

033 Loet and Max Voss**[0:00:00]**

Interviewer: Okay. Today is February the first, and I am in the home of Loet and Max Voss. And you've lived here for many years. I would like you to tell me – Harbord Village is doing a history project, and we want to gather information from people who have been here for at least thirty-five or more years – to talk about what you like about the neighbourhood, and even more specifically the **[0:00:30]** changes that have occurred since you've been here. Okay. So can we start by you just telling me when you moved to this neighbourhood, how many years ago? And how old you were at that time so we'll know what stage of life. So what year did you move?

Respondent 1: We moved into this house, into the neighbourhood actually January 1969.

Interviewer: Great. And what street are you on?

Respondent 1: We are **[0:01:00]** on Brunswick.

Respondent 2: Yeah. But before that we lived on Oxford. Does that count? Oxford Street?

Respondent 1: No, no, no. That's outside the neighbourhood.

Interviewer: But '69 is still plenty of time in our neighbourhood. What made you decide to move to this neighbourhood?

Respondent 1: We wanted to stay close to the Kensington Market.

Interviewer: Oh lovely.

Respondent 1: And also close to the university because my wife doesn't drive, and there was a lot of communication with the university.

Respondent 2: I think I was **[0:01:30]** going.

Respondent 1: And volunteering at the museum. Yeah. I think you were there.

- Interviewer:** You were a student at the university?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** What were you studying?
- Respondent 2:** I have a Masters in Museum Studies.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And then you said it's also close to the museum.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because you know, the Royal Ontario Museum was very important for me.
- Interviewer:** Right. Okay. And what kind of work did you do?
- Respondent 1:** I'm a geologist. I was with the provincial government.
- Interviewer:** Right. Right. So you came to this neighbourhood because the location was very convenient and you [0:02:00] used Kensington Market.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. And of course also close to my work, which was the buildings, the government buildings.
- Interviewer:** Where?
- Respondent 1:** Where the new block is.
- Respondent 2:** Whitney block. Do you know Whitney block?
- Interviewer:** Yes, of course. On Bay Street.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So it was close for you to be a student, close to the ROM, close to the Whitney block.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. The Whitney block is actually on University.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Right.
- Respondent 1:** You're thinking of the other [0:02:30] blocks on Bay Street.
- Interviewer:** Yes, yes, yes. So at what stage of life? How old were both of you at – or approximately how old?
- Respondent 1:** 1969? I was [laughs]...
- Respondent 2:** How old was I then? Thirty-six I think.
- Respondent 1:** [0:03:00] Forty-five. Yeah. No, you must have been a little bit older.
- Respondent 2:** Really? '69.
- Respondent 1:** In '69 I was forty-three.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So we had a short interruption, and I learned at that time that you are seventy-seven and your husband is eighty-five. So you have been in this neighbourhood for a long time. And really you raised your son and your daughter here in this neighbourhood.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. Absolutely. And actually interesting enough, they were the [0:03:30] only children that went to kindergarten and went all the way through Lord Lansdowne.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So they went to the local school right here.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So handy.
- Respondent 2:** Actually first when we're living on Oxford Street they went from there, but I was glad when we moved into this house and they didn't have to cross College Street. You know, that was a real advantage from living here.

- Interviewer:** But that interests me that you said [0:04:00] that they were the only children who went right through Lord Lansdowne School. Where did the other children go?
- Respondent 2:** They all – it was very sad. They all moved away, usually after summer holidays. They were always trying to better themselves, I guess, you know? And then they would move to another neighbourhood. And we were the steady ones really because they just left. [0:04:30] Okay. That's what you'll do. You'll open the door. There you go.
- Interviewer:** When you moved here in 1969, you're both Dutch, right?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So who else was living here? What countries were represented here in this neighbourhood when you came here?
- Respondent 1:** It was heavily Portuguese.
- Respondent 2:** And Jewish.
- Respondent 1:** And Jewish. Some remnants because the Jewish people have moved north, you know? But there were some Jewish people. Yeah, [0:05:00] I don't remember that many Jewish people here.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah, Max. Like for instance, that very nice family of musicians that lived in my mother's house. What was their name?
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** Jacobi.
- Respondent 1:** Jacobi. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And it was a famous...
- Respondent 1:** Lou Jacobi.
- Respondent 2:** Lou Jacobi. He was a famous musician actually.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Well he was in New York, but we found music at that time.
- Respondent 2:** A pile of sheet music that he had written. **[0:05:30]** I think I might still have some in the basement.
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Lou Jacobi.
- Interviewer:** So you're saying that there were a lot of Portuguese people around 1969 and still some Jewish people, but some had moved up north.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. They all moved.
- Respondent 1:** And then besides Portuguese a lot of mixture. There were some – like the Greenlands were living just south of Ulster, and **[0:06:00]** they have been there longer than we have. So there was a mixture of everything.
- Respondent 2:** Portuguese.
- Interviewer:** Mainly Portuguese you're saying.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** A lot of Portuguese. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And in terms of languages, were people speaking English? Or were they all speaking their own languages?
- Respondent 1:** Both. They were all speaking English when they needed, but amongst themselves they spoke Portuguese.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And we were very lucky because we lived in Portugal for a **[0:06:30]** couple of years, so we spoke it more or less, you know? I can say I can speak enough to make my neighbours laugh, you know?
- Interviewer:** But you lived in Portugal before you came?

- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** How many years again? I don't know.
- Respondent 1:** For a year-and-a-half. Yeah. For my work, you know? [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** It was nice.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Do you know who lived in this house before you?
- Respondent 1:** Victor. What was his last name? He worked in the university, and [0:07:00] I think – I know his name was Victor, but I don't know...
- Respondent 2:** His last name. I don't remember his last name. I don't think I've ever met him.
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Respondent 2:** Did you meet him?
- Respondent 1:** No. We never met him because the owners were Jewish, so I don't know whether Victor was Jewish. Oh, what was the woman's name?
- Respondent 2:** That sold this house, you mean?
- Respondent 1:** [Laughs] Well the [0:07:30] funny thing was that I have been looking in the neighbourhood because we wanted to find the house in this area, and the day we were going to buy the house that we had finally decided on on Major Street, I sort of walked around and I wanted to make sure that the roof was sagging, so I came to Brunswick to look at the back of the house. And then I saw the for sale sign on this house, so I said, "Well." So I went inside and [0:08:00] I said, "Oh my god."

- Respondent 2:** This was wonderful.
- Respondent 1:** It was wonderful.
- Respondent 2:** The ceilings are higher, and the square...
- Interviewer:** So this is a better home than the one that you nearly bought.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. Major Street was confined, you know?
- Respondent 2:** It was a nice little house, you know?
- Respondent 1:** You know, and narrow rooms, and high ceilings. This was cubicle. And to me it gave me a much better feeling, you know? It's amazing, but that's what happens when you step into this house. It feels different. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. A good house, you know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. [0:08:30] And you felt that – in your gut you felt – I call it the tummy test. [Laughter] That you felt this was for you.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. It's true.
- Interviewer:** Right. And it certainly turned out to be correct after since 1969. That's forty-two, forty-three years. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** I don't think we'll ever live anywhere else.
- Respondent 1:** And the neighbours next door, they were Portuguese.
- Respondent 2:** They were Portuguese.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And then the neighbours here...
- Respondent 2:** No. They were Indian.
- Respondent 1:** Pakistani. Oh yeah. Were they [0:09:00] in there already when we bought the house?

- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Okay. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** And then I was glad when they left because they were – well. They didn't like us so much because my daughter had just started a punk rock band.
- Interviewer:** Oh. And her music was too loud for them.
- Respondent 2:** Of course. And he kept saying, "Well you see, the nice young ladies play some fine music." He came to the door, "But if it's nice then I listen." A typical Indian guy, [0:09:30] you know?
- Respondent 1:** No, he was a nasty man. He was an engineer.
- Respondent 2:** Oh he was nasty.
- Respondent 1:** And he was making money off the immigrants, you know?
- Interviewer:** So you were not sad to see him go.
- Respondent 2:** No, no. Although the children were nice.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So who makes up the street now, or the neighbourhood as you see it?
- Respondent 1:** Well Ela was still living there, was already living there.
- Respondent 2:** She was my mother's best friend. She was from Austria.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Her husband [0:10:00] never lived there, but she lived there. And then her son is there now.
- Interviewer:** Her son is there now.

- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And where are they from?
- Respondent 1:** Austria.
- Respondent 2:** Austria. Yeah. Initially now. Emerich is his name. Emerich. Yeah. Lovely guy.
- Respondent 1:** And then Ian was there a long time, but I don't know that Michelle is still there.
- Respondent 2:** That's right. They were Portuguese.
- Respondent 1:** They used to have [0:10:30] the fruit stores, different stores in the market and in the city somewhere.
- Interviewer:** And now who do you see here? I mean do you still have Portuguese neighbours?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Right next door we have Portuguese neighbours. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And in general, the neighbourhood – who populates the neighbourhood now?
- Respondent 2:** No. A lot of English people. The English-speaking people.
- Respondent 1:** It's more of a mix here. Yeah. Much more of a mixture than Portuguese. Some [0:11:00] Portuguese have left and have been replaced by English-speaking people. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** So for instance, Kevin, who I just got to know a little bit when they moved in, his wife is from India.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. That's right.
- Respondent 2:** So they're going back and forth to India. He says she's always so much happier. They must have tons of money after being to India. He says, "Oh, we make quite a few trips back and forth." So you know, I've never been to India. I said I'd like to come along, you

know? It would be wonderful. **[0:11:30]** But you know, it's of course very important for his wife. He says she feels always more – yeah.

Respondent 1: Umbrai and Mangram moved in since we were here.

Respondent 2: Yeah. And they came from...

Respondent 1: Vancouver.

Respondent 2: Initially. But they also lived in – remember they used to build that new art gallery in Hamilton.

Respondent 1: Oh.

Respondent 2: They lived for a while in Hamilton. Yeah.

Interviewer: But your general observation is that there **[0:12:00]** are more Canadian and American people populating these streets than when you first came here.

Respondent 2: Oh yes.

Interviewer: There were more immigrants at that 1969, 1970 – in the '70s.

Respondent 1: Yeah. I felt very strongly being so close to university. I couldn't imagine that university people didn't want to live here in this area, but they were all the way in the suburbs, you know?

Respondent 2: They're all in the suburbs. And they're always saying, "Finally to move into the slums," they said to us, you know?

Respondent 1: **[0:12:30]** And I remember meeting – we had in the university about the area, and I said I can't believe you guys, you know? You don't want to damage this neighbourhood; you want to keep it for your own people, your own professors who want to live here eventually. And they were trying to build high-rises, and they were trying to really push into the neighbourhood, and we stopped it because we had a good residents' association.

- Interviewer:** [0:13:00] Well and I agree. This would not have the charm that it has now.
- Respondent 1:** Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** And the comfort if we had high-rises...
- Respondent 2:** Imagine.
- Interviewer:** ...on Brunswick and on Borden.
- Respondent 2:** Horrible idea.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So you were saying there was a strong residents' association that...
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...stood strong against that kind of change.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Were you involved in the residents' association or in any of these kinds of movements?
- Respondent 1:** Later on. I had been the president for about five, six years or so.
- Interviewer:** Really?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. But who [0:13:30] was the woman? Benny? No, no.
- Respondent 2:** Esme?
- Respondent 1:** Esme Benny.
- Respondent 2:** Benny. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Esme Benny was the head of the residents' association at the time, and she was powerful. [Laughs]

- Interviewer:** But you're saying that you were also head of the residents' association.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah. After her. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So when would that have been?
- Respondent 1:** Well that would have been after seven or eight years that she was at – so '69, '76 I think.
- Interviewer:** [0:14:00] So you put a lot of effort into this neighbourhood then.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** You can't be president or head, or whatever the title was...
- Respondent 2:** No. You have to do it.
- Interviewer:** ...without being committed and putting in the effort.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah. We were all gung-ho. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So one of the things you fought were the big buildings.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** What were some of the other issues at that time?
- Respondent 2:** Well you know that gym that they are building – Max, that wasn't there then.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Do you remember?
- Interviewer:** The University of Toronto gym?
- Respondent 2:** [0:14:30] Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Now they have a big swimming pool in there, you know?

Interviewer: Right. Yeah.

Respondent 1: And we fought the height of the building, and ultimately that resulted in the swimming pool not being fit for Olympic Games because they couldn't build the springboards high enough because we cut down the height of the building. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Whoa.

Respondent 1: Oh they were mad at us then. [Laughs]

Respondent 2: But you know, [0:15:00] it only brings tons of people in the neighbourhood. Now this was a very selfish perspective. All of them could come see the races, and see tons of cars and – it's true.

Interviewer: So you were protecting our neighbourhood.

Respondent 2: Yeah. Really. And really they don't care about people in this neighbourhood. The university is terribly insular and selfish, I think.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. I'm happy that you're bringing that up because that is something we're interested in. The university [0:15:30] in relation to our neighbourhood – sorry. You were going to say something.

Respondent 1: No, the university didn't care, but all the other people who were living way up in the boondocks, you know? [Laughs] And they had never conceived the idea that it would be nice for the people to live here. They still don't, I don't think.

Respondent 2: Well it just wasn't very glamorous to live here, I guess.

Respondent 1: No.

Interviewer: But you used the words somebody said, "Why did you move into a slum?"

Respondent 2: Yeah.

- Interviewer:** You used that word.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Well at that time.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. People...
- Respondent 1:** There were people in my office, you know, they're all driving back and **[0:16:00]** forth. [Laughs] Like they were on the road for an hour before I got out of there. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** And you could walk, or go by bike, or TTC. Right.
- Respondent 2:** No. We didn't have to bike. Max walked back and forth...
- Respondent 1:** For lunch. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** Even, you know – so it was very easy.
- Interviewer:** So that kept you fit too.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Walking to the university and back.
- Respondent 2:** It was fantastic, you know?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I don't think anybody thinks of this as a slum anymore.
- Respondent 2:** No. [Laughter] Not anymore, but can you imagine people would **[0:16:30]** say that? But hey, moving into the slum.
- Respondent 1:** Well this house was a bit more expensive than the house on Major Street. The house on Major Street was twenty-two thousand, five hundred, and it was twenty-five.
- Interviewer:** Wow. Oh my gosh. [Laughter] Would you like to estimate what it's worth now? I'm not asking you to do it.

- Respondent 2:** No, no.
- Respondent 1:** We cannot afford to. We cannot afford to.
- Respondent 2:** We couldn't afford to live here now. No, we really can't. Isn't it funny?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But right away he saw that this [0:17:00] was the house that we should have.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. And then I saw the house on Major Street and it was actually also quite a nice little house, so I said to Max, "Why don't we buy them both," you know? Because it was so cheap, twenty-two thousand dollars for a little house on Major Street, if you think about it.
- Interviewer:** So what did you do?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, we did.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so do you still own that one too?
- Respondent 2:** No. We sold it.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. But it was much more than twenty-two when you sold it, I'll bet.
- Respondent 2:** Not that much more because my mother did it, [0:17:30] and she was so proud of herself. She said, "Guess what? I sold that house." And I said, "Mom." "You know, I did very well with it," she said. I said, "We'd never given you permission to do that." So anyway, no, we did very well with that house. [Laughs] But my mother always thought she was very businesslike, but you know, she wasn't really.

- Interviewer:** Yeah. I guess not. [Laughs] Were there a lot of different religions here at the time? Churches, synagogues, religions?
- Respondent 1:** [0:18:00] Yeah. Well was the synagogue still in use?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** You know this little synagogue north of...
- Respondent 2:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** On Brunswick. Right.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah. That's still very much in use.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. There was a time that was sort of less.
- Interviewer:** Yes, I know that. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But now it's very perky and healthy, I think. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** There was another synagogue north of Ulster, north of Sussex on the corner. Sussex [0:18:30] and Brunswick, and that's been used by organizations.
- Interviewer:** And I don't think that one's there anymore.
- Respondent 1:** The building is still there.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But they don't use it as synagogues.
- Respondent 1:** But it's not a synagogue anymore.
- Interviewer:** No. And what about churches? Any comments about the churches that were here? That are here?

Respondent 1: Well we went to the Unitarian church, so open-minded, you know. And we had almost to do – well we knew the St. Stephen's people, we knew them.

Respondent 2: Yeah. Because [0:19:00] our children played together with the St. Stephen's people, you know?

Respondent 1: But they were strictly Anglican.

Respondent 2: Anglican.

Respondent 1: And a bit – I don't know.

Respondent 2: Anglican, you know? And they thought very highly of themselves. Well we do too, but you know, the point is it was just...

Respondent 1: Well I had an argument with – what was his name? Captain?

Respondent 2: Don.

Respondent 1: Don.

Respondent 2: Captain Patterson we called him. Captain. But they were very important in the neighbourhood because they run a summer camp.

Interviewer: A [0:19:30] day camp in the city in the neighbourhood?

Respondent 2: No, no. It was really an overnight camp.

Respondent 1: Well they always had activities in the building too, you know?

Respondent 2: Yeah. But you know, they had this camp, and our children went to it too, you know?

Interviewer: And the argument, was that related something to the neighbourhood?

Respondent 1: No. To the religion. [Laughs]

Interviewer: Oh. To the religion.

- Respondent 1:** I was the scientist who didn't believe in anything, and I was no good, you know?
- Respondent 2:** And they were going...
- Respondent 1:** And they were there. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** ...and they were trying to recruit him.
- Interviewer:** Disapproved of him.
- Respondent 2:** [0:20:00] Yeah.
- Interviewer:** They disapproved that you were not a religious person.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. So I think he wanted to put it to the test, so he said – and he had a friend with him, you know. "Well you don't believe that life is just happenstance, that it just happens and there is no God." I said, "Yeah. That's exactly what I believe." [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Oh. So he was disapproving of what you...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Yeah. He didn't like that of course. But you know.
- Respondent 1:** The kids were nice.
- Respondent 2:** The kids were [0:20:30] nice, and his wife was awfully nice also. She was a total sweetheart, but he was still stupid. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** And neither of you was going to convince the other one.
- Respondent 2:** No, no. I mean really. No, we liked the Unitarian church a lot. We had a lot of fun there.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** That was great. And the funny thing was – excuse me. When all our kids had grown up in that group, [0:21:00] then it's – well then it

had no use. And then it basically fell apart. We all had to laugh about that, you know?

Interviewer: That whole church fell apart you're saying.

Respondent 2: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: The Unitarian church.

Respondent 2: The Unitarian church. For us, you know?

Respondent 1: See, we were an offshoot of the church on St. Clair and Avenue Road. The big Unitarian church. And we had our congregations in the building...

Respondent 2: The Y.

Respondent 1: The Y. You know the Y building on Eglinton? And we had [0:21:30] a very good time. We didn't have money to invite religious people, so we had all sorts of interests to speak to [laughter].

Respondent 2: Yeah. Oh it was very fascinating.

Interviewer: So it sounds like it was a wonderful community that you had within your church, that Unitarian church.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah. We had a wonderful, wonderful – but the funny thing again, it was basically – well you know, sometimes I did the [0:22:00] kindergarten for the – what do you call it?

Respondent 1: Sunday school.

Respondent 2: Sunday school. Yeah. But you know, all of a sudden all of our kids had grown up, you know? They were more or less all the same age. They were friends and it was very nice. And then all of a sudden, poof, it was finished. That was obviously – the wheels of that church was our kids.

- Interviewer:** And that population for that time, they grew up, they went away...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And [0:22:30] some of the older people went back to the first Unitarian church I'm sure.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Well we had to start something for our children because there wasn't enough room, remember? In the first church, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** In the first church.
- Respondent 2:** So there wasn't enough room. So we kept joking about the room and to rent the room. Okay, let's do it ourselves. So then we rented the little place. Where was it? YMCA I think it was.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** I don't know if you know...
- Respondent 1:** On Eglinton. Just a little [0:23:00] bit east of Yonge Street.
- Respondent 2:** But I don't even think it's there anymore. Is it still there?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah it is actually.
- Respondent 2:** Oh really?
- Interviewer:** I just want to come back very briefly that when you lived here with your children there were four of you living here.
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Is that right?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Were there ever any other people living here with you?
- Respondent 1:** Not really.

- Respondent 2:** Well not really. Like well you can say Anthony lived with us for a while.
- Respondent 1:** And Sammy. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** And our Sam. Of course.
- Interviewer:** And who were they?
- Respondent 2:** Sam. Oh, we just saw them [0:23:30] last night, Sammy. He's sort of like an adopted son, Sam. Huh?
- Respondent 1:** Swimming Sam. Swimming Sam and his problems. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** He's often playing in bands and he's so creative. Do I have anything here from him? Well anyway he makes these huge – what are they called? Come on.
- Respondent 1:** Mobiles.
- Respondent 2:** Mobiles. Yeah. And he makes it. You know, and I can't believe he has an exhibition. I'll show you some of his wonderful – he's in [0:24:00] the community. But you see, these are just...
- Respondent 1:** There he is.
- Respondent 2:** Oh for heaven's sake. See, he built these things.
- Interviewer:** Oh my goodness. And this is from – what is this? NOW magazine January?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** January the 18th. Oh my goodness.
- Respondent 1:** Sam's sitting in the middle.
- Respondent 2:** Oh here he is. That's Sammy. Yeah.

- Interviewer:** That's your Sammy. And he's in the Rattlesnake Choir at Horseshoe.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Oh it's so much fun.
- Interviewer:** Well how do you like that for timing **[0:24:30]** when you're trying to tell me – now you're showing me a few of these sculptures with safety pins.
- Respondent 2:** Pins. Yeah. He uses safety pins. Isn't it fantastic?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** So he periodically would move in for a few weeks? A few days? A few months?
- Respondent 1:** No. Just happened at the time that he didn't have a place to stay. He lived here for six months.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Something like that.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So sometimes there were five of you.
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** You mentioned somebody else before you said Sammy.
- Respondent 1:** Anthony you said.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, Anthony.
- Interviewer:** Who's Anthony?
- Respondent 2:** Well he's the other...
- Interviewer:** **[0:25:00]** Another person.
- Respondent 2:** A Greek guy actually.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Well he was always helping if anything needed to be done in the house and so on, so he became a friend and a houseguest.
- Interviewer:** I see. Okay. So sometimes there were up to six in this house.
- Respondent 2:** Yes. Yes.
- Interviewer:** No, because in this neighbourhood sometimes there were people who rented, and had boarders, and it was much more crowded. So you were four of you who lived here, you and your two children, and then occasionally Anthony and Sammy.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I can't ever even imagine – **[0:25:30]** well you know, we've had a lot of houseguests of course. Yeah. Aren't they cute?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. They are. They're lovely.
- Respondent 2:** Actually you know, and he sells them – every year he has two exhibitions I think at the Cameron House. Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So he's an artist.
- Respondent 2:** He's an artist. And yeah, and Janet for instance knows him very well too.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And Janet.
- Respondent 2:** Janet Goodfellow.
- Interviewer:** I don't know her.
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** **[0:26:00]** What are the biggest changes that you would say on your street looking at Brunswick?
- Respondent 1:** Well the thing that bothered me was on Ulster, some areas, some guys, some builder talked all the people into cutting off the tops, and they're all square houses, you know?

- Respondent 2:** So ugly. You know, if you go to that part of Ulster, oh they did a nasty thing to the **[0:26:30]** houses. You know these Portuguese without taste, you know? They all have the same little four blocks and the stones on the top. Very ugly. You just walk slowly by there...
- Interviewer:** I'll walk there on my way home.
- Respondent 1:** So they scrapped all across the park, the whole area, some people recessed it. So there's two peaks left I think in the whole [laughs]...
- Interviewer:** Oh. So it lost all these...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. All that.
- Interviewer:** **[0:27:00]** So that's one thing that you dislike, one of the changes that happened.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. That's one of the biggest changes because for the rest of the houses, they've all stayed the same.
- Respondent 2:** More or less the same. Absolutely.
- Respondent 1:** You know, people want to do something and they have to have the permission.
- Respondent 2:** Well some people do an extreme thing like very close to Bloor there, there is a house that's super, duper modern and it doesn't fit in the neighbourhood.
- Interviewer:** It doesn't. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** It doesn't look nice in streetscape.
- Interviewer:** And they couldn't make it **[0:27:30]** bigger because they're in between two other homes, but they certainly made it...
- Respondent 2:** Yes. They wanted to have their contemporary show. "We're so in," you know? They're so in, we're out. [Laughter] I'm sorry. No.

- Interviewer:** No, no. I understand because this is – we have a lovely atmosphere and nature to our homes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And the streetscape. Of course some people always wreck the streetscape. They are not aware. Like for instance, this land across from us, they built this built-in – you know, they had a porch a little bit bigger than ours, [0:28:00] front porch, and they built it in so it's like a...
- Respondent 1:** Chicken coop.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Like a weathered hut or something, you know?
- Respondent 1:** In front of the door.
- Respondent 2:** And so if you go and look at – another friend who did the same thing, “Oh, that will give us more room. You know, we can store stuff.” It's just a mess. That's all it is.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. It's a bad add-on.
- Respondent 2:** It's so stupid, isn't it? Well I wouldn't trust myself to have a place like that. I would dump all kinds of stuff there. [0:28:30] [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** As far as you know, not maybe now, but certainly in the earlier years, did people have what we call cottage industries? Were there some people working from home in any kinds of at-home work?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I think there was some sewing. Yeah. The Portuguese women sometimes sewed for a company.
- Respondent 1:** Oh. Oh.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But...
- Respondent 1:** For the rest, I wouldn't know.
- Respondent 2:** No. No.

- Respondent 1:** The people all had jobs in the city or wherever.
- Interviewer:** Were the women working?
- Respondent 2:** [0:29:00] Yes. Women were working. The women were often cleaning ladies. Yeah. But actually we had more friends that were Portuguese that were living on Oxford Street, so I was more informed to what they did.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But yeah. The women also helped make some extra money.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So you're saying they were cleaning other people's homes.
- Respondent 2:** Yes. And sewing. They were sewing. [0:29:30] Yeah. But then again, I did a little sewing myself. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** What about the traffic? Have you seen big changes in traffic?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. At the moment it's terrible. I'm so concerned when my cat is outside, you know?
- Interviewer:** So what makes it terrible?
- Respondent 2:** Well we need speed bumps, more speed bumps, you know? I really...
- Interviewer:** So people are racing too quickly.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** The cat is bouncing around. [Laughs] [0:30:00] No, he's obviously in the kitchen. [Laughs] No, what's his name? He was the older man at the time, and he made sure that we had this traffic calming system whether it's one-way, all the way, you know, you can never go straight and that's been a big help.
- Interviewer:** Oh I'm sure it's slowed it down to some extent.

- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Otherwise they could race from College to Bloor.
- Respondent 2:** And that's what they were doing. [0:30:30] All these young guys with these little red...
- Respondent 1:** So now they're coming around the corner sometimes a bit fast and so on, but well yeah, traffic is always nasty. I mean...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. What can you do?
- Interviewer:** What about use of sidewalks and porches? Use of the street in general, people living here?
- Respondent 1:** It's not much change, you know?
- Respondent 2:** Well it is a change. All of a sudden I was thinking of Michelle. You remember? That [0:31:00] fine morning we were sleeping outside on our balcony, and all of a sudden he had the first communion party in his backyard. [Laughter] She would just leave him a couple of sheets, and suddenly he woke up and there was the whole family in communion wear, you know?
- Interviewer:** Oh, so they had a celebration in their backyard.
- Respondent 2:** And they are three houses from us, you know? Yeah. And we wrapped ourselves in sheets and [0:31:30] snuck into the houses. You could do that.
- Interviewer:** But you had been sleeping outside? It was a hot day?
- Respondent 1:** In the summer we had – yeah, we had a balcony. We had the bedroom in the back upstairs, and then a balcony with sliding doors, so sometimes when it was really hot. But it usually started to rain at four o'clock. [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** Oh, four a.m. rain.
- Interviewer:** But you would sleep outside?

- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Beautiful.
- Respondent 2:** It was wonderful. And these beautiful clouds going over your head. It's so lovely to sleep outside. Yeah. We haven't **[0:32:00]** done that for years now.
- Respondent 1:** Well we have racoons now. We didn't have racoons at the time, you know?
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's true.
- Respondent 1:** Racoons come and visit, you know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. That would not be very welcomed, the racoons.
- Respondent 1:** No. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** Two inches away from you.
- Respondent 2:** It's true. And one time – well we had a dog. We had a lovely, lovely dog. And we were going to bed upstairs in that back room there, and the dog was so funny and he was telling me something, and he was scratching a little in the window, and I said, "Maxy, there's nothing there." You know? I say now how arrogant of me. You know, they have such good ears, you know? When they tell you there is something there, you better believe it. They have good ears. So anyway when I said, "No, Maxy. **[0:32:30]** There is nothing here. Okay. All right. Let's have a look." So I opened the balcony doors and we stepped outside together, and we both put our paws on the...
- Respondent 1:** Landing.
- Respondent 2:** ...yeah. On the landing on the balcony. Looked out and I said, "Look." And he was going – **[0:33:00]** and then we both looked

down and so far from my face was this big fat racoon going [hisses].

Interviewer: Oh my god. But it didn't bite you.

Respondent 2: No. But I let out a yell. I mean honestly it was the last thing I'd expected, you know?

Interviewer: That must have been frightening.

Respondent 2: It was.

Interviewer: But your dog was right on top of it.

Respondent 2: He was right there, you know? He was right there with me, you know?

Interviewer: So your husband is Max and your dog was Maxy?

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Two Maxy.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Because my daughter had [0:33:30] the dog in South Carolina, and she said, well, that's the problem. We're the only grand thing you'll ever see.

Interviewer: Oh she was wrong. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: Well she was wrong. And she says to her dad, "I called him after you."

Interviewer: Oh that's sweet. Yeah. [Laughter] Wow, but your dog was really alert to what was happening.

Respondent 2: Oh. It was a wonderful dog. It was. Oh, we were very – I would like to have another dog, but we got a cat because it is easier.

Interviewer: Yeah. They are much less work.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: [0:34:00] What about the use of the back lanes then and now?

Respondent 2: Oh.

Respondent 1: Well ours stops, you know? We have only a short stretch, so nobody bothers us.

Respondent 2: We did it on purpose. We were talking about shall we have it through?

Interviewer: A throughway. Yeah.

Respondent 2: And then cars can go. Yeah, but that's the point. We don't want any cars.

Interviewer: Was it paved at that time when you moved?

Respondent 1: No, no. It's been paved a couple of years ago. Two years ago or so.

Respondent 2: Yeah. [0:34:30] But even now it's not paved.

Respondent 1: The lane?

Respondent 2: Oh, the lane. No. I'm thinking of the space behind our house.

Respondent 1: Oh no. But the lane is...

Interviewer: So the lane was not paved in 1969.

Respondent 1: No.

Interviewer: And it was just paved fairly recently?

Respondent 1: Well they had an expropriation, so we always had to give a certain distance for neighbours, so that part was expropriated. We had to sign a paper for expropriation and then they paved it, which is much

better [0:35:00] because it's properly drained and the lane here going from Brunswick to Major is totally paved.

Respondent 2: Yeah. That's very nice because it used to be a mud mess.

Respondent 1: Which is much better because it was messy and mud.

Respondent 2: Oh horrible. Horrible. Yeah.

Interviewer: Did the children ever use the lanes? Or did you ever use the lanes?

Respondent 1: Our children never did. No. Our children mostly used to play a bit, but not in the lane. The [0:35:30] backyard was big enough.

Interviewer: So tell me about the backyards. How were they used then? Are they used in a similar way now?

Respondent 1: Well when we bought this house there was no garage. It was almost falling apart, so we just got rid of it. So ours is open, but the neighbours each have a well built cement block garage, you know?

Interviewer: But did your family use the back? Was there any space besides the garage? But you took it down anyway.

Respondent 1: Well yeah. [0:36:00] We used to have a parking space at the fence halfway, but since the lane is wide enough, I had a parking space behind the fence that runs equal with the garages. So I have a comfortable space there, and we have a bigger backyard that way, so that's nice. We would play badminton with Michael, did we?

Respondent 2: [0:36:30] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent 1: And we grew some vegetables.

Respondent 2: Yeah. But not more than that. Our Portuguese neighbours – now my Portuguese neighbour there, he...

Respondent 1: Cucumbers, tomatoes, everything.

Interviewer: So your Portuguese neighbours had a lot of vegetables.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Which they shared with you.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah. Always.

Respondent 1: Because I planted a cherry tree, and we had a cherry tree.

Respondent 2: Oh, it was a wonderful tree. It's simply now too high to climb in.

Interviewer: [0:37:00] Oh, so you still have a cherry tree.

Respondent 1: The trees is still...

Interviewer: But most of the cherries are too high for you to reach?

Respondent 1: [Laughs] Yeah. And the birds get them, you know? And I can't be bothered. I used to sit on the balcony with a garden hose spraying the birds [laughs] at five o'clock in the morning.

Respondent 2: Yeah. But they were such great cherries. Oh, the best.

Interviewer: Are they still good cherries?

Respondent 1: Oh yeah, they are. The regular...

Respondent 2: Big Bing cherries.

Respondent 1: Bing cherries.

Interviewer: So you planted that tree?

Respondent 1: Yes.

Respondent 2: Yes.

- Interviewer:** How tall was it when you planted it?
- Respondent 1:** No, it was just a [0:37:30] little...
- Respondent 2:** Little thing.
- Interviewer:** And how tall is it now?
- Respondent 1:** Oh. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** So it's a huge tree.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** It's huge.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And I cut the half off because it was over the neighbour's yard too, and it got so messy with the cherries falling down.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So that tree has really thrived. But they do get messy if you can't.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. And we got it from a neighbour on...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. On Ulster.
- Respondent 2:** ...on Ulster. Very nice old man.
- Respondent 1:** He had a cherry tree. I said, "Oh god, I wish I had a cherry tree." [0:38:00] He said, "Well I have a little stem, a little sprout."
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 1:** So he said, "If you plant it in your backyard and you put" – what was it? Banana peel? No.
- Respondent 2:** A fish.

- Respondent 1:** A fish head for the potassium, you know, I said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah." So I planted the thing anyway and I never bothered. Then it kept growing, and growing...
- Respondent 2:** And I said, "Now did you put those fish heads?" And he said, "The whole backyard will stink." So anyway **[0:38:30]** he didn't, but it thrived, you know? It really.
- Interviewer:** Well it certainly sounds it. I have a friend that lives on Brunswick closer to Bloor and she too has a huge cherry tree, and it's lovely, and it's very messy. [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** It is. But you know, on the other hand I think it's worth it. Yeah. Don't you think? Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** What about the heating? Have you changed the heating since you've lived here?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Our oil furnace broke down within a year of buying **[0:39:00]** the house, so all our extra money went into the new furnace. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, but oh. We were really poor. Yeah, we eat a lot of spaghetti. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Do you have air conditioning?
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Yes.
- Interviewer:** And when did you put that in?
- Respondent 1:** I can't remember. About ten years after we bought the house.
- Interviewer:** So you've had it for a long time.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Oh yeah. And the guy said, "Well it's old-fashioned," but he said, "Don't you worry. **[0:39:30]** This machine will outlast all your

neighbours' machines," [laughs] and the neighbours had the third machine since then, we still have that old...

Respondent 2: Old clunker, you know?

Interviewer: And it still cools your house.

Respondent 2: It cools our house. Yeah.

Respondent 1: And he wraps it up in this plastic, and the guy that sold me this and said, "Don't bother. This thing is built for weather. Don't put plastic over it. You'll ruin it." And it's true, you know? [Laughs]

Respondent 2: Have you never told Johnny that?

Respondent 1: Yeah I told him. But [0:40:00] he was this person, you know?

Respondent 2: No.

Interviewer: I'm going to ask something which sounds silly, but your children grew up here. Our committee decided we would talk about dating. Now you two were already married [laughs] by the time you moved here, but your children – were there certain dating patterns that happened when they were reaching young adolescence and adolescence? Any thoughts, comments?

Respondent 2: Of course there were.

Respondent 1: Well they were totally different. My daughter and my son were totally different.

Respondent 2: So different. So, so different.

Interviewer: [0:40:30] How's that?

Respondent 2: Well our son – oh sweetheart, you're such a nuisance. My goodness.

Interviewer: He wants to be where the action is.

Respondent 2: Sometimes you can be such a nice, well-behaved cat, but today...

Interviewer: That's not a problem. So you were telling me about your son and your daughter.

Respondent 2: Yeah. My son and my daughter are terribly different from the get-go. Always very, very, very different. **[0:41:00]** How shall I say it? My daughter was always a very outgoing – and she has her lot of friends. That doesn't work sweetheart, no.

Interviewer: That's fine.

Respondent 2: But he – yeah. Well he was interested in dance, and he would go to the National Ballet School and he would dance, and later on...

Interviewer: So he took lessons? He studied there?

Respondent 2: Well they asked him, you know? Yeah. He was – no, we didn't have much money for lessons **[0:41:30]** actually to be very honest with you. But oh, yeah. Well for instance in the beginning he was in "The Nutcracker," you know, like that.

Interviewer: He danced in "The Nutcracker"?

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh my god. So he's a serious dancer.

Respondent 2: Yeah. He was a serious – actually he's a serious dancer, yeah?

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So at what ages was he dancing ballet?

Respondent 2: I think eight. He started at eight, something like that.

Respondent 1: He started. Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah. And they really wanted him. **[0:42:00]** Oh my goodness. I couldn't believe it. I thought, well you know, I found out from my

daughter because she was so bored in school and they have apparently a good public school at the National Ballet School. So I thought maybe she would go there and she would be less bored, you know? So they said, "Oh yeah. And do you have more children?" And I said, "Well I have one son." "Oh, could you bring him too?" because they were more interested in boys than in girls. They get always girls galore, you know, but not boys. So I said, "Okay." So we set out and [0:42:30] of course I made a real fuss about my daughter, bought her beautiful tights. And it didn't matter so greatly. So I said, "What should I bring for my son?" "Oh, well just a t-shirt and a pair of socks," they said. So anyway, so we went there and all of a sudden I see this little Hamlet sort of, blond hair and beautiful. Said, "Oh my god, where the heck is Michael?" I said, "Just take a paper [0:43:00] bag and throw some stuff in." [Laughs] You know, so there comes little Hamlet and all the other boys in black tights and white shirt, like little t-shirts. Very nice. I had no idea what he would be looking at, so all of a sudden because I'd been fussing with my daughter and put her hair nice, and all of a sudden out comes this little guy with his wrinkled t-shirt in multi-colours, you know? And he wears this very wrinkled little bathing [0:43:30] trunk, you know? Also jacket I think in a million colours, and he comes jumping out and the woman next to me said, "Who's that?" And I said – I thought, "Oh god." [Laughter]

Interviewer: That was your son.

Respondent 2: That was my son. Yeah. [Laughs]

Interviewer: But he had never danced.

Respondent 2: No. Well actually he had always. He was always sort of dancing.

Interviewer: But he never had lessons or classes.

Respondent 2: Never. No, no, no. So anyway [laughs] and then in the end, they all started [0:44:00] coming over and they all started properly insulting. "Oh my god, he's doing everything wrong that you have now, you see? His arms, his legs." You know, they were looking, of course, how limber he was. So anyway, nobody looked at my daughter, although she is really quite a good dancer, but you know,

no. But boys of course are rare. So they all came over to him and they asked me, they said, "Could your son – he's [0:44:30] way too young now, but could you phone next year and he'll be definitely in the ballet school?"

Interviewer: So they saw that he – they wanted boys, but they also saw that he had talent.

Respondent 2: He had talent. He did. He really did. And in fact, he danced for quite a while actually, but more contemporary. He wasn't too into ballet anymore, you know?

Respondent 1: But he wasn't in the ballet school that long.

Respondent 2: No.

Respondent 1: Two years.

Respondent 2: They kicked out a lot of people after the second year, [0:45:00] and I talked to somebody who really knew that whole outfit really quite well and she said, "Well they were doing some incredibly stupid things, you know? And there were a couple of teachers that were so nasty," and it's true because Michael hated to go to school. And I said to him, "How's that teacher? I don't really like her that much to look at." And he said, "She never talks to me. Never." So I said, "How are you doing then?" But Michael's always been tremendously good at amusing himself. [0:45:30] So what are you doing? He says, "Well, I don't know. I like looking at the clouds," he said. You know?

Interviewer: Okay. So I'd like to come back to – I mean that's a lovely story about your son and his talent, and obviously he loved to dance.

Respondent 2: Yes.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: And we were here at the right spot. You know, it wasn't far. He didn't have to go far either.

- Interviewer:** Of course. And there we are again talking about our neighbourhood being so well located.
- Respondent 2:** It's so well located. So we've got a [0:46:00] lot of kids from the ballet school, so sleeping over, hey Max?
- Respondent 1:** [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** And then they didn't want to go back.
- Interviewer:** So you always had an open door policy in your family.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But to come back to the dating, you said they dated quite differently.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. Well Michael wasn't – girls liked him a lot, but he wasn't terribly interested.
- Respondent 1:** Sitting on the phone, swinging the phone around and talking to him. [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. "Oh, hello? Yeah. Now I have to go have tea with my mother. Bye." [Laughter] [0:46:30] Oh gosh.
- Interviewer:** So they were chasing him.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. The girls were crazy about him, but he wasn't ready for that yet then. Later on he said, "I still" – I said, "Mike, I'm so glad you're still doing ballet." He says, "Mom, listen. We are three boys in a room with twenty-eight girls. [Laughter] Why shouldn't I be dancing?" You know? [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** So he had a sense of humour.
- Respondent 2:** And then – oh yeah. Then yeah, he danced for quite a while. He danced with some – Merce Cunningham. I don't know if you ever heard of him. No. He was a [0:47:00] very prestigious old dancer that he danced with actually, Merce. And well he really has had

some very good teachers. This was in New York when he already moved there.

Interviewer: So he pursued the dancing. Not ballet.

Respondent 2: Yeah actually. Not ballet. No. And now I even can see he's very old-fashioned, you know? Really. I've seen so much dance that you really are aware that, come, let's do something else now, you know? Now have you **[0:47:30]** ready for some fresh air or something, although I still like to see "The Nutcracker," you know? It's not a – it's so sweet. But you know, they have to go beyond "The Nutcracker," I think. Anyway, yeah. Dating. Well Michael was more or less usually pursued by some girls, but then he had a little dancer who was his friend. Remember?

Respondent 1: Oh.

Respondent 2: Janet.

Respondent 1: Janet.

Respondent 2: Yeah. And Mickey. Well they were so different.

Respondent 1: **[0:48:00]** [Laughter] Do you want to talk about it?

Respondent 2: Mickey – he has always had so many friends. So many friends. Like even as a little girl, she was a member of the Greasers. Well the Greasers. There was a whole group of boys and they called themselves the Greasers. Well they would be working on cars, and messy, greasy stuff, but she was the one girl in the Greasers, you know? [Laughter] Michael is so totally different. Totally.

Interviewer: It's very different as children and as adolescents and adults. Yeah.

Respondent 2: Adolescents. Yeah. **[0:48:30]** Totally, totally, totally, yes.

Respondent 1: And the amazing thing was Mickey was always friend with all her ex-boyfriends. They were always friendly. Well there must have been several. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: I have no idea. Twenty? Would you say twenty? Yeah. So that was very nice. This was always a very good – interesting. Now this is interesting. Of course we would have to do birthday parties for our kids, you know? We do a birthday party for Mickey, [0:49:00] and the girls, they would phone all these families, Portuguese families usually, and the daughters were not allowed to come, only the sons. Yeah. And then I said, “Listen, we are good people you know? My husband will come pick the girls up with the car and we’ll bring them back, or if you don’t like us to do the car, then we’ll walk your daughter home. That’s okay too.” “No.” And then you hear in the background, you hear this poor girl sobbing and crying. [0:49:30] Oh it’s so sad, eh Max?

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So you’re saying those parents were very protective.

Respondent 2: They were very protective of their daughters.

Interviewer: Of the daughters. Yes. Yes.

Respondent 2: And that was the difference. And then one time in fact Mickey – you know, this was the time that you had that ribbed velvet, and she very much wanted to have one of these sort of eight shapes in red velvet. You could sit on it, or lie on it.

Interviewer: Yes, I remember those.

Respondent 2: Remember those?

Interviewer: Beanbags.

Respondent 2: Beanbags.

Interviewer: Beanbag chairs.

Respondent 2: Yeah. But very [0:50:00] long, you know? So we made one. My god, I think it went almost all through the house practically. Then it doubled, and tripled. You know, it took about half of the room almost, but anyway they love it. They loved this stupid thing.

- Interviewer:** [Laughs] The kids loved it.
- Respondent 2:** The kids. Kind of lounge on it.
- Interviewer:** Lean on each other.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. And sometimes they slept on it even I think, eh?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Can you imagine? We had this big thing here. And how did it come to that? Oh yeah. The first time that we had it was for, [0:50:30] I think, Mickey's birthday. So we didn't quite know exactly. It was like a big tree trunk from there to there on the floor. Like this big – yeah. It was full of these pellets, you know? I call them electrical breadcrumbs. They jump on you and you have to take them off, you know? Awful. Anyway, so we had that, and then she said, "Now I'm going to ask people for my birthday," and the whole tree [0:51:00] trunk was full of boys sitting side by side by side. No girls. Only her. [Laughter] Because the girls weren't allowed to come.
- Interviewer:** Oh too bad.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But I'll tell you about the dating, you know? And Mickey always had lots of boyfriends actually. She had some friends from Central Tech, remember? What's his name? That very talented basketball player? Iver?
- Respondent 1:** Oh Iver. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So that's an interesting [0:51:30] memory that you have, that the girls were not allowed to go.
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** The parents kept them close to home.

Respondent 2: It's better now, and it was already better in the Chinese community.

Interviewer: Okay. So the Portuguese families...

Respondent 2: Were very tight.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent 2: But you know, what was her name? Miss Lum. She was a very famous Chinese lady. Mrs. Lum. And her family, her kids were free, you know? So they had a lot of these Lum kids as friends.

Interviewer: [0:52:00] I'm going to switch the topic to stores. Stores on Bloor, on Harbord, on College, Sussex. So what do you remember about the stores that existed when you moved in here as compared to now, all these years later?

Respondent 1: The stores?

Interviewer: Stores. Yeah. Yeah. Including restaurants, including theatres. The whole thing. The commercial things.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Well there was this, on the corner here, [0:52:30] Ulster and Brunswick was a little store for all sorts of things.

Respondent 2: Rice, for instance, I remember. They had rice. Yeah.

Respondent 1: And obviously there's still that kind of store now, but that's an old-fashioned neighbourhood store that's still there, you know? This one has got the woman who has her glasses...

Interviewer: Oh that's right. Susan.

Respondent 2: Susan. Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that was a store that had a lot of rice?

Respondent 2: Yeah. They sold rice at one point [0:53:00] before Susan moved in. That's the only thing that I knew that they had. And then for a little while there was a very fancy shoemaker in there.

- Interviewer:** On the same corner? So the shoemaker and then a person who had a store that sold rice.
- Respondent 2:** No. Only one. First the rice, and then the shoemaker, and he made these really – I think he worked for ballets, and he made very – but you know, I went in one time with Nicole and they made these beautiful little boots [0:53:30] and she said, “Oh, that’s a beautiful boot that you’ve made there.” She said, “How much will it cost?” He said, “A hundred and twenty-five dollars.” [Laughter] She said, “What?” She said. [Laughter] You know Nicole.
- Interviewer:** So he had commissioned jobs.
- Respondent 2:** And that was for a little while. Maybe that didn’t last long. Two years, I think. And then do you remember? Maybe Susan bought the building then. Ask her.
- Respondent 1:** [0:54:00] Yeah. That’s all I remember. She’s been in there a long time, you know?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. No, she has.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. She creates a lovely garden around her too.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Lovely.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Any other stores that you can recall in this neighbourhood?
- Respondent 1:** I’m trying to think. The cleaner. The cleaner on the corner of Harbord.
- Respondent 2:** That is a dry-cleaner you mean.
- Respondent 1:** The dry-cleaner. Yeah. What was there before?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. What was there before? It’s true. I never go to that dry-cleaner. [0:54:30] I don’t really like them, but other people have gone crazy about them.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. I don't remember.
- Respondent 2:** But there was another store before that. I don't remember it.
- Interviewer:** And on Harbord, any other stores that you remember?
- Respondent 2:** No, of course. The Harbord Bakery was always there, you know? Yeah. The Harbord Bakery. We knew them right from the beginning because I had another friend who knew them, and she introduced us to them, so we're still sort of friends with them. One time we went camping with them, remember? The people from Harbord.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** The two families [0:55:00] went camping together?
- Respondent 2:** Our family and...
- Interviewer:** Oh my goodness.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Yeah. And Rafi. Do you know Rafi?
- Interviewer:** I know Rafi. Yes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And Sue. So we went one time. We went camping together.
- Interviewer:** Whoa.
- Respondent 1:** And we went to Quebec.
- Respondent 2:** Oh it was far. Yeah. Rafi had in his mind – he has these things in his mind. They had a lot of very old French-Canadian houses there or something. You remember that?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** So we went [0:55:30] there looking for these darn houses and we spent the whole day.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] He wanted to see that?

- Respondent 2:** He's very, you know. Once he has got something in his mind, we have to do that.
- Interviewer:** He's tenacious.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But you know, we've been friends since – god, for how long? I don't remember.
- Interviewer:** I think his father bought the bakery in 1945 is when his father bought it from somebody else, so it has been here a long time.
- Respondent 2:** It has been here for a long time. And so we were introduced to them through a Jewish friend of ours. Yeah. She's not living here anymore.
- Interviewer:** **[0:56:00]** And any other thoughts about the stores as you remember them that they used to be, or what exists now?
- Respondent 1:** Well I'm trying to think. The ceramic store on the...
- Respondent 2:** On the corner there?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. What was there before?
- Respondent 2:** Oh, isn't that terrible? That's right. I remember being really happy that they put that nice ceramic store right there. Yeah. I remember when I saw it. "Oh, this is great. This is so nice." Now I feel almost guilty because they have so much stuff, you know? So except when they really need a very **[0:56:30]** special gift you will go in there to buy something. I feel always a little guilty about that shop, you know?
- Interviewer:** Oh, because you want to be supporting it more?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. So it's impossible because I don't know anybody who I can give something to, you know? Yeah. It is really hard. I hope that they're making a go of it. It's a lovely shop.

- Interviewer:** Well they have a lot of classes also, so that's another way to bring in money.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. That helps. That helps of course.
- Interviewer:** Any comments about the [0:57:00] JCC?
- Respondent 2:** I was just thinking of the JCC. Yeah. Well the same friend that introduced us to the Harbord Bakery introduced me to the JCC, and she said, you know, "This would be so fun for you guys. You could all work with clay," and what was the name of that woman? That Jewish woman, of course, who was teaching classes there.
- Interviewer:** Oh, she was giving pottery classes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Michael has taken classes there quite a bit.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. [0:57:30] Well they always asked him if he wanted. Actually I still have – you see that little statue there and that guy behind her?
- Interviewer:** I do.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. The kids made that there in those...
- Interviewer:** Oh, in the classes at the JCC.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. The JCC. Years ago. I mean god, I don't know. But...
- Interviewer:** So your family has used the JCC.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. They loved going there. I didn't think of doing gym there or anything. I don't even know if [0:58:00] they did. It was more like a neighbourhood community place.
- Interviewer:** And that's a nice thing about it because it is a community place, and there is the gym for those who want that. It is both.

- Respondent 2:** It is both. Yeah. No, I think – it's true actually. Yeah. But you know, now I'm going there, you know, whenever I feel like it to do gym or swim.
- Interviewer:** So you belong there?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh you do.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, I do. But I can never get my daughter to go, to come, you know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah
- Respondent 2:** **[0:58:30]** But it's a very – it's an active place. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh it is. I go.
- Respondent 2:** Do you go?
- Interviewer:** Very often. Yeah. I also gave fitness classes there for more than twenty years.
- Respondent 2:** Wow. Which one? Kiri?
- Interviewer:** Oh yes. She teaches Aqua-Fit.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. I go to the Aqua-Fit.
- Interviewer:** Oh okay. So you'll see me there some time now that we know each other.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Now that we know each other. Yeah. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Yeah. What do you think about the security of our neighbourhood? The livability, the security of the neighbourhood? Safety?
- Respondent 1:** **[0:59:00]** So far it's been very good. Well you know, the only thing is when kids come from the Brunswick House on Bloor they sort of

push car windows in or something, you know? And students – well they are students from the Brunswick house from the university. The Brunswick House. Then they come through the street and they do a bit of malicious things. [0:59:30] But as far as stealing or so, never had that.

Respondent 2: The jewels, you know?

Respondent 1: Yeah. Right. Because I've always wondered. [Laughs]

Interviewer: So that's kind of vandalism just kind of for a bit of fun.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah. But no more than that really.

Interviewer: Yeah. So you feel that it's...

Respondent 2: Do you feel safe?

Respondent 1: Yeah. But you live in a big city. You always have to be prepared for some things happening. But so far I think the police [1:00:00] has it under control. I don't know how they do it, but you know, when you hear about bad things happening in the city you always wonder could that have been here? You know? And then I guess it could. But of course, there's nothing to steal in the houses. You know, they used to steal radios and then things, and I guess now they steal computers. But...

Interviewer: But it would still be a bad feeling to have somebody break into your house.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah.

Respondent 2: [1:00:30] Oh yeah. One time somebody had broken into a neighbour's. The Portuguese people used to live there. The other Portuguese family.

Respondent 1: Oh okay. Yeah. Yeah.

- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I remember. But that was actually the only time that I remember that they had broken in there and they stole a radio, I think.
- Respondent 1:** And I'm sure people in the little store on the corner got bothered sometimes.
- Respondent 2:** Yes. Yes. Are you going to talk with her? She's lovely.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And she's been here for more than thirty-five years?
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** [1:01:00] No. No. I'm sticking only with people – because I want to know how people observed the changes that have occurred.
- Respondent 2:** Oh okay. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Maybe as another part of our study, but right now it's just sort of over the decades the changes that have occurred.
- Respondent 2:** Oh okay. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Was Rochdale an issue while you were here?
- Respondent 2:** Yes. It was a very interesting place. We went to a dinner there a number of times, remember?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** I thought it was wonderful [1:01:30] especially because I had been on a dig, an archaeological dig, from the university. I needed not a couple of marks and the professor said, "Well if you go for us on a dig, then I'll give you an A." So [laughs] I said, "Well, you know, of course." And then after that I felt so lonely, just the three of us here or the four of us here, and I said to myself, "Gosh, I really need more people around me." [1:02:00] And I'm so used to being on

that dig that I started coming and going. So then we went to – I said, “Let’s eat in Rochdale.” So for a while there...

Interviewer: Did they have some kind of restaurant there?

Respondent 2: Yes.

Interviewer: Oh they did.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: So that would have been in the ‘70s? When would that have been?

Respondent 1: Probably.

Respondent 2: Late ‘60s, early ‘70s I think.

Interviewer: So you kind of hung out there occasionally.

Respondent 2: Yes. Yeah.

Interviewer: So you enjoyed the atmosphere of what was...

Respondent 2: It was nice. I liked it. Oh yeah. I liked it very much. You know, I had friends who lived there, and [1:02:30] you know, they saw somebody fall out of a window once, you know? And a body coming by. There were some nasty things really. You got people high on drugs, you know?

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: But it’s dangerous.

Respondent 2: It is very dangerous. But since we were not, we had little to do with that aspect, yeah.

Interviewer: Well I think we’re drawing to an end, and I certainly appreciate that you allowed me to come and speak to you in your [1:03:00] very colourful, wonderful home.

- Respondent 2:** Thank you.
- Interviewer:** And I'm wondering if there's – I mean the topic of this was to talk about changes that you have lived with, and observed, and experienced. Is there anything that we have not talked about that...
- Respondent 2:** Well like old people, for instance, that have died since we've lived here. You know?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, but that happens all the time.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. You know. But like the old people we knew, like Cyril Greenlands, you know?
- Respondent 1:** [1:03:30] Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** You knew Cyril?
- Interviewer:** I knew Cyril and his daughter, Aya. I don't know their son. His son.
- Respondent 2:** Okay.
- Interviewer:** But I certainly knew Cyril.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** A loss to our community.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, and his wife. Well Jane, she was a very good friend of mine, you know? Very Scottish. Like him, she speaks a little bit like that, but she really spoke very – had a very Scottish accent, you know? Just a lovely woman. A lovely, lovely, lovely woman. [1:04:00]
Yeah.

- Respondent 1:** Well the main change of course is the Doctor's Hospital, what used to be the Doctor's Hospital now...
- Interviewer:** A nursing home.
- Respondent 1:** ...for old-aged people.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. That is a big change. Yeah. It's sort of...
- Respondent 1:** And that was quite an issue in the neighbourhood association, you know? How big was the building going to be and the...
- Interviewer:** You mean again the height of the building?
- Respondent 1:** ...the height and everything.
- Respondent 2:** Of course [1:04:30] they tried to build it as big and as high as they can, you know? Now it was a bit of – now you get this wind effect when you walk by there in the winter.
- Interviewer:** Like a wind tunnel.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But you're saying it was really important to keep our neighbourhood a neighbourhood, and not some place with huge high-rises.
- Respondent 1:** Absolutely. That was the big thing.
- Interviewer:** Well and you accomplished it.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Thank god. Well you know, Crombie was the mayor at the time and we had support, I guess, from the city also, but [1:05:00] that big thing on Spadina is the last one built and the rest no more. [Laughs] Can you imagine what this neighbourhood would have been like? [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** But I'm learning from you then that all those years ago we had a strong residents' association, and we still have a strong residents' association now.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: It's very important if you want to keep a nice neighbourhood. I'm convinced if people didn't bother to go out to the [1:05:30] association meetings and so on – even they're not very active anymore compared to what they were, you know? Like let me say in the time of when they were building the university thing there, then they were very active.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Active meaning you had to fight. [Laughs]

Respondent 2: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Fight the university. Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Well I want to say thank you to both of you for...

Respondent 2: Yeah. You're very welcome.

Interviewer: ...sharing your stories so openly and so articulately. It's been a pleasure.

Respondent 2: [1:06:00] Thank you.

Respondent 1: So will we see the results of what you're doing?

Interviewer: Well at first we had thought about a book. It's likely not to happen, but you will see the results. It will be on our website. I can't say when, but you have my name, you have my phone number, and you can keep in touch with me.

Respondent 1: Okay.

Interviewer: But I just want to say a big thank you to both of you.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Well it was very nice talking to you.

Respondent 2: It was very nice. What did I have you – oh, you are going to leave...

[01:06:23]

[End of recording]