill. There was plenty of water in Serowe, from three big rivers, the Sepane, Mannonye and Motetshwane. The Sepane and ^{Mannonye} ~~Motetshwane~~ flowed right through the town. About 1916 all the rivers arid up and people made shallow wells on the river beds to draw water.

When I was about twelve I was called by my father from the cattle post to attend school. I attended the primary school in Serowe run by the London Missionary Society. During this time my father died but I was elected by the missionaries for further education for which they paid. They sent me to Tiger Kloof for two years where I completed standard six. I then returned to Serowe and started teaching at the mission school, though I was not trained to be a teacher. The schools were under the control of the missionaries at first and we were not paid a salary. It was the rule of Khama that teachers should not be paid. That old man killed us. The Chief's word said: "You are working for your country, to improve it, not working for money. All teachers must live on their own cattle, goats and ploughing of corn."

There were few of us at first -- Miss Sharp, the missionary principal and four Batswana teachers. At Christmas time Khama gave us an ox to slaughter and once, when the 'flu broke out, Miss Sharp gave us one pound for three months to help with medical expenses. We were the forerunners of education in Serowe, but later our services were forgotten. We managed to follow Khama's rule at that time because we did have cattle and corn but later on I became poor through serving

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue: And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the Lord, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye used to go a whoring."

We have the blue cloth concealed under the green cloth because the blue cloth is sacred and we do not want it damaged by the sun. It is our daily reminder to keep in the right path. The police cap worn by the men is just a mark of our church so that our members are known apart from the members of the many other churches who heal by holy water, and who also have their mark -- sometimes a red string tied on the hand or a head band of stars.

Lekganyane died in 1967. When he died, his position was temporarily taken by all his servers. There was a lot of quarrelling on his death as a lot of priests were fighting for the chief position which Lekganyane had held. The day has yet to come when the full power of the church ~~passes~~ passes to Lekganyane's senior son, Barnabas. But Barnabas is consulted on all church problems.

When Lekganyane was still alive, he one day said to me:

"God has given this man power. He is different from us in the way God has made him. I can see that he will not stay long with me. He will one day have his own church." In spite of these words, I stayed in the church and learnt from Lekganyane. It was only in 1973 that I started my own Galilee Christian Church. All the rules of my church are the same as the rules for the Zion Christian Church. I have only chosen a new name and shall chose a new uniform.

SEROWE: THE VILLAGE OF THE RAIN-WIND
(era of Khama -- Mma Seata)

When we settled down in Serowe, we were very busy. Waggon^s were our means of transport. Six waggon^s would come in a day for repair. The busiest times were the winter months; my husband had to prepare the waggon^s in good order for the ploughing time and the rainy season of October, November. I was then a dressmaker and I sewed for people in Botswana and everywhere. It helped me to bring up the children and build a home. An outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease brought all business to a standstill. I kept the home going with my sewing. Through my sewing I was involved in village life. I taught my helpers how to sew and many women who worked with me, left, and became dressmakers on their own.

Repairing waggon^s those days was much more difficult than what it is today. My husband used a bellows while my son uses an arc welder. The bellows took a much longer time -- four steel tires used to take three to four hours to fit on to the wheels. My husband put the tires on to a wood fire where they were heated, then joined. Servants had to work the bellows up and down to heat the tires so that they could be trimmed and fitted for the wheels. My son, instead of all that labour his father had, first cuts the tires and joins them with the arc welder. The joining of the steel tires is three times quicker than the way my husband worked, but the joining of the tire to the wheel is done in the same way his father did and is highly skilled work. We guarantee our waggon^s for four years, before repairing them again.

SEROWE: THE VILLAGE OF THE RAIN-WIND
 (era of Khama -- abolition of ~~polygamy~~, bogadi -- breakdown of family life)

Mpatelang Kgosi, aged Seventy

Our whole society is falling to pieces and I do not blame the breakdown of family life on Khama's abolition of ~~polygamy~~ ~~and~~ bogadi because we had long lived with the changes Khama made and yet in those days people were afraid to break the law. I blame the evils amongst us on lack of proper leadership. There is no ruler to care for and control the people. Men and women were very self-controlled in the old days because even when customs like ^{bogadi} ~~polygamy~~ had been abolished, men often preferred to marry very young women. Since a man had only a choice of one wife, he would often have to wait until the age of thirty, without any contact with women until his wife was fully grown. There wasn't any question of the girl becoming pregnant or anything like that. Both the men and women of today have very cheap values. To a woman a man means money and there is no peace in her search for money. She moves from one man to another. And no longer do the men care about the position of being a father -- they just chase women. What else do they do but encourage the children to do the same.

It looks as though many new evils have come with the laws of independence. In 1967, the government introduced a new marriage law, whereby, once children reach the age of twenty-one, they may marry without their parent's consent. The result of this is that we now have a large number of divorces. The new style here is to be married for about two years and then divorce. On top of this, family planning was introduced. We can just give it its proper name, which is birth control. At first I did not mind all the adultery and many bad things that were going on because it was producing children. Now the women have seen that they need not bear children. One day there will be no people at all in this country because the

SEROWE: THE VILLAGE OF THE RAIN-WIND

(era of Khama -- ~~with abolition of polygamy, bogadi~~ -- breakdown of family life)Malebe Clebeng, aged ^{Forty}~~Thirty~~-five

I don't know for sure when married life broke down, but by the time I started to notice the world, I could see there was no more marriage here in Serowe. My grandmother had been married and so had my mother but in my time, marriage suddenly went out of fashion. It isn't only for the women of my age group -- most of the younger women are unmarried too. In my village ward there are about fifty women. Out of that number, five are married, the rest are unmarried, but we all have children and rear them on our own. I have five children but I have never been married. There isn't so much difference between my life and that of a married woman. All the years, I went like other women to plough my mother's lands, so that I could have food to feed my children. If we had a good year, there was always plenty of corn, pumpkin and mealies. I'd keep some of the harvest for food and some of the seeds for another year, then I would sell some of my crop. I'd then keep this money to pay for the school fees for my children. A woman can also make a good living brewing and selling beer, provided she does not start drinking the beer herself. Once she does that, her whole life falls down -- she loses her way between drink and men and you should see the condition of such a woman's yard! Everything is a mess there!

Most of the old people living now grew up outside the customs of polygamy and bogadi, so I don't think the break-up of marriage was caused by Khama changing these customs. There were many ways of securing marriage. If a mother had a young son in her yard, she'd have her eye on the yard of a friend who had a suitable young daughter. It was known before they grew up that those two would marry and these arranged marriages between parents, for their children, used to ensure that all children were married. That we began to rebel

SEROWE: THE VILLAGE OF THE RAIN-WIND
(era of Khama -- Ramosamo Kebonang -- end of an era)

I had time to take note of my surroundings. Three old men of the neighbourhood pelted themselves into the yard, their rapid walk and the eager looks they threw in our direction, showed that they were devoured by curiosity. Without fuss, they put down their kgotla stools near us and for the next three hours sat completely immobile. Their eyes were round like owls. It's not only little children who like stories, I thought. Old men too. And I thought, the white-haired Ramosamo must have been a real V.I.P. in his hey-day. He had a full, long face with a burnt-copper complexion and arched, arrogant eyebrows. A number of servants moved quietly around the yard, busy with chores. They looked like Masarwa people.

I had a number of leads to get him to talk and the first lead I chose ran me straight into a dead end.

"I was told," I said. "Your family were involved in the dispute between Khama and his son, Sekgoma II and you picked up your house and followed Sekgoma."

"Not me," he said. "My father went away with Sekgoma. I stayed with Khama. It was family disturbances which I refuse to explain."

I was only temporarily dismayed. I had dreams of recording the endless moves from one village to another by an eye witness. The actual dispute, its heat, its intensity, its causes had been ^{recorded} fully both by literate Bamangwato and the British. Apart from the big move made later by Tshekele Khama, the dispute between Khama and Sekgoma must have been the last of the great African classics, where the battle lines were so sharply drawn. It was a classic in that all through his career Khama only fought battles of principle. There have been other facile interpretations which reduce it to a power struggle between an old man and a young ^{man} ~~king~~ with the old man holding on to the throne at all costs. Khama was sixty (he was to live to the

With considerable alarm, I asked him how a baby's fontanelle could "fall down".

"But your baby's pogwana fell down too," Gabaipone replied calmly. "It happens to every child."

I insisted that I had never seen this on my baby and we argued so much that in the end I was forced to refer to the baby book I had used for my son. About the baby's fontanelle, the book said, very mildly...

'The fontanelle is a good guide as to whether or not the baby needs water. If it forms a slight depression in the baby's scalp, offer the baby water as he may be thirsty...' Nothing at all about such severe forms of diarrhoea, whereby the baby was so dehydrated due to loss of fluids from the body that his blood system stopped flowing and his fontanelle collapsed. Gabaipone's treatment for this form of diarrhoea was... "I use herbs called bchita and mamata. I burn these herbs in a clay pot, mix them with oil from sour milk and rub it on the head and navel of the child..." His fee is high, 50c plus one goat, for a kind of treatment that may result in the death of the baby. The hospital fee for treatment is 40c.

For, as Dr. Marit Bromberg found out when she first worked at the Sekgoma Memorial Hospital... "I'd be woken up at mid-night to save the life of a baby, almost dead from diarrhoea -- that was the biggest problem we had at that time. I'd give intravenous drips, save its life and feel very heroic. Then, a month later I'd be woken up again -- same baby, same condition, same treatment. The second and third time round, you begin to feel like a fool. You don't feel you are saving a human life any more. Every time the baby's brain has been deprived of oxygen, there is some brain damage and the baby's chances of living until the age of five, are very slim... So many of our