

035 Flora Lewis Kay and Susy Sky Fagan

Please note that any items that were difficult to transcribe are marked with an [indiscernible] tag.

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Okay. Today is February the 9th, and I'm sitting here with Flora Lewis Kay, who grew up from the years of 1926 to 1951, living in three houses on Major Street and two houses on Robert Street, so that is 1926 to 1951. And Susy Sky Fagan, who was [0:00:30] lived – she describes as the Roaring '20s and the Dirty '30s.

Respondent 1: Yeah. [Laughs]

Interviewer: But she lived in our neighbourhood at 35 1/2 Major Street from 1922 to 1948. They have not lived in our neighbourhood since, which means they won't be able to talk about the changes in the same way, but you can still tell us an awful lot about how things were, 85 and 80, and 70, and 90 years ago. [Laughter] [0:01:00] So I just want to say welcome to both of you, and Florie, I guess we'll start with you. Do you have any idea why your family moved into that neighbourhood?

Respondent 2: No, at the time I guess the rent was cheap enough, so that's why they moved there.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 2: Because my parents, one of them lived on Gerrard Street East, and they came to the Jewish area. They thought they were going to have children, they better bring them up there. And it was a nice lively [0:01:30] space to live when I saw it.

Interviewer: So it was a Jewish area...

Respondent 2: Yeah, oh definitely.

Interviewer: ...you're saying in – what years?

- Respondent 2:** Mostly.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But it was a lively area, and the kids were fantastic. And there wasn't any bullies, nothing like that. Everybody played nice.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, so warm and friendly, and were there – do you remember were there synagogues in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, there was one I remember on Spadina called [0:02:00] the London Synagogue. It was on Spadina below College. That was the only one I knew of because we weren't into that, so I didn't know.
- Interviewer:** So your family wasn't interested in shuls.
- Respondent 2:** No, we didn't.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** In fact, when my husband met me, he went, "How come you don't know about these things?" I said, "I wasn't brought up that way." You could envision that because he came from Poland.
- Respondent 1:** Did he?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** [indiscernible 0:24] was born in Poland, eh?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Definitely. [0:02:30] And so he couldn't understand how me, as a Jewish girl, didn't know all the things he knew. Actually I wasn't brought up that way, that's why. I had grandparents here, but they didn't do that either.
- Interviewer:** Right. So your family was Jewish in identity and culture, but you weren't shul-goers.
- Respondent 2:** No.

- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Can we just...
- Respondent 2:** My mother was, but I wasn't.
- Interviewer:** Let me just hold a second. Would you mind, Florie, to just tell us your age?
- Respondent 2:** Ninety.
- Interviewer:** Ninety. Thank you very much.
- Respondent 2:** You're welcome.
- Interviewer:** **[0:03:00]** You just look phenomenal. I'm sorry that we're not taking pictures – yeah, I'm sorry. I just want to introduce you, Susy, and do you want to tell us when you lived in this neighbourhood? What we call Harbord Village now. What was...
- Respondent 1:** I call it Major Street.
- Interviewer:** Okay. You call it Major Street.
- Respondent 1:** Major Street was an identity all on its own, right?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** It was unusual. And...
- Interviewer:** And tell me how...
- Respondent 1:** ...it **[0:03:30]** was surrounded by the new immigrants from Europe.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm. Which helped each other.
- Respondent 1:** They were clannish like they are today, you know...
- Interviewer:** But you put it in a different – you said they were clannish, and you said that they helped each other. So that clannishness was – you're saying it was a very positive thing.

- Respondent 1:** Oh yes.
- Respondent 2:** My father-in-law took in some of those people when they arrived because they had no place to live, and he kept them there, and he fed them, and housed them, and that's what they all did for each other.
- Respondent 1:** Incredible.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Incredible.
- Respondent 2:** [0:04:00] Definitely.
- Respondent 1:** The way people lived in those days. This here will tell you – this little blurb that precedes my book says, "My early memories. I grew up believing the soup kitchen was in our house."
- Interviewer:** Oh my god. So describe – explain what you're talking about.
- Respondent 1:** My father was always bringing home people, where they got my mother's daily homemade soup [0:04:30] because they had no place to go to live or to eat.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** So Susy, you're saying that your home was very welcoming and supportive.
- Respondent 1:** Always.
- Interviewer:** And are you saying a lot of other homes were like that too?
- Respondent 1:** As a matter of fact, talking to the Ladovsky family from the United Bakery...
- Interviewer:** Yes, yes.

- Respondent 1:** ...and I remember way back their parents – the grandparents, the originators [0:05:00] of Ladovsky's United Bakery. When they had – the people that worked in the needle trade down Spadina, they all came there to eat. All the men. And I don't know about the ladies, whether they wanted to spare the money, but the men did.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** And he would ask them, "What did you have?" so he'd know what to charge them, and they would say, "I had a cup of coffee." And they probably had a meal.
- Respondent 2:** Probably.
- Respondent 1:** And he said to them, [0:05:30] "That's all right. When you can, you'll pay for that cup of coffee."
- Interviewer:** So you're saying it wasn't only the home kitchens, it was even Mr. Ladovsky in the store.
- Respondent 1:** It was the people in that time of life. The saying was, "We had nothing." I had nothing, but nobody had anything.
- Respondent 2:** No. Not at that time.
- Respondent 1:** "But we did have each other."
- Interviewer:** Oh that's beautiful. That's wonderful.
- Respondent 1:** We [0:06:00] had each other, and we could count on one another. It didn't matter for what, but you could count on your neighbours. It was just like one big cohesive family.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Nobody went without...
- Interviewer:** So most people were poor...
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...but everybody was there for everybody else.

- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** A real sense of generosity.
- Respondent 2:** As a matter of fact, it was a kind of street where a lot of people would come in and live for a week and then leave because they couldn't pay the **[0:06:30]** rent.
- Interviewer:** What happened in terms of the number of people living in these homes?
- Respondent 1:** What happened in terms of the number?
- Interviewer:** Well was it one family? Did they take in...
- Respondent 1:** They took in boarders.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Respondent 1:** And that's how they bought their food or paid their rent. Wherever they could get boarders that could afford to pay a little bit to boards, they had full meals the same as the family, whatever they were. The meals **[0:07:00]** were made out of mostly bones.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. You went to the butcher and got bones.
- Respondent 1:** You got bones for nothing.
- Interviewer:** In terms of numbers of people living, when you think of how we're living today, all of us...
- Respondent 1:** One bedroom for each child, eh?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, right. So what was – right. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** I was lucky if you only had three in a bed.

Respondent 2: Two, three families and one bathroom.

Interviewer: Okay. That's what I'm asking you about.

Respondent 2: Right.

Interviewer: So you were lucky if you – what were you saying?

Respondent 1: Because there was three [0:07:30] in a bed.

Interviewer: There was three in a bed. [Laughter] So the conditions were much more – and as you say, one bathroom. No matter how many people.

Respondent 1: And there was a never a complaint.

Respondent 2: No.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Never a complaint. We didn't cry poverty like you hear today. We didn't know the word even. We were tickled pink when we came home from school, especially in the wintertime, and if there was a hot, baked [0:08:00] potato waiting for us when we got home, we just relished that baked potato.

Interviewer: So you appreciated what was available.

Respondent 1: And we had potato soup for supper.

Respondent 2: Oh. [Laughs] That'd be interesting. [Laughs] Well I couldn't say ours was exactly that way. My dad worked at Tip-Top Tailor's and people considered us rich because my father worked at Tip-Top Tailor's.

Interviewer: What did your dad do there?

Respondent 2: He was a head cutter [0:08:30] for suits.

Interviewer: Oh, so he had a good...

Respondent 2: So he had a good position, so we weren't that bad off.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 2: But it was in the same era, just the same.

Interviewer: Now you lived, as you said, Susy – because there are two of you here – you lived in three homes on Robert Street, two homes on Major Street. Why did all those moves happen?

Respondent 2: We lived in flats, what they call flats.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent 2: And when my mother decided we'd like to move, we moved to another flat. We lived in flats until we bought our house on View Mount because that's the way you [0:09:00] lived then. You lived in somebody else's house in their flat.

Interviewer: So you were renting from somebody else. You'd rent a floor from somebody else.

Respondent 2: Always. Yeah.

Interviewer: So at that point you're saying there might have been three families.

Respondent 2: Not where I lived. There was always just the two families.

Interviewer: Two families.

Respondent 2: Yeah. People who owned the house and us.

Interviewer: How many children in your family? How many...

Respondent 2: Myself, my sister.

Interviewer: Okay. So there were four people in your family.

Respondent 2: Yeah, right. And then downstairs there was three. They had one daughter.

Interviewer: Right. Okay. In one of the homes.

Respondent 2: Uh-huh.

Interviewer: [0:09:30] Yeah. Okay. So there were – right now where there's one family you had two families living there.

Respondent 2: Right.

Interviewer: And what about where you lived on Major Street? How many people...

Respondent 1: Well there was three flats, three floors.

Interviewer: Three floors.

Respondent 1: And my parents. Six kids.

Interviewer: There were six children in your family?

Respondent 1: Yes. And there was a man that lived with us that my father brought home that had no place. [0:10:00] He was a Mulatto man, and he became definitely a part of our family. He was a part of our family.

Respondent 2: They don't use that word, Mulatto, these days. You never hear it anymore.

Respondent 1: No. What do they use?

Respondent 2: Just black.

Respondent 1: Black or white?

Respondent 2: That's it.

Respondent 1: Well he was – that's the way I always knew, you know?

Respondent 2: Well that's the way we did.

Respondent 1: It wouldn't have mattered anyway. He's...

Interviewer: So he became like another...

Respondent 1: His picture is in [0:10:30] my album.

Respondent 2: Right.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. But he was a member of the family, the way you felt about him.

Respondent 1: Oh he was. He certainly was.

Interviewer: So there were six children and three adults. That's nine of you living on Major Street.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: Unless my mother took in another boarder somewhere along the line, you know?

Respondent 2: That's right.

Interviewer: Okay. So you were nine or sometimes ten?

Respondent 1: Yes.

Interviewer: Was it one of those narrow homes you lived in, that most of us live in down there?

Respondent 1: It was fairly [0:11:00] good size.

Respondent 2: It was. It was.

Respondent 1: I would say it was a fairly good size in a sort of a squared-off look.

Interviewer: So what was the sleeping arrangement with six children, and your parents, and...

Respondent 1: Well say I had two older sisters, and there was – usually there was three of us in a bed, and like who was going to sleep in the middle, and who got to sleep on the end...

Respondent 2: Yeah, right.

Respondent 1: ...that you would hang onto, and they shouldn't fall off the bed. [Laughter] [0:11:30] But there was never any fuss about it.

Respondent 2: No problem.

Respondent 1: It was just normal...

Respondent 2: That's right.

Respondent 1: ...for those days.

Interviewer: Yeah. But it was very different from today.

Respondent 2: Oh for sure.

Respondent 1: Yes.

Interviewer: And you're the one who said it.

Respondent 1: Yeah, but they won't grow up the way we did with the stamina.

Interviewer: So you felt it made you...

Respondent 1: And the get-up and go...

Interviewer: ...a stronger person.

Respondent 1: You just – they will not.

Interviewer: Are you willing to say how old you'll be in your coming birthday?

- Respondent 1:** [0:12:00] Well you know, but I would prefer you don't put it in. [Laughter] That's the way I feel about it.
- Interviewer:** That's fine. That's fine. But I'm saying that the two of you are very strong, vital women, and you have good stories.
- Respondent 1:** We still go out dancing, and we're active in everything. Volunteer work like crazy.
- Interviewer:** What kind of volunteer work?
- Respondent 1:** Go look at the wall there.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 1:** I have a medal from the Governor General for things that [0:12:30] I've done over the years. I worked with the homeless people, the homeless youth, the Covenant House, feeding the people at the Holy Blossom, the homeless nights, and raising funds for them. Getting clothes, toiletry items, and what amazes me is they have people that in a high level of their order of what they [0:13:00] do in the synagogues and whatnot. Nobody ever thought of going to the different companies to ask for small items like toothbrushes. They had four hundred volunteers and they were asking for toothbrushes, but they didn't ask the four hundred volunteers to ask each of their dentists to give them one.
- Interviewer:** Right. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** So and I phoned – I phoned each of the places, the Kleenex companies, [0:13:30] for the toothbrush, toothpaste. Each of them. And asked for sample sizes, and I got – I told them who they were to send it to, who the person was they were to address it to, what it was for. First of all, I told...
- Respondent 2:** Holy Blossom.
- Interviewer:** We have to come back to this.

- Respondent 1:** They had to make the request, which they did. I think I got five hundred and one, five hundred toothbrushes or something in one area.
- Interviewer:** [0:14:00] Excellent.
- Respondent 1:** But it's just a case of something needs to be done. Use your head, and see how you get to do it.
- Interviewer:** Yes. Before I turned on the tape, you wanted to talk about a number of the people who had been very successful who lived in the neighbourhood when you were there. So could you think of some of those people now?
- Respondent 1:** Absolutely. I had two articles that I kept for years [0:14:30] that were in The Star. One of them was Louis Rasminsky, who was a former Governor of the Bank of Canada.
- Interviewer:** Did he live in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. He went to Lansdowne School, and so like...
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 1:** You ask anybody that's still around from that era, they'll tell you. And we had Mildred Herman, who lived on Major Street, [0:15:00] and this is an article I cut out from The Star when she passed away just within the past couple of years.
- Interviewer:** And could you tell us who she was?
- Respondent 1:** Mildred Herman became world renowned as a ballet dancer and teacher. She changed her name to a Russian name, of course. Russian-sounding name [Laughter], but the – what they had to say about her [0:15:30] was incredible in this article.
- Interviewer:** Well you're showing me a picture of an absolutely beautiful dancer. This is her?
- Respondent 1:** That's her.

- Interviewer:** Gorgeous. Absolutely beautiful.
- Respondent 1:** And I have a picture of her in my album in Lansdowne School.
- Interviewer:** So both of these people that you're naming went to Lansdowne School, lived in the neighbourhood...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Right on Major Street.
- Interviewer:** ...a long, long time ago. Right. Right. Are there any other people that you can think of, either one of you, who have become well known **[0:16:00]** for the work, for their contributions? Anybody else?
- Respondent 1:** Well how about the boys that were killed overseas?
- Interviewer:** Ah yes. Yes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, all of them.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** How about the ones that were not killed and made it home that one was torpedoed off the coast of Africa on his way to Italy to join the forces, another one parachuted out of his plane, was captured. Well thank **[0:16:30]** goodness he was saved anyway afterwards, and we'd been in touch, or Neil has, with siblings. The one that parachuted out of the airplane lived, I think, at number 13 Major Street. That's Taplitsky.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** And his sisters, he has two sisters that live in Downsview, and the one who's – **[0:17:00]** that parachuted off the coast of Africa, these were all buddies that – like one after another. They all went into the Air Force. I don't think any of them went into the army.
- Respondent 2:** No. They all went into the Air Force.

- Respondent 1:** I mean that had prestige.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Respondent 1:** And not only that, the uniform was so smart.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But then you'd go out and come back instead of crawling in the mud.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Well like we have pictures of them all.
- Interviewer:** You know that [0:17:30] we are naming the lanes downtown in Harbord Village, and we are naming one of the lanes after these men that you just described.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** So we are honouring them.
- Respondent 1:** The strange part is listen to these numbers. Solly Kay lived at number 3 Major Street, Harold Sobel lived at number 5 Major Street, next door.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Chucky Males [0:18:00] lived at 35 Major Street. 35.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** And I lived at 35 1/2, and I was the leader of the gang. [Laughter] I was. The boys all paid strict attention to me.
- Interviewer:** But this is so wonderful that you knew these people personally. They were your friends, and as they say, you were the leader.
- Respondent 1:** We grew up...
- Respondent 2:** We grew up with them.

- Respondent 1:** We weren't even toddlers when we started to play with one another. We were just this close little – like [0:18:30] our gang. Like these...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And we were girls and boys. We were all together.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And when you played, where did you play?
- Respondent 1:** We played – if we could, we played on the street on Major. If not, we went into the back lane.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** Was the back lane – was it paved or was it dirt?
- Respondent 1:** No, no. [Laughter] It was mud. Mud.
- Interviewer:** But you played there?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** It was dry mud.
- Respondent 2:** Mostly dry mud. The rainy day we didn't play there.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And it was [0:19:00] home to – see, nobody bothered us there.
- Respondent 2:** No. We were all one big group.
- Respondent 1:** But the only thing, we used to have a war with the Robert Street gang.
- Respondent 2:** I didn't live there then. I lived on Major. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** They were this big. We had a war with the Robert Street gang and the boys would say, "I'm hungry. Tell my mother I want a bagel." And none of the boys would run out because they were throwing

stones at each other, but I was elected – I was the one that was fearless. I [0:19:30] would go out and not go to their homes and say, "Give me a bagel for Izzy, or give me a bagel for Louis, or whatever it was," and I'd come running back with their snacks, you see? [Laughter]

Interviewer: Did they eat them by themselves? Or did they have to share them with you?

Respondent 1: Well whoever in need, they would give them a bite. You know?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent 1: They would give them a bite because this gang – also in this blurb is a story about [0:20:00] Chucky Males, one of the boys that was killed next door to me.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 1: We had this reunion about, what? Six, seven years ago here?

Respondent 2: Yeah. Right here. Right.

Respondent 1: Whoever...

Interviewer: You had a reunion in your home?

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Whoever we could find from that area.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Respondent 1: And everybody brought their – what do you call it?

Interviewer: Memorabilia. Pictures.

Respondent 1: Yeah, their pictures, and their autograph books, and whatnot. And Chucky males lived next door to us. [0:20:30] The pictures in here – where's my album? My album?

- Interviewer:** Remember the tape is on. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, but the – no, the album. It has all the Major Street pictures in. And next door to us was a man who was called Pop Cohns. He lived at 35 1/2, and he was what was known as the ward healer that **[0:21:00]** I have now become.
- Interviewer:** The ward healer?
- Respondent 1:** The ward healer. Everybody that needed something to be done and didn't know where to go, and needed help went to him. He knew all the politicians.
- Interviewer:** Oh. I see.
- Respondent 1:** Ward healer.
- Interviewer:** So he was the kind of major resource to...
- Respondent 2:** Chucky was his grandson.
- Respondent 1:** Chucky was his – they – uh-oh. So no. Chucky had a cousin that lived in the house as well. Chucky's **[0:21:30]** mother and her mother were sisters, got married, stayed in the house, had that one room. One of the people that came to the reunion said, "Does anybody know where Ella is?" That's the cousin. One of the girls knew what her married name was. Major Street. Major Street. Major Street. It shows the address on one of the pictures too. Wait. **[0:22:00]** Take note of this because when you hear this, you will know what I'm referring to. So we found – I looked at all the last names in the phone book, and I went through them and I finally got somebody and a man answered, and I said, "Could you tell me if this is Ella Cohn's home?" He said, "Yes, it is. Who's this calling?" I mean so many years after she got married. **[0:22:30]** I said, "It's someone from her past." "Can I tell her who it was? She just went out shopping?" I said, "No, you can't, but I'll call back in half an hour." Call back, Ella's waiting for the phone call. These are all Major Street. Now keep note of that. So I get Ella on the phone and she's so excited, and she says, "So who have I got?" I said, "Ella,

do you remember Susy Sky?" [0:23:00] "Do I remember her?" She said, "I remember." I've got that in here. "You sent me out to collect the dues from all the guys." [Laughter]

Interviewer: So you were the boss.

Respondent 1: Yes. And she said, "I told her you told me not to come home until I got all the dues." And the dues was two cents a year. And the clubhouse was the chicken coop in my mother's [0:23:30] backyard. We're going to look and see if that is still there on Major Street. [Laughter] The chicken coop, because you had a chicken coop because...

Interviewer: So that would have been...

Respondent 1: ...when there was a holiday, the prices doubled.

Interviewer: Oh. Oh, so you had your own chickens?

Respondent 1: No. But you went and bought your chickens ahead of time...

Respondent 2: Ahead of time.

Respondent 1: ...and put them in the chicken coop.

Interviewer: Oh, so you kept them alive then in the chicken...

Respondent 1: Yes. You kept them. The same as the fish. You can't put the fish in the bathtub. Nobody could take a bath.

Interviewer: Oh [0:24:00] so you bought the chickens in advance.

Respondent 1: It's true.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Respondent 1: So there' a picture of 35 1/2 Major Street right here. Right there.

Interviewer: Okay. You know, we'll have to look at the pictures later because we're going to tape right now.

Respondent 1: Oh. I see. Okay.

Interviewer: We'll do that later. Okay.

Respondent 1: So this was pretty well like Lord Lansdowne Public School.

Interviewer: So you both went to Lord Lansdowne School.

Respondent 2: There was no high school.

Interviewer: So that was eighty-five years ago that you both **[0:24:30]** went to Lord Lansdowne School.

Respondent 2: Well we had to go to school. [Laughs]

Interviewer: How old is that school? My god.

Respondent 2: That's torn down and built a new one.

Respondent 1: It's towards the – give me this.

Respondent 2: Yeah. It's part of the old one now.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 2: It was three floors high, made of all wood.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent 2: They put a fancy shmancy one now.

Interviewer: So did you know each other as children?

Respondent 2: Oh sure.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah.

Respondent 2: Definitely.

- Interviewer:** So she was one year behind you.
- Respondent 2:** I was at her house when I was – I was six years old. I was down at her house.
- Interviewer:** And she was a kid because she's born one year after you.
- Respondent 2:** Right. Right.
- Respondent 1:** I was the leader of the mob.
- Respondent 2:** [0:25:00] The boys were there, the Aspers are there, everybody.
- Interviewer:** Tell me about – you said you played on the street, and you played in the lane when it wasn't muddy...
- Respondent 2:** Right.
- Interviewer:** ...because it wasn't – what about the back garden or the back – whatever was behind your house?
- Respondent 2:** Garages.
- Interviewer:** There were garages?
- Respondent 2:** Garages.
- Respondent 1:** There was a lot of horse and wagons in those backyards. The people in those days were in the business of selling junk, or [0:25:30] schmattas.
- Respondent 2:** Pandering old things.
- Respondent 1:** Or they'd sell clothes...
- Respondent 2:** Or a milkman like my father-in-law was.
- Respondent 1:** If you bought, say, a tablecloth or something in the matter of a cloth-type thing, you'd pay five cents a week when you had it.

- Interviewer:** To pay it off slowly?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So let's not go too quickly here. You said people collected stuff that they used for their businesses.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** As you say, schmattas or [0:26:00] junk.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And it stayed in the back...
- Respondent 2:** And they sold it later on whenever they could.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So this was the junk business...
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Junk business and the schmatta business.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Right.
- Respondent 1:** That was Craigman. Craigman was in the junk business.
- Respondent 2:** And they'd yell, "Bottles, bones." And they were going down to say – so you knew they were there.
- Interviewer:** And were they travelling with a horse and wagon?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.

- Interviewer:** So they would just call out, and if people had stuff they would bring it to them.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** And they would buy it from them.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:26:30] Okay.
- Respondent 1:** And then resell it.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And my father-in-law, he was the milkman and he gave away the milk half the time. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Okay. So he was a milkman with a horse and wagon?
- Respondent 2:** With a horse and – Jumbo was the horse.
- Respondent 1:** Who had cars in those days? [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Well it's a long time ago when you guys were kids. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** I got to see some of my father's things in one of those metal toolboxes that my nephew brought over. He said, "Auntie Sue, I think maybe you should look at this." Well [0:27:00] when my parents died, his mother, who lived in the house, my oldest sister and him, she took certain things, and this was one of the things she took. She had it for years and never went through it, and when my sister died he got it. And he had it for years and he never went through it. He said, "Auntie sue, I know you'll look at this and see if there's anything interesting." So I sat for one week on the floor and put everything out, and sorted out all [0:27:30] the receipts from my father's synagogue, the synagogue – one of them that you guys went to. What was the name?
- Interviewer:** There's one that's still...
- Respondent 3:** Did you say the Shaarei Shomayim?

- Interviewer:** No, no.
- Respondent 2:** No, Roseda went downtown.
- Respondent 3:** Oh, it's the Kiever shul.
- Respondent 1:** The Kiever? Yeah. That was one of the two shuls my father went to. The Kiever. And the receipts were all there, and also the Eastern Children of Israel where [0:28:00] all his family's buried, and him. And then I kept going through all these receipts from the musician's union that he belonged to, and then I came across a receipt, twenty-five cents to fix a car. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** For those people who had cars. Where did people store the horses and the wagons?
- Respondent 2:** In the backyard.
- Respondent 1:** In the backyard.
- Interviewer:** Just in your backyard.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. The shed.
- Respondent 1:** That was like a garage.
- Respondent 2:** Right.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And that was fascinating, what you said [0:28:30] about the chickens, so if they were going to be more expensive around a certain time, you just bought – but you had a little place to keep the chickens.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. So that was the chicken coop. That was our clubhouse.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. They walked around the yard.
- Interviewer:** They tied up their ankles.

Respondent 2: Because I don't buy even now anything that's whole, fish or chicken or anything, got to be pieces, my mother-in-law was making – she had in the backyard two white chickens and I saw them and I thought I guess she wants a pet. The next day I brought my daughter down to see them. It was a Friday. [0:29:00] I looked out and I couldn't speak to her, she spoke just Jewish. So I poked her and I said, "Two," and then I put my finger down. So she points to the pot. [Laughter] I had a fit. "No, no, no." I started hollering, "You can't do that. No, no, no." So I got my husband on the phone. "Tell your mother she can't cook the bloody chickens. She was eating it." So he gets on the phone with her and she starts to laugh. What does she think she does? She takes the chicken, throws it in the sink. She [0:29:30] dumped it because I was so excited, I didn't want her to cook it.

Respondent 1: Upset.

Respondent 2: And the other one she gave away.

Interviewer: But the chicken was already dead and beginning to be cooked.

Respondent 2: And she's cooking like it's soup.

Respondent 1: I mean that's what it was for.

Interviewer: So she wasted all that good soup?

Respondent 2: She did because I got all excited. [Laughs]

Respondent 1: They didn't have in those days vegetarians. [Laughter]

Interviewer: Yeah, no kidding.

Respondent 1: Vegans.

Respondent 2: But that's what she did for me because I couldn't stand to see that chicken being cooked.

Interviewer: Well that was very kind of her.

Respondent 2: Yeah, it was.

Interviewer: It was.

Respondent 2: She was a lovely woman. I loved her.

Interviewer: Yeah. But that's interesting how they tied up **[0:30:00]** the feet so they couldn't run away.

Respondent 2: Yeah. She tied it by the ankle, yeah. And there was a two and a one the next day. Oh my god, I thought I'd die.

Interviewer: People are wanting to start to bring them back now.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: I interviewed somebody who said she wants to have chickens there in her back garden.

Respondent 1: There's been quite a write-up about that in the newspaper.

Interviewer: Let's just have one person talking because...

Respondent 2: Oh sorry. Now what were they doing to the chickens, those eleven people that died the other day? They were giving them needles or something?

Interviewer: Yeah, I don't know, but they were brought in to – **[0:30:30]** yeah.

Respondent 2: I'm worried about the chickens.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. [Laughs]

Respondent 1: I still worry about the chickens.

Respondent 2: Oh I don't want to eat the chickens that have needles.

Interviewer: When you lived in the neighbourhood, was it like ninety percent Jewish?

- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 1:** I would say so.
- Respondent 2:** I would say no.
- Interviewer:** So what would you say?
- Respondent 2:** I had the Pitters family live there.
- Interviewer:** So who lived there? Besides the Jewish people...
- Respondent 2:** Their name was Pitters. There was a family of black people, and there was three [0:31:00] sisters and one boy, and the mother and father and they lived on my street.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Who else? What other groups...
- Respondent 2:** And there were an Italian group. Do you remember the Ipolitos?
- Respondent 1:** Oh, the Ipolitos? They were on Robert Street.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, right. Big family.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. The banana family or something.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** They were in bananas.
- Interviewer:** And what was the...
- Respondent 2:** And mostly it was.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And what was the relationship between you, the Italian family, the black family?
- Respondent 1:** Friendly.

- Respondent 2:** Friendly. We were all friendly.
- Respondent 1:** It was very good.
- Interviewer:** Friendly, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** It was as though they were all – came from the [0:31:30] same place.
- Respondent 2:** Same place.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, okay.
- Respondent 1:** And from the same body, you know?
- Interviewer:** So it was very friendly.
- Respondent 1:** Never, never – helped one another, never had a problem.
- Respondent 2:** Never.
- Interviewer:** Now you said your father-in-law was a milkman.
- Respondent 2:** A milkman.
- Interviewer:** Okay. What other kinds of work did people in the neighbourhood do that you can recall?
- Respondent 2:** There was one man that he fixed watches and stuff like that from his house. [0:32:00] But I...
- Interviewer:** Well that's interesting because I always want to talk about people who worked from home.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** So this man worked in his home and he was a watch repairman.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.

- Interviewer:** And other thoughts that both of you have about the kind of work that these people – and you talked about people who collected rags and schmattas. You talked about junk dealers. What other kinds of work did people do?
- Respondent 2:** Oh, we had a man that sold fish from his truck. He was dressed all in white, he'd come around once a week, and his truck **[0:32:30]** was immaculate, and he was – had fish inside these things, and he'd have ice.
- Interviewer:** Ice, okay.
- Respondent 2:** And he had a whole outfit, and he would sell you fish. Then we had a man who sold bread and cakes, and he'd come in his truck, and then we had a fruiter and he would sell fruit and vegetables from his truck. That was their businesses, and they came around our area all the time.
- Respondent 1:** You missed about all about the tea wagon.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And what was that?
- Respondent 1:** It was a beautiful...
- Respondent 2:** A beautiful one.
- Respondent 1:** ...a beautiful red tea wagon that came with a horse **[0:33:00]** and horse-drawn, and they would sell tea to the families...
- Respondent 2:** From these things on the street.
- Respondent 1:** And of course, no one can forget the ice truck.
- Respondent 2:** Oh of course. We can go back to that.
- Respondent 1:** We all followed the ice truck. They came to deliver twenty-five or fifty pounds, as requested, for their icebox.

- Interviewer:** And you would put it into the icebox?
- Respondent 2:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** The forerunner [0:33:30] of the fridge, yeah. And they would chop with an ice pick, and all the kids would gather at the back because he would deliberately chop extra pieces on the roadway so we could collect them. Those were our popsicles.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 1:** We couldn't wait to get a piece...
- Respondent 2:** It's true.
- Respondent 1:** ...to run – we had to make sure, of course, the horse hadn't...
- Respondent 2:** Rubbed it there first. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And I think he deliberately stopped where it was okay [0:34:00] and we would stop and pick up these pieces of ice. We would – you think we had the finest ice cream sundae...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, it's true.
- Respondent 1:** ...the way we – how satisfied we were. And if anybody got more than one piece, we shared it with – everybody got some.
- Respondent 2:** It was easy life then, not like now.
- Respondent 1:** Oh, you know.
- Interviewer:** Talk more about the kinds of – please, about the kinds of work that people did, because we've talked about several [0:34:30] different things.
- Respondent 1:** Well the needle trade. The needle trade was very big.
- Interviewer:** At home and in factories?

- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Down the Avenue was loaded.
- Interviewer:** The Avenue being Spadina?
- Respondent 1:** Spadina.
- Interviewer:** Oh lots of needle trade work in there.
- Respondent 1:** Oh boy. It was the needle trade. For some reason or other, I think everybody that came over from the old country was taught how to sew, both men and women.
- Interviewer:** Schneiders.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Both men and women. I know my father-in-law, when **[0:35:00]** I saw his papers, his immigration papers, you know, when he came over, he was a tailor. He worked at Tip-Top Tailor's, and no, he worked at Eaton's. Excuse me. At Eaton's. But the immigration put down he was a sailor. [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** Instead of tailor.
- Respondent 1:** He was a sailor. My daughter can't get over it.
- Interviewer:** Okay. **[0:35:30]** And as far as you know, were the women working in addition?
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So what were the women...

- Respondent 2:** The factories for sewing.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Cutting, whatever.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Anything. Busheling.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, that's right. I did that once.
- Respondent 1:** So did I. [Laughter] You know what busheling is?
- Interviewer:** No, I don't.
- Respondent 1:** Tip-Top Tailor's had jobs for just about anybody. You could get a job for busheling. Busheling was removing all [0:36:00] the...
- Respondent 2:** The threads.
- Respondent 1:** ...threads that when they put something down and what did you call it when...
- Respondent 2:** When you sew it.
- Interviewer:** No, when you were getting it laid out and the pattern together.
- Respondent 2:** Well I did the uniforms, so I don't...
- Respondent 1:** The basting. The basting. It was the basting.
- Respondent 2:** You had to cut the...
- Respondent 1:** It was all white, so – and to keep the pieces together, and then they sewed, but you had to get all these pieces out.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 1:** So that was what they called busheling.

- Respondent 2:** And they used a scissor like this, not like this. [0:36:30] You held the ends when you did that.
- Interviewer:** But you're saying a lot of the women were also working.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Definitely.
- Respondent 1:** Oh you were glad to get the job.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Right.
- Interviewer:** So who took care of the children?
- Respondent 2:** I don't know. I never had children then so I don't know.
- Respondent 1:** Pardon?
- Respondent 2:** Who looked after the children when we were working? I guess grandmothers.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. The grandmothers were the ones. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So that's very interesting, you know, because sometimes I hear there was so much work to take care of at home that the mother stayed home, but you're saying a lot of the mothers were [0:37:00] working.
- Respondent 2:** Sure.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yes.
- Respondent 2:** The grandmothers did the work.
- Respondent 1:** I have a picture here of one of the boys who went overseas. He survived. He taught all the paratroopers. He was a lieutenant. He was one of that group, the ones that got killed.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Major Street.

- Respondent 1:** Eddie Burke.
- Respondent 2:** Boy, was he cute.
- Respondent 1:** Wait until you see the pictures.
- Interviewer:** You had an eye for them, eh?
- Respondent 2:** Oh he was kind of good-looking.
- Respondent 1:** He was a gorgeous kid, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** He was.
- Respondent 1:** But he [0:37:30] went – he had to quit school, public school, to go to work because his family didn't have any money for food or to pay rent. So he had to help. He was only thirteen. So he quit school, he went to work at Tip-Top Tailor's, and at the reunion we were discussing this, we had here.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Respondent 1:** And he said he made five dollars that first week. He was so happy he was going to bring home five dollars to his mother. [0:38:00] And somebody stole it.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 2:** Stole the five dollars.
- Respondent 1:** And he's, "How am I going to go home? What am I going to tell my mother? How is she going to be able to go and buy food?" You know? All the kids got together and put money in until they got five dollars for him to take home. That was how we lived in those days.
- Interviewer:** But that was – I mean for all the kids to get together and collect five dollars, that was a lot [0:38:30] to collect.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.

Respondent 1: In those days, yeah. But they made sure that he had his week's pay.

Interviewer: Wow. That's a beautiful story. Yeah. Before I turned on my little audio, you were talking about yourself being a wonderful athlete. So I'm wondering whether we can come back to that and talk about the kind of sports that you played, and what it was like – how many girls were athletic?

Respondent 1: [0:39:00] Well I have pictures in the album there. I was captain of the volleyball team, got city champions. I was captain of the baseball team. We won the city champions. And I got medals and crests for track and field. I was involved in the relay sports, the [0:39:30] running relays, the broad jumps, the high jumps, but I had to go in the midgets because I was so small. But I still did it, and one of my favourites was the tether tennis. Tether tennis was – they had a pole, a metal pole, and there was a rope hooked on the top and at the bottom [0:40:00] of the rope was a tennis ball in a crocheted net or something. It would hold the tennis ball, and there were two people on either side, and you played to get 21 points, and there was really a good way of – it was tactful, you know? You had to know what you were doing, and I [0:40:30] loved it, and boy was I good at it.

Interviewer: And were you the exception? Were a lot of girls athletic, or were most girls backing away from sports?

Respondent 1: To begin with it was an outlet for all of us because we had no – in those days we had no place to go to be – community centre-type thing. And so those of us that could went out. [0:41:00] A lot of girls tried. The odd one was pretty good, but there were very few that came to the threshold that I was in.

Interviewer: Yeah. So some of the...

Respondent 1: There was two or – Marie Taggart was one of them. So she's passed on, but she was pretty good, but she didn't spend near the time that I – I virtually lived in the playground.

- Interviewer:** So you were outstanding, and you had a passion for it.
- Respondent 1:** [0:41:30] Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** So you were – you excelled in athletics, and you loved it.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** So for you it was a very special...
- Respondent 1:** I couldn't wait to get – as a matter of fact, when I came home, I used to have to come through the lane and go through the backyard and come in, wait until my mother wasn't in the kitchen because I didn't want her to see what my socks looked like. [Laughter] But you could stand them up in a corner by themselves [0:42:00] from being in the playground all day. Don't forget we were playing in the cinders.
- Respondent 2:** Because that's what we had in the playground, cinders.
- Interviewer:** That whole neighbourhood, was it pretty much homogeneous? Was everybody pretty much of the same income level, or lack of income level?
- Respondent 1:** I would say so.
- Respondent 2:** I'd say so, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** I would say so.
- Interviewer:** So everybody was kind of in the same boat.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Give or take a little bit more or a little bit less, but...

- Interviewer:** Yeah. Most of you were...
- Respondent 1:** ...it [0:42:30] was pretty much....
- Interviewer:** ...kind of pretty poor, I think, is what we – to be very straight about it.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. And what languages were spoken?
- Respondent 2:** English.
- Respondent 1:** My mother – I can remember my mother saying, "I will go scrub floors in somebody's house before I will take welfare."
- Interviewer:** Proud.
- Respondent 1:** Of course.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** And that's the way they all lived in those days. They wouldn't take the welfare. Anything [0:43:00] they could do to make ends meet.
- Interviewer:** So everybody was quite poor, and you sometimes rented and had extra people for extra income.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** And people wanted to be proud that they could take care of themselves and their families.
- Respondent 1:** One of my early memories is that my mother worked at Child's Restaurant on Yonge Street because her older brother said, "You make sure you work because [0:43:30] we have to get enough money to bring the next person over from Poland."
- Respondent 2:** Right.

- Interviewer:** So everybody...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. So my mother cut her hand on one of the machines, a finger. It was her ring finger, and someone stupidly put carbolic acid on her...
- Respondent 2:** Oh Jesus.
- Respondent 1:** ...to disinfect it, eh? They had to remove her finger.
- Interviewer:** And she [0:44:00] worked at Child's to have extra money to bring extra family from Europe.
- Respondent 1:** Family over from Europe, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. So your family – your family spoke English. Your family spoke English too?
- Respondent 1:** Oh yes. They were very Canadian. My mother observed all of the Jewish holidays and all the Jewish things, you know? But they were very Canadian.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. They wanted to be...
- Respondent 1:** They were proud to be in Canada.
- Respondent 2:** [0:44:30] Everybody. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** I think she can – you can both come up with the same stories.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** We're so happy to be here.
- Interviewer:** What was happening on the roads? What percentage of whatever was on the roads were horses and buggies? What percentage were cars?
- Respondent 1:** There was a lot of horses and buggies then. Very few cars.

- Respondent 2:** My father and his horse was Jumbo. He called him. It was a white one. Big, big one, I remember, and he housed him in a garage.
- Respondent 1:** As a matter of [0:45:00] fact, they used to have a place, a stable on College Street between Robert and Spadina. There was a little laneway there. They used to have stables in there. They used to have stables there. And another thing we remember quite vividly is the drinking fountain on Spadina and College...
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** [0:45:30] On one side, the horses drank water, on the other side the people took water.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So this was a special drinking fountain.
- Respondent 1:** No, it wasn't. It was like this. It looked like a metal – a wrought iron – the shape of half a bathtub.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** And the horses would get their water there, but on the other side there was a fountain that you could get cold water on, and that was outside of [0:46:00] Benjamin's Funeral Parlour. [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** On Spadina.
- Interviewer:** So there's a funeral parlour there now. It used to be Benjamin's?
- Respondent 1:** It used to be Benjamin's.
- Interviewer:** Wow. That's a first.
- Respondent 1:** And across the road was a castle, and we thought the girl that came to Lansdowne School, we thought she was a princess because she lived in that castle. Whatever it was then, it is now Connaught Laboratories.

- Interviewer:** Got it. Okay.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** What about the stores? What do you remember about the stores [0:46:30] on Bloor, on Harbord, on College?
- Respondent 1:** The stores, there was Wells Delicatessen.
- Interviewer:** Are you talking about College or Bloor?
- Respondent 1:** College Street.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So we'll start with College.
- Respondent 1:** Wells Delicatessen had white tiled walls, and all across the front of it were salamis hanging. That was the decoration. And they were...
- Interviewer:** That was the decoration? [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** And they were at various stages of drying out, and the drier they became, the more [0:47:00] expensive they were because the fat was making them lighter. And the boys used to get – their mothers had to give them that nickel to go there and get a hot dog. And across the road was Becker's.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Remember he kept the hot dogs in the window?
- Respondent 1:** Well yeah. Becker's Delicatessen was across the road, and the boys would – where were they going to spend their money? At Wells? Or at Becker's [0:47:30] because at Becker's because they got a piece of speck...
- Interviewer:** Oh, I remember the speck.
- Respondent 1:** ...on their pastrami sandwich.
- Interviewer:** If you'd like to describe what speck means.

Respondent 1: Speck is a piece of fat dipped in hot spice, and they would have that sliced and put on their pastrami sandwich, and they were in their glory. They would have to think hard where they were going to spend that nickel. And then we'd go to Spadina Avenue [0:48:00] and we had the original Shopsy's, and the other one across the...

Interviewer: Caspowitz.

Respondent 1: ...across the road. They were right within...

Interviewer: Shopsy's and Switzer's.

Respondent 1: And Switzer's.

Respondent 2: Switzer's.

Respondent 1: That's the one that was there. Yeah.

Interviewer: So lots of delicatessens.

Respondent 1: Oh yes. Are you kidding? Because they thrived on the needle trade coming there.

Interviewer: Right. And what other stores do you remember, or restaurants?

Respondent 1: The stores, [0:48:30] Sammy the hat-maker, Sammy Taft.

Respondent 2: She's still around.

Respondent 1: Taft. No. The – all the major headliners from the entertainment world came to Toronto to go to Shopsy's and have a sandwich, and autograph a picture to be put on the wall, but they came because they were going to Taft to get their hat.

Respondent 2: Their hats.

Interviewer: So they made fine hats.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah.

- Respondent 2:** [0:49:00] Oh, felt hats.
- Interviewer:** Where was that? Where was that?
- Respondent 1:** On Spadina.
- Respondent 2:** Spadina.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. It was definitely there. Then we get into Kensington and you had Katz's for the big barrels of pickles, sour pickles. [Laughter] Before you went shopping, you went to this barrel and you picked out your pickle. It was usually at the bottom of the barrel.
- Respondent 2:** It was good. It was good.
- Respondent 1:** You picked out the one you want, you paid your nickel, and [0:49:30] you walked chomping on that pickle all the way through Kensington doing your shopping.
- Interviewer:** A sour pickle.
- Respondent 2:** And a big thing like that.
- Respondent 1:** Butter. There was Caplan's.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, right.
- Respondent 1:** There was two of them. Caplan's and...
- Respondent 2:** And you got the butter with a thing like this.
- Respondent 1:** And there was another one next door, and they had great, big – they must have been fifty-pound slabs at least, or a hundred, and they would take this wooden...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Paddle.

- Respondent 1:** ...wooden paddle and slice off a piece. **[0:50:00]** Butter – and it never tasted so good as it did in those days. It's not the same today.
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** What about any other kinds of stores or theatres in that whole area?
- Respondent 1:** We went to theatres.
- Interviewer:** I'm talking about Bloor, Harbord, College.
- Respondent 1:** Do you remember the LaSalle Theatre on Spadina?
- Respondent 2:** And they had a Jewish cinema, I remember.
- Respondent 1:** And there was the Garden Theatre on College Street.
- Respondent 2:** And the Playhouse.
- Respondent 1:** There was two of them.
- Respondent 2:** We saved dishes.
- Interviewer:** These are movie theatres?
- Respondent 1:** Are you kidding? **[0:50:30]** For five cents, are you kidding?
- Respondent 2:** We saved dishes.
- Respondent 1:** One of them was the Playhouse Theatre, the other one was the Garden Theatre.
- Respondent 2:** Garden Theatre.
- Respondent 1:** One was between Major and Brunswick.
- Respondent 2:** And Spadina.

- Respondent 1:** The other one was between Major and Spadina.
- Respondent 2:** Spadina. Right. Both on the same side.
- Respondent 1:** And LaSalle Theatre was on Spadina Avenue near Dundas.
- Interviewer:** So that was farther south. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** If you were lucky enough to get a nickel.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** And an [0:51:00] onion sandwich. [Laughter] You went to – usually it was the LaSalle.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Cowboys.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And to watch that. Or lacking the nickel to go to the show, we would go to Queen's Park and get that – take that same sandwich with us for our lunch, and collect leaves, coloured leaves, but that was our pleasure. It was [0:51:30] our outing to go there.
- Interviewer:** What about Harbord or Bloor? Any recollection about any stores on Harbord?
- Respondent 2:** There's a bakery.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. The Harbord Bakery, we remember, that's been there since like forever.
- Interviewer:** Well I know Rafi Kosower, whose family owns it, his father bought it from somebody else in 1945, but somebody else owned it before that. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And there's a butcher shop at Brunswick and Harbord.
- Interviewer:** A butcher?
- Respondent 2:** [0:52:00] Martin. He owned the butcher shop there.

- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 2:** Sells all Jewish meat, you know, like kosher.
- Interviewer:** Right. Right.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Anything else on Harbord?
- Respondent 2:** There was like a little confectionary store, but I don't know. I never went in there, so yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Well the reason we wouldn't be too aware of that because we...
- Respondent 2:** We didn't do the shopping.
- Respondent 1:** ...we kept all our activities up around the College Street area.
- Interviewer:** You know, and I've noticed that. As I'm meeting people who lived there a long time ago, if you lived near College, or Harbord, or [0:52:30] Bloor, that was really your neighbourhood.
- Respondent 1:** That was the hub.
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Respondent 1:** That was the hub.
- Interviewer:** So your hub was College.
- Respondent 1:** The only one...
- Respondent 2:** I was on College and I'd buy a hot dog when I was pregnant.
- Respondent 1:** ...that really knew about Harbord Street were the boys that went to either Central Tech to learn a trade...
- Respondent 2:** Or Harbord...

Respondent 1: ...or Harbord Collegiate to become a professional because the girls went to Central Commerce.

Interviewer: To learn to be a secretary or **[0:53:00]** something like that.

Respondent 1: To work in an office, yes.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah.

Respondent 2: Oh, my brother-in-law went to Midland to have an operation so he could join the Air Force because they refused him. There's something about his leg, and he went there, and something about his nose. He went up to Midland, stayed there a week, had his operations, went back, and the Air Force took him.

Interviewer: Into Midland?

Respondent 2: Because all his friends were in and he wanted to be in.

Respondent 1: Yeah. All of them, yeah.

Interviewer: While you were there, did people start doing any renovations, or was that not part **[0:53:30]** of...

Respondent 1: There was one person on Major Street who had the smarts and both he and she, they would buy a run-down house, and a lot of them needed repairs, you know, at that time. They would buy it. They obviously had enough money that they could put a down payment or what – and then they would fix it up and then resell. And then they made money, and they went one after **[0:54:00]** another. They became very well-to-do just from doing that.

Respondent 2: Greenwin Construction.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: That was one of them.

Interviewer: Now...

Respondent 1: And wait.

Interviewer: Go ahead.

Respondent 1: You know Cadillac Construction? Where do you think Burman, where he grew up on Baldwin Street in a chicken store? Right next door to my aunt. They both had chicken stores on Baldwin.

Interviewer: So they started off modestly too.

Respondent 1: Very modestly.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent 1: That's where he grew **[0:54:30]** up.

Interviewer: When your families lived there, all the moves you did, your family rented until you moved to View Mount. Did your family rent, or did they...

Respondent 1: They rented until they could buy.

Interviewer: So your family bought?

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: The home that you were living in, that same one.

Respondent 1: Yes.

Interviewer: So they rented until they bought it.

Respondent 1: That's right.

Interviewer: Got it. Okay.

Respondent 1: And as a matter of fact, later on, much later on, when the Cohn house was up for sale, my mother bought that house.

Interviewer: **[0:55:00]** A second house?

Respondent 1: A second house.

Interviewer: Whoa. What an entrepreneurial woman.

Respondent 1: Wait. And when my mother had to go – unfortunately when my father died rather suddenly, he was at my home for dinner and he says, "I don't feel good. Take me home." My husband took him home and my sister phoned, she said, "He needs to see a doctor. He won't let us call a doctor." I said, "Tell them **[0:55:30]** I'm calling the doctor."

Interviewer: We know who the boss is. Okay.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Well and not only that, my father and I were like this. My sister used to always say, "Daddy's little favourite." I said, "Jealousy will get you nowhere." But it was because I did everything I was told. I never questioned, I never argued with them. If they needed me for something, it was done. And my father was taken into the **[0:56:00]** hospital, he didn't last five weeks. He had uremic poisoning. And strangely enough this Max Teplitsky that parachuted out of his – a couple of weeks after my father went into the hospital, his father was brought in for the same thing. And one of his daughter's names was Susy, and she was crying and my father thought it was me and he said to the nurses **[0:56:30]** and to the family, "Tell my Susy not to cry."

Interviewer: Oh my god.

Respondent 2: Wow.

Respondent 1: And they both passed away within two weeks of one another, same thing. Now one week after the Shivah, the day after the Shivah, my mother took a massive stroke.

Respondent 2: Oh shoot.

Respondent 1: And she didn't talk or move for fourteen years.

Interviewer: **[0:57:00]** Oh boy.

- Respondent 1:** So who had the responsibility? My brother said, "You're the smart one in the family. You know what to do. You get everything done. You better turn this off," because I said, "You're full of shit."
[Laughter] I said...
- Respondent 2:** You've said worse. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** I said, "I know I'm the smart one, but you just don't want to have your **[0:57:30]** life interrupted, so you figure I can do everything." He says, "Well you've got nobody to look after." My husband had just dropped dead. So anyway, it was a case of my mother went into a nursing home on Spadina, then we brought her out, and I made a hospital for my mother in her home, and my sister was yelling blue murder, and I said, "Look, this is Ma's home. You've lived here scot-free all this time."
- Interviewer:** **[0:58:00]** Oh, so your sister had continued to live with your mother?
- Respondent 1:** She was living there, the oldest sister.
- Interviewer:** With a family or just by herself?
- Respondent 1:** With her son. Her husband had passed away. And I said, "I'm making everything convenient for mom and I'm going to get a nurse or..."
- Interviewer:** A caregiver.
- Respondent 1:** ..."a nurse's aide to come in and help," which I did. And then she was going in and out of the **[0:58:30]** Baycrest for therapy and finally wound up in the Baycrest. Let me show you something here. Just let me get past you.
- Interviewer:** Okay. I'll just turn this off.
- Respondent 1:** Oh now we've got to get to the boys.

- Interviewer:** Well no, what I want to talk about boys – you're right on topic because I want to talk about what dating was like when you were twelve, fourteen, sixteen.
- Respondent 1:** I'm referring to the boys that...
- Interviewer:** I know that.
- Respondent 1:** ...were killed overseas.
- Interviewer:** I know. But I want to talk about dating, okay? We can come back to that, yeah. What were the...
- Respondent 1:** **[0:59:00]** We used to have – remember those parties in a house, if the mother would let us bring the kids in and turn the record on and have dances?
- Respondent 2:** No, I'd go to the clubrooms. I couldn't date until I was eighteen.
- Respondent 1:** Oh.
- Interviewer:** You couldn't date until you were eighteen?
- Respondent 1:** No. I did get to go to a clubroom. I remember vividly up above a store...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Above the store near Spadina.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Clubrooms up there.
- Respondent 1:** The boys would have clubrooms, you know? So – but **[0:59:30]** that was limited, but what we had were socials in whoever could get use of their dining room or living room, if the parents would let them. And how many kids – you know, four or six, seven kids would come, and we'd dance. And if the boys didn't know, the girls taught them how. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** And what were the dances that you did?

- Respondent 2:** Jitterbugs.
- Respondent 1:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** You know, the one where they get thrown underneath, you know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Like that.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** You want to know?
- Respondent 2:** [Laughs] [1:00:00] I danced like that. They threw you up and then they threw you down and underneath their legs.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So with jitterbug.
- Respondent 2:** That was me.
- Interviewer:** What else?
- Respondent 2:** And I could waltz, I could do anything. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But I couldn't go until I was eighteen.
- Interviewer:** So your parents didn't let you date until you were eighteen.
- Respondent 2:** Definitely not.
- Interviewer:** And would that have been also in a group? Or could somebody come and you'd go...
- Respondent 2:** She'd let a boy come pick me up to take me dancing because I liked to dance.

- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But otherwise, uh-uh. Couldn't.
- Interviewer:** Excuse me, I'm going to have to turn this off.
- Respondent 2:** That's it.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. [1:00:30] What about health care. Doctors.
- Respondent 2:** Doctors.
- Respondent 1:** You paid.
- Interviewer:** You paid out of your own pocket?
- Respondent 1:** You paid.
- Respondent 2:** Three bucks.
- Respondent 1:** You paid.
- Interviewer:** Did you go there? The doctors came to you? What happened?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, in those days they did. It was three bucks if they'd come.
- Interviewer:** Wow. So that was expensive.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Of course it was expensive. So you didn't call them unless you had to.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Were there...
- Respondent 2:** [1:01:00] I used to bite my nails badly.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** So I put on these false nails. They used to be pieces of plastic.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.

Respondent 2: Not like now. And then when we jitterbugged, a guy through me out and he got a handful of my nails. [Laughter] "Oh my god, I broke your nails." I was worried they won't grow back. I didn't want him to know they were false. [Laughs]

Interviewer: I hope that that background – that's a wonderful story. I hope it won't be drowned out. That's a great story. Okay. Go ahead.

Respondent 1: No, I was saying the last man I worked for, I still keep in close contact with him for lunches. [1:01:30] He comes here, he comes to our affairs, family affairs, and the last time he came a couple of weeks ago for coffee, he said, "What's – why's she got all that music on?" he said, and yet he's not in my age category, but the stuff from way back, you know.

Interviewer: It's wonderful music. I mean I'm glad you turned it on briefly.

Respondent 1: Oh, are you kidding? Wonderful.

Interviewer: Yeah, it is wonderful.

Respondent 1: I get all the old songs, you know, from our time.

Respondent 2: Right.

Respondent 1: From our time.

Respondent 2: [1:02:00] Glen Miller, Tommy Dorsey.

Respondent 1: Yes. All the old – all the – yeah.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: So you say you weren't allowed to date until you were eighteen, and you said you used to gather at people's homes and just have parties in people's living rooms.

Respondent 1: Well my mother was very strict with us anyway. The two older girls, they seemed to get away with – I don't know what their ages were

when they were going out, but they had a fairly good social life. I think I was a late-bloomer. [1:02:30] Mind you, I think I was sixteen when I met my husband, but if you were sitting on the steps in the front porch, my mother would make sure that my knees were covered. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: Of course. Definitely.

Respondent 1: Oh yes. I mean strict. Mid-Victorian, it was mid-Victorian.

Respondent 2: It was definitely.

Respondent 1: Mid-Victorian.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: So much so [1:03:00] that when I was pregnant and I was going to have my baby, nobody ever told me anything. I had no idea.

Respondent 2: No, you had no idea.

Respondent 1: My idea of giving birth to a baby was being put in a great big cylinder and turned around and around until the baby came out.

Respondent 2: Oh for heaven's sake. [Laughs]

Respondent 1: That's all I could visualize because no one told me anything.

Interviewer: What about sex education?

Respondent 1: [1:03:30] Nothing.

Respondent 2: There wasn't any.

Respondent 1: There was no such thing as sex.

Respondent 2: Uh-uh.

- Respondent 1:** What are you talking about? You weren't even allowed to use the word "sex."
- Respondent 2:** That's right. We never used that word.
- Interviewer:** So when you got married?
- Respondent 2:** That was a problem for me. I don't know about her. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** It was.
- Respondent 2:** [Laughs] It was for me.
- Respondent 1:** You were on your own, kid.
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 2:** That's right. I couldn't see...
- Respondent 1:** You were on your own.
- Respondent 2:** ...I couldn't let a boy touch you that night, but the next night it's okay because you had a piece of paper.
- Interviewer:** Wow. So from zero experience and zero knowledge...
- Respondent 1:** [1:04:00] That's exactly the right term...
- Interviewer:** ...to becoming a woman and having...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh my...
- Respondent 1:** Exactly the right term.
- Respondent 2:** [Laughs] Oh I fooled my husband for a long time. He's lucky he's here. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** I fooled my husband, I'll tell you that.

- Interviewer:** So trying to avoid being with him?
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Respondent 1:** What are you talking about?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** I went to Detroit on my honeymoon, my husband's sister's place, and my best friend – I don't know if you remember Ann Greenberg.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** She was there and she said, well, you know, she wanted to know – [1:04:30] I was there a week before I would let him come near me.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** That's...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Wearing pyjamas and a pad. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** And that's the type of...
- Respondent 2:** That's what I did.
- Respondent 1:** That's the type of knowledge...
- Respondent 2:** We didn't know anything.
- Respondent 1:** ...or misknowledge that we had.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, right.
- Respondent 2:** Maybe not everybody, but we were that way.
- Interviewer:** I'll bet a lot of people were like you.

- Respondent 1:** I don't know about the others too much. There was the real bad girls that you stayed away from...
- Respondent 2:** Like Teitelbaum. You remember her?
- Respondent 1:** [1:05:00] Who?
- Respondent 2:** Teitelbaum?
- Respondent 1:** No, I don't remember her. But she...
- Respondent 2:** No? Her mother was one of these women that sends her kids out to get it. She's like that. A woman sends kids out, but she was one of those.
- Respondent 1:** Do you remember the Cadner girls?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah? Okay.
- Interviewer:** So they were not inexperienced like the two of you were.
- Respondent 2:** No. They were experienced.
- Respondent 1:** Oh, believe me.
- Respondent 2:** The whole family, all the girls.
- Interviewer:** So then what you did is – you knew that it was happening and you kind of looked down on them.
- Respondent 2:** Of course.
- Respondent 1:** As a matter of fact when somebody once [1:05:30] said to me how – "Well how do you think you got born?" You know? I said, "Don't you say that. My mother and father wouldn't do such a thing."
- Respondent 2:** [Laughs] Yeah.

- Respondent 1:** Wow.
- Respondent 2:** And I never smoked because I didn't want a boy to give me a marijuana cigarette. That's what we had in those days.
- Respondent 1:** I never knew about marijuana in those days.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah I knew about marijuana, so I wouldn't smoke in case I got – so that's why I still don't smoke.
- Interviewer:** Just in case some guy gives you marijuana, right? Like your grandson here.
- Respondent 2:** [1:06:00] [Laughs] Oh yeah.
- Respondent 3:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But that's the way it was then.
- Interviewer:** So...
- Respondent 1:** Just watching Ralph, he's looking at us all in this room right now.
- Respondent 2:** When my girlfriends came back from their honeymoon, I said, "So? What's it like," and they were all, "Well that was all right." I was thinking, "What's missing with me?" [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So I guess you were – you asked them, but you don't know what really happened.
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** Nobody was open and nobody explained anything.
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Respondent 1:** No. There was no...

- Respondent 2:** ...nobody ever did.
- Respondent 1:** It was not only no information and it was misinformation.
- Respondent 2:** [1:06:30] Yeah. You learned in the school grounds whatever you learned.
- Respondent 1:** I didn't even learn there.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, I heard about that in school grounds.
- Respondent 1:** I saw – one day I was in the schoolyard and the bunch of the boys were there and they started to grab one of the girls. Got too smart with her.
- Respondent 2:** Cheeky.
- Respondent 1:** And she was trying to get – and I saw it, and the boy said to me, "Don't you tell anybody or you know what you'll get." And I said, "Nobody threatens [1:07:00] me." And he started chasing me, and I had to run – remember the fence?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** I had to climb the fence and jump the fence. He couldn't get near me.
- Interviewer:** But when he said, "You know what you'll get," you didn't really know what he was talking about.
- Respondent 1:** No, no, no. Nothing – he just said physical. He was going to hurt me.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** He was going to hurt me, and I said, "Nobody threatens me." And he started chasing me, and I just made a beeline for the fence. [1:07:30] The door – he couldn't get to the exit, and I just climbed

the fence and went flying over, and he could – he was stumbling.
[Laughter]

Interviewer: Yeah. Well you were a hot athlete. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: Right.

Respondent 1: And the boys all knew it. They knew – the saying was that I could run faster and hit harder than any one of them.

Interviewer: What would you have been known for? I mean she was a fabulous athlete and she was a leader, and she was the leader [1:08:00] of the boys.

Respondent 2: I was the dancer.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent 2: I danced a lot. Yeah. Even in school. I got ambitious when I was fifty. I learned how to cross-country ski and I loved it. [Laughs]

Respondent 1: Oh isn't that something?

Interviewer: Wonderful.

Respondent 1: At fifty?

Respondent 2: Fifty.

Interviewer: Good for you.

Respondent 2: Yeah. I decided I'm going to take it up.

Respondent 1: Good for you.

Respondent 2: Not downhill.

Interviewer: Yeah.

- Respondent 2:** But I thought, oh, I'll learn it, and I did. And I got my pins to put my legs up like that, and turning around.
- Respondent 1:** Oh my goodness.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. It was wonderful. I loved it.
- Interviewer:** Good for you.
- Respondent 1:** Good for you.
- Interviewer:** But dancing was something that you loved to do.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, I [1:08:30] did that a lot.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** Went to dancing school, and one after school...
- Interviewer:** And was that dance that you did with a partner? Or was it...
- Respondent 2:** No, we learned different steps, and then of course we're partners when we're in the class, but dancing was my...
- Respondent 1:** Well Freda Garr and her husband, that I have in the book here, they became teachers of the groups that were getting a little older. Like even the doctors, all the doctors and the builders, they were giving them classes, [1:09:00] and their son became a choreographer in the movie industry, and his – you see whenever there's a big show with dancing, like "Jesus Christ Superstar," his credits are on there. He's on the credits. So.
- Interviewer:** I want to talk about – I think – oh, just two more questions. One is when you lived in that neighbourhood, [1:09:30] was it safe? Was it dangerous? Were there certain things you had to be careful about?
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Respondent 2:** Nothing.

- Respondent 1:** It was safe.
- Respondent 2:** It was safe.
- Respondent 1:** If anything happened, it was very rare.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. It was safe.
- Respondent 1:** Very rare.
- Respondent 2:** And friendly. Very friendly.
- Respondent 1:** My nephew told me this week when I brought this subject up, he said, "Auntie Sue, do you remember that somebody shot at me in the lane there?"
- Interviewer:** Whoa.
- Respondent 1:** And I said, "No," and I would have been aware of anything that [1:10:00] happened. He said that as a matter of fact, I was able to identify the room that it came from when the police came. So that was a very unusual thing.
- Interviewer:** Okay, okay.
- Respondent 2:** You could walk around at night.
- Respondent 1:** We had to go to school through the lane. We went through the laneway. The back door down here, through the cut-off, there was the school. Or if we [1:10:30] had to go to the grocery store to pick up something in a hurry right on the corner across the road from the school.
- Interviewer:** So were there lots of grocery stores?
- Respondent 1:** Not a lot, but this one, this one was Ben's Grocery, remember?
- Respondent 2:** That dirty grocery. I remember.
- Respondent 1:** Ben's.

Respondent 2: I went in there once. I bought seventy-five cents worth of candies...

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent 2: ...and I gave them to the kids. I didn't eat them. I was supposed to bank that money, the penny to the bank, but I didn't.

Interviewer: That's a lot of money.

Respondent 1: The boys used to go there to get little packages [1:11:00] of cigarettes. They were called Cububs. You remember? Cububs. So all the guys, they were big-shots, like thirteen years old, you know? And they'd go – or they'd be gambling in front of that store. Oh yeah, we didn't talk about our gambling with the Aggies.

Respondent 2: No. I know. [Laughs] The Aggies – I still have some of those Aggies too.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: We were gamblers. We didn't know it, but we were gamblers. Originally Lord Lansdowne, [1:11:30] which was just Lansdowne School then, had only planks on the surface...

Respondent 2: Of the schoolyard.

Respondent 1: Big planks. And on the end of each plank was a big nail.

Respondent 2: To hold it down.

Respondent 1: To hold the planks down. So we used to play Aggies.

Interviewer: What's that?

Respondent 1: Aggies and Alleys.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

- Respondent 1:** Aggies and Alleys.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** the lowest rank of the Aggies were little...
- Respondent 2:** Dibs.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, dibs.
- Respondent 2:** Dibs.
- Respondent 1:** Dibs, and then [1:12:00] they'd have the Aggies go to the next level up. They were – the uglier they were, the lower they were. And the more expensive ones, the Alleys were gorgeous.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, I remember those.
- Respondent 1:** So you would shoot them up to see if you could hit the one – the dibs would shoot toward the Aggie, and if you hit it...
- Respondent 2:** If you hit it, you got it.
- Respondent 1:** ...you got it. But if you didn't, you keep going. And then if you ran out of dibs, you bought them, ten for a penny, [1:12:30] so you could keep in the game.
- Respondent 2:** Another game we played – not in the schoolyard, but ourselves – you'd get cut up pictures of the movie stars, and you'd put them in a book in all the different pages. And then you held the book real tight like that, and you'd give them a pin and they would go and put a pin in there, and whatever came out, that's what they had.
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 1:** What about Buck-Buck coming...
- Respondent 2:** Oh boy, that was stupid game we played.

- Respondent 1:** Buck-Buck...
- Respondent 2:** No wonder my back is sore now. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. It was a game called Buck-Buck, How Many Fingers Up? [Laughter] [1:13:00] So we would have teams. One would – you'd have to get up against the brick wall like this...
- Respondent 2:** And somebody would stand there so it would be soft.
- Respondent 1:** And then somebody – then the other team would take a flying leap and...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, and jump on.
- Respondent 1:** ...and straddle you. Straddle you.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 1:** And they would hold fingers and you – they would yell, "Buck, buck, how many fingers up?" [Laughter] You had to guess. You had...
- Interviewer:** Okay. Okay. Yeah, so what I'm also learning is you had a lot of games that [1:13:30] you played.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You know, you didn't have lessons and lessons and lessons.
- Respondent 1:** We played hockey with a broomstick.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Now I have one more question and that is do you remember the end of World War II?
- Respondent 2:** Oh sure.
- Interviewer:** So tell me what you remember happened.

- Respondent 2:** Well unfortunately ourselves, my brother-in-law, Solly K – we got the telegram that he was missing in action that night.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Oh.
- Respondent 1:** Was it the same night?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. February the 24th. I was standing in the hall [1:14:00] and I had the belly. His mother.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 2:** And we got the telegram. I tried to keep it from my husband, but I had to tell him finally that he's missing in action, but then we got the other one that he's gone.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 2:** And we went to see where he's buried in Europe. He's buried in a beautiful cemetery. Not the soldiers, because he came down in [indiscernible 01:14:20], and that's where they buried him.
- Respondent 1:** Where did he come down?
- Respondent 2:** [indiscernible 01:14:23]. It was France and Germany at the time, and they buried him. And the cemetery is so colourful [1:14:30] where the people are in there. But they've got the little cross, you know?
- Respondent 1:** We're going to try and make an effort to bring the four boys home.
- Interviewer:** Who's we?
- Respondent 1:** All of us that are involved in this with the four immediate ones that got – that were buddies and...
- Interviewer:** One of them being your brother-in-law?
- Respondent 1:** One of them her brother-in-law.

Interviewer: And his name was?

Respondent 2: Solly.

Respondent 1: Solly Kay.

Interviewer: Solly Kay.

Respondent 1: Harold Sobel next door, Chucky Males next door [1:15:00] to me, and one of the boys up the street.

Interviewer: Oh my god.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's beautiful. I just want to ask you what do you remember from the end of World War II?

Respondent 1: The end of World War II?

Interviewer: Yeah. When it was announced.

Respondent 1: I remember when I found out that I literally flew from my mother's house on Major Street to my in-laws' house on Beatrice. I must have made it in about seven minutes. I just flew from one house [1:15:30] to the other screaming that it was over, and my husband would be coming home.

Interviewer: Oh your husband was there?

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: He was in Holland at the liberation of Holland, yeah.

Interviewer: Oh my god. Wow, so you had such close connections.

Respondent 2: Oh sure.

Interviewer: Both of you.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** My brother-in-law was smart over there. He got in touch with a girl that was in a kitchen...
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** ...and he was very friendly with her. She used to call him Stan. [1:16:00] And when he went, she started to get in touch with me. She wanted to come over and I thought my in-laws seeing her were in trouble. So slowly I weeded her away from me because what's the point? She never married him.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** She was just friendly with him.
- Respondent 1:** He was a very close friend of mine, Solly. He used to help me...
- Respondent 2:** He was a great guy.
- Respondent 1:** When I went to high school, I had a choice – I think it was in second-year of doing art or taking art or French. [1:16:30] I didn't know the first thing about French. I figure I would take a stab at art, but I wasn't good at drawing, but Solly was great, so Solly used to sit with me and hold my hand and draw pictures. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Oh what a fabulous story.
- Respondent 2:** He was a great guy.
- Interviewer:** Fabulous.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. He was...
- Respondent 2:** Well he would have been ninety now. He was the same age as me.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.

- Respondent 2:** He would have been ninety years old. Wow. I can't imagine.
- Respondent 1:** Solly was originally my buddy, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Wowee.
- Interviewer:** [1:17:00] So before I turn off this video, first of all I want to say thank you to both of you. Neil, I want to thank you because you got your grandmother together, and Susy, which was – this was a very, very rich...
- Respondent 1:** We have the real history of downtown...
- Respondent 2:** Major Street.
- Respondent 1:** ...Major Street in particular.
- Interviewer:** Well and you described it so colourfully and so well.
- Respondent 1:** Everything about – Kensington, I was the chosen one. [Laughter] I [1:17:30] was the one my mother chose to go shopping to Kensington five times a week with her.
- Respondent 2:** Wow.
- Respondent 1:** With the baby buggy so we could fill it up with groceries.
- Respondent 2:** Well I never went there because they tried to screw me once because they thought I was Gentile, and I also bought a melon [laughter], and the lady, in Jewish, talked to her husband. I can understand that.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** "Charge her more. She won't know the difference." [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** Talk about that, you know the...

- Respondent 2:** I don't go back there no more.
- Respondent 1:** You know this [1:18:00] coloured fellow I told you about that lived with us?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** My mother sent him to Kensington to get a dozen eggs, and the woman said to whoever, "Give him the stinking eggs."
- Respondent 2:** Oh. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** And he said, "Lady, you can keep the fresh, stinking eggs yourself," [laughter] "because I don't want it." [Laughter] This fellow was such a wonderful person in [1:18:30] our home that – like him and the one in my book that went to the reunion, there's the reunion picture from downtown from the club that we – all the Jewish kids went to on the corner of Bellevue...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** ...and the boys wouldn't go to [indiscernible 01:18:51], but everybody liked him. All the boys were crazy about him, so the mothers used to say, "Mel, [1:19:00] please, he'll listen to you. He won't go to [indiscernible 01:19:02]." So Mel used to go to [indiscernible 01:19:04] with all the boys, so he learned how to get bar mitzvahed. He knew all the Jewish words and everything.
- Interviewer:** So he wasn't Jewish but...
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Interviewer:** ...he got the kids to go. [Indiscernible 01:19:12], by the way for our tape is afterschool, Jewish school after, at four in the afternoon.
- Respondent 1:** That was on Brunswick near College.
- Interviewer:** So they got the one kid who wasn't Jewish because he was the leader?

Respondent 1: But he – everybody – they had the highest regard for him, so he learned how to become [1:19:30] bar mitzvahed.

Interviewer: That's a fabulous story.

Respondent 1: But he learned everything, all the Jewish sayings and all the Jewish words. The same as this coloured man that lived with us.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent 1: But you still haven't gone into the four boys.

Interviewer: What would you like to add about them?

Respondent 1: The four boys, I told you about the numbers of the streets they lived in.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent 1: And I've got the pictures of them here. Have you seen them?

Interviewer: I will look at them. I just...

Respondent 1: Oh, after the tape?

Interviewer: We'll turn this off.

Respondent 1: All right.

Interviewer: Is there anything more you'd like – I know they all lived close to you, and...

Respondent 1: [1:20:00] They were all a band.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: They were a band – like you would say, a band of brothers.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent 1:** And like you couldn't wait to get up in the morning to go out and see them on the street...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** ...and play with them. And we didn't, quote, disband until we'd got into our teens, I'd say. And then we each went our separate ways because of high school, and...
- Respondent 2:** Which [1:20:30] school they went to.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And then eventually they were going into the army or into the service, and we were dating, getting ready to get married, you know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Well they will be honoured because they are very, very clearly remembered with a lot of respect and appreciation.
- Respondent 1:** Oh are you kidding?
- Interviewer:** They're being honoured in our neighbourhood.
- Respondent 1:** As a matter of fact, when I heard about this whole situation and I read everything that there as in connection with it, I thought, "Why didn't [1:21:00] they call this the Major Lane of Heroes?" Well it's going – they're having their lane coming up soon. So I'm going to turn it off, but I just want to say to Susy, to Florie, and to Neil, thank you very, very much.
- Respondent 2:** You're very welcome.
- Respondent 3:** You're welcome.
- Respondent 1:** I hope you got everything that you were looking for.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So Neil, you're talking about – yes, please.

- Respondent 3:** Sure. So I started out about, I would say, about ten years ago that my Aunt [1:21:30] Florie's youngest daughter, Cheryl, went to Ottawa to see if we could get his...
- Interviewer:** His being?
- Respondent 3:** Solly Kay's, pilot Solly Kay's – anything related that the government had of Solly's remains. And we were able to come up with his medals and his hat.
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 3:** And what we've done is we've framed it with his shot, with his picture in the [1:22:00] middle of the picture, his three medals, and then my Uncle Joey, which would be Ralph and Solly and the other...
- Respondent 2:** Younger brother.
- Respondent 3:** ...their younger brother. He's got his hat.
- Respondent 2:** Mm-hm. And I have the wing.
- Respondent 3:** And you have the wing.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 3:** So we have quite a bit of Solly Kay's artifacts, and beautiful things about his career in the army. Like him being a pilot, and [1:22:30] we're happy, we're very happy.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And Florie, you wanted to say – Florie, you're his sister-in-law, so tell me what you want to say.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. My husband's got a whole briefcase full of stuff on Solly, and during the Air Force days and all that I didn't bring them because I thought maybe you wouldn't want to look through them.

- Respondent 1:** That would be a treasure trove.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I know. My husband got it all together and I have his wing because Solly gave me that wing. That's how come I got it.
- Respondent 3:** He gave it to you?
- Respondent 2:** He gave it to me.
- Respondent 1:** But tell me, how did you get his hat? How were you able to...
- Respondent 2:** Well Cheryl when she went to Ottawa.
- Respondent 1:** [1:23:00] How could you recover that?
- Respondent 2:** I don't have it. Well they always have a couple. They have the big one.
- Interviewer:** I'm just going to turn this off, but I just think it's nice for us to know that you have these artifacts, and that Solly actually gave you, Florie, the wings.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, he gave me the wing that I Have.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. And it was your brother-in-law.
- Respondent 2:** I used to wear it on my pantsuit.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 2:** But my husband got a lot of papers and stuff that he got together.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** He told me, "Don't let it out of your sight."

Respondent 3: We have his logbook, his flight logbook as well.

Interviewer: Oh my god.

Respondent 3: It's his logbook [1:23:30] that has all his flights documented and everything there, so we've got that as well, so that was all from the Canadian Government at that time, but roughly ten years ago to 2012 as we speak, so this would have been in 2002. He would have...

Respondent 2: Yeah. He came down because of the Pathfinder. He was ready to come home and he switched to become a Pathfinder, be with his friends that he flew with, and they would first light up the target and the plane was shot in half, and then he came down [1:24:00] and his captain came to see us. He says he was dead when the plane was falling down because the guns were going, and he was leaning over the guns because his half – he was a gunner in the back tail.

Respondent 3: He was a rear gunner. Yes.

Respondent 2: Yeah, and so that's why he came down where he did.

Respondent 1: And Chucky Males was too.

Respondent 2: Yeah. But you should see when his captain came. Whoa. And blue convertible, and he came to tell us, and we kept it from my mother-in-law. We never told her.

Interviewer: You didn't tell her what?

Respondent 1: His mother.

Interviewer: But you did not tell his mother...

Respondent 2: Don't tell her – [1:24:30] well we told her that he's gone, of course. But we didn't tell her the circumstances...

Interviewer: Okay. That's what you didn't tell. Yeah.

Respondent 2: ...she didn't need to know about.

Interviewer: Yeah, right.

Respondent 2: We kept the captain away from her, so.

Interviewer: Right. Okay. I'm turning it off again.

Respondent 2: Okay.

Interviewer: But I just want to thank you for this additional information because...

Respondent 2: But I have it up here if I want it.

Interviewer: ...we appreciate all that happened, and for you to have these artifacts is very special.

Respondent 1: We do. I can't...

Respondent 2: Thank you.

Respondent 1: ...I want to see the...

[01:24:53]

[End of recording]