

**075 Debbie Cowitz**

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

[0:00:00]

**Interviewer:** Today's the twenty-third of September, 2012. I'm sitting with Debbie Cowitz, who grew up in the neighbourhood that we love so much. Debbie lived at 81 Borden from 1933 to 1956. So Debbie, first I want to say thank you very much for allowing me to come to your home, and to learn what your experiences were. So 1933, would you just [0:00:30] start off by telling me how old you – the ages that you were between 1933 and 1956?

**Respondent:** Mm-hm. I was born in 1933, and so I was born at the Mount Sinai hospital on Yorkville Avenue, and my parents took me home to their home where they lived, which was on Borden Street, 81. And [0:01:00] we lived with my grandparents. My grandparents owned the house. They bought the house, I guess, in the twenties, and it was – it is still – it is a three-storey house, and my grandparents lived downstairs. And at first we lived downstairs as well, and then when I got – I guess I was three or four – we moved upstairs [0:01:30] to the flat. So we lived on the flat.

**Interviewer:** That means...

**Respondent:** Second floor.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Respondent:** Second floor. And it was a very big house. It had three storeys, and so there was my grandparents, which is one family. There is my parents and me, that's second family. And then my uncle wasn't married yet, so he lived there, and then my grandmother [0:02:00] had three boarders who lived in the house as well. So there...

**Interviewer:** Now where did they live?

**Respondent:** They lived – two lived in the attic, and one lived on the second floor, on the same floor as we were.

**Interviewer:** Now in your family, you and your parents moved to the second floor. Did you have your own kitchen, or did you all use the kitchen on the main floor?

**Respondent:** We had our own kitchen. On the second floor there was a kitchen, which my [0:02:30] parents used, and on the first floor was a kitchen which my grandparents used.

**Interviewer:** What about bathrooms?

**Respondent:** And the house had one bathroom for everybody.

**Interviewer:** Which – was that on the...

**Respondent:** Was on the second floor.

**Interviewer:** So there were a lot of you sharing one bathroom.

**Respondent:** There was a lot of us sharing one bathroom. And there was a boiler in the kitchen for hot water. And it stood [0:03:00] next to the stove. There was a beautiful, big stove, which was used – there was a wood stove. And then next to it was a hot water boiler, and when I wanted to take a bath, I went into the bathroom, and I let the water run, and my grandmother used to scurry up the back steps [0:03:30] and knock on the door and say, "Debola, remember." In Yiddish. "Remember that you can't use too much hot water because other people have to use it as well." And this was every time I took a bath. Yeah. That's what she said. [Laughter] So there...

**Interviewer:** So you had your routine. Every routine.

**Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. So sometimes on Fridays, sometimes we ate [0:04:00] with my grandparents, but other times – most of the time we ate separately.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

- Respondent:** You know, so Shabbat was – sometimes we ate together.
- Interviewer:** And were more children – did you have any sisters or brothers?
- Respondent:** When I was ten years old, my parents had another child, a boy, and his name was Myron. And he was a mentally handicapped, so **[0:04:30]** when he was seven and I was seventeen, he went to an institution in Orillia, and that's where he stayed, and that was a very sad time for everybody.
- Interviewer:** Oh, I can imagine.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. Do you have any idea what it was that prompted your grandparents to buy in that neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** I have no idea, but probably it was because that was the **[0:05:00]** – the price was right, and that's why they – they started off on Chestnut Street, and D'Arcy. And then they moved north to Borden, and I think that the price was right at that time that they could afford it, and I think it was something like three thousand dollars they paid for the house in the twenties.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. **[0:05:30]**
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So now I want to come back to this Debola. Did you – what language did you speak at home?
- Respondent:** Yiddish.
- Interviewer:** Everybody spoke Yiddish at home.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** When did you learn English?

- Respondent:** When I went to kindergarten.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So – okay. And the people in your neighbourhood, did you play with children? Or were you pretty much at home with your parents and grandparents?
- Respondent:** No, we played outside. I had friends on the street, and we played outside, and [0:06:00] after, you know, I went to kindergarten, then I – when I went to public school and I met a lot of kids from the street and we played outside, we used to play outside a lot.
- Interviewer:** And at that point, what language were you speaking when you...
- Respondent:** English.
- Interviewer:** So you learned English as soon as you went to school.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Were there children from some of your neighbourhood friends speaking other languages? Or?
- Respondent:** I just remember English.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. [0:06:30] So the kids were speaking English.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Were you aware of other languages being spoken in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** I was aware of Yiddish a lot. There was a lot of Yiddish in the neighbourhood.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So is it most likely that that neighbourhood was predominately Jewish at that time?

- Respondent:** I would say it was.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** What about synagogues? What synagogues were there at that time, that you can recall?
- Respondent:** My grandparents went to a synagogue on [0:07:00] – oh god, I can't think of the street.
- Interviewer:** Well there's one on Brunswick now.
- Respondent:** Not Brunswick. The south of – it was off Spadina, and it was – it was off Spadina. I'll think of it. I'll think of the name of the Street. Cecil.
- Interviewer:** Oh yes.
- Respondent:** Cecil.
- Interviewer:** Yes. Yes.
- Respondent:** So my grandfather was very active in the shul there. It was called the [indiscernible 00:07:25]. That was the name of the shul. And he [0:07:30] led services there quite often, and he used to go there practically every day for services.
- Interviewer:** And was he an observant man, or just...
- Respondent:** Very observant.
- Interviewer:** He was.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** And what did your family practice when you were...

- Respondent:** When we were living together we were Orthodox.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. With kosher...
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** ...food. Okay. So where did you do your shopping if you wanted kosher food?
- Respondent:** Kensington.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Please talk to me about Kensington Market.
- Respondent:** **[0:08:00]** Okay. This is what I remember about Kensington because I used to go – my grandmother, I think she went every day because she always needed something. But also on College Street, there was Goodbaum's. That was a supermarket, and it was on College on the north side of the street between Brunswick and Borden.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** It was called Goodbaum's. So that was a supermarket. **[0:08:30]**
- Interviewer:** But they also had meat.
- Respondent:** No.
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent:** I don't remember that they had meat.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Oh, so she got the meat from Kensington market.
- Respondent:** So meat she got from – now where was Greenspan's? I think she got meat at Greenspan's, and that was on Brunswick near Harbord.
- Interviewer:** Oh. So it was a small kosher butcher on Brunswick near Harbord.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** I have to keep reminding myself that you lived there and you left when you were thirteen years old.

**Respondent:** No, I left when I was twenty-three.

**Interviewer:** Oh, twenty-three. [0:09:00]

**Respondent:** Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** Oh good. Oh that's even better.

**Respondent:** Until I got married.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So if you lived there until you were twenty-three, what was it like at that time when you were fourteen, sixteen, eighteen in terms of dating?

**Respondent:** Oh. [Laughter] Okay. Oh my god. Well dating...

**Interviewer:** Yes?

**Respondent:** My social network began when I joined a [0:9:30] youth group called Habonim.

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah. Yeah.

**Respondent:** That's when my social activities began. And I think I was thirteen or fourteen when I joined there, because – and we used to go there on Friday night. That's when we used to have our meetings, and Habonim was also on Cecil.

**Interviewer:** Okay. That's – you figured it out. Yes.

**Respondent:** And so we used to go there on Friday nights [0:10:00], and that's when we used to meet – Friday nights and Sunday morning. So that's like two times we went there.

**Interviewer:** That's a lot.

**Respondent:** So Friday nights there used to be dancing, Israeli dancing.

**Interviewer:** Oh yes. Uh-huh.

**Respondent:** And that was our social activity for Friday night, plus meeting different groups within the organization. There was boys' groups and there was girls' groups, and the boys used to meet the girls Friday night. [0:10:30]

**Interviewer:** And you did everything in a big group.

**Respondent:** Yes. In a big group, and there was a big, huge room for dancing, and the purpose of that organization was to prepare you to go to Israel to live on a kibbutz, or start a kibbutz. And at that time, there were quite a few people who went and started a kibbutz or two in Israel, which is still [0:11:00] going today, which is like seventy years later. So there was a lot of Israeli content, and there was a lot of, like, revving young kids up, you know, and adolescents to do something idealistic. And at that time was – that was when the state was declared in forty-eight...

**Interviewer:** Oh my goodness.

**Respondent:** So there – you know, [00:11:30], it was like – it was so wonderful because now we had a state. And I remember when the state was declared, that was in May. We had a big march on College Street with flags, and we wore these – we called them [indiscernible 0:11:46], which was blue – they were blue kerchiefs, you know? And we had white shirts, and blue skirts, and we were marching, and we were – I remember that we were really proud that, you know, [0:12:00] now we had a state. And this – we were in Habonim until probably eighteen or nineteen.

**Interviewer:** So you're saying that a lot of your social life happened...

- Respondent:** There.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Right. So Friday night you had the dancing, and Sundays?
- Respondent:** And Sunday were meetings, and we used to collect money. JNF – do you know what a JNF box is?
- Interviewer:** A Keren Kayemet box?
- Respondent:** A Keren Kayemet box. So we used to have Keren Kayemet box, and we used to go around in the [0:12:30] neighbourhood, knock on doors, and ask for money. Like nickels, dimes, quarters, and that.
- Interviewer:** I just want to tell you that my middle son went to [indiscernible 0:12:40], and he was in Habonim for twelve years.
- Respondent:** Was he?
- Interviewer:** And my grandson has been at [indiscernible 0:12:47] now for five years. [Laughs] And he's going back next year.
- Respondent:** Wow.
- Interviewer:** So I know Habonim very well.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Wow. That's really nice.
- Interviewer:** So it was an important part of your youth then.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** And so you had a social life there. You had [0:13:00] a social life there, you had it Friday night, you had it Sunday. At some point I guess something changed because you eventually got married, so you didn't do everything in a group. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** No. Well eventually we got – yeah, I got married, yeah. But I was probably one of the last of the group to marry. They were marrying

at eighteen and nineteen at that time. They were eighteen or nineteen. So after – like around when I [0:13:30] was in my last year of high school, which was grade thirteen then, I met my husband. And that's when Habonim finished, and my other life began, you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Respondent:** We used to go – on Sundays, from Habonim, we used to go to [0:14:00] Queen's Park. You know that park?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent:** That's a huge park.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Respondent:** And we had these skirts with the crinolines underneath.

**Interviewer:** I remember them very well.

**Respondent:** And the white blouse with big, big bows, and we used to just like to go to the park and laugh, and kibbutz, and...

**Interviewer:** These young couples, you mean? Or?

**Respondent:** No.

**Interviewer:** No.

**Respondent:** No. From Habonim we used to [0:14:30] go to the park. After I met Ron, we didn't go to the park anymore. [Laughs]

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

**Respondent:** We didn't do that.

**Interviewer:** So this Habonim affiliation, association for you was very much your social life.

- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** It was?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And where did you go to school when you lived in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** King Edward Public School, and after that Harbord Collegiate.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. I guess most of the people from there [0:15:00] went to Harbord Collegiate.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. And that was also social because my friends were all at Harbord.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** So it was – between Harbord and Habonim, it was quite a social life.
- Interviewer:** While you lived in the neighbourhood – because twenty-three years is significant – were you aware of changes of different ethnic groups moving in? Different languages being [0:15:30] spoken?
- Respondent:** Not at that time.
- Interviewer:** So your life was very centered here.
- Respondent:** Insular Jewish.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Insular. Yeah. And I guess comfortable.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Backtracking a little bit, you said that children played on the street a lot. What were the games you played, and where were your parents when you were playing on the street?

- Respondent:** They were up in the house.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So you had, I think, a lot more freedom [0:16:00] than the children have today.
- Respondent:** Complete freedom. Complete freedom. I was just telling my granddaughter, who lives with me upstairs, the other day that in the summertime, we didn't have fridges. We had ice box. And so the truck used to come to deliver the ice. And there – and they used to – did you ever see this?
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent:** [0:16:30] Oh okay.
- Interviewer:** Please talk about it, because I would like to have it on our recording. Please do. Yeah.
- Respondent:** They had like a pick, a couple of picks on the truck. So when they delivered the ice to the houses, we kids used to go to the truck, take the pick, and break off like little pieces of ice and eat it. [Laughter] It was so good.
- Interviewer:** That's so wonderful.
- Respondent:** It was so good, especially [0:17:00] when it was hot. And you know, we didn't have air conditioning of course, and so when we had that ice, we were so happy we had all this ice and we could eat this ice.
- Interviewer:** And all the kids did it.
- Respondent:** Everybody. Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. How often did this truck come along?
- Respondent:** At least once a week, maybe twice. I don't remember exactly, but I think it was at least once a week.
- Interviewer:** Do you remember anything else being delivered?

**Respondent:** [0:17:30] Milk. Milk. Milk came in a truck. First I remember it being delivered with horses, and then I remember – and we used to have milk tickets. And so we used to put the empty bottles of milk, the empty bottles, out on the verandah with the ticket inside [0:18:00] so that the milkman knew to replace it.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** Do you remember this?

**Interviewer:** I do. I do. I grew up in Montreal, but it was similar.

**Respondent:** And in the wintertime, the cream went to the top. So there was about that much cream, and then the rest was milk. It was pretty good, you know, at that time. Yeah, but the milkman came with the horses. Then after that he came with a truck, [0:18:30] like as the years went on, he didn't have the horses anymore. And I also remember that on Spadina, which wasn't too far from where we were, there used to be a trough where the horses could drink water right on the side of the sidewalk.

**Interviewer:** And that was Spadina, how far north?

**Respondent:** Spadina and College.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Right.

**Respondent:** [0:19:00] Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And then where were the horses at night? Or was that not something that you knew?

**Respondent:** Well I did know about the horses at night because my grandfather, who lived on – my other grandfather who lived on Brunswick near Ulster – he was a – what do you call it when they gathered old things?

**Interviewer:** A [indiscernible 0:19:27]. I don't know.

- Respondent:** Yeah. Right.
- Interviewer:** Collector, we'll say.
- Respondent:** **[0:19:30]** A collector. He would look for that...
- Interviewer:** So he would collect clothes and objects too?
- Respondent:** He collected objects.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Like I have something here that he collected. I have it. I'll show it to you.
- Interviewer:** Please.
- Respondent:** So he had a horse, and he used to go around with the horse, and I was beside him. So...
- Interviewer:** You'd sit – it was a wagon.
- Respondent:** I'd sit on the wagon. Yeah. With him.
- Interviewer:** Do you have pictures of that?
- Respondent:** No.
- Interviewer:** No. Okay. Let's go ahead. **[0:20:00]** But you sat on the wagon...
- Respondent:** I sat on the wagon with him, yeah. And he had a horse, and the horse pulled it. And he used to go up, you know, up and down Borden, and Brunswick, and Major, and Robert to pick up stuff.
- Interviewer:** So would he have a bell? Would he call something out? Would he knock at doors? How did...
- Respondent:** I think he would knock at doors.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

- Respondent:** I think – let me just get this. It's right here.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** It's hard to give up. Oh, I can't – [0:20:30] look. Can you look here?
- Interviewer:** I can see it.
- Respondent:** See that?
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent:** That's his.
- Interviewer:** Well I'm going to take a picture of that before I leave. I will take a picture. I also want to take a picture of you.
- Respondent:** Okay.
- Interviewer:** So...
- Respondent:** And when he was finished, he took the horse. Now I can't remember if he took the wagon as well. He must. And on Borden Street, there was a lane in the back. [0:21:00] And horses were kept there.
- Interviewer:** Now where was that on Borden? Because Borden starts at College and goes...
- Respondent:** It was between...
- Interviewer:** North of Harbord?
- Respondent:** It wasn't Borden.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** It was Lippincott.

**Interviewer:** Lippincott. Okay.

**Respondent:** It was Lippincott. Between – it was south of Harbord. Harbord and...

**Interviewer:** Well there's...

**Respondent:** [0:21:30] College.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So there were stables.

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And are those probably garages now?

**Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent:** And he used to take the horse to the stable.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Did the horse have a name?

**Respondent:** I don't know. I don't remember that. I was about six maybe. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you don't remember the name, but you do remember sitting beside him.

**Respondent:** Oh yeah. Oh yeah. And I remember all the stuff in the wagon, you know, like pots, big pots, [0:22:00] and glassware, and you know, things like this. You know, plates.

**Interviewer:** Beautiful.

**Respondent:** Beautiful plates, and...

**Interviewer:** And he would then sell them?

**Respondent:** And he would sell them. Yeah. Mm-hm.

- Interviewer:** Whoa, that's quite a lovely memory.
- Respondent:** It is quite a lovely memory.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Now my grandfather who – is any of this...
- Interviewer:** This is fabulous.
- Respondent:** Oh okay.
- Interviewer:** This is all the neighbourhood. Yeah.
- Respondent:** My grandfather, [0:22:30] who I lived with, had – his business was schmattas.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Now when you say schmattas, do you mean rags? Or do you mean clothes?
- Respondent:** Clothes. All the clothes that he used to...
- Interviewer:** Okay. That's what I need to clarify.
- Respondent:** ...put in bales and sell them. Sell them. I think he shipped them to Montreal. That's what I remember.
- Interviewer:** Well could be.
- Respondent:** This was on Chestnut Street. He had a storefront. He didn't sell [0:23:00] anything from the store, in the store, but he kept all his clothing in that store, and that's where he operated from. That's how he made a living. I don't know how he did it, but he did it. And I used to go with him to Chestnut Street, you know, to the...
- Interviewer:** This is the same grandfather who was collecting these objects?
- Respondent:** No.
- Interviewer:** This was the other grandfather.

- Respondent:** The other. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** This was the other grandfather.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So they both eked out a living by taking old stuff and doing something with that old stuff.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Peddlers.
- Interviewer:** [0:23:30] That's right. That's the word people...
- Respondent:** That was the word I was looking for.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Peddlers. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** So he did that. And from that, from peddling these clothes, he was able to buy a house on Borden Street from all that.
- Interviewer:** Now you were twenty-three.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You've lived there for twenty-three years. So is that when you got married?
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** And did your family remain there?
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** How much longer did they remain there?

- Respondent:** Until '69.
- Interviewer:** [0:24:00] Whoa. Oh they had a really long history there.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. And in '69 they sold the house for twenty-seven thousand.
- Interviewer:** Would you like to guess what it's worth today?
- Respondent:** I know. I saw it advertised a few years ago for six ninety-nine.
- Interviewer:** A few years ago.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So it's up from there. Yeah. Of course there's inflation. The area's popular and there's inflation. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** [0:24:30] But at that time, in sixty-nine, they didn't ask me whether they should said it. I would have said don't sell it. They didn't ask me. They sold it. [Laughs] You know, I was already out and I had my family, and so...
- Interviewer:** When you think of the neighbourhood, thinking back to it, was it a safe place?
- Respondent:** Very.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. I want to come back to the kids were playing on the street, and nobody was [0:25:00] supervising and watching carefully. But I want to come back to the front porches – you it verandah.
- Respondent:** The verandah.
- Interviewer:** And I want to talk about the back, what was behind the homes too. So did your family use the verandah, and did you use the back, and how was the back used?

- Respondent:** Well the verandah in the front...
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** ...my grandmother liked to sit out there.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Did she have a favourite chair out there?
- Respondent:** She had a bench. I had that bench out here for many, many years and then it [0:25:30] just disintegrated. I took – I said, "I have to take this bench." I took it. I took it – anyways, it's gone. But she sat on the bench, and my mother liked to sit on the bench. And so that's where they sat. They sat on the bench. And sometimes I like to sit on there too, but most of the time I was playing on the street. And I still have – you know what? You [0:26:00] should call this woman as well. I still have a friend from then. We were together since we were about seven.
- Interviewer:** Oh, I would love to call her.
- Respondent:** She lived across the road and diagonal. She lived near Ulster.
- Interviewer:** So before I leave, I'd like to take her name.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. Oh she would love to talk about this.
- Interviewer:** Good. Is she living up here somewhere too?
- Respondent:** Yeah. She lives up here.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Okay. I'd love to speak to her.
- Respondent:** Now she lived there. [0:26:30] Yeah. Also for a very long time. When she got married she lived there with her parents.
- Interviewer:** So she and her husband moved in there.
- Respondent:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So to come back, behind the house, what did you have behind the house?

**Respondent:** Yeah. Behind the house there was – oh, behind the house there was a summer kitchen. Did you ever hear of that? A summer kitchen? So it was a room. [0:27:00] I get very emotional about this. It was a room that had a roof that you could lift up with a rope, and you used it at Sukkot.

**Interviewer:** Oh my.

**Respondent:** Because it became a sukkah.

**Interviewer:** Wow. That is – I've never heard this before.

**Respondent:** Yeah. It became a sukkah, and my [0:27:30] grandmother decorated it. Decorated it with – she used to take bird eggs, the outside of eggs. What do you call the...

**Interviewer:** The shells.

**Respondent:** The shells. Thank you. And she used to make birds out of them and hang them from the roof for Sukkot.

**Interviewer:** That was a real skill that she had.

**Respondent:** She used to hang them, [0:28:00] and she used to take leaves, and things, and decorate that room, and we ate in that room for eight days at Sukkot.

**Interviewer:** And sometimes it was cold, I'll bet.

**Respondent:** Yeah. It was cold. We went in our coat.

**Interviewer:** [Laughs] Yeah.

**Respondent:** You know, we went in our coats, but – so that was the summer kitchen.

**Interviewer:** [0:28:30] So that was the summer kitchen. So she raised the roof?

- Respondent:** She raised the roof.
- Interviewer:** And created this sukkah.
- Respondent:** So that summer kitchen went off the kitchen, and from the summer kitchen you had stairs that you went into the backyard.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. And what was in the backyard?
- Respondent:** Nothing. Not even grass. Just earth. And a garage. A garage was in the back.
- Interviewer:** And what was in the garage?
- Respondent:** Nothing until my father bought his first car, and then his car went into the garage.
- Interviewer:** **[0:29:00]** So nobody was interested in gardening, or growing vegetables, tomatoes, the green beans.
- Respondent:** No, no. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So your family used the front, the bench as you call it. Obviously it was a significant – it was more than a piece of furniture.
- Respondent:** Yeah, it was.
- Interviewer:** Did the women sit out there more than the men?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Yeah. The women sat out there. Now my father – **[0:29:30]** I don't remember if he sat out there. He might have. I know my mother did and my grandmother did.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

- Respondent:** You know? They sat out there.
- Interviewer:** How much socializing was there amongst the adults on the street?
- Respondent:** None. Just, "Hello, how are you?" You know, if somebody – you're sitting on the verandah and somebody passes by, so you wave and you say, "Hello."
- Interviewer:** Okay. From what you recall, were there any of these [0:30:00] women or men who had their businesses at home?
- Respondent:** No.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. What were some of the kinds of work...
- Respondent:** None that I know.
- Interviewer:** Were any of the mothers working outside the home?
- Respondent:** No. My mother didn't start to work outside the home until the fifties.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. And what were some of the – I know what both grandfathers did. They were peddlers. [0:30:30] What was the work that some of the other fathers did?
- Respondent:** Some had – one had a factory, a coat factory on Spadina.
- Interviewer:** Your father?
- Respondent:** No. One...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But what did your father do?
- Respondent:** Oh my dad?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** He worked at the Tip Top Tailor's, which was on the waterfront. Bathurst and Queen's Quay, and he worked there [0:31:00] for forty years.

- Interviewer:** Woo.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** What work did he do then?
- Respondent:** He was a pocket maker.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Isn't that amazing? Forty years. He must have been a very good pocket maker.
- Respondent:** He was excellent.
- Interviewer:** And when your mother went to work, what did she do?
- Respondent:** She worked in a restaurant on College Street called The Bagel.
- Interviewer:** The Bagel. We all know The Bagel. So...
- Respondent:** She was one of the stars there.
- Interviewer:** She was one of the waitresses there? Did she [0:31:30] like it?
- Respondent:** She loved it.
- Interviewer:** So she started working there in the fifties you're saying?
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** When she had to take my brother to an institution, she was very depressed. And a relative of ours, who knew people at The Bagel said, "You're going to go to work, and I'm going to get you a job." And she [0:32:00] got my mother a job there at the cash. And my mother worked there also for I think thirty years.
- Interviewer:** She started there in 1956?

- Respondent:** She started there in – just a minute. In '51.
- Interviewer:** '51. So until about 1981.
- Respondent:** Until they closed the store, which was probably in the '80s.  
**[0:32:30]** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well that has certainly been a very beloved institution on College Street.
- Respondent:** It was an institution. And she knew everybody in the city who came in there. She just knew everybody.
- Interviewer:** So did it help her feel better...
- Respondent:** It helped her a lot.
- Interviewer:** ...after institutionalizing her son, your brother?
- Respondent:** It helped her a lot. Yeah. It helped her a lot.
- Interviewer:** Did she come home and tell stories?
- Respondent:** Of course she had many, many stories.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** **[0:33:00]** Hi, Laurie.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So we're going to end the interview. I just want to say, Debbie, this has been absolutely fabulous. Thank you very, very much.
- Respondent:** You're welcome.

**[00:33:14]**

[End of recording]