

058 Paulo Fernandes

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

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: I want to thank you, Paulo Fernandes, for agreeing to meet with me. You're another person from that little group on Major Street, and I've already met Bob Whyte and his wife, and I've meet Mutt, and now you brought me pictures of the lane in that neighbourhood, and children on the street in that neighbourhood. So thank you very much.

Respondent: Oh, thank you for having me.

Interviewer: I'd like you to start [0:00:30] by telling me the years that you lived in the neighbourhood. I know you started on Sussex and then you moved to Major.

Respondent: That's right.

Interviewer: So you came from Portugal and you moved to Sussex. What year was that?

Respondent: That must have been early '70s, probably '70, '71. I know it was – I guess my mom's family's – her sisters were all moving over from Portugal to Canada, so I think there was maybe two or three of us families [0:01:00] living on Sussex.

Interviewer: In one house?

Respondent: In one house. And I guess it was a home base where everyone kind of came in, got familiar with the neighbourhood, and then from there everyone bought their own place in the neighbourhood.

Interviewer: Right. And where was it on Sussex?

Respondent: It was on the north side between Major Street and Robert Street.

Interviewer: And who lived there? At the time that you remember the best, who was living there? How many of there were you, and who...

Respondent: Oh jeez. There was [0:01:30] probably anywhere between eight to twelve people, so two to three families. Three, I guess, at most at one time were three families, about yeah. Six little rug rats.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: How many bathrooms?

Respondent: As far as I can remember, one. Yeah. [Laughs]

Interviewer: And how many kitchens?

Respondent: At the time I can remember it was one as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. It was weird back then because one thing I do remember back then is, like, every room was either rented out, or there was a family living in there. [0:02:00] It was very different than nowadays where everybody wants open concept. You wouldn't find that back then because every little square inch being used by someone, for sure.

Interviewer: And when you say every square inch, I'm sure you mean that a lot of the bedrooms had two people or three people in them.

Respondent: Oh absolutely. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Was there any space where people could hang out together that wasn't a bedroom?

Respondent: I think where people hung out, from what I can recall, is the kitchen pretty well. [0:02:30] That's where most of us hung out.

Interviewer: Yeah.

- Respondent:** It was the meeting place.
- Interviewer:** So all the other rooms had a bed and a dresser in there.
- Respondent:** Pretty well. Pretty well, yeah. There was no living room. It was a bedroom.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Exactly.
- Interviewer:** That is a wonderful picture. I could just picture. Yeah, yeah. And the bathroom must have been quite a joke at times.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah, absolutely. Absolutely. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** It sure was.
- Interviewer:** Your relatives came before you. You have any idea what brought them here to this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** **[0:03:00]** You know what? I think it may have had – well at the time there were – I mean it was a predominately Jewish and Portuguese neighbourhood back then. So I'm assuming that there were – you know, this is where they can come and speak their native language without – and assimilating at the same time without, you know, really going somewhere, having to learn a different language right off the bat, so I think that's why they all moved over here.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And you came here in 19?
- Respondent:** '70, '71. **[0:03:30]** Towards the end of '71, I believe.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And you were...
- Respondent:** Just about a year old. Yeah.

- Interviewer:** And you lived on Sussex for a few years?
- Respondent:** I would say maybe even six months. Six months to a year.
- Interviewer:** And then your parents bought their home.
- Respondent:** And then they bought their home here.
- Interviewer:** At what address?
- Respondent:** At 104 Major Street.
- Interviewer:** Who were some of the neighbours that you remember there?
- Respondent:** Oh, I mean my fondest memories, obviously, of Mort Greenberg. [Laughter] Because he was, like, he was my dad. He was my everything to me. Best friend. He really took care of us.
- Interviewer:** And in what ways?
- Respondent:** Well, you know, [0:04:00] Mort was a CBC sports cameraman, so he always made sure we were involved with sports. You know, keep us out of trouble, right? Involved with sports, tried to get us to do things. He'd always meet these famous hockey players after his interviews, and they'd donate sticks to him and he'd give the sticks to us. I mean – and when people found out that we were actually playing street hockey with these, you know, sticks that were probably worth something [laughter], like what are you guys doing, cutting them down [0:04:30] to size? Like [laughter], but you know what? Our parents couldn't afford any hockey equipment or anything like that, so he was great. He was fantastic. Anyway, he was born on 98 Major Street, he's still there today.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** He's just an amazing – I mean he's got so many amazing stories to tell.
- Interviewer:** Can you recall while we're still talking about him...

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: I mean you mentioned before I turned this on, something about summer.

Respondent: Summer. Well [0:05:00] yeah. Mort would always travel to Vienna, Austria to – I mean he is definitely an opera fanatic, and so he'd be there every summer and he was just so good to us. I mean he would leave us the key to the house, and his house was our playground. He set up – I mean his basement, we set up ping-pong tables down there, we played hockey down there, we pretty well did everything. [Laughter] And even to this day, you know, you don't even – you can just knock on the door and walk in, and there's [0:05:30] Mort, calling, "Come on in."

Interviewer: Yeah. I've been there three times because I've had to go back for different reasons, and that's exactly what happens. Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. Amazing. And you know, he tells me stories. I remember him telling me stories that my dad's house was actually the corner store, if you will, of the neighbourhood. The front door was located – which is located now on the south side of the house was located on the north side of the house. He would tell me stories of, you know, how all the backyards were pretty well chicken coops, [0:06:00] everyone had chickens. You know, he still remembers the roads weren't paved. It's amazing. It's really pretty neat.

Interviewer: And that's quite remarkable that he would go away for the summer and give the key to all these kids.

Respondent: Oh yeah. And there – back then there was a whole bunch of us kids. There really was a lot of us. Tommy, Tommy De Medeiros lived at 100, so he was the eldest of all of us, so he was – he, you know, Morton knew that Tommy had us all [0:06:30] under control, and...

Interviewer: Hopefully.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. It was great. [Laughter] Yeah. Amazing memories.

Interviewer: Well with your permission, I would love to have him hear this piece of the interview.

Respondent: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Because he never told me how wonderful he was to you.

Respondent: Oh he was. He was so wonderful to all of us. Yeah. Like I said, you know, because our parents, you know, they came here – in terms of giving us everything, they fed us, they, you know [0:07:00] they put a roof over our head, but other than that they really – you know, they were struggling themselves to get by in the new country, you know, working all the time, and Mort was always there for us no matter what. No matter what, yeah.

Interviewer: Fantastic.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Now you talk about working. What kind of work did your father do? And did your mother work?

Respondent: Yes. My dad, he was – he worked in sheet metal, so he did a lot of – they did a lot of industrial [0:07:30] buildings. Up until I was probably about fourteen or fifteen and I remember walking down south on Major Street and I saw my mom on a sidewalk, and she was crying hysterically. My dad just fell thirty feet from on top of the roof and we thought, okay, he may not make it. Anyways, I don't know what he did to his back, but he never worked ever again, ever since then.

Interviewer: So how old would your dad have been at that time?

Respondent: Well let's see, twenty-five years [0:08:00] ago. He would have been about – probably getting close to fifty.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So he obviously survived.

Respondent: He survived.

Interviewer: What was the damage?

Respondent: Oh, I couldn't tell you. He wore a metal back brace for years. For years he wore this thing.

Interviewer: And pain?

Respondent: Lots of pain, yeah. I really do remember. I mean my dad was, you know, a very – he had a lot of energy up until then, and then after that you can really tell that his – he was...

Interviewer: Must have been depressed.

Respondent: [0:08:30] His depression really – oh yeah, sure. Because he wasn't able to do the things that, you know, he wanted to do really. But...

Interviewer: Oh, so that must have affected your whole family.

Respondent: Oh it did. Yeah. It did. And my mom – from what I can recall, she worked at Three Small Rooms. What hotel was that?

Interviewer: Oh right. Just off Bloor.

Respondent: Just off Bloor.

Interviewer: The Colonnade.

Respondent: Windsor Arm Hotel?

Interviewer: Yeah. Something...

Respondent: [0:09:00] Windsor Arm? Maybe. That's where I believe she started.

Interviewer: And what was she doing there?

Respondent: I believe she may have been in the kitchen helping out in the kitchen, and then she also did that same type of work for George Brown. I don't know. George Brown used to be on Kensington Market there.

Interviewer: Oh you're right.

Respondent: Closer to Spadina?

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: I forget. I'm not sure – I don't know if it was – no, not Nassau. No, it wasn't Nassau. But it was towards...

Interviewer: She worked at the campus then.

Respondent: Yeah. She worked there for a number of years.

Interviewer: While you were growing up? [0:09:30] Or when you were a child?

Respondent: Yeah, when I was more of a child.

Interviewer: Right. And then when this happened to your father, was she the only person supporting the family? Or did you have some...

Respondent: Well yeah, I guess with – I guess my dad was receiving worker's comp, some sort of...

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. And my mom I think at that point, she – I think it might have been around the end when she started cleaning homes.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: So yeah, that's what she did for many years. Yeah.

Interviewer: And who took care [0:10:00] of the children?

Respondent: You know what? I mean...

Interviewer: Mort Greenberg. [Laughs]

Respondent: When he was around, sure. But you know, we pretty well took care of ourselves. I remember as being a young child, my brother and I,

who's Carlos, who's fourteen months older than I am, we would walk ourselves to school. You know, I mean we're talking maybe from grade one. And we went, we both went to Lord Lansdowne public school, so we'd walk there and we'd always [0:10:30] come home for lunch, and you know, that way – because we could always watch our "Flintstones."

Interviewer: [Laughs] Yeah.

Respondent: But yeah, no. That was great. So we took care – you know, it was one of those, it really was eight o'clock in the morning, parents kicked you out of the house, and you came back for dinner.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: We ran the streets. We knew – it was amazing.

Interviewer: That's so changed now. But for your generation, and for my generation and one generation before, we did play on the streets much more, and now parents are reluctant.

Respondent: [0:11:00] Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

Respondent: Well there did come a point back in those days where I don't know if you recall the story of Emmanuel Jacques. He was a shoeshine boy on Yonge Street. Portuguese kid who was abducted and tortured, and the whole bit, and it was at that point where the Portuguese community really rallied around each other because of what happened. And I guess at that point, people were really more reluctant in letting your kids go out and being alone outside because of what had happened.

Interviewer: [0:11:30] I remember that now.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: What a tragedy.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Horrible story. Yeah.

Respondent: It was.

Interviewer: Yeah. But you described that you played on the streets a lot.

Respondent: A lot. A lot.

Interviewer: So from morning to night on the weekend, and your parents would just let you know when it was dinnertime.

Respondent: Pretty well. When someone was hollering, you made sure you came home for dinner. Yeah. Yeah. It was amazing because you were really – we had fun all day long from the moment we got up until whether it was going up to Sussex and playing hockey at the ice rink [0:12:00] up there.

Interviewer: Which is now closed.

Respondent: Is it closed now?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Oh, that's a shame.

Interviewer: They haven't put ice there for a few years.

Respondent: Is that right? That's a shame. And one thing I do remember is Major Street – I mean back then it really was a canopy of trees, and it was all chestnut trees. So as kids it was fantastic because we would make huge – we'd collect all the chestnuts and have chestnut fights, or do whatever [laughter] because you could do so many things with them. It was really – I mean if you look down from Harbord, [0:12:30] down towards College Street, it really was a huge canopy of just chestnut trees back then.

Interviewer: And the kids played with them. Yeah.

- Respondent:** Oh, we'd certainly play with them. Yeah. We had a great time.
- Interviewer:** Mort Greenberg described putting a cord through and whacking other people with it.
- Respondent:** We did...
- Interviewer:** You did that too?
- Respondent:** We did that too. Yeah. I remember my dad had this old bench on the porch, and you can lift up the seat...
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent:** ...and this thing was absolutely filled to the top with chestnuts.
- Interviewer:** Oh. Did people eat them or cook them?
- Respondent:** No, we tried, but they were just – yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:13:00] Yeah.
- Respondent:** No, they weren't...
- Interviewer:** But chestnuts played a big part in your life...
- Respondent:** Oh they did, yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...for two generations or three generations.
- Respondent:** Oh absolutely. And it's funny that you say that because every time I look at Mort, or I'll go by Mort's place, he still has his chestnut tree. A lot of the chestnut trees have been cut down in the neighbourhood. I mean they were getting old and falling over and stuff, but his is still there. Yeah, amazing.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But do you remember how beautiful it was?
- Respondent:** Oh it was amazing.

- Interviewer:** It was a gigantic tree. Yes. Yeah.
- Respondent:** It was amazing. We'd all get either a baseball or football, [0:13:30] and we, you know, we'd sit there knocking chestnuts down all day long, and yeah, it was a lot of fun.
- Interviewer:** When you talk about playing, and you're thinking of playing with your friends, where did you play? You talked about the rink. What other areas did you play?
- Respondent:** You know, we really used the whole community. I mean we would have Olymp days where we would set up hurdles, and long-jump in it, and we used the whole neighbourhood. You know, people – we'd jump people's fences for hurdles, we'd [0:14:00] run the marathon around the block, you know, things like that. I mean, yeah. It was...
- Interviewer:** What about the back lanes?
- Respondent:** Back lanes? For sure. Every – it was all used up by us for sure.
- Interviewer:** Did you use the back lanes in the same way as the street? Or any different ways?
- Respondent:** No. I don't think so. I think we just – yeah. We were just having fun everywhere we were. The streets, obviously, we played a lot of street hockey on the streets. They were at least paved.
- Interviewer:** And [0:14:30] that's summer and winter?
- Respondent:** Summer and winter, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, it was a lot of fun. Wintertime we had a lot more snow from what I can recall. We had a lot more snow back then, so we had a lot of fun with the snow. Nothing like a kid being outside. I mean yeah, it's...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. And it's much easier for the parents too. And for the kids too.
- Respondent:** Absolutely.

- Interviewer:** You didn't have to phone to make play dates.
- Respondent:** No, no. Exactly. Exactly. And you know, and everybody – all the neighbours knew each other. And today, there were, **[0:15:00]** you know, sometimes you don't get that anymore where everybody knew everybody. I mean you know, you can be disciplined by your friend's mom down the street because that's just the way it was. Everyone took care of each other. It's a little bit different now.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Oh yeah.
- Respondent:** You know, there's certainly not as many young kids around, but then again the area's not really afford able for young families anymore.
- Interviewer:** Well they seem to be coming back.
- Respondent:** Slowly, slowly.
- Interviewer:** But I don't know if they're playing on the street the same way you did.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But you're right, I think it's lower density.
- Respondent:** Lower density.
- Interviewer:** You don't have...
- Respondent:** Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** **[0:15:30]** ...twelve people in that house. You'll have four, maybe.
- Respondent:** Exactly.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And I guess nowadays too we're not having as many kids, as many children, but back then it was just a – you know, you could

easily put two or three hockey teams together with all the kids in the neighbourhood.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So the years that you lived in this neighbourhood then would have been from the 1970s?

Respondent: '70s, yeah.

Interviewer: To?

Respondent: '70 to about just past 2000, I guess.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. **[0:16:00]** So you – it's nice for me to meet you because you knew it from the eyes of a child.

Respondent: I did, yes.

Interviewer: And that's helpful for me to have. When you come and you look around – well I just want to say your parents still live there.

Respondent: They're still there, yes.

Interviewer: Have your parents made any changes to the house that you lived in?

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: What kinds of changes?

Respondent: Definitely some changes. The front yard. I mean if you see some of the older pictures that you may see here of the laneway, **[0:16:30]** you know, a lot of wooden garages falling over. I mean even the

chimney was just about falling apart. A lot of the houses – it is much older, and yeah, so they've – I mean the façade's new, new brick, interior as well. They renovated the inside of the house.

Interviewer: Your parents have renovated their inside too.

Respondent: They have. Yeah. I think they probably did that, I'm going to say, maybe thirty-five years ago when they first renovated, so they dug down. I remember them digging down the basement because it was pretty well just a crawlspace down there.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: So I do remember them doing that, [0:17:00] and yeah. So you know, they've slowly renovated throughout the years.

Interviewer: Do your parents speak English?

Respondent: They do. Not very, very well, but they do.

Interviewer: Do you think I could meet with them, maybe with you there?

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: So we'll talk about this after we do this.

Respondent: Sure. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Because they might have some additional memories or different...

Respondent: Oh absolutely.

- Interviewer:** ...perception.
- Respondent:** Definitely different perception for sure. [Laughter] For sure.
- Interviewer:** Just looking at the global picture, what are some of the biggest [0:17:30] changes that you see in the neighbourhood? You're kind of an insider and an outsider because your parents are still here.
- Respondent:** Yeah, I am. Biggest changes. I know so much has changed. It really has.
- Interviewer:** It might be too global a question.
- Respondent:** It may be.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So let's make it a bit smaller.
- Respondent:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** You said that from what you remember when you were living here as a child was mainly Jewish and Portuguese.
- Respondent:** Portuguese, some Italian, and some Asian. But [0:18:00] definitely predominately Jewish and Portuguese, yeah.
- Interviewer:** And what was the relationship between all these different groups?
- Respondent:** Oh, I think everyone got along really well. They really did. Everyone had something to offer, and everyone was very friendly. It really was. I mean it was a time when you can just allow your kids to be themselves out in the streets, and...
- Interviewer:** And if they disappeared into somebody's house you didn't worry.
- Respondent:** No one really worried, yeah. You knew they were being taken care of.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

Respondent: But yeah, they all [0:18:30] got along really well. I do remember down in Kensington Market though for sure. That was probably ninety percent owned by Jewish, and then about ten percent Portuguese because a lot of the Portuguese worked for them, and then slowly as the years went by, you could tell that a lot of the Portuguese workers were starting to buy the businesses from – they were just getting older and didn't want the businesses. You know, a lot of the fruit markets and stuff like that. That changed a lot too, yeah.

Interviewer: I know it used to be called the "Jews' Market."

Respondent: [0:19:00] Is that right?

Interviewer: That's one of the things that it was called was the "Jews' Market."

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So it became more Portuguese.

Respondent: It did.

Interviewer: Jewish people got older.

Respondent: Got older.

Interviewer: And some of them moved up north and they didn't want the business.

Respondent: I think that's exactly what happened. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. But the children all played easily with each other.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: And there was trust.

Respondent: Absolutely. Yeah.

Interviewer: Was there any exchange of food?

- Respondent:** Definitely. Definitely. Of course, yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you ate at each other's homes and **[0:19:30]** ate each other's...
- Respondent:** Absolutely. Yes.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I remember as a young kid going to – I think his name – if I recall his name is David Lee, and I was maybe seven or eight years old, learning how to eat with chopsticks.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent:** Which was amazing, right? [Laughter] Which was amazing.
- Interviewer:** So when you were in his home they ate with chopsticks and you did too.
- Respondent:** Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. It was neat. Yeah. Good memories.
- Interviewer:** You didn't go home to your Portuguese parents and tell them to buy chopsticks?
- Respondent:** No. [Laughter] No, but it was **[0:20:00]** just, you know, I mean it was interesting. Yeah. Because like I said, everyone really got along with each other and...
- Interviewer:** Did you ever learn any words from some of the other languages?
- Respondent:** Oh, I'm sure I did. I probably couldn't recall right now, but...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Do you recall any people working from their homes, having businesses at home?
- Respondent:** Not really, unless you were a stay-at-home mom. I don't really remember anyone working from the home. Everyone was out. Yeah.

Interviewer: [0:20:30] And which schools did you go to? You started off at Lansdowne, you said.

Respondent: I started off at Lord Lansdowne, and for high school both my brother and I ended up going to Northern Secondary.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Respondent: Yeah. Up at Mount Pleasant and Eglinton there. We had a lot of options. Central Tech, Harbord Collegiate, a lot of them, but the – they offered a lot of different courses that weren't being offered down here, and we took a chance and we went up there.

Interviewer: And you [0:21:00] both went up there.

Respondent: We both went up there. Yeah. We had to – Tommy Ho who used to live – let me see. If we're 108, somewhere around maybe 114 Major Street maybe.

Interviewer: Tommy in the pictures?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Another Tommy.

Respondent: This is a different Tommy Ho. He's the same age as my brother and I, and he went up to Northern as well, so there's a few of us that went up to Northern, and he actually became one of the youngest cardiologists...

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: ... in Toronto. Yeah. Very, very – Northern had a [0:21:30] level six program, and that's why he went there because he was just a genius really. And...

Interviewer: And...

Respondent: And you know, he came from a family, you know, his parents were very hardworking, all the sons and daughters all became doctors and lawyers, and amazing.

Interviewer: Well I guess the work ethic was very clear.

Respondent: It was very clear.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well just the way you said your wife's family said, "You can't be an artist. Go get a real job."

Respondent: Go to university. Yeah. Same. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that was you have to [0:22:00] – you have to find a way to support yourself.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: When you look at the streets, I'm going to talk now a bit about the traffic. Have the streets changed in some way in terms of traffic?

Respondent: Oh absolutely. I mean, you know, years ago you could run – you could drive from the top of Harbord or probably – maybe even from Bloor, and it was one way all the way down to College Street, and now it's, you know, [0:22:30] you can go one-way half a block, then you have to turn around, go the other way, so a lot more confusion now, but it's probably because, you know, people are driving faster, and you know, parents are more concerned about – this is another reason why they probably don't see a lot of kids out on the roads playing on the streets anymore as well, but yeah, there's definitely a lot more traffic congestion now than there was back then.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah. And I think confusion. [Laughs]

Respondent: Well you're right. I can sit on my dad's porch and within ten minutes there will be three or four cars going up the wrong way. [0:23:00]

And you know, that's why – you know, I teach my four-and-a-half year-old, you have to make sure you look both ways before you cross. Just because you think that they're coming one-way doesn't mean that's – you know?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So there is that confusion for sure.

Interviewer: Yeah. I know that certainly when I'm crossing the street and my street – cars are going south, I look the other way too.

Respondent: Yeah. Absolutely.

Interviewer: Because of those idiot.

Respondent: There are. There are a lot. And they don't care. You know, you can sit out there hollering, "Wrong way," and they're like...

Interviewer: Yeah. That's right. That's not necessary.

Respondent: Give you a wave, and...

Interviewer: [0:23:30] Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. But that's certainly changed. Oh, sorry I just – we had – on the corner of Harbord and Major, there's a restaurant there now. Loire? Used to be Olive and Lemon. Anyways, when I was a kid, that used to be a fish market. They would bring a truck – it's like a huge tank with live fish. And as kids, we'd always – when this truck pulled up in a laneway [0:24:00] there, just next to the Harbord Bakery, they'd park in the laneway there and they'd have these big nets, and scooping out these live fish for this fish market. And occasionally some of the fish would fly out onto the street, so for us that was – yeah, that was a great memory actually. [Laughter] I just can't...

Interviewer: Did they retrieve the fish or did you grab them?

Respondent: No, no. They'd retrieve the fish.

- Interviewer:** They'd got the fish.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. They got their fish. But it was just so amazing for us just to sit there and watch it...
- Interviewer:** So that was another activity the kids looked forward to.
- Respondent:** Absolutely. Yeah. [0:24:30] My god, I can't believe I just remembered that.
- Interviewer:** Oh, talking about that, what other stores do you remember in that neighbourhood? And the side streets, the corner stores, Harbord.
- Respondent:** Oh it's changed so much.
- Interviewer:** Just talk to me about the stores as they were.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I don't – you know, it's hard for me because it's so much.
- Interviewer:** It's so much.
- Respondent:** It's so much change, it's hard.
- Interviewer:** Well think. So you talked [0:25:00] about that fish place. So people would go in and the fish were swimming in tanks? Or did they kill them as soon as they got them and then you bought them?
- Respondent:** No, I don't recall because I don't know if I ever went inside the store, but I do remember that was your fresh fish of the day.
- Interviewer:** And Harbord Bakery was there, you said.
- Respondent:** Harbord Bakery was there, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Did your family shop there?
- Respondent:** Occasionally?
- Interviewer:** The Market?

- Respondent:** Occasionally. They do have the best bagels in town as far as I'm concerned, but there was actually – on the corner of Ulster and Major on the southwest corner, that was as well [0:25:30] a convenience store. It's now someone's residence. I do remember that being a convenience store. It's the corner lot there.
- Interviewer:** You can see a lot of those homes that...
- Respondent:** Used to be, yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...you can see the side windows and they were definitely stores. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And we had the park there on Ulster. We always hung out there at the park as well. Is it...
- Interviewer:** On Brunswick?
- Respondent:** Brunswick and Ulster.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yes.
- Respondent:** Yeah. We spent a lot of time in that park too.
- Interviewer:** I think they're planning on modifying it, but we'll still keep the [0:26:00] park, but they're going to do some changes too. They're talking about that.
- Respondent:** Yeah, no just thinking about that too, I guess going south on the old – my brother was born at the old Doctor's Hospital, which is no longer there. Right? The old Doctor's Hospital – oh my goodness. Yeah. It's a lot of changes. A lot of changes.
- Interviewer:** I just met the daughter of one of the doctors.
- Respondent:** Oh is that right?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. She talked to me about the hospital.

- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And her father and uncles.
- Respondent:** Wow.
- Interviewer:** So your brother was born there, but you were born in Portugal.
[0:26:30] No, no.
- Respondent:** No, yeah. No, he was born here.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent:** And then my folks – I guess this was during the transition of them making their move over to here, so they were here, you know, probably on Sussex trying to figure out what was going on, probably moved – went back with me, or I was pregnant...
- Interviewer:** Your mother was pregnant.
- Respondent:** They went back probably to retrieve maybe, you know, my grandma to bring back. I'm not really sure exactly the story, but...
- Interviewer:** So you were born there.
- Respondent:** I was born there.
- Interviewer:** So the older brother...
- Respondent:** Was born here.
- Interviewer:** ...was born here, [0:27:00] then they went back and you were born there.
- Respondent:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** Fourteen months later.
- Respondent:** Exactly. That's right. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So any other stores that you recall, that you recall that corner store?

Respondent: I do.

Interviewer: And did the kids use the corner store? Or would the parents use the corner store? Who used the corner store?

Respondent: Yeah. Everybody. Yeah. The community. Yeah, everybody went to the corner store. Yeah, for sure.

Interviewer: Where else did they shop?

Respondent: Well I know, like I said, my parents shopped a lot down in Kensington Market because...

Interviewer: The prices.

Respondent: ...the prices [0:27:30] and there were a lot of Portuguese down there so that they can communicate, and you know, it was easier for them when they first got here. Yeah. I'd say they spent more time going south than they did north.

Interviewer: But it was more ethnic.

Respondent: It was.

Interviewer: Probably.

Respondent: It was.

Interviewer: The Market is, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. In terms of stores, wow. It's hard for me to say.

Interviewer: Okay. But Kensington was there, and this fish place, which was obviously – it sounds to me it was probably a very busy place.

Respondent: It was, yes.

- Interviewer:** Yeah. [0:28:00] Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** The front porches, how were those used? Did your family used the front porch much in the warm weather?
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Definitely. Yeah. I don't think there was any, you know, central air conditioning back then. Yeah. So a lot of the time, absolutely, were spent on the porch. Yeah. And it's amazing because almost all the porches were kind of filled with people. Everyone would hang out outside. [0:28:30] You know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I think that's another feeling of community...
- Respondent:** Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** ...that at night people hung around outside, and during the day if the mothers were finished their work and the kids were playing, they might just be out there observing to some extent.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** Unless they were working outside.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Did you have a backyard behind your house?
- Respondent:** There was a backyard there, but very – I mean, you know, maybe fifteen by fifteen.
- Interviewer:** So it was tiny.
- Respondent:** It was small. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:29:00] And was it used at all for anything?
- Respondent:** It was growing vegetables as far as I can remember. It was basically growing vegetables. I mean it was a concrete pad, but

there were many of those wine barrels cut in half filled with dirt, you know? Tomatoes, lettuce, peppers, that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Well that's significant because you could feed your family.

Respondent: Oh absolutely. Yeah.

Interviewer: Generously, and all very fresh and tasty.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And who was the gardener? The mother? The father?

Respondent: I think both. They were both.

Interviewer: Yeah. And did you grow [0:29:30] up doing some gardening too?

Respondent: Oh I love gardening today.

Interviewer: Oh you do.

Respondent: I do. And you know, the one thing I wish I had is more land so I can grow – because right now it's more of a, you know, I have a lot of grass down because I have young kids and I want them to have a place to play. So I used to be – my backyard used to be just all tomato plants.

Interviewer: Whoa.

Respondent: Yeah. Before we purchased the home, and I said, "Okay, you know what? The kids can't – they need somewhere to play." And so yeah, I could have tore it up and put some grass down there, but I would [0:30:00] love to, you know, one day when they're a little older start growing some more vegetables. It's amazing.

Interviewer: Well you probably learned to love it because you did it with your parents, and they did it very naturally.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: I'm the opposite. I never saw anybody doing it. I don't know how to do it. [Laughs]

Respondent: You know, and quite honestly we'd travel back to Portugal almost every – I'd say every two summers, and when we went away it wouldn't really be a vacation. You'd still be going over there to work and helping out grandma or whoever was there, you know? Get the hoe out and start bringing [0:30:30] up some potatoes and carrots, and it was a lot of work.

Interviewer: Yeah. A lot of work, but you're also so familiar with it and you can do it without feeling intimidated...

Respondent: Oh absolutely.

Interviewer: ...which is describing me. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah. I definitely enjoy it.

Interviewer: You did have air conditioning you said. Have your parents put in air conditioning?

Respondent: They have, yeah.

Interviewer: And did they do that about thirty-five years ago? Or more?

Respondent: Yeah, I would say about thirty-five years ago.

Interviewer: Well you said they did big renovations at that time.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And lowered it.

Respondent: That's right. Yeah. It would have been done back then, I would assume. They had to have all that [0:31:00] duct work in the house and stuff, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But so when you were a kid...

- Respondent:** Oh, I remember the big oil tank in the basement. You know, the truck would pull up, I don't know, maybe once a month or whatever it was, and he'd sit there filling the tank, and I do remember them – I remember when they were renovating the basement, they pulled that tank out and yeah, wow.
- Interviewer:** So those are – you know, if I ask about the changes in a global way it's hard to think of them.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And when we talk specifically about these, there's so many things that you can recall.
- Respondent:** **[0:31:30]** And you know, I can recall the Beer Store.
- Interviewer:** Where was that?
- Respondent:** On a truck. The truck would come down your street and deliver your beer.
- Interviewer:** This is the first time I'm hearing about this.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. It was the beer truck, then there was the Pop Shop or whatever. They would have – certain companies would have, you know, ginger ale, pop, different types of sodas. They'd come down the street.
- Interviewer:** Would they honk their horn?
- Respondent:** Honk their horn. Yeah, yeah. You know, it was probably, like, on a Saturday so everyone knew, everyone's hanging out, waiting for them to come by. **[0:32:00]** Yeah. It was amazing. IPA Beer. I remember that. One of my best friend's dad, he always had – used to always stop – the Beer Store would stop off in front of his house and get his – and it was amazing.
- Interviewer:** And you actually called it the Beer Store.

- Respondent:** Well that's what I did. Yeah. That's what I called it. Yeah. Yeah, I do remember that. Wow.
- Interviewer:** What about pets? Did anybody have pets at home?
- Respondent:** Not really. Not that I can recall.
- Interviewer:** [0:32:30] I guess there were too many people.
- Respondent:** There was too many people. Yeah, yeah. There's definitely a lot of people.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So you don't recall maybe people or any people having cats and dogs.
- Respondent:** No, no. Not really. I know Mrs. Whyte from across the street, she always had two big dogs, yeah. And she was a – you know, because there was so many of us kids playing around, the dogs got riled up, she wasn't too happy with us.
- Interviewer:** Did she have them behind a fence?
- Respondent:** Yeah. They were in their fence.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** They were behind the fence.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But they'd [0:33:00] start barking and get angry at the kids.
- Respondent:** Yeah, I mean, which I guess – yeah. [Laughter] It was good times.
- Interviewer:** The University of Toronto, I mean you were a child and you left, but do you have any sense of the university having any influence on the neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Oh absolutely. I mean my – the house directly across from my dad's has always been, as far as I can remember, has always been rented to university – the U of T students. I mean it [0:33:30] almost seems like every house for a period of time, it felt like every

house that was going for sale, the university would buy it because it would be great for rentals. So there are – definitely you'll find a lot of university students in the neighbourhood for sure.

Interviewer: I know now – I sometimes listen to stories, or I've had experiences, where they get pretty noisy, especially the warm weather and the parties that extend out onto the street. Was that ever an [0:34:00] issue for your family? Or?

Respondent: No, I don't think so. You know, I mean it occasionally happened, but it wasn't – I mean these people are paying way too much to go to university and, you know, I mean they really had their noses to the books, so they didn't really have the time.

Interviewer: So at that time they weren't partying.

Respondent: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Or too noisy.

Respondent: I mean like I say, it happened occasionally, but I don't think it got – I mean there were occasionally, you know, the days where everyone would wake up and everyone's antennas on their cars would have been bent over, but who's to say who did [0:34:30] that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: It could have been some university kids on a wild Saturday night or something, but that's going to happen.

Interviewer: That's annoying. Yeah.

Respondent: These are things that happen no matter where you go.

Interviewer: What about the JCC? Was that part of your life at all?

Respondent: Yeah. I mean as I got older, I have memberships to go to the JCC. We play squash, racquetball there all the time, things like that. I use the swimming pool. They have a great salt water pool there.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, it's very nice. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. You know, and even to this day, you know, like we –
[0:35:00] my young daughter would take lessons there as well and stuff, but yeah, no. Yeah, it was definitely part of it.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm. So we talked about Kensington Market. What about churches and synagogues? Did your family belong to one? Were there a lot of them around? What?
- Respondent:** We used to go – my parents were never very, very religious. I mean we would occasionally go to [0:35:30] mass on Sundays and we'd go up to St. Peter's.
- Interviewer:** Where's that?
- Respondent:** On Bathurst.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah. Just north of Bloor.
- Respondent:** Just north of Bloor, just across the street from the Bathurst Street station, subway station. We'd go there. But no, we weren't very religious in that way, so...
- Interviewer:** And do you remember any synagogues in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** I do. Well there was the one, I believe, there's one on Brunswick, just north of Harbord.
- Interviewer:** That's still there.
- Respondent:** There's that one on the east side.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. That's still there.
- Respondent:** [0:36:00] And was there another one along Ulster? Maybe just east – sorry, just west of Bathurst?
- Interviewer:** Oh yes. There's one at Markham and Ulster.

Respondent: Oh, maybe Markham. That's still there.

Interviewer: That's still there too.

Respondent: Okay. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. That's still there.

Respondent: That's Knox church, which is on Spadina there. Bowling alleys. They had a bowling alley. I mean as kids we would go there and...

Interviewer: Where?

Respondent: As far as – [0:36:30] I don't know if it was – you know, I can't even remember if it was at the church or at the building next to it.

Interviewer: On Spadina?

Respondent: On Spadina there. Yeah. Knox church, yeah. They had like little bowling alleys down in the basement.

Interviewer: Oh in the church they had bowling alleys.

Respondent: Like I said, I don't recall if it was actually in the church...

Interviewer: Or next door.

Respondent: ...but it was all part of the Knox church. Yeah.

Interviewer: But it was part of Knox church. Isn't that...

Respondent: It was there.

Interviewer: ...that's interesting. I mean it was a way to bring young people, or people, just people people, into the church.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. And just [0:37:00] if I may...

Interviewer: Yeah.

- Respondent:** ...it's reminding me of when Dr. Morgentaler was still on Harbord Street.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent:** And there was a friend of mine, his dad threatened him – I remember he got taken away. He threatened him with some garden – he was doing some gardening and he saw him walk by or whatever, and – because, you know, he was obviously a very religious man or whatever and...
- Interviewer:** So he threatened Mogentaler.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Directly.
- Respondent:** Yeah. So the cops came, took him away. Oh my god, that was years ago too.
- Interviewer:** That's not nearly as bad [0:37:30] as whoever burnt it down.
- Respondent:** True. True. That's right. So I guess that's changed. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You know, nobody has brought up the Morgentaler clinic and how this man, good Catholic man, was so angry about what he was doing.
- Respondent:** Yeah, that's true because now, you know, he's in our neighbourhood and he just couldn't – yeah, it was hard for him to see him there.
- Interviewer:** Oh well clearly he felt he was killing babies.
- Respondent:** Absolutely.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. Wow. Interesting memory that just – you never know what's going to [0:38:00] come...
- Respondent:** Yes.

Interviewer: ...pop into your mind.

Respondent: My goodness.

Interviewer: You talked about two things, one is the kids who are out there and playing after breakfast. You'll all come have lunch, come have dinner, and then bending aerials on cars. Generally, what are your thoughts about the security and the safety of this neighbourhood?

Respondent: Back then or today?

Interviewer: Both.

Respondent: Like I said, back then I think it was a lot – it felt safer. Everyone knew each other. And [0:38:30] I think that went a long way with, you know, parents allowing their kids to be out there and doing what they wanted to do because they knew that they'd be taken care of. Everyone really truly looked out for each other.

Interviewer: That's so beautiful.

Respondent: Yeah. It was. I mean yeah, you can go away on holidays and knew that, you know, your house was – not only was someone going to cut your grass, someone was going to, you know, get your mail. Nowadays you have to, hey, you know, call someone from out of town. "Can you make sure you come out to take my mail in?" It's different nowadays. Yeah. [0:39:00] Yeah. You know, the sense is that people are maybe afraid or tend not to meet each other almost. You know, you get new people...

Interviewer: They get more privacy.

Respondent: People want to be private. There's a lot more of that today than there was back then for sure. For sure.

Interviewer: It sounds very nice the way you describe it.

Respondent: It was. It was amazing.

Interviewer: It was a real sense of we, and we'll help each other, and we'll take care of each other. If you're at work we'll watch out for your kids.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. There was a sense [0:39:30] of community for sure.

Interviewer: Yeah. And the Market, it sounds to me as if your family really used it.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Absolutely.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I mean I probably worked at ninety percent of the market stuff on Kensington as a kid. Yeah. It was...

Interviewer: Great. After school? Summer?

Respondent: Oh sure. Like I probably started working when I was nine or ten years old, you know? Got on my bike, you know, maybe for ten dollars a day or whatever it was.

Interviewer: And what would you do? What were one or two of the jobs that you did then?

Respondent: Well I [0:40:00] would go work at some of the fruit markets, so I would have been, you know, stocking the fruit stands and stuff like that. I remember once there was a – I don't think it's any longer there. It was a pharmacy at the corner of Major and College on the northeast corner. I forget the name of it. Weinstein's.

Interviewer: Okay.

- Respondent:** Maybe a Weinstein's. And as maybe ten, eleven-year-old, I would deliver drugs to the neighbourhood.
- Interviewer:** Oh. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** Oh my little bike. [Laughter] Giving the prescriptions. "Okay, you've [0:40:30] got to go take this to Miss whoever," you know?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Oh that's a charming little story.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah. [Laughter] Oh my goodness. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you've been working since a young age.
- Respondent:** Since you were saying that work ethic, right? It's like it's always – listen, you know what? My parents always provided us with what we needed. Anything above and beyond, you had to go work and make your own money for what you wanted, which was fine, which was great.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I think it's a good message.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well I think we've pretty well [0:41:00] covered all the topics. When you agreed to come and speak to me, and I assumed you understood that we were going to be talking about your life. Is there anything that you thought of at that time that I haven't brought up? You've talked about the stores. Anything...
- Respondent:** I mean I'm surprised at how many memories have popped up just sitting [laughter] here talking. These are things that – yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** But...
- Interviewer:** What about dating? Did you [0:41:30] start dating at twelve? At fifteen? Did you go as groups?

- Respondent:** Dating. Wow. That was – I think I was a late bloomer. [Laughter] I was too interested – honestly, I was too interested in playing my sports, and doing things of that nature than I was in dating girls until, you know, maybe towards the end of high school or something.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I love that expression. A late bloomer. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** A late bloomer, yeah. Late bloomer. I had some catching up to do.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. [Laughs] I hope you did.
- Respondent:** [Laughs] Yeah. But no, it was great. Yeah. But in terms [0:42:00] of dating, yeah, no. Not really.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, okay.
- Respondent:** I was a shy young fellow too, so yeah. Things have changed.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. [Laughs] Congratulations.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Thank you. Thank you.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Well I think, you know, when we say goodbye to each other, if there's something else that comes to your mind, I'll turn this back on.
- Respondent:** Sure, sure.
- Interviewer:** Just for now I want to say thank you very much. It's been a pleasure...
- Respondent:** Well thank you for having me.
- Interviewer:** ...listening to your stories. Yeah.

Respondent: It was great. Thank you so much.

[00:42:26]

[End of recording]