

CultureTalk Ethiopia Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
Growing Up Around Addis Ababa

English translation:

N: Nafkote M: Woman on the right

M: Addis Ababa.

N: Oh yeah. Where were you born?

M: I was born near Kazanchis. And then, right when I turned one, we moved to Arat Kilo. You could say that I spent most of my childhood there, in Arat Kilo. And then, when I was fourteen, we moved to Bole.

N: Yeah. Personally, I grew up in Bole. In fact, I've never lived anywhere outside of Bole. Bole Medhanialem, do you know it?

M: Yes, I know it. Next to the big church?

N: Next to the big church. And, there weren't too many people there when I was a kid... Bole Medhanialem¹ hadn't been built yet, the neighborhood hadn't grown yet. Only a few houses had been built and we were one of the first families so there weren't that many people around.

M: When someone says "Bole," generally, what do most people think?

N: Oh, "Bole kids are spoiled" ; "Bole is the rich people's neighborhood" -- people talk as though everything is in Bole.

M: How true is this?

N: When you think about it, in a lot of ways, there are rich people in Bole. The nice houses are in Bole... What foreigners call "downtown," if you try to apply that to us, then Addis Ababa's downtown is Bole. There are parks and cafeterias for children and for young people. There are nice restaurants for families in Bole. If you want to relax, you go to Bole; there are lots of good things there. And often when you grow up in a wealthy household, since everything is provided for you, there are a lot of things you don't know, and you don't lack anything, then it's possible to become a little spoiled.

M: Yes, and often you come to resemble what you see around you. And in Bole, often, the standard of living for the people that live there tends to be a bit higher. But, like I said, I grew up in Arat Kilo. And I had a lot of friends in my neighborhood. Indeed, some of them are my closest friends that I still keep in touch with today. I grew up with them,

¹ the church

and on the one hand, I went to school at Greek Community School. And my friends from Greek Community School had at least one car, or sometimes two or three, they were very rich but they were also my close friends. On the other hand, my neighborhood friends were far from having their own cars. Let alone that, they had to work as well because their parents weren't making enough money.

N: I understand that well because I myself... what I was telling you earlier about the kids in our neighborhood, well, they came from very poor families. They survived by raising animals and selling milk. And the kids' job was to milk cows. They had some sheep. During the holidays, they'd sell sheep and get a little bit of money. And what I remember the best is when we'd go in the direction of the forest, we'd find a place by the river so that the cows could graze. And if that point in the river had a pool, then we'd say, "Oh, here's our swimming pool," then we'd jump into the water and swim. I don't know, I have very fond memories of that.

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