

054 Norman Cook

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

[0:00:00]

**Interviewer:** This is the 6th of May, and I'm sitting with Norman Cook, who's visiting from Japan, and I really appreciate the fact that you are giving me the opportunity to speak to you because your family has a very long history in this neighbourhood.

**Respondent:** A very long history indeed.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. So that's what we're going to be talking about. If you would just tell me for the tape, the years that you lived here and how [0:00:30] old you were, including when you moved to the Clinton area because that's so close.

**Respondent:** When I would – I would have been five years of age when I moved here. By the way, from Kensington Market, so not very far away. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yeah, okay.

**Respondent:** Just outside the boundary of the Village on Wales Avenue, actually. On Wales Street in Kensington. And then we moved up to Major Street and so I would have been five and...

**Interviewer:** [0:01:00] And what year would that have been?

**Respondent:** That would have been 1946.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** And so 1952, did I say, I would have been twelve. And then we moved over – because I finished grade eight in Clinton Public School, so I was over at Harbord and Clinton, but all the previous years were at Lansdowne and a daycare centre somewhere in this district, and unfortunately I don't know where it is and my mother

has passed away unfortunately, but there was a daycare centre here. [0:01:30] So. But I began kindergarten at Lansdowne. Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** So you spent...

**Respondent:** Until grade seven.

**Interviewer:** So you spent your young years here, and then when you moved to Clinton – starting off living in the Market, and then going to Clinton. It's all very close.

**Respondent:** Very close.

**Interviewer:** And not very different.

**Respondent:** Exactly.

**Interviewer:** So we're focusing on your years right in Harbord Village, but I think we can really include your experiences in the other – because they're so [0:02:00] close and so similar.

**Respondent:** We almost have to, because these other approximate areas had such a structural effect on the Village, in all due respect to the people who now define the Village in specific terms. It had a configuration of its own that followed certain kinds of paths, some of which were ethnic, some of which were racial, some of which were religious in the case of some of the kids. Some of which were just kids playing with kids. The school districts, for [0:02:30] example, overlapped a little bit the areas that we're talking about, so that's important as well because, of course, we played with our classmates.

**Interviewer:** Well, so you're talking about your entire childhood until the age of around nineteen when you left.

**Respondent:** Yes. Exactly.

**Interviewer:** When you left Toronto.

- Respondent:** Exactly. Exactly.
- Interviewer:** So for us, that makes you an expert on the neighbourhood.  
[Laughs]
- Respondent:** Of that time.
- Interviewer:** Well we're talking about your experiences. Anybody's an expert because they lived here. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** I'll take it.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, thank you. **[0:03:00]** Do you have any idea what – who moved here first? What generation? Your grand...
- Respondent:** My great-grandparents.
- Interviewer:** Your great-grandparents.
- Respondent:** My great-grandparents moved here first, and they moved from the countryside, from East Gwillimbury, which is northwest of here, I believe. Or would it be east? Almost due north, I guess.
- Interviewer:** Do you have any idea approximately what year that might have been?
- Respondent:** **[0:03:30]** Do you know, I'm not certain, but I – my grandfather was born there, and he came with them as a youngster. I can find that out and I'll send that out to you.
- Interviewer:** Your grandfather was born, meaning in Harbord Village you mean?
- Respondent:** No, my grandfather was born in East Gwillimbury.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** But he came here as a child, and likely even a toddler to the Harbord Village.
- Interviewer:** Okay.

- Respondent:** And to Lippincott Street precisely.
- Interviewer:** [0:04:00] Okay. Now I have a picture here that was in one of the newspapers. That's your grandfather.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** Yes. Okay. That's your mother's father.
- Respondent:** Let me see. I'm thinking it might be my great-grandfather actually. That was my great-grandfather. That wasn't my grandfather. That was not Charles Sharp. That was Charles Sharp Senior.
- Interviewer:** Oh, there were two generations of Charles...
- Respondent:** Yes, yes.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** This was my great-grandfather.
- Interviewer:** But that was in [0:04:30] this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Oh yes. Quite so.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So because we're taping it, could you just – because that happened in this neighbourhood, could you just talk about what we're looking at?
- Respondent:** Well what you're seeing is, I believe, that he was at that time – he was a pastor of a church, but that wasn't lucrative. [0:05:00] And so what he did to support his family was that he drove this truck, or these horses.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] That's quite a truck being pulled by two horses.
- Respondent:** And so that's what he was. He was a teamster and did this to kind of support his family, and yeah.

- Interviewer:** So he was a pastor...
- Respondent:** Yes, oh very much so.
- Interviewer:** So he kind of had a day job.
- Respondent:** To [0:05:30] understand about him and our family, it's very important to understand that he was the pastor of the local black church, which by the way was not in the Village. It was over on Grace Street a few streets over, and the church was called the British Methodist Episcopal Church, and it was an all-black congregation and he was the pastor. And the woman who he married, [0:06:00] her family were also very involved in the church. And her name was Jackson, and I believe that they lived on Borden. And they raised their family on Lippincott Street.
- Interviewer:** I interviewed a Jackson person. Her husband died some years ago, but his grandfather had been the first black mailman in [0:06:30] Toronto. I don't know if it's the same Jackson family.
- Respondent:** Was she an older woman?
- Interviewer:** No, she wasn't. Because it was his grandfather.
- Respondent:** No, the woman you interviewed.
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent:** She was young?
- Interviewer:** Well young like me. [Laughs] Young like us.
- Respondent:** Uh-huh. I'm trying to think of who that might have been.
- Interviewer:** No, but no. She was seventy-eight. This woman was seventy-eight.
- Respondent:** When did you interview her?
- Interviewer:** Oh, a couple of weeks ago.

- Respondent:** Oh.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** I'm trying to think of who that might have been, which Jackson because the Jacksons were our cousins.
- Interviewer:** Oh really? [0:07:00] I'm trying to think of whether they were on Major or Brunswick. I think they were on Brunswick.
- Respondent:** Brunswick more likely.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I think so. I'm not going to find it fast enough.
- Respondent:** Oh, don't worry about that.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Albert Jackson was his grandfather. Oh yeah. Brunswick. And they [0:07:30] owned a number of homes on Brunswick, right?
- Respondent:** Mm. Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So...
- Respondent:** We're all homeowners here, pretty much. We owned a lot of property in this area.
- Interviewer:** So what was that about?
- Respondent:** Why did they do that? I think that at the time, you know, in the black community in particular, this area was a transition area.
- Interviewer:** Mm. Very much so. Yeah.
- Respondent:** You know? It had – in that sense, it was similar to Montreal's plateau [0:08:00]. It was an immigrant settlement area and the Jewish families, for example, came through and moved on, but for the blacks it was a bit difficult because there was clear racial discrimination in housing. So once they settled into the area, there was kind of a no-exit situation for them. And their tendency, apart

from the fact that they liked to be together as families, was to buy property in the area. Kind of like the Chasids of Montreal.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** You know? **[0:08:30]** And so that's what was behind it. And also, there was something very interesting during the late '40s and '50s about those families, the black families in particular. You know, when I went to Montreal to study, I studied with a sociologist who was black, who had published some important papers. He was at St. George Williams University. A man named Harold Potter. And Harold Potter had published a remarkable study about the black communities in **[0:09:00]** Canada in that era on the post-war era, and it turned out that over ninety percent of the men were railroad – worked for the railroad, and were mainly railroad porters. But when I look at the Village, this particular Village as you define it now, that – those numbers really draw up. Most of the men did other things other than being porters, so probably only – and I'm estimating – maybe thirty to thirty-five percent of the men **[0:09:30]** were railroad service workers, and the rest were free tradesmen or construction workers, stevedores on the docks of Toronto, but they didn't work for the railroad, which was interesting. So there was a little bit of...

**Interviewer:** What's a free tradesman?

**Respondent:** A plumber working for himself.

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

**Respondent:** A carpenter. So there was a lot of institutional completeness **[0:10:00]** for the black community here, but they had their own churches. You know, there were the parochial schools, there were community centres – two, two-and-a-half actually, if you include St. Christopher House, which was mostly black. The other third was Jewish and it was two-thirds black. Home service was entirely black, and UNIA was entirely black. These free tradesmen serviced the black community. **[0:10:30]** You know, I don't think I saw – maybe one or two in my whole childhood – a non-black serviceman come to our house to do plumbing, to do carpentry, to do electricity,

and this type of thing. So they were forming a somewhat independent economy.

**Interviewer:** So did that work – that the black people serviced black families, and white – [0:11:00] was there any crossing or not?

**Respondent:** Oh yes, yes. There was crossover for sure. And quite a bit of it. But the preference for the black families who lived here, many of whom were related to each other by the way, especially the old Underground Railroad families like the Jacksons and my family, the Sharps, and the Caribbeans were – that's another story. I'll talk about it in a few moments. But overwhelmingly, their preference, if they could, would be to use black businesses. [0:11:30] Yeah.

**Interviewer:** On a day-to-day basis in your childhood, you're talking about adults and working situations.

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** But kids going to school, kids playing ball, all these things, playing on the street. How much interaction was there?

**Respondent:** Oh, a great deal. A great deal. I think I mentioned in one of our emails that our gang was referred to as the United Nations gang, and [0:12:00] that's because the kids came from everywhere. So we played with each other all the time, and really did a lot of crossover here. Of course, [indiscernible 0:12:09]. That's me at Lansdowne Public School.

**Interviewer:** [Laughs] You're very much a part of the group of the kids. Yeah.

**Respondent:** So you ask about if we were together. Heavens.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay.

**Respondent:** And many of us remained close in the [0:12:30] years following as well.

**Interviewer:** So in...

- Respondent:** I think I told you that I'm seeing my...
- Interviewer:** Shuman.
- Respondent:** Shuman.
- Interviewer:** Yes, yes.
- Respondent:** Where is he? That's Jerry.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Whoa. So you haven't seen him for...
- Respondent:** I haven't seen him since high school.
- Interviewer:** ...for fifty years.
- Respondent:** We both went to Harbord.
- Interviewer:** Amazing. Oh my god. And you left the city, and of course we didn't have email.
- Respondent:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** It was much more [0:13:00] effort to stay in touch.
- Respondent:** Now we raised our families and we have time, and we're going to rebond and...
- Interviewer:** I had a class reunion about five years ago for my class in Montreal. Fifty years since we had completed high school and it was thrilling.
- Respondent:** Isn't it?
- Interviewer:** Oh, it was such fun. But we had to look at each other's names before we could really recognize the people because we hate to admit, but we changed a little [laughter] in fifty years. Yeah.
- Respondent:** So yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:13:30] Okay. So the kids...

**Respondent:** Yeah. And it all shows there. You know?

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah.

**Respondent:** This youngster was from Lithuania. Estonia. He was a Lithuanian. He came from France. That's one of the **[indiscernible 0:13:48]** twins. That's Mindy Bragg, that's Jerry Shuman. He's Jewish Polish. I don't know where Shuman's family came from. Probably Poland as well. That's Taisto Tammisko from Finland.

**Interviewer:** **[0:14:00]** Oh yes. Okay. So the pictures tell a thousand words. [Laughs] Yeah. Okay.

**Respondent:** And the year of the car too. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Right. And how about in terms of, you know, people's work, and the institutions that you had, there was a lot of separateness. But going into each other's homes, were you welcome in their homes?

**Respondent:** We also went to each other's community centres **[0:14:30]** at times, because one of the things we were all subject to was a certain amount of ethnic training and consciousness. There would be occasions in the black community when they would be talking to us about being young, black people. And we wouldn't bring our white friends into a situation like that, and similarly the Jewish kids underwent the same thing, and the Japanese kids the same thing. Another time that **[0:15:00]** – and remember that era that I'm speaking about where there was a little bit of distance, but I'm sure the kids broke it all down anyway – and that was when the social dances began when we hit our teens, and there we would be social dances at the YMHA.

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

**Respondent:** And our friends would be saying to us, "Come, come, come," but the adults who were running it would prefer the Jewish kids met Jewish kids, and the Japanese the same, and the black kids the same, so there were **[0:15:30]** adults who were trying to groom us into our ethnicity, which for us was a little uncomfortable and didn't

make sense because we were dancing together in high school, and we were dancing together in the street dances, you know? And stuff like that. And we kind of had our eye on each other a little bit, regardless of race, colour, or creed, right? But there's a little bit of that. But normally, yes, we were certainly at each other's houses all the time. Yeah. I played the role of – [0:16:00] for the Steinbergs, my nemesis Elaine Steinberg's family – to her shock and horror of being the shabbes goy of the house. [Laughter] Right? Because they were Orthodox, right? So I used to go in and turn on the gas, you know. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** But it's interesting that you knew the term also. [Laughs]

**Respondent:** Well, you know, bear in mind when I wrote in an email that we swapped cultural things, tendencies and trades, and [0:16:30] stuff like that. You know, the community that I grew up in had a very strong light motif track running of Yiddish. The Yiddish language. Hebrew was – they didn't know what the hell that was.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** None of my friends had even heard of Hebrew at that point.

**Interviewer:** Well, the parents came from...

**Respondent:** The parents and the grandparents were Yiddish-speakers, right? [0:17:00] So it was spoken everywhere, you know? I mean you could expect if you're going into the house of somebody who was Jewish that you're going to hear some Yiddish, right?

**Interviewer:** And did you learn some Yiddish words?

**Respondent:** Yeah. We learned. We learned a little bit, and we picked up a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and you know. And...

**Interviewer:** So well, I guess it's somewhat understandable. Yes, play with them. They're your friends. But when you're moving towards the [0:17:30] age of getting married...

- Respondent:** When the searching for mates began, and the – it was even before that. It was kind of the cueing up of mentalities, you know? Which for some kids worked and for other kids didn't, you know? We still had a very high rate of intermarriage coming out of these communities and that generation. I would dare say that of my male Jewish friends in secondary school [0:18:00] in particular, I would say that forty to fifty percent of them married non-Jewish women. Yeah. I would say that. Of the black men, I would say about the same if not higher even. The Japanese were even higher. I mean they went right through the roof, to the point where, you know, they now are concerned about, you know, the loss of that generation altogether to assimilation. [0:18:30] They were the highest actually.
- Interviewer:** Well it's certainly changing the world.
- Respondent:** It's changing the world. So we ended up, of course, with this beautiful Canada with all these kids of different races and colours and mixtures. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** In terms of socializing, I'm thinking of front porches, people's piece of land behind the home, and the back lanes.
- Respondent:** Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** Could I throw all that at you and think of all these different...
- Respondent:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** The back lanes. [0:19:00] How did you use those?
- Respondent:** Front porches were teaching places where invariably kids themselves independently rarely hung out, especially boys on the front porch. If you were on the front porch sitting, chances are you were with a member of the previous generation, either a parent or a grandparent. Grandparents especially loved front porches, and they would sit and they would comment quietly as people are going up and down the street. [Laughter] [0:19:30] Or they wouldn't comment, which was common too. [Laughter] But these were viewing places. Remember in the email I said that we had come from many places on the planet to be here? So people had

opinions, but there was a very strong post-war desire to coexist and get along. People had quite enough war and conflict, and all of that nonsense. They lived it, you know, through the large part of the twentieth century, so now everybody was kind of [0:20:00] – get along. Let's get along. And – but it didn't mean that people didn't have opinions, you know? I can remember sitting with the elder Mrs. Kaproff, right? The Ukrainian woman right down the street, and she had something to say about it after the lady got ten steps down, and she didn't speak to her. They didn't fight; she just didn't speak to her. It's like you're there, I see you, but you know, we remember the Cossacks and the [indiscernible 0:20:30] [0:20:30].

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

**Respondent:** You know? There were racists who didn't like black people. We knew who they were in the neighbourhood. We avoided them. Because in addition to the minorities, the ones, you know, these people had come from everywhere, they're also poor whites who didn't make it living here because the Scots were here before had [0:21:00] moved on and they had left their poor behind, and they resented the incomers. And...

**Interviewer:** The Scots who had remained here resented because...

**Respondent:** Yes. The poor ones, yeah.

**Interviewer:** I guess they had a sense that this was a place, a transition place.

**Respondent:** It was a transition place. Also, it changed. We changed it when we came. You know, we brought these new smells, and tastes, and habits, you know? They weren't used to looking up and seeing, you know, a Chinese and a Japanese, and an Indian and a black, and [0:21:30] you know, God knows, Jews, and on and on, and all this stuff. And it was like, you know? You know, there's an interesting – St. Peter's Church was a Catholic church over on Bathurst Street. I think it's still there. Bathurst just above Bloor. It's about two steps above Bloor. A Catholic cathedral. The people who were there were, for years, Irish Catholics before the district began to change. [0:22:00] When the Italians came, of course they're Catholic and they started going to the Catholic Church. I can recall an open-line

– you know, because open line radio was just starting then, and this lady got on and started screaming and yelling about how the centre of Toronto is being taken over by these people, and a white person can't even get a seat in her own church anymore. And the non-whites she was referring to were [0:22:30] Italians. You know? So there was, you know – don't forget we had in 1933, which you're probably very aware of with your historical research – a major race riot here.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** The Christie Pits riots. And people were aware of that, even in the years that I was growing up here. And think about that. That was thirteen years, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years later. And so [0:23:00] the shockwave of that had stayed as kind of within the legend of the community, so people were conscious that things could go bad. Things could go bad unless we really managed our relations with each other well. So the live and let live business was partly a by-product of that terrible experience, but there was still consciousness of it.

**Interviewer:** So there was consciousness of that, plus a lot of people had come from pretty terrible situations in Europe.

**Respondent:** Yes. Exactly.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** [0:23:30] Not only in Europe, but as I said the Japanese Canadians, you know, were internment camps right in Canada. And you know, one of the quiet stories that I came to understand, there were Germans who lived here as well. Monica Fruglen's family lived in the Village.

**Interviewer:** There's water, if you want some.

**Respondent:** Her father had been a soldier in [indiscernible 0:23:52] and had been a prisoner of war in Canada, because don't forget you had German prisoner of war camps at North Bay, [0:24:00] Ontario. And at the end of the war, many of them didn't go home. In fact, I'm

not even sure what percentage of them went home. I'm beginning to think that maybe half of them stayed here, if not more. Or went into other countries, but they didn't go back to Germany. There's nothing for them. And they were treated fairly well in Canada, those German prisoners of war. And [0:24:30] her father had been one of those German soldiers, so when I said that there were tensions in the village, and people knew, you know, to be a non-Jewish German in this village at that time was not an easy thing. And my friend Toby still talks about Monica Fruglen as an old Nazi. Right? [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. One of those fears in those experiences.

**Respondent:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Interviewer:** [0:25:00] Very deep. Yeah. So let's come back. I love what you were saying about the front porch where people were down on...

**Respondent:** Yeah. So the front porch was a classroom of the street. [Laughter] The back porches tended to be workspaces a little bit. You know, in those years we did a lot more of our own food preparation than we do now, and chickens had to be plucked, fish had to be filleted [0:25:30] and gilled. I mean it was real work, you know, to get a meal on the table, and the back porch tended, in many people's houses, to be places where extension of the kitchen, in a funny kind of way. You know, it wasn't unusual to arrive at somebody's house and see a member of the family plucking a chicken or cutting its feet off, or you know? Fish gills going every which way, and you know, [0:26:00] there was a smell to the back porch.

**Interviewer:** [Laughs] Not a sweet one, some of the time.

**Respondent:** And sometimes not sweet. Sometimes sweet because sometimes, you know, the baking of pies would cool on the back porch.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** You know? So it depended. So the back porch was about that.

**Interviewer:** And if there was a piece of land beyond the back porch...

**Respondent:** There was. We had backyards.

**Interviewer:** And how were those used?

**Respondent:** [0:26:30] Well remember, the families had a lot more kids than we have now on average. I mean every family had three kids, minimum. Minimum. I mean they weren't ten, twelve kids per family, as in Quebec. You're talking about, you know, five, six, at most, and my family was large. It was seven kids in the house. But we planted a lot of – the victory garden mentality wasn't that far [0:27:00] behind. Remember in the war they planted victory gardens because of the food shortages? So a lot of people continued to grow food, and so our backyards had usually a fruit tree or two in it, pears, apples, peaches, plums. Just about everybody. Parents grew rhubarb for rhubarb pie. In fact, I don't know anybody that didn't have a patch of rhubarb in the garden. Everybody. It was very [0:27:30] popular at that moment. So that's what the gardens were used for. The notion of a grass lawn in the back garden, that didn't exist much. People didn't sit in their – as the suburbs, you know? Or further north where they, you know, had larger backyards. Ours were functional.

**Interviewer:** But they were important spaces. A lot happened back there.

**Respondent:** They were very important spaces. A lot happened, and you know, if there were a [0:28:00] couple of little chairs out there, it would be a place where your parents took you to talk, or your parents would – where people didn't want to talk in the house. You know? Let's go into the garden and have a chat. You had a chat in the garden, usually by your parents.

**Interviewer:** It was not necessarily a good chat. [Laughs]

**Respondent:** It wasn't necessarily. And we were little entrepreneurs in our backyard, you know? [Laughs] At some point, and I'm still being criticized by – at some retirement club for it. [0:28:30] I used to have boxing in my backyard and started charging people and making my friends fight, and I was collecting the money. [Laughter] I gave a boxing promotion. And he said, "I almost got killed in your

backyard." Said, "You kept inviting kids from other districts to fight me in your backyard, and you were charging them and I never got a cent."

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent:** I said, "Well, you know, you didn't have a contract." [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** So he didn't sign, he gets to leave this morning.

**Respondent:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** [0:29:00] Wow.

**Respondent:** So.

**Interviewer:** So as you say, they were functional.

**Respondent:** Yeah. And culture also went on in people's backyards. Kids had puppet theatres in their backyards. They'd create those. Remember we made a lot of our own. It wasn't internet time and computer time. I mean we were very busy inventing and inviting, you know? So you can go to somebody's backyard and be a puppet show. [0:29:30] "We're putting on a play," you know? "Everybody on the street has to come, and we're going up and down the street and we're telling people, 'Come to our house on Saturday at two o'clock. We're putting on a play.'" My sisters, and myself, and my cousins, and – so all of that was going on. So backyards were used that way also.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And the back lanes now?

**Respondent:** And the back lanes, that was the boys' stuff. Girls didn't hang out [0:30:00] in the back lanes very much in my time.

**Interviewer:** In the back lanes where you were hanging out, were they paved, not paved, a mixture? What?

**Respondent:** No. They were not at that time paved.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

- Respondent:** And in fact, a couple of them got paved toward the end of my stay in this district, but when I was a kid, they were full of rats and, you know? [Laughs] Pretty messy places altogether.
- Interviewer:** Especially when it got wet.
- Respondent:** Oh, it's god awful.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So tell me what you did there. How were the boys **[0:30:30]** using it?
- Respondent:** This is where we decided it was our territory. The boys decided this is our lane, and only some people are allowed here. [Laughs] Right. Of course, it's ours, right? So the little warrior mentality of little macho boys begins fairly young, you know? This is our territory, male territory, and bonding, and all of that kind of stuff. Our territory, this is our gang. If we catch the kids from **[0:31:00]** Lippincott here or Borden, they're in big trouble. Remember, I was over on Major. And so that was kind of part of it, and you know, this area is full of chestnut trees.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Yeah.
- Respondent:** And we used to get the chestnuts, and it was usually dangerous, you know? Our parents were really furious. We would get these chestnuts and drill holes in them, and put shoelaces through them, and hit each other with them, you know? And have fights with them.
- Interviewer:** Oh wow. What a weapon. They're hard.
- Respondent:** They were weapons. They were **[0:31:30]** hard. Oh yeah, we went to whack the other guy to kingdom come.
- Interviewer:** Whoa.
- Respondent:** And so that kind of stuff got broken up. Parents had to police the lane a little bit because we'd get a little crazy in the lane because that's where we felt we were away from supervision. This was our freedom spot, you know? And this is where also we would kind of

become conscious of stuff. This is where – kind of our sexual [0:32:00] education began with each other, with the peer-level education, you know? This is the first time I heard of condoms, was in the lane. Where else was I going to hear about it? My father wasn't going to tell me about condoms when I was ten years of age. "Now what's that?" You know? "It's a condom." "What's it for?" You know? [Laughter] "I don't know. Ask so and so. He's older. He knows." Right? "My brother told me?" [Laughs] Right? And so all of that kind of mythology about our sexuality would [0:32:30] begin, and the theories of sexuality, girls, you know? While and so was with so and so, and so and so was with so and so. "Where did you hear that? What's that mean?" You know? And we're learning all of these words, but, you know, if I could summarize a phrase that hallmarked my time here, it would be, "Make out." [0:33:00] "Make out in the broadest sense." You know? We were here as families to make out, make out better, but make out had a double meaning. It meant going and kissing girls.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** Making out, you know? [Laughter] So we were all on the make. And the lanes were a place where we learned how to get on the make.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever bring the girls into the lane for that purpose?

**Respondent:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** You did. So that...

**Respondent:** Well that was [0:33:30] getting right toward the end, right? You know, my mouth is what was trying to move, right? [Laughs] Because we definitely by then had something on our mind, you know? And we were trying to prove reputations. We were little boys, you know? Little men establish, as you know, little pecking orders, you know. Who's top dog, who's bottom dog, and who gets to eat first and pee first, and all that kind of stuff. The Lionel Tiger theory of the wolves, you know? And little boys are [0:34:00] like that. We were like that in the lane.

**Interviewer:** You know, he's coming to speak in Toronto on the 17th of May.

**Respondent:** Oh, he is?

**Interviewer:** And I am going. I took a course from him around 1957, '58 at McGill. So you brought his name up. Yes, yes. Yeah.

**Respondent:** Well he would have understood this conversation very well, and the use of the lanes was very much a reflection of that whole worldview, that way of thinking, that way of being, you know? Was very existential for us.

**Interviewer:** [0:34:30] And it was another...

**Respondent:** It was character-forming also. It was, you know, you'd get into a fight in the lane and that's where you learned that enough was enough, right? That, you know, he's crying, stop. Don't be brutal, don't – you know? You've got him in a headlock. That's enough. He can't do anymore. He's got you in a headlock, and that's enough. So you – and you don't pick on him because he's smaller than you, you know? Don't be a bully.

**Interviewer:** Or you do pick on him because [0:35:00] he's smaller. [Laughs]

**Respondent:** Exactly. Exactly.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Respondent:** So that's where the values got negotiated through your character, where you got a chance to practice the values. In fact, you might have been taught at home, you might have been taught at school, you might have been taught by older brothers in the street, but suddenly this was an arena. This was a real place, and you know?

**Interviewer:** And as you say, the parents weren't there as much.

**Respondent:** The parents weren't there as much.

**Interviewer:** So you had to learn a little self-regulating.

**Respondent:** Exactly. Exactly.

- Interviewer:** Yeah. [0:35:30] Important place of learning.
- Respondent:** Exactly. It was very, very important.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Extremely important. I think I wrote one of the anecdotes in an email about getting caught by my mother peeing up the side of a garage when she had this little ten-year-old.
- Interviewer:** So please tell me about that.
- Respondent:** Who can pee the highest off the wall. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** And your mother didn't appreciate that.
- Respondent:** When Elaine Steinberg, who was my – as I said, my nemesis and my neighbour who lived several doors [0:36:00] down – who was a snitch on me. She had really kind of lined me up, and it was her house, and I was doing the lights and stuff.
- Interviewer:** Right. I remember that.
- Respondent:** But Elaine didn't like me. She didn't trust me at all right? And she had her eye on me. "What's he up to?" And she happened to be passing. The lane that I lived – I lived on Major and...
- Interviewer:** Major near where?
- Respondent:** Where Susan Potts [0:36:30] now lives.
- Interviewer:** So just south of Harbord.
- Respondent:** Just south of Harbord across from the Harbord Bakery.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Were you at 162?
- Respondent:** 162.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so that's exactly – okay. Yes. I know who's in there.

**Respondent:** I lived in 162.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** So that's a T-lane. There's one going right across to Robert right behind the Harbord Bakery, and then there's the one that goes the length all the way down to College.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I lived on Robert Street for a lot of years.

**Respondent:** An, then you know that lane very well.

**Interviewer:** That was my lane.

**Respondent:** That was your lane.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** And that wasn't your lane; that was my lane. [Laughter] But **[0:37:00]** Elaine would pass – the girls would go through the short part of it. They wouldn't go the length down to College, but they would go to Robert coming from Lansdowne School. They'd go all the way down Robert, cross the lane to Major Street, and we were kind of in that junction, that T, right? With this garage. And all of us were there, five of us, I think. We had our little weenies out and we're peeing up the wall, and Elaine came by. Oh. **[0:37:30]** [Laughter] And ran straight to my house, and my mother was there and she said to my mother, "Norman's peeing in the lane with his friends. They have their pants down." [Laughter] And my mother came roaring out of the house and through the lane. We hadn't thought that Elaine would do that, right? [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** First she took a good look.

**Respondent:** She took a good look. She took a very good look. [Laughter] And had this – I remember the look on her face. She was just horrified. **[0:38:00]** [Laughter] Right? And anyway, my mother came through

the lane and we were in full motion, and I think I got sent to my room for a couple of days.

**Interviewer:** Oh, a long time.

**Respondent:** A bicycle was taken away. I remember that.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so your mother didn't see any humour in that at all.

**Respondent:** Oh no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** And of course, in your room.

**Respondent:** Of course it got reported to my father who, you know, [0:38:30] took me aside and said, "Really, you know better than that, don't you?" In his classic way. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And at that time, of course, bedrooms did not have all the toys that they have now, so...

**Respondent:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** I hope you had some books maybe. [Laughter] Yeah.

**Respondent:** No, no. I was just sent there, and "We've seen enough of you for a while." And...

**Interviewer:** So the back lanes, a lot of important things happened.

**Respondent:** A lot of important things, and a lot of [0:39:00] difficult things too. You know, it was a lot more corporal punishment of kids in those years than there is now, so it was a place where a father would take a whack at a boy, so we saw that. And one of my friends' fathers – a lot of the parents were really affected by what happened during the war, [0:39:30] and some of them might have been a bit emotionally out of balance as a result of their experience.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** You know? In many respects, you know? My good friend Zal Yanovsky, who went on to become the folk singer and was with the group that did, "Do You Believe in Magic?" the Lovin' Spoonful...

**Interviewer:** Oh my god...

**Respondent:** Yeah, Zally's from here. Zally's from here. He's passed away now. But Zully's [0:40:00] mother was really profoundly affected by the Holocaust, and she was very protective toward her son. She just – you know, she had lost so many members of her family, the idea of losing a child or a child being injured was just for her unbearable.

**Interviewer:** So...

**Respondent:** And she's always concerned that he wasn't eating enough. And she would come to the schoolyard then barter from the schoolyard because at recess, she would come with bagels and try to grab him through the fence and stuff bagels into [0:40:30] his mouth, and Zally would kind of run through the schoolyard trying to avoid the part of the fence where his mother was standing with food at ten-thirty in the morning, wanting to cram him, you know? And...

**Interviewer:** It's not funny, but it is funny.

**Respondent:** Yeah. So we had – and you know, one of my Japanese friends' fathers had been in the internment camps and stuff like that, and the Japanese were awfully attacked in the streets here. Not in this district because of course they couldn't live here until after the war, [0:41:00] but throughout the country. I mean, physically attacked. I mean the Germans who were here at least could blend and change their name from Schmidt to Smith, or Braun to Brown, and [indiscernible 0:41:12], and we don't know anything about German, but the Japanese couldn't, and they were quite visible. So some of them began to take up martial arts, the karates and the jujutsus and stuff like that in order to protect themselves, and [0:41:30] his father became one of those people. And periodically, the back porch of their house was padded because he used to practice, and it was padded all along the walls and all across the floor. And I arrived to their garden one day in the backyard and Kenny had done something that really enraged his father. And

**[0:42:00]** his father was throwing him off walls. In fact, we had done it together, so I should have got punished as well. It was the two of us. We got up to something.

**Interviewer:** They were throwing this kid against a – oh.

**Respondent:** And he was about ten at the time and he weighed, you know, nothing. And he started to bleed internally. And finally, the mother came in and had to throw water on the father. It was one of the most violent little incidents I've experienced. Unfortunately, as a result of that, **[0:42:30]** by the way, that friend who I just spoke of, himself, became a very violent person. And his life didn't go as it should.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Well that's what he grew up with and that's what he learned.

**Respondent:** Yeah. That's what he learned.

**Interviewer:** Oh, it's a very sad story.

**Respondent:** Yeah. So there were stories like that, you know? Yeah. Some of us did very well, and some of us really didn't.

**Interviewer:** **[0:43:00]** Well, you certainly did.

**Respondent:** Yes, I did.

**Interviewer:** Talking about the homes, you said you were sent to your room because of that terrible thing you had done in the lane. I wonder if we could move on to talking about the homes and who lived in the homes.

**Respondent:** Sure.

**Interviewer:** Your family had – there were seven children in your house, in your family.

**Respondent:** Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** So you were already nine people under your roof.

- Respondent:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** How many bedrooms, how many...
- Respondent:** Do you know, I have to revisit the house. I'm going to do it after you and I are [0:43:30] finished. Sue Potts has offered me a tour of the house because, you know, I can't fully remember.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** I know that I certainly never had a bedroom of my own. I shared it with my brother. But by the way, when I was there, my brother who's a half-brother – my mother was married twice and brought two children to the marriage. I'm the eldest of her second marriage, and my older brother, in fact, got married out of 162.
- Interviewer:** So [0:44:00] he was there for a long time.
- Respondent:** Oh, he was there for a long time. He's since passed away unfortunately, so you can't talk to him, but he would have another take as well. And an older sister as well lived there. She continues to live, but she's in a nursing home, and she was a jazz singer...
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent:** ...who belonged to a band of black musicians and mainly lived in this district, although not directly in the village, all of them. [0:44:30] Either Kensington – yeah, mostly in Kensington or to the west of Spadina around Baldwin and those streets. They all lived and were from there. But this band was a pretty good band, and my sister thought that she was Sarah Vaughan, or Carmen McRae, or someone. It was a jazz band.
- Interviewer:** Well she probably sang quite beautifully, I think.
- Respondent:** Yeah, she did. She did. She did. And in fact, one of the musicians who lived on College at Augusta just on the other side, the continue of Major was [0:45:00] a guy named Archie Alleyne, who has won the Order of Canada and is a great musician, one of Canada's best

jazz drummers, and he's still alive and active, and now teaches music and has a little non-governmental organization that supports the development of young black jazz musicians all over the city. Teaches at Humber College.

**Interviewer:** Wonderful stories. [0:45:30] So we've talked about – I think we've – can you talk a – you talked a little bit about it, but maybe a little more, about the dating that happened. You weren't right in the Village; you had just moved out, but the lanes a little bit. Any other thoughts about dating? How...

**Respondent:** Well you know, a lot of – we were a transition generation, very much so. [0:46:00] I mean, on the interracial dating side, interethnic dating side, this stuff was really just beginning in many respects. Although there were some earlier examples they were very rare. For example, over on Robert Street, just at the beginning of the lane, as you go from Harbord to Bloor, there was a woman who was an American Jewish woman named Mrs. Freeman, who was married to an African American, and their son – they have a [0:46:30] son and a daughter, Maxine and Bobby. Bobby was part of our United Nations gang, although, by the way, the black man – Mr. Freeman was not their biological father. Both children were white. So she had been married and divorced, and come to Canada with her two children. He was also an American, so I guess that they had had a relationship in the States, and it wasn't viable, and they came to Toronto. [0:47:00] So that was unusual for us. My family almost didn't know what to make of it, it was that unusual. My mother was kind of not sure what to make of Mrs. Freeman. The Jewish community for sure wasn't either. But there wasn't negative comment in my family. There was just kind of – they didn't know what it was, you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And [0:47:30] I think that that pushes it to be friends with each other, to help each other, but then to actually marry and create a family.

**Respondent:** Yeah. That was unusual at that stage.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** Then, we began to see some real shifts, you know? What were the intermarriages of that time that were kind of leading edge? They weren't black-white marriages, for sure. The leading edge marriages were Catholics and Protestants. [0:48:00] That was the first go-around because this city had been a city run by Orangemen from Northern Ireland, and until we in 1955 elected Nathan Phillips, which is another story – because that was really the – that was the victory of the Village. That was our political victory. That was as important to us as Barack Obama winning the presidency of the United States. And [0:48:30] because it was a defeat of the orange, and their anti-Catholicism, their anti-Semitism, their racism, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba, ba. My grandfather, by the way, was an Orangeman. Charlie Sharp was an Orangeman, so he had made a compromise with the older establishment. That's why they became a very prominent black family. They made an alliance with power. But my generation, who were Liberal, and my mother's generation in fact, [0:49:00] really my parents, challenged that. And they didn't like that alliance. They preferred new Liberals, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, free of that kind of discrimination because the Catholics were attacked all the time. And so the notion of Catholics and Protestants marrying each other was really objected to by the Catholic priests as well as [0:49:30] the Protestant ministers, so there were rumours that so and so was seeing so and so. "She's a Protestant. He's a Catholic."

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** And people would sweat about it. They were taken by their parents to confession, and priests would come to their house, and you know, you would hear all these stories. And then the next thing you began to hear was, "I would like to date him, but he's Jewish." [0:50:00] Hm. "Should I? Shouldn't I?" "Oh, I'd like to go out with her. No shiksas allowed." [Laughter] "Can't do it, you know? But maybe I'll see her." You know, because teenagers are driven by their hormones too, you know? So all of this kind of back-channel stuff began. There were Japanese here, [0:50:30] and there were Chinese. And as you know, during the war it was a great antagonism. Chinese and Japanese did not fraternize in this community. A guy named Spud Yuyama married Jimmy Wong's sister, and that was absolute – what happened.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** Right? And her father, by the [0:51:00] way, owned the famous Sai Woo restaurant in Chinatown. So they were a very prominent Chinese family, and here she had married this Japanese jockey, by the way, he became a jockey at Woodbine racetrack. And they all lived in this district. All of this with downtown roots. And people kept saying, you know, "Spud Yuyama and the Wong girl?" Right? If they can get married, anybody can. And that was one of the [0:51:30] really key door openings. And then of course, you've got black-white stuff, and the black kids and the Jewish kids hung around together a lot. A lot. A lot of the Jewish kids wanted to learn to dance like black kids, so they were – and by the way, because it was a transition area, you'd get kids coming from as far – his grandparents or parents had lived here, and they got up to Forest Hill and beyond, you know? And they would start to come back to dances here. [Laughter] [0:52:00] You know? So there was a little bit of hanky panky going on there as well. You know? I mean by the time I was in grade eleven I had a Jewish girlfriend for sure, if not two or three. [Laughter] And certainly Larry Greenstein, who became Larry Green, was certainly going out with a black girl, etcetera, etcetera. So there's a lot of teen stuff moving around, you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. The hormones, the chemistry...

**Respondent:** [0:52:30] The hormones, the chemistry.

**Interviewer:** And it was okay before then.

**Respondent:** And we liked each other.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** We shared a similar – we'd grown up together, first of all, right? We knew who each other were, and we could speak to each other in certain ways.

**Interviewer:** But when you were twenty-two, twenty-five, thinking of your life partner, the family, what did the family...

**Respondent:** Well very frankly at that younger age, we weren't that bad. And we started to think about that stuff [0:53:00] later.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** And usually under pressure to do it. Let's see. Is there a picture? Did I bring that picture? Hm.

**Interviewer:** How do you happen to have all these pictures here with you?

**Respondent:** That's...

**Interviewer:** That's?

**Respondent:** ...my high school girlfriend.

**Interviewer:** Oh. [Laughs]

**Respondent:** Now, right? Now that's her. She's fabulous.

**Interviewer:** [0:53:30] Yeah.

**Respondent:** And she grew up here.

**Interviewer:** And you've kept – did you lose forty years in between?

**Respondent:** Oh yeah. Oh heavens, yes. Oh heavens, yes. Oh heavens, yes. Families later. Grandchildren later.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** And we're still friends.

**Interviewer:** She is lovely.

**Respondent:** She is lovely. She's completely crazy, and she became a concert pianist.

- Interviewer:** What's her instrument?
- Respondent:** Piano.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Oh, pianist you said. Sorry. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Very nice.
- Respondent:** She lives in Vancouver, by the way. **[0:54:00]** And yeah. So yeah, we all related to each other.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** And there were all sorts of stories. And you know, there's a retirement club, which I may have mentioned in one of my emails of a lot of the men who grew up here. It's called Club 65, and it meets annually just over here, next to Knox Church. And I come here whenever I'm in the country. It's October I go to the event, and it's full of black and Jewish men, mainly. **[0:54:30]** Although, although some of them aren't Jewish. Some of them are – Frank McNulty I guess is Irish Catholic originally, and Teddy Schmidt is, I guess, an ex-German priest.
- Interviewer:** You have to be sixty-five to be allowed in?
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. You have to be sixty-five to get in. It really is the retirement club, and...
- Interviewer:** And they meet every year.
- Respondent:** And every year they say, "We should invite the women," and everybody says, "Yeah, that's a good idea," but they never do. [Laughter] So it's very much the male bond. You want to talk about the lane, **[0:55:00]** right? The lane...
- Interviewer:** Right. Yeah.

**Respondent:** ...continues.

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

**Respondent:** And they'd kibbutz and they'd rub each other, and if you were there, you just wouldn't want to – I mean it's not a good place for outsiders who don't know these people to be because you'd swear we were all racists. The name calling is terrible, you know? "What are you Yids up to these days?" "I don't know. I don't know. We were talking to some Schwartz's down the street." You know? [Laughter] So all of this stuff comes back, you know, because we did. We called each other terrible names **[0:55:30]** in our bonding with each other because we had a sense of commonality, and that's still there. That love is still there, and I'm very proud of that group, by the way. Every time I see them together I almost cry.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. It sounds very special.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** There's a guy who's a Huron Indian in the group because remember there were Native people in the Village as well who speaks Yiddish perfectly.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent:** Bobby Opperman, right? And...

**Interviewer:** And he learned Yiddish.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** **[0:56:00]** Any kind of...

**Respondent:** And by the way, he Yiddishized his name. His name was originally Otraman. He changed it to Opperman.

**Interviewer:** It's Yiddish. [Laughter]

**Respondent:** So some very strange things happened with identity. Identity became a very special game here, and you know, some of the Jews wanted to Anglicize their names because they didn't want to be discriminated against because their name sounded too Jewish, and you know, I tease my friend Toby who, once a Goldenberg is now [0:56:30] a Dent. I tease him and I say, "Where did you ever get such a goyishe name?" [Laughter] He says to me, "Well, you know, he was Jewish." You know, she's divorced. "You know, he was Jewish, but I think I probably chose him." And I said, "And you didn't change your name back after you divorced?" She said, "No, no, no. You know, you get a lot of mileage out of Dent." [Laughter] Right? Especially in Vancouver. She says, "It's full of English." So.

**Interviewer:** There are a few other places I would love to talk about. The relationship [0:57:00] between this, our Village, and Kensington Market.

**Respondent:** Oh yes. Oh yes. North of College – the east-west axes were very important in terms of social boundary and people's perceptions. First of all, there's a little class perception. People, as you move further north in the city – I always thought they [0:57:30] were a little better off than people who'd been further south. And it wasn't without reason. I mean it was a port city, after all, and you know, people wanted to get away from the port. So the Market, in terms of a residential area as opposed to the Market proper, was perceived as a little older, a little poorer that we perceived that we were a little better off, and we perceived [0:58:00] the people who lived north of Bloor a little better off than us.

**Interviewer:** And I think they were.

**Respondent:** And they probably were.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** But not by great degrees, and in hindsight, you know? Our families tended to live in that area as well, so I had relatives there, but certainly from the point of view of our ethnic communities, a lot of Jewish [0:58:30] kids who I knew, their grandparents lived in

Kensington, and the parents had moved up one notch only to move again, by the way, at the end of the '50s to the famous **[indiscernible 0:58:43]** of the Jewish community up Bathurst, you know? But there was an intermediate jump in generationality, and we underwent that as well, except my grandparents were always here. So I'm from old established Village, **[0:59:00]** you know? But many of my friends lived in that area, and we were close. We went to the same community centres. We played sports together. They had another community centre there called University Settlement House and St. Christopher House. There were two of them. And those were great social places when you talk about **[0:59:30]** all this hanky panky dating that was going on, it was going on down there.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. And that was in the Market? Or close to the Market?

**Respondent:** It was just on the edge of the Market. Yeah. When I say the edge, I mean two streets – one street, right? I'm not talking about very far.

**Interviewer:** And in terms of shopping and – where would your family have done its main shopping for food?

**Respondent:** The bulk of it was done at **[1:00:00]** Kensington Market. We had some small stores around, small **[indiscernible 01:00:05]** going with Montreal words.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Little corner stores.

**Respondent:** Corner stores. Yeah. We would go as far as Bloor Street for shopping. There were a couple of stores up there, but mainly Kensington. Mainly Kensington. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And **[1:00:30]** anything – excuse me – about the use of streets and traffic?

**Respondent:** Hm. Do you know, Harbord Street of course had streetcars, and I still think of Harbord as having streetcars. Every time I come along this street, I keep looking for the streetcars.

**Interviewer:** So there were tracks on Harbord?

**Respondent:** There were tracks on Harbord. Oh, heavens yes. Heavens, yes. And in fact, I lost a dog, [1:01:00] one of my dogs when I was a kid, maybe ten, ran out and got hit by a streetcar at Major and Harbord. Yeah. And I had crossed the street, and the dog ran out to follow me and I had walked into Eisencraft's Cigar Store, which was on the corner of Harbord and – I think it was Eisencraft, or was it Eisen? Eisen-something. They were a lovely couple. I can still see their face. And I just kind of walked through the door, and I heard the streetcar coming [1:01:30] and I hear this screech of the streetcar and my dog is lying in the street. It was just terrible. For a kid it was just completely traumatizing.

**Interviewer:** And I'm sure you can see it as if it just happened two seconds ago.

**Respondent:** Yeah, I can. I can.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Respondent:** I want to just for a moment talk about two characters who lived here who were very special. You know, people always talk about Sam Shopsowitz and Kensington, and he was a great hotdog maker, no question about it. He became world-famous, [1:02:00] and you know, a big star of my high school and, you know, he was of a previous generation. He was older, of course. So everybody knew what Shopsy's – Sam Shopsowitz. Although he wasn't as franchised as he became, of course, but he was certainly the hotdog king of Kensington, and...

**Interviewer:** Where was his store at that time?

**Respondent:** Spadina and Dundas.

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

**Respondent:** But we had our own. A guy named Colman Greenspan who lived on Brunswick. [1:02:30] And Colman Greenspan was a great hotdog maker, and I have to find out more about what happened to Colman Greenspan because he was a neighbourhood hero. He was a folk hero.

- Interviewer:** Where did he have – did he have a storefront?
- Respondent:** Yeah, he did, and I'm trying to remember where it was. Maybe on College, I guess. Near the Mars, which of course was a great institute.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And it's still there. Right. Okay. So he was the hotdog guy.
- Respondent:** He was the hotdog guy, and [1:03:00] made great hotdogs. Colman Greenspan hotdogs. And we were so proud of them, you know? These – you know? Forget Sam Shopsy. Forget him, you know?
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] You want a good hotdog...
- Respondent:** You want a good hotdog...
- Interviewer:** ...go to Coleman. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** I mean people have very strong opinions here about hotdogs and wurst and stuff, you know? And bagels, as in Montreal.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah, oh yeah. They would have competitions sometimes, who has the best.
- Respondent:** Between Toronto and Montreal even, I mean the [indiscernible 01:03:28] Bakery, what can I say? [1:03:30] That has the best bagel in the country. But anyway, we had very strong opinions and – about the quality of our deli.
- Interviewer:** So when you said two people...
- Respondent:** And then the other one I haven't mentioned yet, and I'm still putting my mind around him, and his name was Whitey Kaproff. Whitey Kaproff owned – he's a mechanic, and a Russian Jew with his family. David was my age, and he had two daughters, [1:04:00] Olga and – what was the other one's name? I can't remember. And they lived on Brunswick just north of Bloor, but his garage was on the corner of Harbord and Major, right behind our house. 162 was a

lane, and then the next building right across. Right in our backyard across [1:04:30] the lane.

**Interviewer:** Oh, there was a garage there.

**Respondent:** There was a garage there.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Because now there's a garage at Harbord and Major, but it's on the northeast corner.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Oh.

**Respondent:** And this is Whitey Kaproff's garage. And Whitey Kaproff was an amazing character. He could rip any engine apart, but he had a hobby, and the hobby was he built race cars. Those little midget race cars. And to my knowledge, he was the first Jewish driver on the speedways around here. And of course, [1:05:00] little kids – we were really wired to the whole idea of speed, you know? And Whitey Kaproff had these cars, these racing cars that he had built, and we used to go over and just kind of watch this, and you know. His son David wasn't much interested, but I sure as hell was, right? And Whitey would be down there ripping engines apart, and on the weekend he would go out and he would race, you know, at very high speeds around these oval tracks, kind of like Indy car stuff of today.

**Interviewer:** So this was in the '40s.

**Respondent:** [1:05:30] Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Early '50s.

**Respondent:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** Oh, I never heard about this man at all.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Whitey Kaproff. What a character. But David, I understand – I haven't seen David and I'm hoping I run into somebody who has a

connection to him, but the last I heard, that David had become a guru and he was in doing ashrams in India, and become a man of peace, and had been so for many years, and...

**Interviewer:** And his father was racing at full tilt.

**Respondent:** And he's a Buddha. He's a Buddha, you know?

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That apple did not fall too close to that tree.

**Respondent:** [1:06:00] Wow. Wow. When I was told that story, I was kind of shocked, you know? But David was never that interested in his father's stuff. I can remember saying to him, you know, you know, "Can you get your father to take us to the track? I'd love to da, da, da." You know? A lot of kids weren't that proud of their fathers at that point. We had a very interesting period in which – I'm not sure what it was, whether it was a post-war transition, or [1:06:30] a break, or you know? A lot of the fathers were very internally focused maybe because of what they had been through in the Depression in the war, and war out there with their sons, you know? They're too busy working, you know? And they didn't talk much. I mean I look at my son now, and how he is with his children, or even how I was compared to my father, you know? Men have become more vocal each generation in parenting, and things have changed.

**Interviewer:** And more hands-on.

**Respondent:** And more [1:07:00] hands-on. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent:** More affectionate. But what a stunning character he was, and I wish I had photos of those cars and everything. And I'm sure that one of the Kaproff's must, so...

- Interviewer:** Any other characters in the neighbourhood? I haven't heard at all about these people.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. We had all kinds of putzes in this neighbourhood.  
[Laughs]
- Interviewer:** But those really stand out for you.
- Respondent:** For me right now, you know? And as [1:07:30] I think about them, there were prostitutes in the neighbourhood, so we had that going on as well. No big houses, but a couple of women who were kind of into that a little bit.
- Interviewer:** They lived in the neighbourhood...
- Respondent:** They lived here and they serviced the neighbourhood as well, and you know. One of the Native women, you know, was...
- Interviewer:** There's a woman who walks on the street now that Sue Potts pointed out to me where she used to work. [Laughs] [1:08:00] Because I was asking about cottage industry. Two things I ask about – one is cottage industry, people working at home, and did the mothers work? Did the women work? So that's how I learned....
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. But the Home Laundry was very big.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** Don't ever underestimate how many people worked in that Home Laundry. That was quite big.
- Interviewer:** You're saying that that's one place? Or people had home laundries?
- Respondent:** No, no. That's one place. It was a factory.
- Interviewer:** Oh, where was that?
- Respondent:** At the corner right here. Brunswick [1:08:30] and between Borden and Brunswick on the north side.

**Interviewer:** So there's a Laundromat there.

**Respondent:** Now there is, I guess, but it was a big – a three-storey laundry called Home Laundry, and they would take – they were taking laundry from small places, laundries all over town, but this was the factory. This is where it was all being done and then being sent back to the distributors. This was the wholesaler. [1:09:00] And there must have been, I would say, forty to fifty women who worked in there every day.

**Interviewer:** Whoa.

**Respondent:** But it wasn't...

**Interviewer:** It was a big industry.

**Respondent:** Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And come back to the prostitutes. Did you – what were – as children did you know about them?

**Respondent:** Sure.

**Interviewer:** And what was your reaction? What did your parents say about them?

**Respondent:** Where we [1:09:30] had to be careful – and I'll tell you in terms of the Native woman I just mentioned – her brother was in our gang. The parents were gone, she was supporting her brother who was our age, an age-mate, and they were from Saskatchewan and she had moved here first, and then brought her young brother. And when she was working, sometimes he would have to come to my house.

**Interviewer:** [1:10:00] Oh.

**Respondent:** You know? He became an angry kid, needless to say.

**Interviewer:** So he didn't have parents, and his sister...

- Respondent:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** ...had to use her body to support them.
- Respondent:** Exactly. And by the time we were – and he was a big kid. And by the time we were teenagers, he beat somebody up so badly that he ended up going to reform school. Happily, I heard years later that he had become an RCMP officer and was back [1:10:30] in Saskatchewan counselling kids.
- Interviewer:** Beautiful story. Beautiful.
- Respondent:** Yeah. So he made it.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Are you familiar with...
- Respondent:** I suspected he would.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. The book, "Manchild in the Promised Land" by Claude Brown – is that his name?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Sounds similar.
- Respondent:** It's very similar.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I just remember that one person took interest in him in some – wherever he had been institutionalized for bad behaviour.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** [1:11:00] And when he wrote the book he was a lawyer, but he could have been dead or incarcerated.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Yeah, I mean we had some tragedies in the neighbourhood. Some of them worked out well, some of them didn't. You know, right across from you on Borden, just on the other side of the street, lived the Belfon family, and I think I mentioned in

one of the emails that the young Garfield was shot to death by the police. The [1:11:30] father was the community barber. The barbershop was between Lippincott and Bathurst on this side. And he had two brothers and two sisters, so there were five children in that family. And it impacted them all tremendously. The – each [1:12:00] of them had kind of a different reaction. The parents died – the mother died soon after. She was just heartbroken by the loss of that child, and the father was never the same either. I mean it really impacted them. But I was in Rome a number of years ago, and I had heard – I'd been curious what happened to the boys, you know? And one of them – somebody said to me once that one of them – and it [1:12:30] didn't surprise me when they said it – had become a black Muslim. And was so angry toward white people, he didn't talk to white people. And the policeman was white. And I said, "Well, somehow I'm not surprised." You know, it didn't shock me. About ten years ago – no, fifteen years ago, I was walking down the Benevento in Rome and I was posted in Rome, and [1:13:00] I'm walking down the straight, the main straight, and a couple are coming toward me and the woman is white and the man is black, and I vaguely notice – but I was very preoccupied with my work and something else, and I get two steps beyond and I hear this voice saying, "Norman. Norman Cook." And I turn around and it's the man speaking to me and I don't recognize him at all, and he says, "I'm John Belfon. [1:13:30] Do you remember me?" And I said, "John, how are you?" You know, he introduces me to his wife who's white, and you know, we agreed to meet that evening. I'm on my way to a meeting, but they're touring Rome and I'm going to go to their hotel and meet them. And so I arrive at the hotel and he tells me that he's going to have dinner with me alone because his wife is, you know, otherwise occupied or something. [1:14:00] We sit down and explains to me that he's converted to Judaism, that this is his new wife, that he underwent a bris...

**Interviewer:** Oh my god.

**Respondent:** ...at surely close to forty years of age.

**Interviewer:** Oh my god.

- Respondent:** And I kind of look at him, you know, try not to faint. [Laughter] Right?
- Interviewer:** Woo.
- Respondent:** And that he'd met her in New York, and that he's an artist, and that his brother is no longer a black Muslim, but he's come to his senses [1:14:30], and now he's some kind of Buddhist or something. Man of peace. And he wanted to talk about his brother, which we did, and his family, and yeah. And he lives in Toronto, by the way, and he should be spoken to. He's a very Orthodox Jewish person, so you can't speak to him on Fridays. [Laughter] He's nothing like a convert.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent:** I mean he's really...
- Interviewer:** Oh. So I'd like to write his name down.
- Respondent:** So he came across the street from you.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so he's [1:15:00] in – if I just look him up and call information...
- Respondent:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** So please tell me his name again.
- Respondent:** B-E-L-F-O-N. Belfon.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. And first name?
- Respondent:** John.
- Interviewer:** John. And he lived on Borden.
- Respondent:** And he has a brother named Joe, so if you can't find John Belfon, look for Joe Belfon.
- Interviewer:** Oh, thank you.

- Respondent:** Now neither of the sisters live in the city from what I can gather. They both married Americans and moved away.
- Interviewer:** Okay. B-E-L-F-O-N. Thank you very much. [1:15:30] So that tragedy, that was a horrible tragedy. Injustice.
- Respondent:** Oh, it was horrible. But I think I mentioned in my email that when I recontacted Jerry Shuman, who's now a judge, you know, the first thing Jerry said to me, "Oh, how are you?" And I said, "Fine, you know? Thinking about the old community." He says, "Yeah, me too. I'm really happy you contacted me." We started chatting and he said, "You know, isn't that terrible about the Belfon business?" And I said, "You remember that, Jerry?" And he said, "Yeah." And I said, [1:16:00] "We were awfully young."
- Interviewer:** But some of these things are so powerful. They are just imprinted permanently because they're so – whether it's good, bad, whatever. Sometimes they're so strong.
- Respondent:** So strong. So strong. And yeah, it was a coming of age shock for all of us, you know? It was – I at the time probably was twelve when that happened, you know? And...
- Interviewer:** Well, and I'm glad that the brother had...
- Respondent:** I have been at that house before [1:16:30] and the evening before, playing with one of the younger Belfon boys, and I had left my bike there, and I never went back and got it. Which my mother always reminded me. She always said, "Aren't you going to go back and get your bike," and I didn't want to go. I couldn't go.
- Interviewer:** Too much pain in that place.
- Respondent:** This is the first time I've been back to Borden Street since that day.
- Interviewer:** Oh. So it – so it was very clear to you, that memory had come back.
- Respondent:** [1:17:00] Sure.

- Interviewer:** And the power of that.
- Respondent:** As I parked my car and walked across. It just flooded, that memory.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So they're pretty much right across the street?
- Respondent:** Yeah. There was a very large – there were a whole series of other families who lived on the other side of that street and up and down here. There were a lot of black people who lived in this block. The Wrights, the Belfons, the Escos. Oh heavens. Probably at least seven or eight [1:17:30] families, if not ten. Just in this block, first block.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Well I certainly hope that I'll be able to find John or his brother. Yeah. I'll look for them. Yeah.
- Respondent:** And if you don't, let me know because in October, chances are that Joe will be at the Club 65 reunion. John doesn't come because they're always held on a Friday night visiting shul.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] [1:18:00] Okay. That's fabulous. The University of Toronto, any thoughts about how it interacts or influences, or has impacted or impacts our neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Well first of all, it did a bunch of things, and I can let – tell you that when we were in secondary school over at Harbord Collegiate, that we had a lot of PhDs teaching [1:18:30] us. It was full of PhDs. Our principal was a PhD, our French teacher was a PhD, or history teacher was a PhD, so in some important way, the proximity meant that probably people who might have had spouses teaching at the university, or had some significant relationship with the University of Toronto also were teaching at our secondary school.
- Interviewer:** Whoa.
- Respondent:** So that was very important to us. [1:19:00] And we were an upwardly mobile community. I mean, I later heard about high schools where kids were not proud of standing first. Not here. Our schools led the province in scholarships in those years.

- Interviewer:** Harbord Collegiate in particular.
- Respondent:** Harbord Collegiate in particular. But you know, the other schools were feeder schools. We didn't come from nowhere to go to Harbord.
- Interviewer:** Well, you came from the feeder schools and you came from those families.
- Respondent:** [1:19:30] And those families. Yeah. And those families who were on the make. And their kids were on the make. And our youth culture became a youth culture of on the make. You didn't want to stand at the bottom of the class. There was no status in that at all. You better be good. You know? And there were a bunch of names you could be [1:20:00] called for not, you know?
- Interviewer:** So you didn't take pride in being a lousy student.
- Respondent:** You never took pride here in being a lousy student. In fact, you didn't take pride here in being lousy at anything, right? We had swagger.
- Interviewer:** What's that?
- Respondent:** You know.
- Interviewer:** Oh, swagger. [Laughs] Yeah. Okay.
- Respondent:** We had swagger. There was – and that remained. I mean you can still tell the kids in the area still have a swagger, and I see enough of them to see, you know? They're a little...
- Interviewer:** Well, there's some pride in what...
- Respondent:** There's pride.
- Interviewer:** We have [1:20:30] some goals.
- Respondent:** Yes, we have goals.

- Interviewer:** We have some integrity, and we're – you know? We hope to go there.
- Respondent:** Exactly. I mean at that young age, we obviously hadn't formulated our plans for a long-term in our families, and what we would impart to our grandchildren as we are and all of this kind of heritage stuff. You just didn't want to be the stupid one, right? You didn't want to seem to be a stupid.
- Interviewer:** But you're right. It does depend on your cohort because for some [1:21:00] of them, you take – you could take great pride in dropping out or being tough, but not here.
- Respondent:** Not here, no.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** No, that was not on. And you know, if you were a boy, you wouldn't get the girls by playing stupid. Not here. You know? And the girls were smart as well, you know? They were on the move, they were trying to do things, and they were respected for it, right?
- Interviewer:** [1:21:30] Although, in terms of education, because you and I are very much – very close in age, the expectations for girls and boys were different.
- Respondent:** They were different. They were clearly different.
- Interviewer:** I mean I look at my own family, my brother became a doctor, my sister – I became a teacher then a social worker.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And my sister's a physiotherapist. But my brother became the doctor. So we had an education, but...
- Respondent:** Well that was true here as well.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.

- Respondent:** I think that very few girls [1:22:00] of my time, of my generation from here out-achieved their own brothers.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** But maybe the younger brothers in many cases.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Many of the parents didn't believe that you should make the same investment in education for the girls as you made for the boys, because after all, they're going to get married anyway. Better to make a good marriage than a good education.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. So that was partly generation.
- Respondent:** Partly generation.
- Interviewer:** It's no longer the situation right now.
- Respondent:** No. But relatively speaking, relatively, relative to the rest of the [1:22:30] population, I think even our girls out-achieved the girls from approximate districts who were not part of that whole minority energy push, of which, by the way, we had several groups living here who were really, really on the make. The Jewish community was on the make for sure. The Japanese community was on the make. The black community was on the make. There was, you know – go get it, you know? We were on the edge of civil rights, right? [1:23:00] So the pressure was there, and you know what I mean? Civil rights didn't start the day that Martin Luther King opened his mouth for the first time. It really began before that, and it began here as well as in the United States, and when I talked to a porch education by the elders, you know, I mean part of what we were being educated to was ambition and changing the world. And we did as a generation.
- Interviewer:** I lived [1:23:30] in Palo Alto where Stanford is from 1964 to '68, and I was very connected with all these movements and making the world a better place.

- Respondent:** The chairman of the Department of Psychology at Stanford was one of these kids from here.
- Interviewer:** Oh. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** Lee Ross.
- Interviewer:** I worked in the Department of Psychiatry at Stanford. Yeah, yeah. But we were going to make the world a better place. We worked towards that, yeah.
- Respondent:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** [1:24:00] So those were very, very strong, strong, strong impulses.
- Interviewer:** I think I'm going to end with just one more question.
- Respondent:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** I've taken up a lot of your time.
- Respondent:** No, it's fine.
- Interviewer:** How safe...
- Respondent:** I'm delighted to do this.
- Interviewer:** Well, I appreciate it, and I'm enjoying listening to you and learning from you. How safe the neighbourhood was when you were growing up here.
- Respondent:** Relatively [1:24:30] speaking, quite safe in the boundaries that you're speaking of. Where it got a bit dangerous was as you got a bit closer to Spadina and Dundas. It's a little more dangerous. Parkdale was dangerous for us. I don't recall any – there was [1:25:00] a murder that occurred, I think in the house of Sue Potts's friend, who I haven't met, named Janice Dembo, and what that was...

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** ...was a family who were poor, in which the father used to beat the mother, and the son killed the father for beating the mother. And when he turned sixteen he was of age or something like that.

**Interviewer:** What is that story?

**Respondent:** [1:25:30] The father also kept a gun in the house. He was a hunter, and he was – the man who was killed who beat his wife was very disliked in the neighbourhood. We always considered if we had a real anti-Semite in the neighbourhood, it was him. The older Jewish member, they hated him. And he apparently got in the street one day, screaming anti-Semitic stuff. [1:26:00] His kids were bullies as well in the street. I had had a fight with both of them. I beat up both of them at one point.

**Interviewer:** Good for you. [Laughs]

**Respondent:** Well I, you know, beat up the younger one who [indiscernible 01:26:15] on his older brother, so I beat him up too, but they were kind of crazy, you know? They would fight with broken bottles and, I mean, they were a very dangerous family.

**Interviewer:** So the whole family was wrecked by this man.

**Respondent:** Yes, exactly.

**Interviewer:** By the [1:26:30] father.

**Respondent:** Yeah. And he had been a miner in Northern Ontario and he had come down. He was also drunk, and when he beat his wife up he was usually drunk.

**Interviewer:** So it was just a whole disaster, that whole family.

**Respondent:** It was a disaster, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

- Respondent:** Completely dysfunctional.
- Interviewer:** So he was horrible for...
- Respondent:** By the time his son killed him, I had already moved. I was already over on Clinton Street and I heard this story.
- Interviewer:** But generally speaking, that's a very specific horrible situation.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Generally speaking, do you think it was quite a [1:27:00] safe neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** It was fairly safe. Yeah, yeah. It was fairly safe.
- Interviewer:** Let me understand. You were living on Major.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** But your grandfather or great-grandparents had property on Lippincott?
- Respondent:** On Lippincott, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So just help me understand that. So they bought a few homes on Lippincott, and those were torn down to make the field for Central Tech.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. [1:27:30] That's one of them.
- Interviewer:** Oh, what a beautiful home. Is that gorgeous? So that was on Lippincott and torn down.
- Respondent:** Yup. And they had about three of them like that. This is, I think, the same house. Unfortunately, I don't have pictures of all of them. That was...
- Interviewer:** But is that a beautiful place? Look at all the gorgeous work.

- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god. Can you see who's in these pictures, or is it too small?
- Respondent:** I think that those are [1:28:00] my aunts.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** Those are aunts. And maybe my great-grandmother and her three daughters.
- Interviewer:** Ah. So this would have been bought by the city in order to raze it to the ground in order to build Central Tech's grounds. I see. What a beautiful place. Oh.
- Respondent:** I'll show you the back. You talked about the back.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And you never lived on Lippincott. You always lived...
- Respondent:** Well I did for a year.
- Interviewer:** You did.
- Respondent:** [1:28:30] Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh, when the – that's – yeah, right.
- Respondent:** And that's my grandmother.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** When I talked about the back porches and the work that went on out there, that's my grandmother.
- Interviewer:** Whoa.
- Respondent:** Right? And she's got her full-length apron on, and she's, you know, in the back of the house, and you know, she looks like a cook, you know? That's the back of one of these houses.

- Interviewer:** A very beautiful woman.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Well this was her as [1:29:00] a young woman.
- Interviewer:** Oh wow. Well I'm going to take pictures of your pictures of these.
- Respondent:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** Whoa, is she ever gorgeous. And...
- Respondent:** That's my great-grandfather. You can't see, but...
- Interviewer:** Now would this be the same person...
- Respondent:** No. Yes, yes, yes.
- Interviewer:** That's the same person.
- Respondent:** Yes, yes.
- Interviewer:** Now you have all [1:29:30] these fabulous pictures. Well, as I said, I'm going to photograph these pictures, but I'd like – when I take the pictures, I want you to identify who's in them.
- Respondent:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So maybe I'll just...
- Respondent:** Yeah, this is one of their daughters. That's my mother's older sister. She's since passed away, of course.
- Interviewer:** Another beautiful woman.
- Respondent:** Oh, here is also – that's Lippincott Street in the [1:30:00] back.
- Interviewer:** And who's this?
- Respondent:** This is one of my grandfather's sisters. My Aunt Dorothy. We called her Auntie Dot. And this was her – she married very late. Very late.

And she finally caught a husband who was an old bachelor from Florida who we called Uncle Tom. [Laughter] And he was a great storyteller.

**Interviewer:** Whoa. Is this ever – look at that fabulous dress she's wearing.

**Respondent:** Very – you can see the southern influence. That was [1:30:30] – he probably said, "Oh, darlin'." You know? That's petillant ball stuff, you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Very beautiful. You don't have a date on it. Too bad.

**Respondent:** No.

**Interviewer:** Anyway, we can kind of guess at dates. Okay.

**Respondent:** Now that's my great-grandfather.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So what I'm going to do is just turn this off now because we're going to just...

**Respondent:** Sure.

**Interviewer:** ...enjoy the – I'm going to enjoy the pictures though. I want to say thank you. I'm going to speak to you about the pictures, and take [1:31:00] pictures of them.

**Respondent:** Sure.

**Interviewer:** But before I turn it off, I just want to say a huge thank you. It's been...

**Respondent:** You're more than welcome.

**Interviewer:** ...informative, entertaining, and a pleasure to meet you.

**Respondent:** It's our common heritage.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. [Laughs] Yeah. Thank you very, very much.

**Respondent:** You know? I don't own it. I'm just a custodian. [Laughter]

**[01:31:16]**

[End of recording]