

039 Feige and Joey Kay

***NOTE:** There were several instances where Yiddish was spoken. These have been indicated with an **[indiscernible]** marker with the associated time code noted in the bracket.

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Today is the thirteenth of March, and I'm at the home of Feige and Joey Kay.

Respondent 1: That's right.

Interviewer: And first of all, I just wanted to say thank you very much. Our Residents' Association, our History Committee appreciates your...

Respondent 2: Our pleasure.

Respondent 1: You're very welcome. Thank you.

Interviewer: So what I'd like to start with is **[0:00:30]** before I turn the machine on, you told me that both of you lived down there for many years.

Respondent 1: Many years.

Interviewer: So would you just tell me – we'll start with you, Feige – tell me your age and tell me the year you were born and when you lived in the area please.

Respondent 2: My name is Feige Kay. I was born March 17th, 1930. I'm eighty-two years – going to be eighty-two years old this week. I lived downtown from **[0:01:00]** 1930 until 1958.

Interviewer: What are some of the streets you lived on?

Respondent 2: I lived on all the streets. I lived on Robert, Major, Brunswick, Markham, Manning.

Interviewer: Okay. That covers plenty. So that was 1958 when you got married?

Respondent 2: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: [0:01:30] So how many years was that, did you say?

Respondent 2: 54 years.

Interviewer: Whoa. Okay. I think you're an authority. [Laughter] Okay, and Joey would you just tell me your age and the year that you were born, and how long you lived there.

Respondent 1: My name is Joe Kay, and I'm eighty-six years of age. I lived on Major Street for approximately twenty-five years, and I also lived on – when we came to [0:02:00] this country I was four-and-a-half years old. I lived on Brunswick, eventually moving to Palmerston, and then Markham Street, but eventually wound up on Major Street at two addresses, number 3 and 63. And when we got married in 1958, we moved to Bathurst and Wilson.

Interviewer: Okay. Now you lived on Major Street and your brother is one of the people who is one of the Boys of [0:02:30] Major Street, and everybody has very fond memories and – so would you just talk about that a little bit? You're the youngest of three boys.

Respondent 1: I was the youngest of three brothers. My brother who we'd lost in the Air Force – he was five years older than me. He was twenty-two years, and he went into training in 1942. [0:03:00] And he trained in Canada in different parts of Ontario. He was a gunner with the Lancaster Bombers, and other types of bombers. He did one tour of operations overseas and reenlisted, and he went into pathfinding. And on his fourth mission, I believe he was shot down at that time.

Interviewer: Wow. That's a tragedy for your family [0:03:30] no doubt.

Respondent 2: Terrible. My mother-in-law was not able to talk about it ever. She was so pained. She wouldn't allow a picture on the wall.

Interviewer: So no pictures of your brother.

Respondent 2: Yeah. You have. But she didn't allow...

Respondent 1: There were many pictures. I have some pictures to show you when we're...

Interviewer: But your mother couldn't tolerate having any pictures up.

Respondent 1: She didn't talk about it because she tried [0:04:00] to. By not talking about it she felt that...

Interviewer: It didn't happen.

Respondent 1: ...it didn't happen, I suppose, in her mind.

Interviewer: So that was her way of coping.

Respondent 1: That was her way of coping, yes.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah. Do you remember a change in your mother? Do you remember?

Respondent 1: Absolutely. Oh yes. For many years she was very quiet. And it took a few years until she came around somewhat.

Interviewer: Right. I guess [0:04:30] everybody in your family suffered a massive loss.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent 2: We did, you know. I have to add that every year outside, him and his other brother would come to the shul, and they bring all his paraphernalia – his hat and his things – and they would put them down on a seat and they didn't let anybody sit on that seat. And as the prayers were going on, and [0:05:00] it would be sort of in his memory. We have plaques for him there.

Respondent 1: I have to show you very important documents here.

Respondent 2: He was always in the boy's mind. Always.

Interviewer: So both of the brothers.

Respondent 2: Both are very devoted. I have never seen brothers – they just never gave up that he was lost. But he spoke about him all the time. Not in front of the mother. In front of the wives, families, friends. He was [0:05:30] always in our midst. My children feel that they know him.

Interviewer: What do they call him?

Respondent 2: Solly.

Interviewer: Solly. Right.

Respondent 2: His name was Solly. I never met him, but I feel like I really knew him through them. And when this all came, there was some other stuff I believe that would come. We'd have a Veteran's day at shul.

Respondent 1: This was him.

Interviewer: Okay. [0:06:00] I want to just look at the picture.

Respondent 1: And this is the log book here.

Interviewer: Okay. So let's just talk about what you're showing me now.

Respondent 1: This is when he went into training right before.

Interviewer: So who made this log book that you're showing to me?

Respondent 2: He did.

Respondent 1: He had to keep this. The Commanding Officers saw this...

Interviewer: So this was Solly's book.

Respondent 1: Yes. This is his personal book of when he started.

Respondent 2: He was a nice writer.

Interviewer: His writing was gorgeous. Looks like a computer.

Respondent 1: He was an artist.

Interviewer: He was an artist?

Respondent 2: He was artistic.

Respondent 1: [0:06:30] He could do art, work all kinds of – especially printing and writing.

Interviewer: This is a real treasure. And how beautiful it is.

Respondent 1: We kept – look.

Interviewer: And also do you want to say the other thing that you brought to the table?

Respondent 1: Well he sent back his personal log book with all his missions that he did over [0:07:00] Berlin and Schweinfurt and Frankfurt – all the various parts of Germany that did the bombing. And like I said before, eventually in 1944 on the third mission, I believe, when he went into pathfinding operations, which is obviously a very dangerous thing, he had to light up the targets over Germany. They fly very low. And he could not be allowed because he was a tail gunner and it's very difficult to get out of that position. So four of them [0:07:30] bailed out, I believe, and three couldn't get out of the aircraft.

Interviewer: So the ones who bailed out survived?

Respondent 1: I don't know.

Interviewer: You don't know?

Respondent 1: I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah. But he didn't bail out.

Respondent 2: He was supposed to come home. He volunteered for another flight.

- Interviewer:** What he was doing was very important. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Eventually the Commanding Officer writes that he was missing at that point.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 1:** And then [0:08:00] the flight after that was missing.
- Respondent 2:** The authorities came to the house to talk to the family.
- Interviewer:** So there wasn't a phone call. Somebody actually came to the door.
- Respondent 1:** Rabbi Monson came. There was a telegram that went missing. It was a telegram, I believe. I wasn't at home at the time, but eventually [0:08:30] the Rabbi came, and eventually after the war the pilot came to us. He's an American. His name is Jackson. He's all the way through in here.
- Interviewer:** There's his name.
- Respondent 1:** All the way through. This is quite a book because it tells you – [0:09:00] the Daily Star came to the house at one point. They were hit by flak, and they called him – he was short. They called him Shorty, and the Daily Star came to the house to find out. There's the two chronics that they published in 1943, '44. One of the flights that he landed with one circuit of gas left, and they managed to escape that. It's right in here. It's all documented here. If you go through it page by page...
- Interviewer:** But while you're looking through that I just want to say that the other thing – okay.
- Respondent 1:** Dusseldorf. You see in red, [0:09:30] all these are important. Berlin. Here's the one here. Hit by upper castle. Hit by flak and lost. But he managed to get out of that one. Let's see. The man from the Daily Star came to the house.
- Interviewer:** The Star came to the house to what? What did they want from your family?

Respondent 1: Excuse me?

Interviewer: You said the Daily Star came...

Respondent 1: They came because they wanted to know about him, [0:10:00] you see?

Interviewer: So they wanted – this was after they learned that he had died?

Respondent 1: No, no, no, no. They came after that particular flight, which was two chronics. They were looking for action stories and they came to find out where his family was. You know, to find out about this boy. And that's why they came to the house – to find out more about the person.

Interviewer: Right. Okay. So he was alive and [0:10:30] well at that time, but a fighter.

Respondent 1: Oh he managed to escape that. They all got through that except they landed in...

Interviewer: For the sake of this tape, would you also say the other thing that you brought to the table? Just because the tape doesn't show pictures, so I just wanted you to describe what you have in your right hand. Yeah.

Respondent 1: Well this is – they returned a camera and one of this was [0:11:00] called a cap. This is his cap. They returned that and a camera that they have, and this locker I guess, and this book. And his flying log.

Interviewer: Who brought these things back?

Respondent 1: It was by mail. It was sent back.

Interviewer: Pardon?

Respondent 1: This was sent back by mail.

Interviewer: By mail?

- Respondent 1:** Yes. It was sent back by mail.
- Interviewer:** So it was in your parents' home, and then...
- Respondent 1:** At 3 Major Street.
- Interviewer:** Right. At 3 Major Street. Right.
- Respondent 1:** This is how it was brought back. And [0:11:30] he got his commission. Once he went into pathfinding he became a Private Officer. Up until that he was a Sergeant, which there are pictures of here. But all these boys were all his friends.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Are these are all the Major Street boys?
- Respondent 1:** There's four or five boys on Major Street. One block.
- Respondent 2:** In one block these boys were all killed, which was very unusual.
- Respondent 1:** McCaul Street to College. Four or five boys. They're all lost. Everybody [0:12:00] in their crew.
- Interviewer:** Well and those of the Boys of Major Street, and that's why we want to acknowledge them.
- Respondent 2:** Honour them.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yes. Very unusual to have a group like that on one street. They're neighbours.
- Interviewer:** Imagine what happened to that street. I mean it went into one massive depression, I'm sure. But you're saying that you never met him and yet he's been part of your life.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yes. A very great part.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Handsome.

- Respondent 2:** Between him and his brother, his father was much more open [0:12:30] about it.
- Respondent 1:** He's training. That's him. That's in training. That tells you where he was at the time. And it actually tells you all about it.
- Interviewer:** What I want to move onto now is do you have any idea – since both of you grew up in the neighbourhood – what brought your family to choose that neighbourhood?
- Respondent 2:** Everybody chose. All the immigrants lived around [0:13:00] off of College. Synagogues were easily available...
- Respondent 1:** The synagogues were all located within one mile.
- Respondent 2:** All the families required synagogue lights.
- Respondent 1:** There's ten synagogues and one that I'd like to mention to you – all the synagogues.
- Interviewer:** So what were the synagogues, some of the synagogues that you remember?
- Respondent 1:** Okay. There was the Henry Street, the Poylisher synagogue.
- Respondent 2:** There was the Ostrovtker Shul.
- Respondent 1:** There was the Ostrovtker on [0:13:30] Cecil, which became something else.
- Respondent 2:** The Men of England. These were big shuls.
- Respondent 1:** At Spadina and Dundas, the Men of England. Now there were many, many others. Small little steepled houses.
- Respondent 2:** They belonged to a steeple.
- Respondent 1:** On Cecil, on Huron Street, on Baldwin Street, on D'Arcy Street, there were houses...

- Respondent 2:** Every block.
- Respondent 1:** ...turned into Synagogues.
- Interviewer:** It's a little bit like Lawrence and Bathurst now.
- Respondent 2:** Except they're a little **[0:14:00]** more sophisticated. These were homes. Houses, converted houses.
- Interviewer:** So the Jewish immigrants came to that area.
- Respondent 1:** They came to that area within one block.
- Respondent 2:** There was kosher butchers and kosher stores, and you know, no problem. In those days everybody kept kosher and it was a big requirement. It was no problem to make purchases.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So whatever you needed was right there.
- Respondent 2:** It was right there, the market, the Jewish market, Kensington – it wasn't far.
- Respondent 1:** Kensington Market was for that reason.
- Respondent 2:** **[0:14:30]** Everything was available.
- Interviewer:** Do you remember specifically any of the stores? You named a whole lot of shuls. When you think of the stores, can you remember of the stores in particular?
- Respondent 2:** How about Normi Katz's fish store? Where was that?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. That was right on Baldwin Street.
- Respondent 2:** Baldwin.
- Respondent 1:** It was on Baldwin.
- Respondent 2:** Normi Katz's. Katz's fish store. What were the bakeries?

- Respondent 1:** Daiter's was always there.
- Respondent 2:** Daiter's.
- Respondent 1:** Daiter's was there on Kensington.
- Respondent 2:** Creamery. Then there's the [0:15:00] creamery. What was the bakeries?
- Respondent 1:** There was a bakery there. There was Ledowski's, which is...
- Respondent 2:** Restaurant. Old restaurant.
- Interviewer:** It's united.
- Respondent 1:** Lawrence and Bathurst. I used to go there quite a lot.
- Respondent 2:** They're celebrating I think a hundredth anniversary...
- Interviewer:** Okay. But I remember when it was downtown.
- Respondent 2:** On Spadina. There was Newman's bakery on Spadina.
- Respondent 1:** On Spadina.
- Respondent 2:** I didn't shop in those days.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. The next store [0:15:30] was Pearl's. Right on Spadina.
- Respondent 2:** What was the kosher butcher my mother went to?
- Respondent 1:** That was as far as College Street. There was Rothberg's drugstore. Always at Major and College.
- Respondent 2:** That was very famous.
- Respondent 1:** Famous drugstore.
- Respondent 2:** It was a drugstore on the corner of Major and College.

- Respondent 1:** Major and College.
- Respondent 2:** And if you had a problem, you didn't go to the doctor. You went to the drugstore and Mr. Rothberg fixed you up.
- Respondent 1:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** Who went to a doctor?
- Respondent 1:** Nobody.
- Respondent 2:** [0:16:00] Mr. Rothberg.
- Interviewer:** Mr. Rothberg was the expert.
- Respondent 2:** He was the expert.
- Respondent 1:** In those years, the societies – the people came from different parts of Poland. The Landsmannschaft they were called. They would hire a doctor like Dr. Rosen and give him maybe seven hundred dollars for the whole year, which was...
- Respondent 2:** It was service.
- Respondent 1:** ...taken service. [0:16:30] I could go there if I had a cold or something like that. Right on Palmerston he lived.
- Interviewer:** So he lived there and he had an office there.
- Respondent 1:** He lived on Palmerston Boulevard. And you can go there, grab a...
- Respondent 2:** We had Dr. Weinstein.
- Respondent 1:** The Landsmannschaft paid for that.
- Interviewer:** I see. So you paid a membership for it?
- Respondent 2:** Absolutely.

Respondent 1: Yeah. You pay them.

Interviewer: And he had a certain salary and you could just go. And he was like a drop-in clinic. A one-man drop-in clinic.

Respondent 2: Yeah. Yeah. He was the society doctor and he serviced all the society members of that particular society. They had a doctor for another society. [0:17:00] Of course, they weren't too sickly. They were young.

Respondent 1: Well they were young. They were much younger.

Respondent 2: They were young. But that's the doctors who took care of the society members. They lived in the area. SO that's why coming to live in that area, it covered all your needs.

Interviewer: So it was a real community.

Respondent 2: Absolutely. After Seder, you could walk out on College. You could not get [0:17:30] by. It's a wide street. Hundreds and hundreds of people would all be in our new clothes, Passover clothes, and we'd be walking and walking. This was after Seder. The young people would come out unmasked, [indiscernible 00:17:43]. We'd look each other over, see your shoes, your clothes. It was just something that was done. Shul life was very popular. Very popular. [0:18:00] I was telling somebody the other day that when a friend of mine would come into my house, a new friend, and my dad would be home and I'd say, "This is my dad, Mr. Feldman. This is my friend," and he'd look at her and he'd say, "So tell me where does your father doven?" And I would be...

Respondent 1: And she would tell him everything about the family.

Respondent 2: And then I'd say to him, "Why did you ask such a question?" He says, "Why not? Because I found out everything." I said, "What did you find out?" He said, "I found [0:18:30] out she was Jewish, I found out that her father – her family's observant. They go to shul, and she's a nice family. You can have her as a friend."

- Respondent 1:** My brother, Ralph – an older brother of mine – he was older than Solly. He tells a cute story about Dr. Joe Greenberg. Did you...
- Interviewer:** You know, I've called him. I'm going to call him again, but I will.
- Respondent 1:** He tells a story. There were three boys. I think there was a sister. And he tells a story about [0:19:00] if you didn't come to school, the truant officer would come to the house and check you out after a few days. Anyway, so he came to the house. This happens to be a true story. I'm surprised I remember. He says, "Joe, how come you missed school?" He says, "Why would you miss school?" He says, "I couldn't go?" "Why?" "My brother had my shoes."
- Interviewer:** Oh my god. So they were poor?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Everybody was poor. There was the odd, odd family.
- Respondent 1:** [0:19:30] But there's a guy – Joe can give you more of a story. He was an officer – he wasn't in the air crew but he's a very emotional kind of a guy.
- Interviewer:** I met his brother, Muttel.
- Respondent 1:** Oh, Muttel. Oh, yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** I met him.
- Respondent 1:** Well you know, Muttel is the oldest, but Joe was in the Air Force, you see? So he knew his five, six guys within a half a block.
- Respondent 2:** And you knew them. He lived on Major Street.
- Interviewer:** But you're saying the families – most of you were poor.
- Respondent 2:** But we didn't know it because everybody was the same.
- Respondent 1:** On the same [0:20:00] boat basically, you know? I thought he was a milk driver, you see? So all the kids remember me today. The grandchildren remember me today. He was like the pied piper.

- Respondent 2:** He had a horse.
- Respondent 1:** On the horse and wagon, then the truck in 1937.
- Interviewer:** Don't go so fast. So your father had a horse and buggy?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. He had a horse and wagon on Palmerston and Markham. His horse and wagon. In 1936, '35, '37. It was a horse. We used to go to the back to rub the horse down. Used to buy oats, and barley, and salt.
- Respondent 2:** Everybody knew [0:20:30] the horse.
- Interviewer:** Did the horse have a name?
- Respondent 2:** Jumbo.
- Respondent 1:** Jumbo. One of the horses.
- Respondent 2:** [Laughs] The whole community, the kids all knew the horse.
- Respondent 1:** My father, to buy a horse for a hundred dollars, was a big garage in downtown, which is now a big huge building.
- Interviewer:** And where did Jumbo stay at night?
- Respondent 1:** Where you keep a car. On Markham there was a garage.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so there was a special garage for the horses.
- Respondent 1:** A special – it was like a – there weren't any cars.
- Respondent 2:** We didn't have cars.
- Respondent 1:** Very few cars. So that's where you kept your horse.
- Respondent 2:** It was [0:21:00] a stable.
- Interviewer:** Do you remember that stable?

Respondent 1: Absolutely.

Interviewer: How many horses were there approximately?

Respondent 2: One.

Respondent 1: This was his own horse.

Interviewer: Oh, just one. Okay. So just Jumbo. Yeah.

Respondent 2: I meet people to this day who tell me that they used to play with Jumbo and tell me all kinds of stories that Jumbo knew which house to go to when he was delivering.

Interviewer: So Jumbo knew the route.

Respondent 2: Jumbo knew the route. And they rode Jumbo, and they played with Jumbo. It was a very colourful horse **[0:21:30]** for the community.

Interviewer: And then you remember when your father replaced Jumbo with...

Respondent 1: He replaced it with a Fargo truck eventually in about 1938, something like that. I'm not sure of that. '38. '38. Something like that. He replaced it in the last part of the '30s.

Interviewer: Do we know the fate of Jumbo?

Respondent 1: Actually he was kind of white and black. **[0:22:00]** He's a big horse. Big horse because I remember driving him on Christie. There was a dairy. It was called Dockery's Dairy on Christie. It became a 7-Up after that on Christie. That was where they got the milk. Those years, a gentleman would bring in in big huge cans and they pasteurized it in these various dairies. But my father knows a man who used to go out to the front **[0:22:30]** to bring in these cans of milk fresh from the cows, and they would pasteurize it. So he was involved with three or four dairies over about a twenty, twenty-five year span of delivering milk.

Interviewer: Did you sometimes go with your father?

- Respondent 1:** All the time. All of us went. We used to go – those years there were no by-laws. He started off at sometimes one, two in the morning. Some years later the by-law – you couldn't start until six in the morning **[0:23:00]** to deliver this milk. And those years, Eglinton was like the country.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I'll bet.
- Respondent 2:** For sure.
- Respondent 1:** He had the odd wealthy customer up there who had a house up there, and sometimes we'd have a bicycle and we'd have two carriers of milk. Each carried eight quarts. And instead of the horse doing the work, the boys would drive the milk to the houses, and help him deliver the milk. We all **[0:23:30]** did that.
- Interviewer:** So you worked at a young age.
- Respondent 1:** Absolutely. Always. We all did that. You know, ten, twelve. Those ages we all helped deliver the milk at that age.
- Respondent 2:** The Y was very important. The Jewish Y.
- Interviewer:** Where was it at that time?
- Respondent 2:** On Brunswick.
- Respondent 1:** Well originally it was on Simcoe. My wife remembers the Brunswick and College...
- Respondent 2:** It was a lifesaver.
- Interviewer:** In what way?
- Respondent 2:** **[0:24:00]** I belonged. Membership was five dollars. We had a group of about fourteen girls, and we could go swimming. It was five dollars a year. We could go swimming, we could have a club room, and we'd meet, they gave us a counsellor. Then when we got older there was dances that we could go to on a Sunday night. The only thing is we never got to pay the five dollars.

Respondent 1: They let you pay it out, you see.

Respondent 2: They let us pay it out, but somehow it never got paid out. And one day they sent a [0:24:30] counsellor and she says, "Look, you have to pay up your membership. You have to go home, tell your parents." "Okay." Came home, told the parent. Somehow we paid maybe half, but they never bothered us, and they didn't throw us out. It was difficult. Difficult, you know? People with a lot of kids. But it was a godsend.

Interviewer: So it was a real place for you to go.

Respondent 2: It was a godsend. The Jewish community of kids did their athletics there. There was all kinds of [0:25:00] activities, whatever game you needed to play or wanted it was there. The swimming, badminton, volleyball, this, that. And wonderful people. The social workers were great.

Interviewer: So for an example, what would the social workers do? In what ways would you use them?

Respondent 2: Well first of all they supervise all these activities, I guess hiring [0:25:30] staff. And they would come and they would get to know us. And they would help us form the group and tell us how to form the group. We needed a president, we needed this, and how we needed to elect things. And I think they could weed out problems. If there was home problems, I think they could sense it or get a kid to talk about it. But they were very visible. [0:26:00] Very visible.

Interviewer: So if there were some difficulties I guess you could speak to them.

Respondent 2: Yes. I'm sure – you know, when I think back as to what their job really was, it was to see where there were problems, and to see that we were kept in the programs so that we wouldn't be on the street getting into trouble. This place you didn't get into trouble. It was a wonderful place. You could shower there, and be there, and swim. It was a wonderful, wonderful place. [0:26:30] And for teenagers it was even better because it was a place to meet. Today the kids run to bars and this, that – didn't exist. You came to the Y.

You came Sunday night to the Y dance and you met everybody. And it was very well organized, and there was no big money. I don't know anybody who paid up their membership. I don't know how they ran the buildings.

Interviewer: Well I guess I assume that it was subsidized.

Respondent 1: I'm sure it was.

Respondent 2: It had to be.

Interviewer: [0:27:00] Of course they had to pay.

Respondent 2: And that's how the community got to really know each other. Teenagers as they got older, they met, they married, and it was wonderful. It's too bad they don't have a centre point like that today.

Interviewer: Oh yeah. Well the Y at Bloor and Spadina...

Respondent 1: Bloor and Spadina. That's where it moved to.

Interviewer: It might not be the same.

Respondent 2: I don't know that that's the same because it's a lot more spread out.

Respondent 1: No, but they also helped. They also helped.

Respondent 2: Well that was the same Y.

Respondent 1: Naturally.

Interviewer: [0:27:30] Did you go to the Y also?

Respondent 1: I went to the Y. I went to the Y mostly at Spadina and Bloor where we played handball.

Respondent 2: I went there too. I was a fabulous badminton player.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent 2: I was. [Laughs]

Interviewer: I have to tell you I play. Every Sunday morning at the JCC, I play badminton.

Respondent 2: Oh do you? Oh when you go, you think of me.

Interviewer: At Bloor and Spadina. I will. I promise I will.

Respondent 1: And then when the Y opened here for the first year or two, they never [0:28:00] had ball courts when it opened. I think the second year or the third year they had it, I belonged for a short time and I got married at that point, and I got busy with other things, which was a mistake. I should have kept it up.

Respondent 2: Well it served a great purpose, it kept the kids off the street. I even had a little summer job. I worked with a nursery.

Interviewer: At the Y?

Respondent 2: At the Y. I was the junior girl.

Interviewer: Yeah. So there was a – yeah.

Respondent 2: There was an older person, girl, and we would be with the children. [0:28:30] It was a summer job. It was a wonderful summer job for a kid in a safe atmosphere, supervised. It served a lot of purposes to the entire community. It was really a lot of good memories. Good memories.

Interviewer: For both of you obviously.

Respondent 2: Yes. And still there were hundreds and hundreds of kids that were involved.

Interviewer: So they had good programs and it was a safe place.

Respondent 2: Very good and very safe. And I never heard [0:29:00] of coaches hurting kids or anything like that. I don't know if it existed. I never

saw that, or I didn't know what that was. But it was a wonderful, wonderful place.

Interviewer: I want to go back just a small step because you said Sunday night were dances. I want to ask you about those years when you were down there about dating. What were you doing at fifteen, at eighteen? What happened?

Respondent 2: Fifteen we weren't dating.

Interviewer: So when did dating happen?

Respondent 2: We all [0:29:30] loved to dance. We were into music of the day. And if the guy couldn't dance he was finished. [Laughter] And if the girl couldn't dance, she was finished. It was social.

Respondent 1: For boys, those years when we were seventeen, eighteen, we started to rent over some of the buildings on College Street, different club rooms. And the boys would rent that for so much a month.

Respondent 2: [0:30:00] For social.

Respondent 1: They were socials. We'd also have different parties, dances, and so forth, but that was very prominent. There were different names for these different clubs. They had probably half a dozen in maybe a twenty-five year span between College Street and Spadina. They rented over some of the commercial buildings. They rented a room.

Interviewer: So there would be a large room and you'd turn on a record player?

Respondent 2: Yeah. That was a little bit more sophisticated. A little bit more older.

Respondent 1: The boys were nineteen, [0:30:30] twenty.

Respondent 2: They'd invite the girls up there. It was on a different basis. They would invite the girls.

Interviewer: So it wasn't the whole gang.

- Respondent 1:** Everybody went.
- Respondent 2:** But that was very prevalent too.
- Interviewer:** But that was very cute what you said. If you didn't know how to dance...
- Respondent 2:** Forget it. You were finished. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Do you still dance?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** But besides that it was very big to go down to the Lakeshore. There was a place called Biggert's. They [0:31:00] featured dancing right on Lake Ontario near the Palais Royale, especially in the summer months. They had different places going with the guys...
- Interviewer:** But it sounds like the dancing was significant.
- Respondent 2:** Dancing was a very important piece.
- Interviewer:** Do you speak Yiddish?
- Respondent 2:** A little. Yeah. My mother always used to say to me, "Feige, [indiscernible 00:31:17]. The guy, he could be the biggest jerk. But if he could dance, he was [0:31:30] marvellous and she'd say [indiscernible 00:31:37]."
- Respondent 1:** It's all over after that.
- Interviewer:** Because she was right. So dancing was something that you enjoyed. But in terms of dating you said to me at fifteen you didn't date.
- Respondent 2:** No, they didn't really date.
- Respondent 1:** They went in groups of girls.

- Respondent 2:** In groups. The girls would make an evening and invite a bunch of boys, but not on a one-to-one basis.
- Interviewer:** So how did you meet each other? How did people eventually pair off?
- Respondent 2:** A lot of people met [0:32:00] at the Y.
- Interviewer:** Did you meet at the Y?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Actually I was playing handball and I saw this – I'm looking up. You were standing like in the pit. I'm looking up at this nice looking girl...
- Respondent 2:** I was watching him play.
- Respondent 1:** ...with skinny legs. I'm looking at this girl.
- Interviewer:** You saw her really from the...
- Respondent 1:** I did.
- Interviewer:** ...handball court?
- Respondent 2:** Yes, he did.
- Interviewer:** And then?
- Respondent 1:** That's right.
- Respondent 2:** And then I don't know. He got my phone number somewhere. I didn't know him. I never saw him. I did not know him.
- Interviewer:** [0:32:30] But he phoned you.
- Respondent 2:** Yes. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So how old were you at that time when you noticed?

Respondent 1: Well I was an old bachelor. I was about thirty-two. Yeah. Feige was quite a bit younger than me.

Interviewer: She's still gorgeous.

Respondent 2: I played him half-dead for a couple of hours. I'll tell you about it.
[Laughter]

Interviewer: But that's a lovely story.

Respondent 2: And a lot of the kids met there. They did. Through the dances, through the social groups, **[0:33:00]** and it was very nice. It wasn't a rough crowd. The boys were gentlemen, the girls were – you know, parents watched kids like hawks. Nobody stepped out of line here. So it was a different time and it served a wonderful purpose. When I go downtown now I stand in the middle of College Street and I look around, and I just feel this spirit. It's this spirit. It's got a soul. Memories about **[0:33:30]** all the streets, the places that we knew.

Respondent 1: We knew all the stores.

Respondent 2: And we didn't live there a lifetime, but so much happened. And you were with the community.

Interviewer: You know I'm sorry this is not a videotape because you're speaking to me, and you're using your arms, you're using...

Respondent 2: Well there's emotion. I'm emotional about it.

Interviewer: I can feel the joy.

Respondent 2: I can go back to areas here, I have no feelings for them at all.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Because on College Street **[0:34:00]** you could go from Burstein's drugstore to the confectionary store, to the various stores. If you knew every store, to Rothberg's drugstore, you knew every single store. You passed it every day of the week.

Respondent 2: That's right. You know every store.

- Respondent 1:** And you got to know them.
- Respondent 2:** Even the storekeepers.
- Respondent 1:** They knew you.
- Interviewer:** So you knew them, they knew you.
- Respondent 1:** All the vendors. You knew them. The jewellery store, or the bakery [indiscernible 00:34:17], or every single store.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, every kid worked in Cohn's bakery. All the girls.
- Interviewer:** So it was really a little shtetl.
- Respondent 2:** Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** [0:34:30] It was a shtetl. A community.
- Respondent 1:** That's what it was in the '40s.
- Respondent 2:** We went back. Lansdowne School had a hundredth anniversary and then we all thought we were going to go, not go.
- Respondent 1:** We were going.
- Respondent 2:** I'm going to tell you it's a long time, and I remember that night. People were coming out of the woodwork. "Feige," I knew them in grade two. I said, "You know me?" And I had to think. It was just wonderful. People were coming, we all were meeting each other, and recognizing each other, and catching [0:35:00] up on what happened in our life. It was a wonderful school. And where can you go that you have such memories?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And a wonderful neighbourhood.
- Respondent 2:** Wonderful neighbourhood.
- Interviewer:** Did you feel that way about it too?

Respondent 1: Absolutely.

Interviewer: You did.

Respondent 1: I knew everybody and everybody knew me down there.

Respondent 2: You knew the street that you lived on.

Interviewer: So you felt you belonged.

Respondent 2: Oh yes.

Respondent 1: I knew every corner, every block, every inch of the place.

Respondent 2: It wasn't isolated. [0:35:30] People were very helpful to each other.

Interviewer: In what ways?

Respondent 2: Neighbours were good to each other. I'm not that aware for myself, but for my parents I'm sure our neighbours were very helpful. If you had to go away you had to leave a child somewhere without problem.

Respondent 1: You must remember you couldn't afford to keep a house yourself in most cases. You rented a house. You had to rent out every room, so and everybody was [0:36:00] kind of the same. You have somebody renting your flat with three children. Our times they'd come down. Maybe they didn't have full supper. The kids would see you eating food. So my mother would make a sandwich because, you know, it was completely different than what you could imagine today.

Respondent 2: I knew Muttel in 1939. He was the tenant in our house. Him and two other siblings. I mean I feel like he's a brother. I haven't see him in a million years and [0:36:30] we just met last week.

Respondent 1: We just met him today. Last week.

- Respondent 2:** And we were so happy to see each other, and bring each other up to date. We lived together. It became like a family because the tenants were...
- Interviewer:** So nobody had a little den or extra rooms. Every room had bodies sleeping in there.
- Respondent 2:** Every space got rented. There was no den.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** There was a living room.
- Respondent 1:** Are you familiar with the – what's it called? The Bagel on College? [0:37:00] If it's still there.
- Interviewer:** It's not there anymore.
- Respondent 1:** That's too bad. That was quite a good story...
- Interviewer:** Oh, I am familiar with it.
- Respondent 1:** ...about the gentleman who owned it. His name was Benny. And he came to the country in the early '50s. He's an immigrant. He started – the original bakery was closer to Augusta than it was to Spadina, which he opened up some years later. But he had a way of baking bagels different than the others. It was fluted differently.
- Interviewer:** I know [indiscernible 00:37:24]. [0:37:30] I know that.
- Respondent 1:** And he rented – before he got married, he rented a room on 3 Major and it was on the third floor. It was called a boydem. A bedroom is a boydem. And the thing didn't even had heat. We joke about it today.
- Respondent 2:** An attic. It was an attic. A boydem is an attic.
- Respondent 1:** It was an attic, yeah.
- Interviewer:** So that's the man who owned the Bagel?

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. The man who owned the Bagel. Eventually [0:38:00] I used to see him later, years, you know? And it was his wife. And they run a bagel for many years. It was all over the CBC, all over – even the gentile crowds would come to this Bagel to have a soup and the meals that they served. One of a kind.
- Interviewer:** So when he was renting a room from your family, had he started the Bagel yet? Or not yet?
- Respondent 1:** He had opened one up, yes, but I don't know for how long. Two, three years. Eventually he either [0:38:30] bought the building closer to Spadina, which there he really established himself there. It was called the Bagel.
- Interviewer:** Yes. Some of us called it the Dirty Bagel. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** I didn't want to mention it. I'm glad you did. I didn't want to get in trouble.
- Respondent 2:** I was up at Mount Sinai. I had surgery, and then now they're bringing me food. I could not eat this food. I couldn't eat it. And I said, "Joey, you have to bring me food. I will not die in this condition. I will die of malnutrition here." He goes, [0:39:00] "So what should I bring you?"
- Respondent 1:** I used to bring her some soup a lot of the time. Or fish.
- Respondent 2:** "Now go to the Dirty Bagel and bring me a bowl of soup." Somehow that didn't sound right. I'm here sick and I'm asking him to go to the "Dirty Bagel." [Laughs] I survived on that soup, let me tell you.
- Interviewer:** Oh their food was delicious.
- Respondent 1:** Benny and Harriet's.
- Respondent 2:** Lots of wonderful memories that you don't have up here in the suburbs. That's why I can understand you living down there.

Interviewer: Yeah. [0:39:30] What did you have directly behind your homes? I mean...

Respondent 2: It was backyards.

Interviewer: Backyards. And how were they used?

A: They really weren't used.

Respondent 1: I think my father tried to plant vegetables.

A: They planted...

Respondent 1: Plenty of vegetables and sunflowers I remember. Sunflowers and some vegetables. But we also always had this garage in the back. Always had a garage.

Respondent 2: And we had the [0:40:00] porch to sit on in the summer.

Interviewer: The porch? Where was that?

Respondent 2: At the front of the house.

Interviewer: The front. Okay.

Respondent 2: Had a verandah.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent 2: You could sit there. Kids didn't really just use the backyard. Went to the Y, you went swimming. What? Are you going to sit in the backyard there?

Interviewer: Yeah. So the front porch or the verandah was used more.

Respondent 1: Yeah. A lot of people liked to sit out there in the summertime.

Respondent 2: In the evening. That was really used.

- Respondent 1:** Because there was no [0:40:30] air conditioning. There was no air conditioning.
- Interviewer:** Right. He was saying there was no air conditioning.
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Respondent 1:** We used to go – there was one year a few times we all went into the park right along College Street. Queen's Park. It was so hot. One in the morning we went up, take a blanket and just go and try to cool off because all this grass was there.
- Interviewer:** So you would go and go to sleep?
- Respondent 2:** In the front grass.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. For three, four hours.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. We'd bring blankets and pillows.
- Respondent 1:** Couldn't sleep in any house. You couldn't. So hot.
- Respondent 2:** We'd sleep there.
- Respondent 1:** And then the opposite. '40-something we had such a snowstorm. [0:41:00] The streetcars couldn't run on College Street.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 1:** So high.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But you're saying that your father planted some vegetables, some flowers. But it was the front that was used.
- Respondent 2:** It was the front. Who are you going to see in the back? Nobody.
- Interviewer:** I feel the same way. I love the front. But it was a lot of use of the...
- Respondent 2:** The porch was a part of your house, and neighbours could talk across and visit. You didn't even have to go over. You could cross

[0:41:30] and talk on the porches. And you got to know everybody, and you see the people going by so you knew who already lives on the street. The ones that you saw all the time were people who lived there.

Interviewer: And did your family use the front porch too?

Respondent 1: Yes. It got quite hot, you know. So July, August was hot. And we'd sit out front as long as the flies didn't bother you too much.

Respondent 2: And you take Lansdowne School. That was like a **[0:42:00]** parochial.

Interviewer: Because there were all Jewish kids?

Respondent 2: Because it was all Jewish kids.

Respondent 1: We made friends.

Respondent 2: We had one Jewish teacher.

Respondent 1: There might have been half a dozen blacks and you'd make friends with two or three of them. Quite friendly with them.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Respondent 1: And there was the odd Italian. I still remember Don Giallo. I have to talk about him.

Respondent 2: There was a fellow next door. They were an Italian family. And when they came, the baby was born, and they named him America.

Interviewer: Oh. [Laughs] This was an Italian family named their child America?

Respondent 2: **[0:42:30]** They were wonderful, wonderful. They were like the Jewish people.

Respondent 1: We got along very well.

- Respondent 2:** Very family orientated. Good neighbours. They were not anti-Semitic in any way, shape, or form. They were very good friends. Very good friends.
- Interviewer:** But you also remember some black families. Both of you were saying that.
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Absolutely.
- Respondent 2:** On Robert Street. Aggie. Aggie. You remember Aggie and her family? She was a friend to everybody. My mother knew Aggie [0:43:00] like she would know the rest of my friends. My middle sister went with Aggie. Aggie was a big black lady. A marvellous, marvellous athlete. A baseball player A-1. I mean we never thought of her as being black. She was us. Welcomed to our homes, we went to their homes. The neighbours were – I did not experience anti-Semitism. I can honestly say [0:43:30] I never did. The only experiences we had was in the school. In those years, the teachers, the female teachers – was during the war. They were not allowed to marry.
- Respondent 1:** No. They couldn't get married.
- Respondent 2:** They were spinsters.
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Interviewer:** So if somebody was married she wouldn't be hired?
- Respondent 1:** She couldn't teach. Not a spinster. No.
- Respondent 2:** So these were women who knew nothing about children. Nothing. And [0:44:00] most of them were very difficult. They were cruel.
- Respondent 1:** Well I would say some of them were.
- Respondent 2:** They were cruel. They would hit you. You were scared stiff of them.

- Interviewer:** They were allowed to hit you.
- Respondent 1:** They were strict.
- Respondent 2:** They worked in a ladies' prison. They would have been good in a place like that, not with kids. But because of the shortage of teachers they hired these women and they were – what a silly law.
- Interviewer:** I never heard that before. It's so interesting.
- Respondent 2:** It was a law. They could not be married women. So what do they [0:44:30] know about kids? Here you had maybe a sixty-year-old woman dealing with an eight-year-old.
- Interviewer:** And who knows what her own frustration was.
- Respondent 2:** Right. So that was not such a good experience. The male teachers were very good. The male teachers that were left were very good. We had one Jewish teacher, a Mr. Sandler. If ever there was a problem that we thought that somebody was making some slurry [0:45:00] remarks, we would go to Mr. Sandler and tell him, and he was a spokesperson.
- Respondent 1:** This would give you a...
- Respondent 2:** Goes on the route, and he'd fix it.
- Interviewer:** What's this? These are pictures of?
- Respondent 1:** The Lansdowne Public School.
- Respondent 2:** I think Mr. Sandler's son became a doctor.
- Interviewer:** And what are these pictures you're showing me?
- Respondent 1:** This is one...
- Respondent 2:** That's Lansdowne School.
- Respondent 1:** I was a captain here.

- Interviewer:** This is you?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** This is our principal Mr. Wright.
- Respondent 2:** He was famous. Every Jewish mother knew this man. [0:45:30]
And he was so Anglo-Saxon, and he was dealing with all these immigrants.
- Interviewer:** Just one at a time.
- Respondent 1:** I was very skinny. That was a year after.
- Interviewer:** So you were always athletic.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. I was always.
- Respondent 2:** Well not anymore.
- Interviewer:** Well you talked about playing handball years later.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. My brother was even more so the one who was lost.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. He could ski.
- Respondent 1:** I think he had a championship boxing bout at [0:46:00] the arena.
He used to be at the arena for one year. He was very athletic. He was an excellent pitcher, excellent ball player. He was really good.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So he was athletic and you were athletic. And you loved dancing.
- Respondent 2:** I was athletic too. I swam and I played...
- Interviewer:** You said you played badminton.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I was very good. I was so arrogant that if somebody came over to join – make up a foursome and I knew the quality of their

playing, and it didn't suit me, I'd put the racquet down and say, "Sorry. I'm not [0:46:30] playing." What a terrible thing. [Laughter] I hated myself for that.

Interviewer: Well it wouldn't have been much of a challenge for you.

Respondent 2: But still it wasn't nice to hurt somebody like that.

Interviewer: So both of you were athletes.

Respondent 2: We were.

Respondent 1: Well we thought we were. Those years we...

Respondent 2: Yeah. We were. We were involved. And this principal was an amazing man. Amazing. He was absolutely Anglo-Saxon and here he was dealing with all these immigrant families. But they loved him.

Respondent 1: [0:47:00] Especially the Jews. They eventually had a chat.

Respondent 2: Was it CHAT or they Associated?

Respondent 1: Associated.

Interviewer: Really? So one of the Jewish day schools hired him.

Respondent 1: Yes. They hired him for quite a few years.

Respondent 2: I think it was after his retirement that they needed some help.

Respondent 1: Mr. Wright.

Interviewer: Okay. Now these are both teams, sports teams.

Respondent 1: Yes.

Respondent 2: Yeah. This is volleyball. Volleyball.

- Interviewer:** Were the classes mixed? Like when you were in elementary school, [0:47:30] boys and girls in the same class?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yes. Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** And in high school?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. It was a mix. Yes.
- Respondent 2:** And my daughter went to Associated and then she graduated CHAT.
- Interviewer:** So she went right through the Hebrew day school system.
- Respondent 2:** So did her children.
- Interviewer:** So a good education.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. It's a good Jewish education. Hebrew education. It's very good. It is. And then [0:48:00] they speak the language; I do not.
- Interviewer:** So they knew Hebrew.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. They all speak Hebrew very well. Very comfortable with it.
- Interviewer:** And did you both grow up speaking Yiddish?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Both of you?
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** That's what you spoke at home?

- Respondent 2:** Yes. At home. Opened the door and immediately you spoke Yiddish.
- Interviewer:** And say when you were ten years old on the street, that was all in English?
- Respondent 1:** Pretty well.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** To your friends it was English.
- Interviewer:** But to your family?
- Respondent 1:** [0:48:30] Always...
- Respondent 2:** To our parents, I spoke Yiddish.
- Respondent 1:** Mostly Yiddish.
- Respondent 2:** I also went to Yiddish school. In those years, we were three girls and from an Orthodox family, and my dad's, "I don't need girls to say Kaddish. I don't believe in that. So you have to go to Yiddish school to learn to read and write Yiddish. I'm not going to worry about the [indiscernible 00:48:48] and the prayers because I don't expect that from daughters."
- Interviewer:** So [0:49:00] you grew up one of three girls, and you grew up one of three boys?
- Respondent 2:** That's why I don't know how to deal with men. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** But you're learning. [Laughter] But you both said that the houses were filled with people. So any extra rooms in both of your homes would have had extra people renting spaces.
- Respondent 2:** There was another family living there.
- Respondent 1:** There was no such thing. No.

- Respondent 2:** There would be a family living on the upstairs. The owners of the house lived downstairs. [0:49:30] Everybody had an extra family. There was one girl in our group – one out of all these girls. She lived on Howland. Beautiful, beautiful house.
- Interviewer:** So that was north of Bloor.
- Respondent 2:** Just their family. No roomers, no tenant. They even had a basement, which was gorgeous. Our basements were cellars. Sinister, dark – [0:50:00] not hers. But that was one of fifteen girls.
- Respondent 1:** Her father had a manufacturing – he manufactured chesterfields. He was in a better position because he owned something, you know?
- Interviewer:** But it shows how significant that seventy-five years later you remember her house on Howland with the nice basement.
- Respondent 2:** How could I not remember that? She was one only.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. What kind of work did your family do?
- Respondent 2:** [0:50:30] My father was a paper hanger. He worked private. He took on jobs. That's what he did. And he did wonderful work. My mother used to yell at him, "You do too good a job. Less."
- Respondent 1:** They won't call him back for twenty years. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** But she probably was a little bit serious about it.
- Respondent 2:** She was very serious about it. He was a [0:51:00] very interesting man. He was very political.
- Respondent 1:** He could read from morning until night.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. He could read English. He could read the papers.
- Respondent 1:** He lived with us for the last ten years. I used to...
- Interviewer:** Oh really?

- Respondent 2:** After we lost my mother he came to live with us.
- Interviewer:** He was an intellectual man.
- Respondent 2:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** He could read. Yes.
- Respondent 2:** He was always reading...
- Interviewer:** English and Yiddish?
- Respondent 2:** English, yes, and he never went to school.
- Respondent 1:** He taught himself how to read.
- Respondent 2:** But he was self-taught. He could read the paper from cover to cover. He would explain things to us. He'd say, "See this **[0:51:30]** headline? What does it mean?" I said, "I don't know. I don't understand the way they contract." He said, "See? You don't know. You go to school and you don't know. I'll tell you."
- Respondent 1:** He used to say to Feige – she was the baby. "Come on, come on over here. I don't want you to grow up and not to..."
- Respondent 2:** And I have all the stories about the old country.
- Respondent 1:** You can go up in a pool. I want to teach you something. Learn something.
- Respondent 2:** I knew all the stories about his shtetl. I knew exactly what was there. He said there was a river, a castle. I didn't believe him, but I knew about it. **[0:52:00]** It was true, there was.
- Interviewer:** Where was he from?
- Respondent 2:** Driltsh, Poland. And some friends of ours went back to Driltsh in the last number of years, and I said, "Check it out. See if there was a castle and a river," and there it was.

- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 2:** He always told us stories. He insisted that we knew where the beginnings were. So he was a well-read...
- Respondent 1:** He could read.
- Interviewer:** He didn't have the opportunity to be educated, but [0:52:30] he was intelligent and self-educated.
- Respondent 2:** Really self-educated. He was an activist, and yet he was religious, which was unusual.
- Interviewer:** An activist in what way?
- Respondent 2:** An activist for the working people. He loved to go to lectures to hear what's going on with working people. He wanted to know what was going on in the world, and yet he was religious. He was shomer Shabbos. He never worked Shabbos in his life. Shul was a focal point of his life, [0:53:00] and ours, but he was very interested in people and how they live, how they make a living, the rights, the wrongs.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So the shul was one focal point.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** The Y was another one. Lansdowne School was another one.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** The front porch was another one.
- Respondent 2:** Yes. And he belonged to the United Jewish People's Order.
- Interviewer:** Oh I remember that.

- Respondent 2:** For a religious man that was unusual because [0:53:30] they were not religious people. But he found he got educated. That's where he learned about what's going on with people.
- Respondent 1:** But my dad, he was different. He was a people's person. When he moved from downtown to Carmichael after we got married a few years, he had his neighbours – Mr...
- Respondent 2:** Harmsten.
- Respondent 1:** Mr. Harmsten and [0:54:00] Mr. Argent.
- Respondent 2:** He was a gentle man. And Argent.
- Respondent 1:** Both Gentile gentlemen. Both very nice people. Mr. Harmsten could come into his house and he'd make him a cup of coffee all the time. On Shabbat, my dad wasn't well. He'd go and buy the challah for him. He'd drive him to synagogue.
- Respondent 2:** My father only drove Shabbos, and this Gentile neighbour would drive him and then pick him up.
- Respondent 1:** He called him Louie, [0:54:30] and after about twenty years he said, "Why don't we call each other by our first name?"
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. They called him "Mister."
- Interviewer:** They didn't want to be familiar too soon.
- Respondent 1:** He was a character.
- Respondent 2:** He was a very colourful man.
- Respondent 1:** Very colourful. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** He could sing. He was a people's person.
- Respondent 1:** He was a people person.
- Respondent 2:** He was the president of his organization.

- Respondent 1:** When he got there, he says to them, "I'm going to sing us a song." The first thing he did after one month, he invited all of the families – residents there. So [0:55:00] he came up with the song he was going to sing, and which he could sing, he had a voice.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. He had a beautiful voice. He used to sing in a choir in the shul.
- Respondent 1:** We used to watch him. He was on the Jewish hour.
- Interviewer:** I'm going to come back to some of this. These are wonderful stories.
- Respondent 2:** My father was the most colourful man I ever met. They celebrate a fiftieth wedding anniversary and in those days I didn't even know what a fiftieth wedding anniversary – I didn't know anybody that had one. Anyways, the boys said, you know, the parents – their fiftieth. "We've got to do something." [0:55:30] So my oldest brother-in-law says, "Okay, we'll have a little party in the house. We'll invite some friends." Okay. Good. We'll make it a surprise, and then we thought a surprise, not so good. My mother always had a hard problem. So one day we tell them. He says, "Oh that's nice. Where's this going to be?" We said, "At Ralph's house." He said, "Where?" "Ralph's house." He said, "Ralph has a small house." "So?" He says, "No." "Then what would you like." He says, "I want a hall. I want an orchestra."
- Respondent 1:** He was the president of all these...
- Respondent 2:** Okay. "I want you to take movies."
- Respondent 1:** [0:56:00] I want you to be the president of the [Indiscernible 00:56:02]. He had been president of the [indiscernible 00:56:05].
- Respondent 2:** He was president of everything.
- Respondent 1:** So he belonged to many things, you know? But he could...
- Respondent 2:** We made him a gorgeous, gorgeous fiftieth.

- Interviewer:** He didn't want something small and modest.
- Respondent 2:** No way. An orchestra, movies, and he told us which orchestra, which movies. "I'd like to have gold tablecloths." And we came dressed in gold dresses.
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 1:** They rented a hall in Lawrence, I remember.
- Respondent 2:** [0:56:30] It was unbelievable.
- Respondent 1:** As a matter of fact, you know, they invited J.B. Salsberg. He came in.
- Respondent 2:** It was unbelievable.
- Respondent 1:** He'd get invited.
- Respondent 2:** But he orchestrated all of it. He told us which caterer, what food. I mean we were going to have this little – you know what? It was great. It was what they liked, what they wanted.
- Interviewer:** And who decided that you would wear gold dresses?
- Respondent 2:** I think he did. He picked the gold tablecloth. We were tacky.
- Respondent 1:** [0:57:00] He knew about...
- Respondent 2:** He knew about these things.
- Interviewer:** Tacky and fun.
- Respondent 2:** Tacky and fun.
- Interviewer:** Great stories. Great stories.
- Respondent 2:** Great stories of a special man.

- Interviewer:** So you're saying then that your father lived with you after your mother died.
- Respondent 2:** Yes. My mother died at the age of sixty-two suddenly, and my father lived downtown and he doesn't know nothing about a kitchen. He doesn't know about cooking, and he's religious. I said, "What's going to happen to him? Where would he go? What would he eat on a daily basis?" [0:57:30] Anyways, Joey and I thought about it and I said – I was running down with pots and pans, and I said this is impossible. He lived downtown, I live up here. This can't go on. So we talked about it and then we said to him, "Would you like to live with us?" And he says, "If Joey would allow it." And Joey said yes.
- Respondent 1:** Well he never mixed into anything.
- Respondent 2:** He was really marvellous.
- Interviewer:** [0:58:00] It's hard to not mix in.
- Respondent 2:** Yes, he did mix in. When he saw a wrong, which was really a wrong, and we benefitted. So he had stayed put.
- Respondent 1:** It wasn't just with one child. If he saw we were doing something he'd try to correct us.
- Respondent 2:** My daughter adored him.
- Respondent 1:** He respected us.
- Respondent 2:** She adored him. She'd come home every day, "Where's Zadie?" I said, "How about me?" She said, "I know you're here." He would listen to her about her schooling, and talk with her, and help her, and [0:58:30] it was a very good relationship. It really was. We gave him dignity, a place of honour, and no money. There was no money. It was just our...
- Interviewer:** But he was welcome here.
- Respondent 2:** Absolutely. Absolutely welcomed. Absolutely.

Interviewer: I'm going to come back to this.

Respondent 2: We're telling all these stories. I'm sure she's really not interested.

Interviewer: No. These are wonderful. Believe me, [0:59:00] I'm happy to have all of this information. I want to come back to one thing about the neighbourhood there and that is we talked about the front porches, we talked about all these wonderful communities. What about the back lanes? First of all, the streets you lived on, were the back lanes paved? And the other is did you use the back lanes in any way?

Respondent 1: We always used the back lanes because we either had a horse or a vehicle. We had to use the back lanes. There was no other way. We knew the back lanes inside-out. [0:59:30] We had to know all the entrances and exits. We had to know the back lanes. Not just that. Even to go to school to Lansdowne Public School I used the back lanes sometimes. A shortcut.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that back lane was used a lot.

Respondent 1: Quite a bit.

Interviewer: Was it paved or was it not paved? Do you remember?

Respondent 1: It wasn't paved paved. It was a hard surface. It wasn't paved paved.

Respondent 2: Hard mud.

Interviewer: Yeah. [1:00:00] Okay. Well because I know some were, some weren't. And what about you?

Respondent 2: No. We didn't have a car.

Respondent 1: Well they never had a vehicle.

Respondent 2: We never had a horse. I had no reason to use back lanes.

- Interviewer:** Okay. So your family came from Poland. Where did your family come from?
- Respondent 1:** Oh, Poland also.
- Interviewer:** Close to each other? Where's your family from?
- Respondent 1:** Well [indiscernible 01:00:20] I understand were...
- Interviewer:** [1:00:30] I'm sure they're not far away.
- Respondent 1:** Maybe a hundred miles. I'm not sure of the distance.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But were you born in Poland?
- Respondent 1:** The three of us.
- Interviewer:** The three children.
- Respondent 1:** We came to this country.
- Interviewer:** And you were four at the time?
- Respondent 1:** Three children. My mother came here one year after my dad in 1929, 1930. My dad arrived here a year prior to that and then he sent for us.
- Interviewer:** Okay. That's a very – [1:01:00] I have that story with my grandfather.
- Respondent 1:** Also? Yeah?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** What was your maiden name? Oh, you're from Montreal.
- Interviewer:** I'm from Montreal. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Oh, you're from Montreal.

- Interviewer:** Did anybody have pets at that time? Any animals in the house other than mice? [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** My dad always had two dogs always, and cats. Dogs and cats. Always had. Always had.
- Interviewer:** Were they indoor animals or were they outside most of the time?
- Respondent 1:** Both. Both. And my mother never learned [1:01:30] to speak English. She had a hearing loss, so all these animals had a Yiddish name.
- Respondent 2:** And they understood Yiddish.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. They understood Yiddish.
- Interviewer:** Do you remember some of the names?
- Respondent 1:** [Laughs] Trixie. Like I said there's Jumbo.
- Interviewer:** Jumbo. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** There were many, many others that I can – I have to think about them.
- Interviewer:** We used to have a cat whose name was Ketzel.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, Ketzel. That's a good name. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Anything more about the [1:02:00] stores? You talked a lot about the stores on College, Spadina.
- Respondent 2:** Every store was a Jewish store. There was Cohen's Bakery, and there was Rothberg's drugstore.
- Respondent 1:** Every store. We knew all the...
- Respondent 2:** How about Halpern's?
- Respondent 1:** Which one?

- Respondent 2:** Halpern's drugstore. Did it come later?
- Respondent 1:** On Spadina.
- Respondent 2:** No, no, no, no. There was another one on College.
- Respondent 1:** Dundas and...
- Respondent 2:** No, no, no. On College. Wasn't there a Halpern's on College?
- Respondent 1:** The stores that changed names and different things. **[1:02:30]** Besides Rothberg's there was others. Acksmith was there.
- Respondent 2:** Rothberg's became Acksmith.
- Respondent 1:** And Shoppers, as a matter of fact – Real Shoppers, he was at Lippincott and College. It's farther. We bumped into him. I couldn't get over it. I told him – we happened to bump into the owner of the Real Shoppers. So Feige says to me...
- Respondent 2:** Mount Sinai in her – my name. **[Indiscernible 01:02:45]**. You should know it's the Brith centre.
- Respondent 1:** I have to tell you this story. I'm going to take up a second. We're **[1:03:00]** down at the Mount Sinai. Forget why I was there, and we're having a coffee and in front of me this lady in front of me, she's yelling. What's his first name?
- Respondent 2:** Isn't that awful? I can't remember his name.
- Respondent 1:** She's calling him.
- Interviewer:** Murray.
- Respondent 2:** Murray.
- Respondent 1:** "Murray. Murray." Anyways, I say to Feige, "It looks like Mr. Koffler." She says, "Sure it is." Anyway, we sat down and she says, "I'm

going to go say hello.” I said, “You’re not.” I tell my wife, “You’re not.” If you tell her “No,” [1:03:30] she’s going to go.

Respondent 2: He addressed.

Respondent 1: Anyway we got our sandwich and our coffee and we say, “Mr. Koffler?” And my wife introduced herself.

Respondent 2: Because my daughter’s a pharmacist and he did the graduation at the U of T. He charged the students.

Respondent 1: He charged a Canadian Indian. It had to be twenty-five years ago.

Respondent 2: That was at the U of T when Randy graduated.

Respondent 1: At the convocation.

Respondent 2: Yeah. So he [1:04:00] spoke. He spoke.

Respondent 1: So I said to him...

Respondent 2: I reminded him.

Respondent 1: “I remember you doing this.” He couldn’t get over it.

Respondent 2: He was so excited. He said, “I’m glad you came over.” I said, “My husband told me not to come.”

Respondent 1: I said, “Where do you live?” He says, “Well I lived on Major at College?” I said, “I walked by your father’s store every day.” He couldn’t get over it.

Respondent 2: He was so excited.

Respondent 1: He says, “How old are you?” I said, I told him I was eighty-four. He goes, “I’m eighty-five.” This is a couple of years ago.

Respondent 2: [1:04:30] I’m telling you he was thrilled that we remembered it.

Interviewer: So that was the original store?

- Respondent 1:** On College Street, his father's store, near Bathurst.
- Respondent 2:** That was what eventually became this huge...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. What he did with that store.
- Respondent 2:** Did you ever meet them?
- Interviewer:** I've seen them. I mean I could picture them, but I don't know them and they don't know me, but I can see them in the picture.
- Respondent 2:** But I had to go up. He says to me, "What are you doing here?" I said, "I'm going up to the [1:05:00] Marvelle." He perked up and shook my hand. He said, "I hope everything goes well," and so did she. Thank god it was, but they were so caring. And he said...
- Respondent 1:** He says, "You're not." You tell her you're not. Never tell a woman, "You're not."
- Interviewer:** He said as soon as he said to you, "You're not," he knew you were going. [1:05:30] [Laughs] Lovely. You said that the market was – that your family's used the market.
- Respondent 2:** The Kensington Market.
- Interviewer:** In what ways?
- Respondent 2:** They shopped there. The chicken stores were there, the butcher stores were there.
- Respondent 1:** Dill pickles were always the thing we had in your hand so they tasted better.
- Respondent 2:** You used to go with a bundle buggy kind of a thing and that's how they brought the groceries home. My family didn't have a car.
- Interviewer:** So a lot of the groceries were bought at the [1:06:00] market?
- Respondent 2:** Absolutely. Yes.

- Respondent 1:** An awful lot were bought there.
- Respondent 2:** The butcher's.
- Respondent 1:** I remember they used to walk from Markham Street sometimes to go to Augusta...
- Respondent 2:** You know, with the bundle buggy.
- Respondent 1:** ...the food stands and different things to buy groceries there.
- Respondent 2:** What was the name of the store? The butcher store she dealt with? I can't remember. Greenspan.
- Respondent 1:** It was Greenspan.
- Respondent 2:** It was Greenspan.
- Respondent 1:** There was another one too.
- Respondent 2:** When I moved up here she says, "You're not buying nothing up here. Everything up here is trafe." I said, "It's not trafe." She says, "It's trafe. [1:06:30] I'll make the order. You tell me what you want. Joey will come and pick everything up."
- Interviewer:** So the market was best of it.
- Respondent 2:** Oh the market...
- Respondent 1:** Oh it was just predominant.
- Respondent 2:** My two older sisters – Saturday night, if they were very good, my mother would wake up the oldest sister and take her with shopping – Saturday after Shabbos, and she was the lucky one. I couldn't go. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** To the market. So the market was important to both of your families.

- Respondent 2:** Very important.
- Respondent 1:** [1:07:00] It was part of the Jewish circles.
- Respondent 2:** And into your life.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Was the university significant at all?
- Respondent 2:** The university was privileged, very privileged. The families couldn't afford to send the kids. So if you had a very clever son who did very, very well, he would be – not always. He would be able to go.
- Interviewer:** With a scholarship you mean?
- Respondent 2:** I don't think there were scholarships.
- Respondent 1:** There must have been. [1:07:30] There must have been.
- Respondent 2:** I never heard of scholarships. I don't know. But they were few and far between. The families needed, especially boys, to go out and earn a living to help pay – everybody paid rent, paid into the house. So that was a real, real privilege. And let me tell you...
- Respondent 1:** But things got a little bit better after the war because...
- Respondent 2:** ...the kids that did go were fabulous students and they did really – they brought the community great [1:08:00] pride. They graduated, they became lawyers, and doctors. Had great, great, great difficulties.
- Interviewer:** So the families sacrificed.
- Respondent 2:** Absolutely. Absolutely. But you know, once they started and were accepted in the courses, they shone. They really shone. They headed the classes. The medals, the golds, and the silvers. The Jewish community was very into it.
- Interviewer:** And proud of them. Yeah.

Respondent 2: Oh, you could be very proud. [1:08:30] We had a couple – Dr. Jerry and May Cohen. They're my age. When they went to Harbord Collegiate they were already a twosome. She would pass first, he would pass second, and this went on with them both through medical school. He got the gold, she got the silver, and we would wait. The Jewish community would wait to hear. It would be in the paper, the [1:09:00] results of what this couple – and it was very difficult for their families, but they really shone.

Interviewer: Yeah. And everybody schep naches. Everybody was proud.

Respondent 2: And together the community schep naches because everybody knew how difficult it was to send. I have a relative, and those years he went to medical school. My uncle was also a paperhanger. He said, "I'm not sending him. I need him to [1:09:30] help me out," and the family came together.

Respondent 1: He was the youngest. He was a late child.

Respondent 2: Said to him, "Don't stop him." He goes, "But I can't afford." They came financially and they helped, so he became a blood specialist.

Respondent 1: Very nice.

Respondent 2: But I'll tell you he's humble, he never, ever forgets this family. Our shul was plastered with their name wherever he can possibly put it.

Interviewer: Yeah. So he's generous.

Respondent 2: He speaks of his father, mother with such [1:10:00] high regard.

Interviewer: Yeah. So he appreciates it.

Respondent 2: Oh. A hundred percent. But everybody came forward because it was hard to send. Girls didn't go. Very few.

Interviewer: Yeah. I'm going to change the topic. There's just so much that we're talking about. Do you remember the end of World War II?

Respondent 2: Yes.

Respondent 1: Oh yes.

Respondent 2: 1945.

Respondent 1: Oh yes.

Interviewer: And what do you remember happened?

Respondent 2: Well I was fifteen years old and [1:10:30] I remember this announcement. I lived on Brunswick, and I remember they let us out of school, got out of school, and it was – everybody was screaming and yelling in the streets, and shouting. I came home and everybody came out of their home. Mayhem. It was warm, and the excitement was jubilant. Tears, laughter, greetings. People [1:11:00] hugging, kissing. Families who still had boys overseas. It was a very, very special, special time. Big celebration.

Interviewer: That's a lovely description. It's a lovely description.

Respondent 2: Well it was very special.

Respondent 1: And you could get salmon after that. [Laughter] You know what they do with a box of salmon or a bottle of liquor when everything was rationed? Gasoline was rationed, and you had a coupon for gas [1:11:30] if you had a car. Everything was...

Respondent 2: No, she lived in Canada.

Respondent 1: Eh?

Respondent 2: She lived in Canada.

Interviewer: So what do you remember about the announcement about the end of the world? Of the end of the World War II? What do you remember?

Respondent 1: Like Feige says, everybody was so happy watching the news. You know, we're watching everything especially if you went to a movie theatre. It showed you all the newsreels that was going on over in

Europe as the soldiers were starting to come home. And [1:12:00] it was a very happy time for most people, you know?

Interviewer: Yeah. You know when you say most people...

Respondent 2: My uncle lived on Robert Street. He had three sons overseas, and they came home, and they made the biggest street parties. Each son came home at a different time. Each son they made a street party. Banners. There was music on the street that when each son came off and drove into...

Interviewer: Major, major [1:12:30] celebration.

Respondent 2: Major. Imagine three sons and to come home. They came home with problems, but they came home. The excitement. You know, people left. These people all left family. They didn't know they were alive, dead, or what. The celebrations were humungous. Humungous. Warm and very special time. Very special.

Interviewer: [1:13:00] And I guess for your family it could have been...

Respondent 1: Well we were happy. Believe me we were happy that the war was over, but it was...

Respondent 2: It was painful.

Respondent 1: ...it sure made us reflect on – think back on different things that happened.

Respondent 2: This is a family that I really believe never – I don't know if you get over a loss. Really adjusted. He was always with them to this day.

Interviewer: Well at twenty-two, [1:13:30] a healthy, athletic twenty-two year-old...

Respondent 1: You'd have dreams that this didn't happen, you know? I remember myself, I couldn't...

- Respondent 2:** No, but the way they keep the spark, him and his brother. His brother's gone now, but they really kept that spark, and the father. Every dinner we'd get together, they talked.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Except for the mother who couldn't.
- Respondent 2:** Mother, no. They...
- Interviewer:** I guess we all cope in our own way.
- Respondent 2:** After she was gone it came out even more. **[1:14:00]** They never stopped talking about him, and bringing up cute stories. I mean they didn't have such a long life to have so many stories, but they found stories. Very devoted family. He was a fabulous son. I'm telling as a wife, fabulous son.
- Interviewer:** To his parents.
- Respondent 2:** Very caring, very devoted. Very. He was in that house every day. He didn't talk to them. **[1:14:30]** [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** I'm just going to ask one more question about the neighbourhood.
- Respondent 2:** And they need to name that street.
- Interviewer:** You mean the Boys of Major?
- Respondent 2:** They really need to do that because that's such a strange situation. I mean there were other boys, of course, that had been lost, but you know, I don't think there's another street that had all these boys from one street. They lived almost next door to each other.
- Respondent 1:** A block.
- Interviewer:** **[1:15:00]** Well you know, the city is saying we want to – we'll name the lanes and we'll want one-word names, and we're saying this is one we're really going to fight for because we want this to be called the Boys of Major.
- Respondent 2:** Now they deserve that.

- Interviewer:** So we're really going to fight for that.
- Respondent 1:** They deserve that.
- Respondent 2:** They deserve that.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. And the last question is the issue of security and safety in the neighbourhood. Did you lock your doors?
- Respondent 2:** Never. [1:15:30] I never had a key.
- Respondent 1:** No, no, no.
- Respondent 2:** I do not remember owning a key to a house.
- Respondent 1:** No. Very seldom did you lock anything.
- Respondent 2:** Who locked any? I never had a key. I could come home eleven o'clock at night, walk down a dark street. I never gave it a thought that somebody is going to hurt me, or did my family think somebody might hurt me. It was very safe.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And Joey, that was your experience too.
- Respondent 1:** Absolutely.
- Respondent 2:** Did you have a key?
- Respondent 1:** [1:16:00] I never thought about really locking any of the doors, especially with something valuable – you wouldn't leave it. But you never think of really locking up.
- Respondent 2:** They were boys, we were girls. My sisters didn't have no keys, and they too could come home. Usually we'd be coming home from the Y somewhere. And nobody thought how are you getting home? Who's coming for you? It was very safe.
- Respondent 1:** Another thing, my dad being a milk driver, as he aged, [1:16:30] he would hire somebody to help him do the route, and I'd never know

who was going to wind up sleeping downstairs at the cot to help him deliver this milk. He once had a...

Interviewer: He invited them.

Respondent 1: ...professional – his name was Mulligan. He was the Canadian Heavyweight Champion of the World. Nicest guy. Mulligan was his name, and he was helping deliver milk.

Interviewer: He was a World Heavyweight Champion?

Respondent 1: Heavyweight Champion of Canada. Mulligan **[indiscernible 01:16:53], [1:17:00]** that was his name.

Interviewer: And he delivered milk with your father?

Respondent 1: And was delivering milk. He'd give him five bucks or something because where were you going to get five bucks in 1939 or something, you know?

Interviewer: Oh yeah. That was good pay.

Respondent 1: We tried to get a Coca-Cola bottle so we could get two pennies for it and cash it in.

Respondent 2: They were good days for the kids, but not for **[1:17:30]** the adults.

Interviewer: Because of what?

Respondent 2: They understood the finances. The kids did not understand the finances. I mean he – nobody. So he didn't have – my friends didn't look different than me. I wasn't aware that I was poor, but the parents, they were aware of bills to pay, to do – for them it was a terrible struggle. Terrible, terrible struggle.

Interviewer: But they didn't burden you with it.

Respondent 2: You heard it.

Interviewer: **[1:18:00]** You did.

- Respondent 2:** You heard it in the house.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. You were aware of it.
- Respondent 2:** How are we going to pay the bills? How are we going to do this? And we knew we had ten people living in this house. One washroom.
- Interviewer:** Were you ten people living there?
- Respondent 2:** Could be.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And one washroom.
- Respondent 2:** One washroom. Everybody was always knocking at the door for you to come out. But like everybody had that, so it wasn't different. But for the adults it was a very big struggle.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And not much privacy, and not much quiet.
- Respondent 2:** No, no.
- Respondent 1:** Privacy.
- Respondent 2:** How about the telephones?
- Respondent 1:** You share the telephone.
- Interviewer:** Oh, [1:18:30] the phone line.
- Respondent 1:** And the girls would get annoyed. Coughing the book. "Get off the phone already. Get off."
- Respondent 2:** This would go on. If you had a landlady...
- Respondent 1:** If you heard some of the language used on these phones...
- Respondent 2:** ...you were in big trouble.

Respondent 1: I'll tell you.

Respondent 2: You know, we have a man in our synagogue. His name is Sid Gladstone. And he goes around to the high schools and he is from the Depression years, and he tells the kids, the teenagers, [1:19:00] what it was like to grow up in Toronto in the '30s. And I once said to him, "Sid, are they really interested? How can they relate?" He goes, "You would be surprised the questions they ask. Financial questions." He says, "They're booking me all the time."

Interviewer: So they are interested.

Respondent 2: They are interested.

Interviewer: Oh wonderful.

Respondent 1: Goes around to schools. Yeah.

Respondent 2: I couldn't believe that they would want – how could they relate to this? But he does.

Interviewer: Good. So [1:19:30] this is – I'm going to end our – I'm going to stop throwing questions at you, but when you think of all the years that you lived down there, is there anything? Before I was coming and you were thinking about what's she going to ask, is there anything that I haven't talked about that you would like to talk about?

Respondent 2: I really thought that this would be more about Solly.

Respondent 1: Yeah. We kind of got sidetracked. You're right.

Respondent 2: We did get sidetracked. Because...

Interviewer: That wasn't sidetracking.

Respondent 2: ...he's [1:20:00] really what this talk is all about. It's what he did for his country. Not him, the boys. I think the street made a humungous sacrifice. Humungous.

Interviewer: By all those boys going off.

- Respondent 1:** Absolutely.
- Respondent 2:** They gave themselves and they all lived on the same street. That street was devastated. It's like it was bombed. Those people were never the same. Most families...
- Respondent 1:** I just remember one fellow who [1:20:30] came back, aircrew. Topland was his name. You might have it in your records. I see his kid sister, Seppie. He was an observer air crew.
- Respondent 2:** He lived on Major Street too.
- Respondent 1:** Number of tours. And the plane got shot down, and all of a sudden went missing, but lucky for him he bailed out, but went missing. It took a while before he wound up in prison or war camp because his tags – I forget how many, which he took...
- Respondent 2:** Was found.
- Respondent 1:** They found out that he was alive.
- Respondent 2:** [1:21:00] He's buried in France.
- Respondent 1:** And then he came back and he opened...
- Interviewer:** My brother-in-law.
- Respondent 1:** up, and he manufactured men's sport jackets, Top Fine, Spadina and Queen.
- Respondent 2:** Is he alive?
- Respondent 1:** Top Fine.
- Respondent 2:** Is he alive?
- Respondent 1:** No, no. He's gone. He's gone now.
- Respondent 2:** My brother-in-law was buried in France.

Interviewer: Maxy?

Respondent 1: Topland.

Respondent 2: Topland.

Interviewer: So he's buried in France.

Respondent 2: He's buried in France. Yes, there's a grave. And I think the city should give that real [1:21:30] great consideration that a street gave so much, and all they're asking in return is for a name.

Interviewer: We'll be trying very hard. We are really fighting for it.

Respondent 2: I hope so.

Interviewer: Yeah. We are.

Respondent 2: I hope you win.

Respondent 1: You're going to try to see Joe Reiber? Dr. Joe?

Interviewer: Yeah. As I said, I spoke to him a few times and he postponed.

Respondent 1: He's not doing well himself.

Respondent 2: Why is he postponed? He's very involved with this.

Interviewer: Yeah. I'll phone him again today or tomorrow.

Respondent 2: I don't think he's that well.

Respondent 1: No. [1:22:00] He's okay up here, but he can't walk too good.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Respondent 1: He's got to be about...

Interviewer: Eighty-nine.

- Respondent 1:** Eighty-nine. I was going to guess. But he has the office – his son is a doctor.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, David.
- Respondent 1:** His son. I was in there to see him a few times. Somebody came in that has high blood pressure.
- Respondent 2:** On Bathurst?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** That walk. He did his high blood pressure.
- Respondent 2:** He lives there forever.
- Respondent 1:** He's a character in several ways because he's really from the old school. But he can give you a lot of information.
- Interviewer:** Well you know what? [1:22:30] I'm going to phone him today or tomorrow because I have to speak to him.
- Respondent 2:** What do you do at the hospital?
- Interviewer:** Well I'm going to turn this machine off and talk about it, but first of all I just want to thank you, Feige. Thank you Joey.
- Respondent 2:** It's our pleasure.
- Respondent 1:** Thank you for taking that interest to keep this alive.
- Respondent 2:** I'm so glad that you took the interest to keep this alive really...
- Respondent 1:** These guys really deserve it.
- Respondent 2:** ...because we're delighted that there are people who care.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. We do care. And that's why we asked you to give us your initials so that we can share some of [1:23:00] this information.

Respondent 2: We're very – whatever comes of it, at least there were people who tried...

Respondent 1: At least we know you tried.

Respondent 2: ...and cared, and you spent this whole afternoon with our pouring out a zillion stories for you to absorb.

Interviewer: You know, I'm sure we could sit here for another two hours. We won't, but it's...

Respondent 1: I'm sure we could.

Interviewer: ...been very, very, very pleasurable for me. Very interesting. And you've shared wonderful, interesting stories, so I want to thank both of you very, very much.

Respondent 2: I'm glad you came.

Interviewer: Me too. All right.

Respondent 2: [1:23:30] So okay, what I'd like to say about these boys. If I had the opportunity, I would take myself down to the board looking after this and I would get down on my knees and ask that this honour be given to these boys who lived on that street because they deserved it. Their families deserve it, and the generations after them deserve to hear that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Lovely. We're fighting for it. [1:24:00] I'm glad that you said it for all of us to listen.

Respondent 2: I hope I sent a good...

[01:24:03]

[End of recording]