

**053 Mary Miko**

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

**Interviewer:** I'm at the home of Mary Miko.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** 99 Willcocks. And Mary told me that she and her husband bought the house in 1957, which means that you have been here for fifty-five years, and for three years before that, you lived on Robert Street just south of Willcocks, which means you've been in this neighbourhood for fifty-eight years, which means your son grew up here too.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** Right here.

**Interviewer:** [0:00:30] Okay. So Mary, I'm going to start asking you questions, but first I just want to say thank you very much for agreeing to speak to me because I'm sure you know a lot about the neighbourhood.

**Respondent:** Yes, I do. Yes.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So thank you very much.

**Respondent:** Yeah. You're welcome.

**Interviewer:** When you came into this neighbourhood, was there any reason why you chose this neighbourhood?

**Respondent:** This was a – we didn't have far to move. Just I brought the stuff in from the [0:01:00] back in here [laughs] because we're close, you know? And we didn't have much then, you know. And then any reason because we choose that...

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Just this whole neighbourhood. First you came to Robert Street. Did you just find it by chance? Or did somebody tell you to come to this neighbourhood?

**Respondent:** We – as we live in Robert Street, we saved our money, and [0:01:30] we gave a down-payment, and so it was not far from here. Some friends from my husband lived down there right by the lane here.

**Interviewer:** On Willcocks.

**Respondent:** On Willcocks. They had the house, and then so we saw it's not far, and here we was looking at so many rooms, and [0:02:00] we liked the house. We call it – it's our castle because it's so high.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** And then anyway, so there was many – also all nationality in this street.

**Interviewer:** Tell me. What were the other – so just tell me first for the tape where you and your husband came from.

**Respondent:** Oh yes. Yeah. Well we came from [0:02:30], like before we came to Canada...

**Interviewer:** Yes, please.

**Respondent:** My husband is from Hungary. His birthplace is Hungarian, and mine, birthplace is in Yugoslavia.

**Interviewer:** And where did you meet each other?

**Respondent:** We meet each other in Austria. Yeah. After the war, we came to Austria, and then – and I met my husband there. Yes. [0:03:00] And then we went – we didn't stay long in Austria, so – in England, they wanted us to – England needed the young people to work, and so many people went to England. [0:03:30] Young people. Then

there, when we came there, a job and a hostel was waiting for us. I could start working the next day.

**Interviewer:** Whoa.

**Respondent:** Yes. And then we – yeah. We liked it there much because we came so poor, you know? [0:04:00] From Europe. I mean England is Europe too, but I mean before that, we was – like we were happy when we came to England. We had – we could start working right away, and then – yeah. And then when we went home [0:04:30] after work, then we girls, we went in the canteen, and we stay in the line and the food was ready for us. And then we could have a shower after work, and so it was young – we were.

**Interviewer:** How old were you at that time? And what year was that when you went to England?

**Respondent:** Eighteen.

**Interviewer:** You were [0:05:00] eighteen?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And what year was that? Oh, you – okay. You were born in 1930.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So that was 1948.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Okay. And then you came here?

**Respondent:** Yeah. And then we was there working, and then the young people, they want to see, you know, like we always had said, oh, England is surrounded with war there and it will be [0:05:30] not so – it will be – there was talking not so good in the future, and so – and we immigrated to Canada. So when I came here, and my husband – we found a job again.

- Interviewer:** What kind of work did he do?
- Respondent:** My husband, he was thirty-four years [0:06:00] in the Ford Company.
- Interviewer:** Whoa. Good work record. Thirty-four years in the same place.
- Respondent:** Oh. That was very – he loved this place very much. He worked so many hours all the time. And then he even sometimes Sunday, Saturday overtime, and he was – he liked that place so much, [0:06:30] you know?
- Interviewer:** And you said you worked for a while. You got a job.
- Respondent:** Here.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** In Toronto. I got a job – I worked for twenty years, and I worked, like, in Eaton's. Eaton's?
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Not Eaton Centre. Eaton's.
- Interviewer:** Sure.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And like permanent – not permanent, [0:07:00] part-time.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Because I had my family, you know? And at the time, we also rented out.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Upstairs.

- Respondent:** Yeah. Where Saul lives...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** ...these people had this house also. We bought it from them. Yeah. And then they died. The husband and the wife. [0:07:30] The husband was also from Hungary, and the wife too. And so we bought the house from Howler, was their name, you know? The husband died also of cancer and the wife had a stroke.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. So you bought this house...
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...and you and your husband lived on the first floor and part of the second floor? How did you do it?
- Respondent:** Families [0:08:00] was living over there.
- Interviewer:** Upstairs?
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. That time was so different. Inspector came always. It was not allowed so many people in the...
- Interviewer:** The one home.
- Respondent:** Like in the floor was a couple that didn't have no children. Was nice and quiet. And then in the second floor, [0:08:30] we had also a couple. She used to work here in College and Spadina, so she didn't have far. But her husband had – what did he have? I think he had a heart attack. Very young. And they was very nice couple, you know, so she was [0:09:00] very, you know, when somebody dies.
- Interviewer:** Oh, he died. He had a heart attack and died.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yes.
- Interviewer:** Oh, I didn't realize he died. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So she lived on the second floor with her husband.

**Respondent:** Yes, yes. Yeah. And then – so they was very nice too. Yeah. They lived here a long time. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** But while you were living here, you were renting to them.

**Respondent:** No, no. We had this floor.

**Interviewer:** You had this floor.

**Respondent:** This floor, [0:09:30] and upstairs we rented out.

**Interviewer:** I see.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Just it's different now. I think many people live in one room, eh? Like all over the place.

**Interviewer:** I'm not sure.

**Respondent:** No. Like...

**Interviewer:** Many students, you mean? Students who rent a room?

**Respondent:** No, no. Like that time, it was not allowed, so that's why the inspector always called to check. [0:10:00] Only that many people can stay in a house. That was then, you know?

**Interviewer:** You know, I've listened to a lot of stories, and I know there were a lot of people living in these homes. And you're the first person who's telling me that there was an inspector who came to see – because a lot of these people had eight, or ten, or twelve people in one kitchen, one bathroom, but there was an inspector. That's very interesting.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Was an [0:10:30] inspector came. It was allowed only, like, two families. Like, a couple, it was called a family.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent:** Yeah. At that time. And then so the same thing was in the second floor, and yeah. That time, everybody rented out. Everybody. In the street, like, was also – [0:11:00] but also they was also that – the inspector from that much only can be in the house. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So they didn't want overcrowding.

**Respondent:** No, no. For safety, you know. And then he – everyone in this house, in this street rented out.

**Interviewer:** You said something before that I would really like to come back to, and you said to me there were people from many [0:11:30] different countries, and that's when I asked you when you were from, where your husband was from.

**Respondent:** Oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** So could you remember some of the other countries that your neighbours came from?

**Respondent:** Yeah. My neighbour here was Jewish family. Yeah. Polish Jewish. And when we moved in, the parents was still alive. Excuse me. And then – [0:12:00] so then there was like a couple. There was a couple the same age like me. They had two children. And yeah, they was Jewish, and she was very – when we bought the house, the young – the daughter, like she was about my age. And then so [0:12:30] they at that time, I was – we were young, and she was young, and she was so friendly to everybody and welcomed new neighbour in. It made us feel good, me, you know?

**Interviewer:** For sure.

**Respondent:** So eventually, after a year, we became friends, you know? And so – and all of us that live here, and [0:13:00] the husband didn't earn very good money. He was working for a clothes factory.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

- Respondent:** That time when I worked for twenty dollars a whole week, yeah, my husband didn't found a job right away in Montreal.
- Interviewer:** Your husband found a job in Montreal.
- Respondent:** No, no. Not [0:13:30] right away.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** And then I – so he was always thanking me, thank – because I had right away a job, like the clothes factory in Montreal. And then...
- Interviewer:** I'm confused. Montreal?
- Respondent:** Yeah. We came, we had to arrive in – with the boat in Montreal.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent:** [0:14:00] No, no. In the airplane.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Came to Montreal.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you lived in Montreal at first for a short time.
- Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I had an aunt there, which I never knew. And then so all of a sudden when we arrived, then the loudspeaker was speaking, [0:14:30] "Would the couple Miko come to the front?" I said, "What is happening?" [Laughs] "Who can that be?" You know? And so my uncle and my aunt, they was waiting for me. So that was such a surprise that people, you know, and then they say they are my aunt and my uncle. She was a [0:15:00] sister of my father.
- Interviewer:** So had you spoken to her or sent a letter to her?



- Respondent:** No, no. I have another sister in Chicago. Not – yeah. She had another sister in Chicago. The sister in Montreal and in Chicago, they arranged that, and I didn't know these things. Me not knowing [0:15:30] that I have an aunt in Montreal, and she is in Chicago, so she made me surprise.
- Interviewer:** Wow. What a surprise.
- Respondent:** Which I was very happy, you know? And we stayed with her. We stayed with her three months with my aunt in Montreal.
- Interviewer:** And what year was that?
- Respondent:** When we came...
- Interviewer:** To Montreal.
- Respondent:** ...in [0:16:00] 1948.
- Interviewer:** '48. And when did you come to Toronto?
- Respondent:** We came to Toronto in 1954.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so you stayed in Montreal from 1948 to 1954.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yes.
- Interviewer:** Now I get it.
- Respondent:** My aunt was after me to, like to learn sewing. And that's not my field. [0:16:30] And I tried two weeks, but I had just...
- Interviewer:** Not good.
- Respondent:** It was not for me.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** And the way how they sew, [makes sewing machine noises] so fast. [Laughter] And then I say, "No. I can't." [Laughs] I like more

jobs where I stand up. Yeah. Like in Eaton's, I always stand up, you know? I was like [0:17:00] a...

**Interviewer:** So you like to be moving around. You don't want to be stuck on a chair.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. Like not sitting.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay.

**Respondent:** I don't want to sit. And then everywhere I work, I worked in post office, also part-time. Like sorting letters. I like that too. [Laughs] But it took a few days to learn. But then it made my hand show like that, so fast.

**Interviewer:** So yeah, you got very good at it.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So when your [0:17:30] son was born, were you living in Montreal, or were you living in Toronto?

**Respondent:** In Toronto. Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Let's come back to your street because we were talking about people coming from different places.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you talked about yourself, you talked about these Jewish neighbours.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Okay.

**Interviewer:** Where did some of the other neighbours come from?

**Respondent:** These came – the Jewish family came from Poland here. And she grew up here too in this house. My Jewish friend.

**Interviewer:** [0:18:00] She grew up as a child in that house?

- Respondent:** A child. Yeah. She grow up here too, and her...
- Interviewer:** Is she still living here, or she's gone?
- Respondent:** That what I like to find out. Nobody can find her.
- Interviewer:** Oh. So she's not living here now.
- Respondent:** Not now. I was surprised that she moved away because she grew up here, and so she bought – they bought a house. They [0:18:30] too rent it out. Yeah. Every house. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So who else lived in this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Other countries, other languages.
- Respondent:** Okay. This was Jewish, this was Hungarian, and most they died already, so I'm not sure my age – my friend, Jewish friend is alive.
- Interviewer:** But when we think about 1955, 1960, '65, I'm just wondering what languages people spoke, [0:19:00] and where they had come from.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Okay. Like this neighbour, they came here long before us. And then they spoke English because they was here a long time, and they spoke Hungarian and English, you know?
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** The same was with us. I don't understand some Portuguese [0:19:30] people and Italian – they was here long before us, and they don't speak English at all. No speak English [laughs] all the time. And so – and like that...
- Interviewer:** Were there Italian, Portuguese people on this street at that time?
- Respondent:** Yeah. I will start here.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Respondent:** There was Hungarian, and next to Sue was [0:20:00] also Hungarian. And then after that came – yeah, came [indiscernible 0:20:13]. What I – you wrote down.

**Interviewer:** And where is she from?

**Respondent:** She's from Austria, and she is – and her husband was Russian. Yeah. And then [0:20:30] next to that – and they spoke Russia. That's why she knows a little Russia. They live with...

**Interviewer:** A grandmother lived with them?

**Respondent:** Not – yeah. Grandma. Yeah. And then – and after that was also Hungarian.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so a lot of [0:21:00] Hungarians on this block at that time.

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. Hungarian. And then again, the next one was Hungarian too.

**Interviewer:** Oh good.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You know, somebody told me there used to be a lot of Hungarian stores and restaurants on Bloor.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So I didn't know there were so many Hungarian people living in the neighbourhood.

**Respondent:** Yes. You live a long time here, this area?

**Interviewer:** Twenty-five years.

**Respondent:** Oh, twenty-five years.

**Interviewer:** So not such a long time,

**Respondent:** Yes. Your English is good.

**Interviewer:** I grew up in [0:21:30] Montreal.

**Respondent:** Oh.

**Interviewer:** So English is my first language.

**Respondent:** Oh yeah. Do you know French too?

**Interviewer:** Well, a little bit.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** I should know it better, but I do know some French.

**Respondent:** Yeah. That was also the reason we went to Toronto. When we was there, they expected us – we had a hard time learning English, and then they wanted us – that we know two languages – French and English. It's still like that, you know? And then [0:22:00] – and then you were born in...

**Interviewer:** Montreal.

**Respondent:** ...Montreal. Yeah. [Laughs] So you know maybe the streets there, eh? In Montreal.

**Interviewer:** Sure. Where did you live in Montreal?

**Respondent:** First with my aunt, at Rosemont.

**Interviewer:** Oh my goodness. I used to teach school there.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** You're a teacher?

**Interviewer:** I was a teacher, then I became a social worker in psychiatry.

**Respondent:** Oh.

**Interviewer:** I started off as a teacher. That's where I taught school.

**Respondent:** So you were a psychiatrist too?

**Interviewer:** [0:22:30] No. A social worker in psychiatry.

**Respondent:** Oh yes.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** And then – where did I stop?

**Interviewer:** In Montreal. You were saying where you lived in Montreal.

**Respondent:** Oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** Just digressed briefly.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. There. And over in St-Denis.

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah. Nice and central.

**Respondent:** Not far from St-Catharine's.

**Interviewer:** Oh, fabulous location. Very central.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. I like it, but now I [0:23:00] like it here very much.

**Interviewer:** Me too. Me too.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So let's come back to the neighbours.

**Respondent:** Oh yeah. Okay. All right.

- Interviewer:** It's interesting for me to hear about Montreal.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So your neighbours here – so Hungarian, Austrian, Russian.  
[Laughs]
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Portuguese, Italian.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Portuguese. Not Portuguese. Hungarian.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** And again, Hungarian.
- Interviewer:** Whoa. My goodness.
- Respondent:** Yes. And then there is a lane, and there – that next street **[0:23:30]** across the lane then, that street I don't know really who.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** And then after was English, you know? And then over there by the lane again was Czechoslovak. Yeah. And then that big house by Spadina between the lane and Spadina there was a **[0:24:00]** Jewish lady living alone in the house also, but she was crippled by the arthritis. Yeah. And then across the street, again I tell you there, there was that – three brothers at that store where Spadina and the corner. **[0:24:30]** Spadina and the corner, there was a store. Yeah. And that also stopped – I think it was – they moved away. I used to shop there too. Like...
- Interviewer:** And where were those brothers from?
- Respondent:** Chinese.
- Interviewer:** Chinese. And what kind of store did they have?

**Respondent:** A variety store. Yeah. And then after that store, there was an English lady also. This [0:25:00] historic house.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** Do you know which one I mean?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** Historic house, there was also an English lady. She became very old. I think she ninety-five, you know? And then so after – yeah, that historic house was this English lady, and then next to that historic house was again [0:25:30] Hungarian and German.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent:** The husband was Hungarian, and the wife was German. And then after that, that – I think it was English again. And then it was again Hungarian.

**Interviewer:** Oh my.

**Respondent:** And then it was [0:26:00] – after that, was a Jewish lady. She lived alone too. Yeah. And then there, which was that other one by the lane, now I don't...

**Interviewer:** We don't need everyone. I just wanted a general idea.

**Respondent:** Yes. And then there is again a big house. [0:26:30] Like the lane is here on this side. There was Polish. Yeah. Polish. And then over there was – on the next one was Czechoslovakian again.

**Interviewer:** So Eastern European. A lot of people from Eastern Europe.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. And was Czechoslovakian. And [0:27:00] we looked at the house, was so beautiful. Was cheap at that time. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Right now it's worth probably a million and a half dollars.



- Respondent:** Yes. [Laughter] Yeah. And then at the lane there, I think all was Hungarian again. Yeah. And I think that's all, that part again. And I mean **[0:27:30]** until there. Then it was – she was Lithuanian and he was Hungarian. I pronounce it right? Lithuanian?
- Interviewer:** Lithuanian.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Lithuanian.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** And then after that was a Jewish rabbi.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent:** Yeah. A Jewish rabbi. He became very old. But then he died **[0:28:00]** and the wife, I think, was in a home. And when the rabbi died, the whole procession, the casket drove through the...
- Interviewer:** On Willcocks. Yeah.
- Respondent:** To say goodbye to his home, you know? Because he was young too, you know? And then, yes. And there, another house there, **[0:28:30]** I just recently know that the wife was here, and the little boy came to the door, like, to collect money for the school. And so the boy, very young, and the – he tried to explain to me and I wanted to give money, and he says, "No, no, no." He says, "Because I wanted to give, **[0:29:00]** like, ten dollars." And he says, "No. I didn't understand, like, how many minutes I support." Yeah. You know? And so the lady was on the corner. I say, "I don't quite get it. You know, what I should do?" And he was a smart boy, yeah, you know? And so **[0:29:30]** he went and he yelled, "Mom, mom! Come over!" And then the mother explained to me, and so I give the boy ten dollars.
- Interviewer:** And what was that for?
- Respondent:** That was for his schooling.
- Interviewer:** I see.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So...

**Respondent:** That is the people who living now, but the [0:30:00] boy came over. Yeah. So I met – when she invited me to go have a tea, I say, "I invite you to come. You come first."

**Interviewer:** Well so...

**Respondent:** But she didn't come. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So what I want to think about now is you described a lot of your neighbours, and what I learned is you knew your neighbours. I mean to know where everybody comes from, you know those people and you went from door, to door, to door, as you were [0:30:30] describing.

**Respondent:** Now. But I never went to – personally, like...

**Interviewer:** Sure. But you knew...

**Respondent:** We was not friends, like.

**Interviewer:** But you were neighbours.

**Respondent:** But we was neighbours. Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** How did you get to know them. Like you knew...

**Respondent:** Yeah. Let me finish still to the end.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Sure.

**Respondent:** Like there I tell you, the lady which came over, the boy, so there was living again a [0:31:00] Jewish. And the rabbi's on that side, and that – the house, there was a Jewish lady and she had four husbands.

**Interviewer:** Oh. [Laughs]

**Respondent:** And she was such a strong woman, you won't believe it.

**Interviewer:** They died? She divorced them? What happened to all these husbands?

**Respondent:** That, we don't know, you know? Four women – four husbands [0:31:30] died on her. And she was a strong – you know, she lived to a hundred years.

**Interviewer:** A hundred years.

**Respondent:** Yeah. So strong she was. And so one day, she was already skin hanging, you know, like one side. And one day, she was raking the leaves and I was young. And [0:32:00] so I went over. I say, "I do it for you." So I did for her, and we talked, and she says, she says – I say, "How are you?" I say. She says, "You know, my dear, it's still better up here than down there." She tell me. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** So she had a sense of humour.

**Respondent:** Yeah. So I had to smile, eh? You know? That was [0:32:30] so funny to me.

**Interviewer:** Whoa. That was so nice of you to offer to help her.

**Respondent:** Yeah, I did. I was also in her house, yeah. She kept it pretty good, you know? Clean and very strong woman. She was a tall lady. And so she was Jewish, and after, at that house, was the next house. [0:33:00] The next house where always the light is on. And then there is – there was a professor. My son went to him in his university.

**Interviewer:** So he taught one of the courses that your son took at university?

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** At the University of Toronto.

- Respondent:** Yeah. So he had also a [0:33:30] beautiful wife, but she was sick. She was like in a wheelchair, yeah. And then she moved away and I think she died then. They had two children, a girl and a boy, and he was just wonderful to the wife when she was sick. And very – you – [0:34:00] humourful. I don't pronounce it.
- Interviewer:** A good sense of humour?
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Funny.
- Respondent:** Yes. And he used to go with – he used to – I don't know what you call that. Like legs like that.
- Interviewer:** Oh. On stilts. He walked on stilts.
- Respondent:** Yeah. He would walk here, so the neighbours see that, you know? He was so – sense of humour, and they going, and...
- Interviewer:** He was the professor [0:34:30] who did this?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. He was a professor here in the university.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's a good description.
- Respondent:** Yeah. But then the wife had died, and he met a woman again. Yeah. Again, a wife.
- Interviewer:** So he got married another time. His wife died, and he got married again.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And he was very young, the professor. [0:35:00] And one time, he – they went out to eat supper, and they went home at one o'clock at the night-time, he says, "Oh, I have pain. I have pain." So he had the heart attack. And so she live a long time here in this house.
- Interviewer:** The second wife.

- Respondent:** The second wife.
- Interviewer:** So he died.
- Respondent:** He died so young.
- Interviewer:** [0:35:30] And so his wife died young and then he died young.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And then his second wife...
- Respondent:** No, no. His first wife with the children, she was sick.
- Interviewer:** Right. Yeah. I understand that. Yeah.
- Respondent:** And then later she was in a wheelchair, and then later she died. And then he married again another woman with a daughter. Was living there.
- Interviewer:** And then he had a heart attack and died.
- Respondent:** Yeah. The professor, yeah, had a heart attack and [0:36:00] he was, like, sixty-one and he died too. Yeah. And so after, like, I went over to – and we sat in the kitchen, and she told me that – what happened. Yeah. And then so that was that. And in the corner, there was Irish people.
- Interviewer:** Irish. Oh.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Irish. Yeah. [0:36:30] Yeah. They moved away too. I think they are still alive there. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And now when you think of this neighbourhood...
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...without going from door to door, are there Hungarian people? Are there people from Yugoslavia?

- Respondent:** You mean here now?
- Interviewer:** If you think of your street now.
- Respondent:** Now? You know that I don't know people now here. I know where is Macfarlane and Sue, [0:37:00] and then after Sue are students, and then after the students is [indiscernible 0:37:09]. Oh, as I told you already. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Yeah. But a lot of the homes have changed. Those people that you described to me from 1955 have moved away.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. Moved away and died.
- Interviewer:** And died.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** That's a long time ago.
- Respondent:** Only [indiscernible 0:37:27]...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** ...and I, we are alive. She's two years [0:37:30] older than I. We are friends. I shouldn't be talking for her.
- Interviewer:** No, I'll get to meet her. I hope to meet her next week.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. Yes. You going to tell her that I talked about her?
- Interviewer:** No. No.
- Respondent:** No, don't say.
- Interviewer:** But I did – Sue gave me her name, so I'm sure Sue told her.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But I'll phone her and I'll tell her that Sue gave me her name.

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. Do that.

**Interviewer:** That is where I got the name. And I phoned Information and I couldn't find it, so.

**Respondent:** [0:38:00] Oh, oh.

**Interviewer:** I will definitely be in touch with her because I want to meet the people from the neighbourhood who have known the neighbourhood for many years.

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah. So don't mention my name.

**Interviewer:** Fine. I won't. I won't.

**Respondent:** Yes. Like tell her the same thing, you got the phone number from Sue, and...

**Interviewer:** Do you think your street has changed?

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** In what ways?

**Respondent:** Yes. In which way? [0:38:30] It's – one time, it was like – it's what I find now, not right now anymore, it became a little quieter now. But before that, there was so many – the people come with the dogs. I have nothing against the dogs. No. [0:39:00] And they used to come here, and always they would stay in the street, like women and like gossiping, you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** Yeah. And – but something is now different. Now they don't stay. And what I find, that the people in the street don't like [0:39:30] each other.

**Interviewer:** Now.

**Respondent:** Now.

**Interviewer:** And many years ago they did like each other.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Many years ago was not like that. Like now, everybody so educated.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So that's a change.

**Respondent:** Yeah. So educated and before, when we came here, like still so many Hungarian, you know, and...

**Interviewer:** Immigrants.

**Respondent:** ...international.

**Interviewer:** Immigrants.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** International.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. **[0:40:00]** And then so that was not like that then because we was hard-worker. Very hard worker. Like us, that's our first home. And we also want to die in this house. Yeah. My husband died from here. My husband had cancer, like Jack Layton.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** Same. Prostate, liver, bones, everything.

**Interviewer:** Oh, **[0:40:30]** it spread through his body.

**Respondent:** My husband had cancer for – it started nine years ago before he died. But my husband was the type, he don't like to go to doctors like I did. I go to doctors all my life. [Laughs] You know?

**Interviewer:** So if you're sick, you get help. Your husband was...



- Respondent:** No, no. He would call me. He says, "Come here. There is – go, [0:41:00] come and see what's that." He made urinating and it was blood in there. I said, "Please go to the doctor." I say, "That's not a good sign when blood come out." And then so it was okay for a while, and then he called me again. "Look, look." And then he didn't go to the doctor. He says, "I have no pain. Why should I go?" You know? [0:41:30] And then he – yeah. I had a bitter time with my husband. All my life was bitter. All my life was bitter.
- Interviewer:** So you weren't happy. It was difficult being with him.
- Respondent:** But that's what I don't quite understand, you know? And I still love him. [0:42:00] Look, I show you.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** A picture? Okay.
- Respondent:** Yeah. He was so proud of this house. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well he had one to be proud of. It was beautiful. So that's him standing proudly in front of your front door.
- Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. I still cry.
- Interviewer:** So you miss him.
- Respondent:** I still – I had a bitter life, but [0:42:30] I still love him.
- Interviewer:** Oh my goodness. So this is your son.
- Respondent:** My son and the grandson.
- Interviewer:** What a beautiful baby.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And here is the daughter-in-law.
- Interviewer:** That's a beautiful family.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh. This is a gorgeous baby. How old is he now? Is this the baby?

**Respondent:** He is twenty-one, the grandson.

**Interviewer:** He's twenty-one?

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And here he must be a year-and-a-half or something.

**Respondent:** Yeah. And here is my husband too.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent:** And our [0:43:00] son.

**Interviewer:** And you.

**Respondent:** [Laughs] Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Very nice pictures. Beautiful family.

**Respondent:** I have a wonderful family. Like they always bring me out too when they go out to Mother's Day, Christmas, Easter, and...

**Interviewer:** So all the big special days, they always come.

**Respondent:** Yeah. They always. And here, my son is – what you call it? [0:43:30] Power of attorney with – over me.

**Interviewer:** Oh that's good. Yeah.

**Respondent:** He does everything. Paperwork. And I like to work too. And my family's happy. Says, "Mom, you just continue. If you sit down, do nothing and it's no good." Like...

**Interviewer:** Oh, he's encouraging you to be active.

- Respondent:** Yeah. Working never [0:44:00] had kill anybody.
- Interviewer:** So if you want to clean your house, do it.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. And I love gardening. I just wait for the warmer weather. And I have a help also.
- Interviewer:** You mean gardening, or cleaning the house?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Very nice Chinese lady. [Laughs] She bring me some of her stuff, and she says she will help me gardening. And I [0:44:30] have a little problem with my – the legs, and the back is sore.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yeah. But you know, I agree with your son. It's good to keep active.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And that's what I do. But when is something hard, the Chinese lady come. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** How often does she come?
- Respondent:** She comes whenever I need.
- Interviewer:** Oh. So you phone her when you want her to come.
- Respondent:** [0:45:00] Yes. Like once a month. But I pay her.
- Interviewer:** But if she comes only about once a month, you take care of the rest of it yourself.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You're independent.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I do. That was in our mind. Eleanor, can I call you Eleanor?
- Interviewer:** Yes. Please. Please.

- Respondent:** And when I came to Canada, that was [0:45:30] the first thing. We have to learn English and working hard, and not be lazy or always, like, saving. Like we don't want to go to welfare. I don't want to be helping the city, you know? And...
- Interviewer:** What is that?
- Respondent:** [0:46:00] Yeah. Okay. It's...
- Interviewer:** Those are some bills. Could we maybe look at that later?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Okay.
- Interviewer:** We'll do the interview now and then I'll look at all that later. How's that?
- Respondent:** Okay. Okay.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So we'll talk now, and then I'll look at all these papers.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Better I stop. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Okay. [0:46:30] But one thing you did say, you just finished saying is you came to Canada and you expected to work. You worked, your husband worked, you were independent.
- Respondent:** Yes. Yes.
- Interviewer:** You didn't expect Canada to take care of you.
- Respondent:** No, no.
- Interviewer:** You were willing to work and pay all your own bills.
- Respondent:** Yes, yes. Yeah. We – matter of fact, we was like still helping them, you know? Like my husband. That I show you very fast. Just [0:47:00] we was here. We gave a donation. We gave to the nation. We was in Canada since 1960. We already gave donations. Yeah. Like...

**Interviewer:** So you were immigrants, and quite poor and working hard, but you made donations.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** To whom? Where did you make donations?

**Respondent:** To the home, like [0:47:30] poor people. Yeah. Poor people. Here in Toronto are so many poor people. I go to the Scott Mission. I bring stuff there. I support them all the time. And see? My husband here, if you read, Mr. and Mrs. Miko, these are the last – what my husband come together. And look what we gave.

**Interviewer:** And that's what you gave. [0:48:00] Three hundred and ninety-five dollars and thirty-five cents as donations.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. Yes.

**Interviewer:** So even when you were senior citizens and on pension, you were still giving.

**Respondent:** Yeah. At that time. Yes.

**Interviewer:** In 2009.

**Respondent:** And nine.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** Still giving. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So as immigrants, you came, you worked hard, and you started to help poor people.

**Respondent:** Poor people. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And then as senior citizens you were still giving.

- Respondent:** Yeah. Still giving because we are happy [0:48:30] because we found job. The people was nice to us, and now you have to give a little bit back too. Isn't that right?
- Interviewer:** I agree with you. I agree, and I think it's wonderful. I do respect that.
- Respondent:** Yeah. So many people that tell me they don't read. Says they don't open the letter. They just throw them away, you know? And – but okay, you don't. [0:49:00] But you still have to give some. I know my own people too. They don't give.
- Interviewer:** Your own people. You mean other people from Yugoslavia? Is that what you mean? They're not generous.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. You know what happened, my birthplace is in Yugoslavia, and then after the war – and that's what I [0:49:30] – this what I gave them last year.
- Interviewer:** So you still gave two hundred and fifty-five dollars last year.
- Respondent:** Yes. Yes. Yeah. I give this Princess Margaret because my husband was there. They were so wonderful. Yeah. And then, what is it called? Just a second. [0:50:00] Here.
- Interviewer:** So this is a certificate that says May the 6th, 1972.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** It doesn't say how many miles, but it's miles per million.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** 12.1.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Miles.
- Interviewer:** You walked 12.1 miles?
- Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. Yes.

- Interviewer:** And you did that as a fundraiser.
- Respondent:** We met in a safety hall. Yeah. Yes. How many miles I made?
- Interviewer:** 12.1.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Woo.
- Respondent:** Yeah. They get that money, you know? Like how [0:50:30] it is now, they running and that's what I did too. Yeah. When I was young. And that time, I was...
- Interviewer:** Well it says the Canadian Save the Children's Fund, family planning, foster parents. World literacy, the Kiwanis club. So it was a large – many different [0:51:00] groups benefited by people like you walking and collecting money.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Well congratulations. That sounds wonderful.
- Respondent:** Many people – we was in the City Hall and where they meet. You know? Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** So, you know, what you're saying is you came as an immigrant with the expectation you would work, you would earn money, and you would take care of yourselves, and you would help other people.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Which is what you did. And what you're still doing at eighty-two years old in 2012.
- Respondent:** [0:51:30] Yeah. And I give two hundred and fifty-five donation.
- Interviewer:** Yes.

- Respondent:** Yeah. My family's like that too. My family. Yeah. These guys, they look...
- Interviewer:** You're proud of that.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You should be proud of it.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You did a long, hard walk for that.
- Respondent:** Yes. And here, I have also a certificate.
- Interviewer:** Certificate of thanks in honour and appreciation of **[0:52:00]** Mrs. Miko, whose generosity continues to restore dignity and hope that is the Salvation Army. 2007 and 2007.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Here is another.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Thank you for your compassion, your kindness, and your desire to help neighbours in need.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And that saved the children.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Certificate of appreciation. **[0:52:30]** And that was in the year 2000.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** March 17th, the year 2000.
- Respondent:** Here.
- Interviewer:** And that is February 1st...



- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...2010. A certificate of thanks. Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation.
- Respondent:** Yes. And I – and you know, every year they make in Princess Margaret.
- Interviewer:** A memorial service?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. [0:53:00] I go there and I gave always quite a hundred dollar for that, you know? Every year. But now, my husband is gone, I have to slow a little bit because I am alone now, and yeah.
- Interviewer:** You've been very, very generous. Tell me where your son went to school.
- Respondent:** My son went to school. He went [0:53:30] in...
- Interviewer:** Lansdowne?
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Lansdowne.
- Interviewer:** Yeah? He went there?
- Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. Like public school here.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And then?
- Respondent:** And then he was going to Harbord Collegiate.
- Interviewer:** Yes. A lot of people did that. Yeah. So he went to Harbord Collegiate.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent:** And then he went to university here, and was in [0:54:00] well...

**Interviewer:** So he went to the University of Toronto?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And then some – another university?

**Respondent:** Another university. Also belongs to...

**Interviewer:** The University of Toronto.

**Respondent:** ...of Toronto.

**Interviewer:** So maybe it was another campus.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. No, but – no. He lived here.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Respondent:** He lived here.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** But [0:54:30] what do you call that university out in...

**Interviewer:** Hamilton? McMaster?

**Respondent:** No, no.

**Interviewer:** Not Burlington. No. That was also part of the University of Toronto. What did your son study?

**Respondent:** My son, he wanted to be a teacher, but the time when he was taking, like, for school, it was not enough children that time.  
[0:55:00] Lots of teachers – and so my son is seeing not so future for him, so he went to urban planning and then I don't know what it was, but I forgot. But he's now a manager.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

- Respondent:** Yeah. And the wife too is a manager. And then – but my son is [0:55:30] – was mine – I sometimes look. He was like – he was very ambitious. He wanted to go – he worked in summer. He worked in Eaton where I worked.
- Interviewer:** Like you.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And then he worked in Sheridan, and [0:56:00] he worked in Exhibition. He worked at Ford.
- Interviewer:** Like your husband.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And library here.
- Interviewer:** So these were summer jobs, or after school jobs?
- Respondent:** Summer job. Yeah. And maybe after school too. And he was working in the library. And he was teaching also. My son, when he was [0:56:30] seventeen years old, he went alone to Austria because I have a sister there. And then – so he went visit, and that story was so nice too. He arrived. Maybe it's – you don't want to hear what I tell you, eh?
- Interviewer:** I'm not sure. Well, I want to ask some of these questions.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Do. Do. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. But we can [0:57:00] talk after, after I turn the tape off because I want to talk about...
- Respondent:** Yeah. Do that.
- Interviewer:** ...this neighbourhood, and then I can turn off the tape and we'll talk some more.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Now...
- Respondent:** I hope that you take that too what I was telling you. Yeah. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I turned the tape off when you went to pick up some of the papers or when the phone rang.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You said that you like to garden.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So do you have a garden behind your house?

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. If it would be nice, I show you.

**Interviewer:** **[0:57:30]** We can look at it after. And how did you and your family use your back garden? Did you use it a lot, or not too much?

**Respondent:** I did.

**Interviewer:** You did.

**Respondent:** Yes. I even cut the bushes in the front because my husband was busy working.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** And my son was busy schooling. And then...

**Interviewer:** So you were the gardener.

**Respondent:** Yeah. I just love flowers.

**Interviewer:** And are you still doing your own gardening?

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. **[0:58:00]** Yeah. I do. And – but I have some things – we didn't do nothing for a long time. And then so I had – when my husband passed away, my husband was a type, he didn't throw a thing away. Not a thing. So I was so busy these two years to get rid of stuff. Everything.

**Interviewer:** So he was a packrat.

**Respondent:** Yeah. [0:58:30] Yeah. Yes. The garage, only reason we had – I have to have a big truck. Was just parked in there. I still have a car in there, forty years. I want to – when I am not busy, then I would like to go to Central Tech and because there, they...

**Interviewer:** Oh, so they...

**Respondent:** Learning.

**Interviewer:** That's right. So they could use your [0:59:00] car to teach the students.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you have a forty-year-old car in your garage?

**Respondent:** Yeah. And beside was stuff, garbage. And I had people they took it away. I had to pay for that, you know?

**Interviewer:** Right. Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** And then he didn't let me throw anything away. Not a thing.

**Interviewer:** It's got to be frustrating to live with all that stuff collecting.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You never used.

**Respondent:** I wanted to throw out. Oh, I – [laughs] [0:59:30] I don't know what he would have done. And now when he passed away, I need to clean the house in the basement. I had big – three big – it cost me thousand dollars to...

**Interviewer:** To get rid of his...

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes.

- Interviewer:** His junk. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** Now is still a little bit. It's okay. And I have such a good family. They wanted that my husband use the [1:00:00] – for the toilet.
- Interviewer:** Oh, the extra seat that made it high up.
- Respondent:** Go up.
- Interviewer:** Oh. To go up the stairs.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Like a...
- Interviewer:** Escalator.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And then – and my husband said, "No, no. We don't need." He don't need that because he was hard working. And then he – I said, "You," I said, "No." I said too, [1:00:30] I said, "No, you don't buy that. I don't like to spoil my stairs from that." You know? And go up and down, and it's not good, you know? And then now it's down there. I recently, I said, "What you going to do that? It costs lots of money." They got it even cheaper. They got [1:01:00] fifteen-hundred. Yeah. And...
- Interviewer:** But finally he had to agree because he couldn't get up and down the stairs.
- Respondent:** And then they know, my family, that you bought that but you didn't listen to us. You go ahead and you buy, and you don't – you are not sure if we like. And we didn't like it. It's now downstairs.
- Interviewer:** It's in the basement.
- Respondent:** I say, "Do the – sell it, or what I should do, you know?"
- Interviewer:** [1:01:30] When your son was young, when he was in elementary school and high school, when he wanted to play with his friends, where did he play?

- Respondent:** That time, it was – he was very, like, play, you know? And they used to play – he used to go in the – there was, like, where was? It was a rink over there...
- Interviewer:** [1:02:00] Yes.
- Respondent:** ...by Dominion.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** And there.
- Interviewer:** So he played on that rink and that big grassy area too?
- Respondent:** Yes. Or other places also because he played so many kinds of sport. Hockey. Then he played also lacrosse. And then...
- Interviewer:** As a young child, did the children play on the street?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Or in front of the house?
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** [1:02:30] The back? Where did...
- Respondent:** In the front.
- Interviewer:** The children played.
- Respondent:** Mostly this corner around here.
- Interviewer:** So there were a lot of kids playing on the street.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yes.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** Yeah. There was. Yes.

**Interviewer:** Have you done any renovations to your home?

**Respondent:** No, no. Nothing at all. But there's another thing what my husband didn't want, and he didn't let me do. Here was...

**Interviewer:** Do you want me to come with you?

**Respondent:** [1:03:00] Yeah, you can come. Here was a door where I kept the vacuum cleaner, and everything like mops and so on. And now, my husband didn't let me do this. See? How beautiful I had plumbing here. They made me a beautiful...

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** And here put a [1:03:30] beautiful sink.

**Interviewer:** So you did this after he died.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Because he didn't want it.

**Respondent:** Because I have trouble too with my legs.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Respondent:** I walk with a cane.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So this is better for you. You don't have to go up the stairs.

**Respondent:** Yes. And here I have it so comfortable now. My husband didn't let me. I said that would be good for you if we make one.

**Interviewer:** So did you and your husband sleep upstairs? Or you came downstairs after he died. Oh, so you and your husband...



**Respondent:** Always here.

**Interviewer:** So this was always your bedroom on the [1:04:00] main floor.

**Respondent:** Yeah. All the time.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** But he was a stubborn man.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh. [Laughs]

**Respondent:** Yeah, he was. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** Very, very stubborn. Yeah. Yes. Yeah. Here is my son.

**Interviewer:** That's when he graduated from the university.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yes. Here he was one year old. And here is – here I am.

**Interviewer:** Let me see.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** [1:04:30] Wow. Oh my goodness. Very beautiful.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And then of course...

**Respondent:** That's why I say young people, they are beautiful. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yeah, they are. Our skin gets older.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** But that's why you didn't want me to take a picture of you, because you're eighty-two and you don't look the way you did when you were twenty-two.

**Respondent:** [Laughs] And here I made this also.

**Interviewer:** Very nice.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. But you know, you still look very nice. You [1:05:00] don't look twenty-four, but you're a good-looking eighty-two-year-old.

**Respondent:** And you know, my son he says, I am always saying I don't feel what I – he says, "Mom, but you look so good." [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** He's right.

**Respondent:** And here, I have this. Yeah. That's my grandson. Our grandson. And our son.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. And here he's maybe six, and now he's twenty-one, you said.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Handsome little boy.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So come back. [1:05:30] We'll talk for a few more minutes.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you're saying in terms of renovations, you didn't do anything because your husband refused.

- Respondent:** Except...
- Interviewer:** After he died. After he died, you put the bathroom in. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Which a lot of the neighbours, they made that time...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** ...a washroom right away. They – right away. That time, it was only one washroom in the whole house, and then later [1:06:00] the people – like I know a neighbour, she passed away too. She was also hundred, and she – had hers down. Same thing like I, for five hundred dollars.
- Interviewer:** Five hundred?
- Respondent:** That time. You know? Right – many, many years ago. And I had to pay fifteen thousand.
- Interviewer:** Fifteen thousand. Well they had to take down a wall. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. And all the new toilets, [1:06:30] and yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh well. [Laughter] Let me see. You said that you never had animals, but a lot of your neighbours had dogs.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So Sue has a dog.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** And did lots of your neighbours have dogs or cats, or not too many?
- Respondent:** Yeah. I had a cat.
- Interviewer:** Oh, you had a cat?

**Respondent:** Oh, a beautiful cat. I have it for sixteen years. [1:07:00] And it's really nice to have a pet. The cat was so nice. When I was in the kitchen cooking, and here we had a chair, she would sit only and watch me. [Laughter] Would I go to – in the front room, and I would lie on – I always have problem around here all my life too.

**Interviewer:** Around your back and your stomach?

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. Yeah. I [1:07:30] having tests now. All kinds. Yeah. And because one day, it came out blood. I got scared, you know? I went to the doctor. I don't know what yet. I still go. Tests and tests all over. I am scared, say, I am going to have cancer too because in my family, they all die of [1:08:00] cancer. My mother was seventy-one. My sister, she was so heavy too, she was a diabetic. She died from diabetic. She couldn't stay away from sweets. And then my sister in Chicago, she had cancer, breast cancer.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so many.

**Respondent:** My nephew, he was only sixty. Stomach cancer.

**Interviewer:** [1:08:30] So you think about cancer because so many family members have died from it.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And your husband, of course.

**Respondent:** Yeah. My side of family die of cancer. My father's side, stroke. Isn't that funny?

**Interviewer:** Mm. So one is cancer and one is...

**Respondent:** Stroke.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** Actually my – the sister, is a brother – [1:09:00] like my father's sister, she had a stroke. But my father is a different story. I was only not a year yet, and my father went, like, to work to build a

house with other people. Are building. So we children always waiting when [1:09:30] he went, and always waiting every evening to come and – so always we wait all like – dad is coming home. And one day we wait also, and he didn't come home no more because a big beam, a big beam fell on him on his body, and head, smashed the head. And [1:10:00] we children all waiting, and my mother was like with five children.

**Interviewer:** Oh. How old were you at that time when your father died?

**Respondent:** Not a year yet.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You were under a year when your father...

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you were the youngest of these five children.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. Five children between my husband and mother. Like my mother and my father was five [1:10:30] children. Yeah. And one...

**Interviewer:** That's a very sad story.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Oh.

**Interviewer:** Terrible.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. And so he – yeah. Yes. So it was very, very, very hard for my mother.

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah.

**Respondent:** And then I – but the neighbours was very [1:11:00] good. Very.

**Interviewer:** So they helped your family.

- Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. They died now too. The priest and the neighbours, they see so many children no father, and so we – they helped. The priest helped us. And then he – so he was – [1:11:30] he – yeah. They helped us. Oh, and then they said to my mother, neighbours, like, "You cannot be alone without a male." And then so he – then he – the priest too and my neighbours, they said [1:12:00] my mother has to find somebody to get married again, you know? And so they was – all because they see so many – there was no welfare or anything that time. Oh no, no. Nothing like that. But my grandma had – she became very old too. My grandma, yeah. And she had, like, [1:12:30] a small land. A small acres. Like I don't know how many acres, but that's what we all live there.
- Interviewer:** So you went to live with your grandmother?
- Respondent:** No, no. My mother's mother.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. The house belonged to her. Like it was a poor house, you know? And nothing done either because [1:13:00] was very bad with money, you know? We had this little farm or what you call it, and we had to – I had to start working with five years.
- Interviewer:** Working on the farm and helping...
- Respondent:** On the farm.
- Interviewer:** ...to grow.
- Respondent:** To grow and pick up potatoes, and all these things. And then I – yes. And...
- Interviewer:** So did your mother – did another man [1:13:30] come and marry your mother? Yes?
- Respondent:** No, no. Now, see I switch around. [Laughs] Then some – there was, in this little town was a man. The mother was very good also for us. She was very good to my mother, and so there, she had a son. [1:14:00] And they thought – my mother thought maybe, like, it

will maybe become out of some because so many people want her to marry again.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** And even the priest. And then but it turned out that man was alcoholic.

**Interviewer:** Oh no. That's not good.

**Respondent:** Yeah. A very alcoholic. But they – [1:14:30] six years later, then after my husband...

**Interviewer:** Your father died.

**Respondent:** ...my father died. And then so they had then another daughter.

**Interviewer:** So your mother and that man?

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So did he move in with your family?

**Respondent:** Oh no.

**Interviewer:** No.

**Respondent:** No.

**Interviewer:** But they – he helped your family.

**Respondent:** Yeah. They...

**Interviewer:** And they had the one child together.

**Respondent:** And he would marry her. But my mother thought, "My, then what can I do [1:15:00] with that man?" You know?

**Interviewer:** No. Alcohol is bad.

- Respondent:** So she was left with a child with him.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. Okay. So let's come back to our neighbourhood.  
[Laughs]
- Respondent:** Did you record?
- Interviewer:** It's all there. I have. [Laughter] Could you talk about the stores in the neighbourhood? You talked about the store on Willcocks, a Chinese man had a corner store on the corner of Willcocks and Spadina.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And that was a corner store.
- Respondent:** [1:15:30] Yes.
- Interviewer:** Other stores in the neighbourhood? Do you remember any other stores?
- Respondent:** Not in this street.
- Interviewer:** Not necessarily this street.
- Respondent:** Oh around. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But just at Harbord...
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** College. Bloor.
- Respondent:** There was this – Joe was on Harbord and Robert – no. Robert and – yeah. Harbord and Robert Street. Maybe you remember that.
- Interviewer:** Fuda?
- Respondent:** Like his name was Joe. He had, like, [1:16:00] meat.



**Interviewer:** Joe Fuda. Yeah. Okay.

**Respondent:** Meat.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay.

**Respondent:** That there.

**Interviewer:** So it was only meat? Or it was a corner store?

**Respondent:** It think he had only meat then.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So he was a butcher.

**Respondent:** Yeah. A butcher. Yes.

**Interviewer:** And that would have been around 1955, 1960?

**Respondent:** Yeah. Something like that.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. That time. Yes. And then here down here was one. You remember maybe that one.

**Interviewer:** On Robert Street.

**Respondent:** [1:16:30] Yeah. There.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. That just closed about five or ten years ago.

**Respondent:** Yeah. I don't know. Beside the school.

**Interviewer:** With the wooden floor.

**Respondent:** Beside the school.

**Interviewer:** Across from the school.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. With the wooden flooring.

**Respondent:** Yes. They had – oh yeah. Like the store.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** You was in already.

**Interviewer:** Yes. Yes.

**Respondent:** And I don't know what happened to her.

**Interviewer:** But did you shop there sometimes?

**Respondent:** Yeah. Very seldom. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What about...

**Respondent:** She was [1:17:00] Austrian, and he was Italian.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

**Respondent:** But her husband died very early too.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And other stores?

**Respondent:** She had two sons. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Other stores in the neighbourhood?:

**Respondent:** In the neighbourhood? There was one. Maybe you remember that too. There is Robert and Sussex where now the rink is.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** Yeah. The Hungarian who owned the house here [1:17:30] on Willcocks. He had a store right there.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I don't remember. I wasn't here at that time.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So Robert and Sussex there was a store.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Robert and Sussex. There where is the rink now.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** Like by the Dominion, you know?

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** There he had the store.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did you – or did you use Kensington Market very much? Did you shop...

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** ...in the Market?

**Respondent:** Yes. But now it's really beautiful, [1:18:00] eh?

**Interviewer:** The Market?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Well they have more coffee shops.

**Respondent:** Yes, yes.

**Interviewer:** It's a little more...

**Respondent:** Like before, it was Jewish people. Yeah. They call it the Jewish Market.

**Interviewer:** Yes, I've heard that.

**Respondent:** Yes. Jewish Market.

**Interviewer:** So do you shop there now? Or did you shop there while your son was growing up? How much did you use the Market?

**Respondent:** Oh, a lot. Yes. A lot. [1:18:30] Like there was not many restaurants, but they had, like, Jewish butcher. I went with her shopping because my age, she knew this store over there in Market, and they give her also kosher meat.

**Interviewer:** [Laughs] Yes.

**Respondent:** So I went there. They have beautiful meats, you know?

**Interviewer:** So you bought kosher meat sometime? [Laughter]

**Respondent:** The kosher [1:19:00] meat. And I – my neighbour here, before Sue, she says we was not by married – she always said "Mrs. Miko," and I called her, "Mrs. Howler."

**Interviewer:** Oh really?

**Respondent:** Yes. All the time. Yeah. And then she says, "Oh, if you don't mind, bring me a beautiful steak." [Laughs] [1:19:30] I say, "Okay."

**Interviewer:** From the Market.

**Respondent:** Yeah. From the Market. Yeah. So I brought. She know my friend, Jewish friend. She knows these people very well. And we went shopping all the time together. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you used to use the Market a lot.

**Respondent:** Yeah. And I still do now.

**Interviewer:** You still do.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You walk there by yourself?

**Respondent:** Yeah. I walk by myself. I have this little buggy. I show you it.  
[1:20:00] Then so I do, but I get the heavy stuff. A matter of fact, I will – tomorrow morning, I'm going to make out the bill, like what I need. Then they deliver the order, what I'm ordering. The heavy stuff. I have all this juice at home, and...

**Interviewer:** That would be heavy. Juice would be heavy to carry.

**Respondent:** Yes. And always. [1:20:30] But now, I didn't order because I was too busy with going doctor's, and yeah. Otherwise, I would offer you. I always like that the cranberry.

**Interviewer:** Well thank you. I'm enjoying the water that you gave me. Did you go...

**Respondent:** Please have maybe this.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Thank you. Thank you. I like those cookies.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What about – did you – when I first walked in, you mentioned Knox Church. Is that a church where you go?

**Respondent:** [1:21:00] I used to go twenty-five years. I knew so wonderful people too.

**Interviewer:** At Knox Church.

**Respondent:** Yes. They – I am Catholic, and may I ask what are you?

**Interviewer:** I'm Jewish.

**Respondent:** You are?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** Yeah. [Laughs] My – maybe you can help me. You are Jewish?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent:** Yes. And – but [1:21:30] the man in Montreal, he was Jewish. Yeah. I still remember he was a wonderful person. His name was Brian. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Brian.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Maybe when you are young, you know, you remember – like now, I like to – when we are old, I like to think back to my childhood.

**Interviewer:** To reminisce.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Like that I remember, you know? And [1:22:00] then I – sort of, I – I have a little problem.

**Interviewer:** Your memory isn't as good as it used to be?

**Respondent:** No, no. Yeah. This Jewish family where we came three years...

**Interviewer:** Where you lived.

**Respondent:** Yeah. I always meet very nice Jewish people. All the time. Yeah. I have this in [1:22:30] Montreal. There was wonderful men. Like I came and no job, and I – you know, I was there clothes – clothes examiner. Dresses examiner.

**Interviewer:** As one of your jobs?

**Respondent:** Yeah. In Montreal.

**Interviewer:** Oh. So after people sewed the clothes, you examined?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** If they were done well.

- Respondent:** I made dresses. [Makes sewing machine noises] [1:23:00] They sew very fast, you know? Was rack there, all dresses, dresses. Not just one rack; many. So I had to go through each dress, check where a seam is open or a spot from the machines.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** I put there a little paper and a needle, so I Put that separate, and they have to fix it.
- Interviewer:** Have to fix that.
- Respondent:** [1:23:30] Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Do you feel that this neighbourhood is a safe neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Oh, there was already break-ins too.
- Interviewer:** In the past? Or even recent?
- Respondent:** Oh. Actually, oh, not recently, no. They broke in ours too. Yeah. From the back door and [1:24:00] yes. And then I think across the street, three I think it is.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** They said to be very careful in this street. Somehow they go here. Like the police said that they are – it's very popular that they break-in here, you know? Only not long ago, they broke [1:24:30] in on Major. A friend of – she's Italian. She's a friend of my – she works in the same place where my daughter-in-law, and she told me that they broke in. This lady had mother and father. They died in one year together, only six years apart. And she lives alone too. And they broke – when she was [1:25:00] at work in the daytime, they broke into her home.
- Interviewer:** So that's on your mind, that sometimes they break in in your neighbourhood.

- Respondent:** Yeah. Now that's quite a while ago when they did.
- Interviewer:** So in the last few years it has not happened.
- Respondent:** No, no, no.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. And when you walk on the street, you go to the Market, or you go wherever, do you feel safe walking on the street?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You do.
- Respondent:** Yes. Yes. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [1:25:30] I think pretty well we've – just anything else about any stores in the neighbourhood? On College, on Bloor, on Harbord? Anything? Anything else you remember?
- Respondent:** Harbord Street. Oh yeah. Like on – I don't know. Maybe you know that too. You are [1:26:00] twenty-six years around.
- Interviewer:** In the neighbourhood.
- Respondent:** In the neighbourhood. Maybe you remember they are – it was – where our pharmacy is, the name was Goodbaum.
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent:** You remember that?
- Interviewer:** No. So where was – which street was that on?
- Respondent:** College.
- Interviewer:** College.
- Respondent:** And Major. There is a pharmacy.



- Interviewer:** Okay. Yeah. I remember a [1:26:30] pharmacy. I didn't know the name.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** There was Goodbaum's. Yeah. I still have – I still – I was shopping there a lot, and I have – they give this always for free.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Oh, so if you spent a certain amount of money they would give you a bowl?
- Respondent:** Yeah. [Laughter] Then when our son was small, I had the carriage.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** I went with the carriage and I was shopping because [1:27:00] my husband worked all the time, so I put the grocery by the leg, and underneath what I bought there, and they give you always this. Nowadays they don't do that.
- Interviewer:** So how many bowls do you have? A lot.
- Respondent:** And cups too. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I remember when they used to do that in stores or gas stations.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Now, no more, eh?
- Interviewer:** Right. No.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I do remember that.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And in Dominion, I went shopping also [1:27:30] with my son in the carriage, and they give in beautiful – I show you now. A glass, a crystal. So I have six. And – yeah. I can drink from...

- Interviewer:** So this was from...
- Respondent:** From Dominion.
- Interviewer:** It's heavy crystal.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And they give this away always when I went shopping.
- Interviewer:** If you spent a [1:28:00] certain amount of money.
- Respondent:** Yes. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You know, I had forgotten about that because that – a lot of stores or gas stations used to do that.
- Respondent:** Yes. I have six of them. I can eat like an ice cream, or I can drink out of it.
- Interviewer:** So it could be a cup or a lovely dessert plate.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** It's beautiful.
- Respondent:** When my neighbour comes, you know, the [indiscernible 1:28:24], and I like to serve always something.
- Interviewer:** It's elegant. It's [1:28:30] really elegant.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I like it very much. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well, is there anything else you'd like to talk about, about the neighbourhood and all the years you've lived here? Anything else that – before I turn off the machine?

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yes. About the neighbourhood, maybe you knew the – what is it called? [1:29:00] [Indiscernible 1:29:00]. I think it's 120.

**Interviewer:** No. I don't know them.

**Respondent:** No?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** She became – she died, I think, last year. And she was a drape maker. Excuse me. She was a drape maker, and yeah. And then who lives now in that? Oh, right here, [1:29:30] 120, she was living there. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Well, I think I'm going to turn this off now.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Okay.

**Interviewer:** And there are a few more things you wanted to show me, but before I turn it off, I just wanted to say thank you very much. It's been a pleasure meeting you and listening to all your descriptions of what it's like living in our neighbourhood.

**Respondent:** Yes. Yeah. And I was happy too to meet you. Really. I always wanted somebody to come [1:30:00] and talk to also.

**Interviewer:** Well thank you very much. So we both enjoyed it.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Thank you.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah.

[1:30:07]

[End of recording]