

093 Tillie Karasik

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

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: The date is the 18th of February, 2013, and I am interviewing Tillie Karasik. Her son, Herb, is with us. And Tillie lived at 67 Major from 1923 to 1942 when she got married, and then again from 1945 until 1952 when she lived on the upstairs flat. [0:00:30] And I would just like, Tillie, to start off by saying thank you very much for allowing me to come and speak to you.

Respondent 1: You're very welcome.

Interviewer: Do you have some stories you would like to tell right off the start about your life on Major Street?

Respondent 1: Well I think that you should know that across the street there was the St. John's convalescent home run by the Anglican church.

Interviewer: Now when you're talking...

Respondent 1: There was a nunnery.

Interviewer: Now where was this on Major? Near [0:01:00] what major street?

Respondent 1: Right across 67.

Interviewer: And was that near Harbord or near College?

Respondent 1: Near College.

Interviewer: Near College. Okay.

Respondent 1: And we used to play next door to – my girlfriend lived next door to the nunnery, and we used to go into the nunnery and they used to give us cookies when we were small. I think that's very interesting

because now there is a hospital [0:01:30] in that spot where the St. John's convalescent home was. There is now a hospital.

Respondent 2: Where? On Kensington where you went for your eyes?

Respondent 1: No. Yeah, but it's on the other side. It's on Major Street.

Respondent 2: Yeah. Okay. But it's right down by College.

Interviewer: So that's the Kensington nursing home is there.

Respondent 1: Yeah. It's an eye clinic. Kensington Eye Clinic.

Respondent 2: There's the office building, and behind it [0:02:00] is the retirement home, and that's where the St. John's...

Respondent 1: On Major Street.

Interviewer: I just want to ask one question before we move on. At what ages were you living in this neighbourhood? In 1923 to 1942, how old were you during those years?

Respondent 1: I was from a young child to a teenager. I got married when I was nineteen.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 1: So I lived there [0:02:30] all my life.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 1: And I went to Lansdowne school. That was on – there was an entrance on Robert Street for Lansdowne school, and there was a lane that you could cut across from Major Street to Robert Street, and at the end of the lane was a grocery store called Band. Band's grocery store. And then across from that was Lansdowne school, which still stands [0:03:00] today and is on – the entrance is on Spadina.

Interviewer: For Lansdowne school.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Right. I think that that grocery store just closed about ten or fifteen years ago. It was there for a long time.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Called Band.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So you went to school, you walked through the lane.

Respondent 1: Usually because you had to be there for nine, and usually I used to – like my sister said, every hair had to be in place.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: But even as a child, I was always very [0:03:30] – my appearance meant a great deal to me.

Interviewer: Well I told you already, you are ninety and you look fabulous.

Respondent 1: Thank you.

Interviewer: You do look fabulous. When you walk through the lane, did you walk with other children?

Respondent 1: Usually.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So that was a common way of getting to school, using the lanes.

Respondent 1: Shortcut.

Interviewer: Right. Was the lane paved?

Respondent 1: No. Mud. Mud. But to go around, we had to go out to College Street from 67, which was [0:04:00] in between Ulster and College, so you had to go out to College Street, around College to Robert, and then turn in. Consequently, we used to cut through. It was like a shortcut. And on the corner of Major Street, there was a drugstore called Rothbart's. And on Borden Street, Borden and College, was

Koffler's. Koffler who owns Shoppers Drug Mart [0:04:30] now is a descendant of the Koffler that owned that store at Borden and College.

Interviewer: So that was really the first Shoppers Drug Mart, so to speak.

Respondent 1: Well it was Koffler's.

Interviewer: It was Koffler's.

Respondent 1: For many, many years. I can't remember it being Shoppers Drug Mart.

Interviewer: No. I'm sure it wasn't, but that was the first...

Respondent 1: I know that it's the same Koffler.

Interviewer: Was that Murray Koffler, or would it have been his father?

Respondent 1: It would be his [0:05:00] father. Kofflers are pharmacists for a long time.

Interviewer: Right. So what started off as that...

Respondent 1: Koffler on Borden.

Interviewer: On Borden, that eventually became Shoppers a few decades later, maybe.

Respondent 1: Maybe.

Respondent 2: Oh, a lot longer. I think Shoppers was in the '60s.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. What was the pharmacy like at that time, the drugstore?

Respondent 1: They sold [0:05:30] everything. Chocolate bars, medication, did photo...

Interviewer: Development.

Respondent 1: ...developing.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: And they did everything. The one on the corner did everything.

Interviewer: And did you know the owners? Did the owners know you?

Respondent 1: They worked. Yeah. They knew who you were.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So it was really a family store.

Respondent 1: At that time, [0:06:00] the Jewish people congregated on College Street, like on the – like most people were observant. Like I come from a very observant family. My mother and father were very observant, and they would walk on College Street, you know, and it was like the – like you would think the Jewish ghetto because it was from Spadina – [0:06:30] although the Waverly Hotel was there already at that time.

Interviewer: It's a long time.

Respondent 1: You know the Waverly Hotel?

Interviewer: I do.

Respondent 1: Where the homeless go now. It was there. But from Spadina to about, I would say, way down up to Clinton Street, Rushton even, was the Jewish neighbourhood. They all lived – Euclid, Markham, Palmerston Boulevard. If you were rich, you lived [0:07:00] on Palmerston Boulevard. If you weren't rich, you couldn't afford it. And even today, Palmerston Boulevard is considered a posh neighbourhood.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: And like Robert Street, Robert, Major – Robert, Major, Brunswick, Borden, Lippincott.

- Interviewer:** You remember those streets well.
- Respondent 1:** And what was after Lippincott?
- Interviewer:** Bathurst.
- Respondent 2:** It's Bathurst.
- Respondent 1:** [0:07:30] It's already Bathurst.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** So after Bathurst was Markham, Markham Street. Still today, Markham Street, Euclid Street. Still today.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So you're saying Saturday afternoon people would be shpatziring.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. They would go...
- Interviewer:** They would just go for a stroll.
- Respondent 1:** Like the adults would maybe sleep, or they would come from shul. They went to synagogues. They were observant, the Jews, because they were immigrants. Each – in 1942 [0:08:00] some were still – had just come from the old country not too long previous to that, I think. I'm not sure.
- Interviewer:** There were immigrants living there. When your family was living at – in 1923 when you were living there, who else was living in that house? You and your parents.
- Respondent 1:** Me, and my parents. But I remember three boarders, [0:08:30] my brother.
- Respondent 2:** Two brothers.
- Respondent 1:** Two brothers, and well my sister was born five years after me. She was an accident.

Interviewer: Oh. [Laughs] Okay.

Respondent 1: That's what I always say because we're all close together. My brother and I are a year-and-a-half apart, and my older brother was an immigrant. He came from the old country [0:09:00] with my mother. My father came first, then he brought my mother with my brother, and my brother took care of my mother who was very sick on the boat, you know? And he nursed her. He was very good to my mother. He was ten years our senior, and we all lived on Major Street and we had a summer kitchen.

Interviewer: What's that?

Respondent 1: Like they [0:09:30] added on, like, a kitchen where she used to go out there to cook instead of dirtying her kitchen.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent 1: We called it a summer kitchen.

Respondent 2: It was like a back porch type of kitchen.

Respondent 1: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So there was your parents and three children, and then your sister and three boarders.

Respondent 2: It was a three-storeys house.

Respondent 1: Two-storey.

Respondent 2: It was a two-storey house?

Respondent 1: And then when my aunt came from the old country, they brought my [0:10:00] mother's sister. She slept in the dining room.

Interviewer: There you go. Yeah. So your parents helped pay, I guess, helped pay for the mortgage by having these boarders living here.

- Respondent 1:** Well they were relatives, cousins. They were my father's cousins. Like Max Feldman, and [indiscernible 0:10:20] was Max's nephew, and then they brought over Louie Feldman who was [indiscernible 0:10:30] [0:10:30] – like it was all related. And they had no place to go, so they all stayed in the – that was before I was married because when I got married, I took over the bedroom. But the upstairs, when my parents lived on Major Street, there was a tenant. They lived in two rooms and in the middle room were these three boarders in twin beds.
- Interviewer:** [0:11:00] So what is that up to? A lot of relatives and your family, children, two generations, and then another relative came, plus two boarders. How many people were living under that roof?
- Respondent 2:** Six. Ten.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Usually. And my mother used to work hard. She carried...
- Respondent 2:** Because she cooked. In those days it was room and board.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** So she cooked for everybody.
- Respondent 1:** And she shopped in Kensington without a car.
- Interviewer:** So she shopped and she schlepped. [0:11:30] Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** She worked hard. She did. She really did. You think we work hard, boy. Nothing like they did.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. They did work hard. So let me understand. You lived there and then you got married in 1942, and what happened in 1942 in terms of living at 67 Major?
- Respondent 1:** I moved out. My mother bought me a cedar chest and she filled it with [0:12:00] linen, and I left it at home, and I went with my husband during the war. We travelled.
- Interviewer:** Talk about that a little bit please.

- Respondent 1:** We travelled – his first posting was in 1942, and we spent our honeymoon night, the night we were married on the train going to Ottawa, and he – it was his first job, was in Ottawa. And we lived in a boarding [0:12:30] house with the shoemaker and his wife. And two other wireless operators lived there too, and that's where I went the night I was married.
- Respondent 2:** See, a wireless operator in those days knew Morse code because that's what they used to communicate, was Morse code. Like dot, dash, and that's what my dad knew. So [0:13:00] he was positioned in Ottawa to listen for German Morse code signals.
- Respondent 1:** German and Japanese.
- Respondent 2:** Japanese was when you went to Vancouver.
- Respondent 1:** Vancouver.
- Respondent 2:** But when you were in Ottawa, they were listening for the German...
- Respondent 1:** Submarines.
- Respondent 2:** ...the submarines. There was German submarines in the St. Lawrence River. Not many people knew that, but there were. That's what my dad was listening.
- Interviewer:** Whoa. And I guess that's one language that [0:13:30] everybody speaks. I mean the Morse code is the Morse code, so it doesn't matter what country it's from. It's the Morse code. So he was very specialized. Your husband, your dad was very specialized.
- Respondent 1:** He was exempt from the army because of it. It was vital war work, it was called.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So he was exempt from the army, but he was doing work for the country.
- Respondent 2:** He was doing work for the country, but officially he was never in the army. He was discharged after one month for the army.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. They used to have...
- Respondent 2:** It was like a secret. It was top secret.
- Interviewer:** Whoa. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** They used [0:14:00] to have conscription for the army.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Well he was conscripted, so he was one month in the army. But he would have been exempt because he helped support his mother.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** His mother was a widow. His father died when my husband was only eighteen, seventeen, eighteen, and his father was only forty-seven. And he's helped support [0:14:30] his mother, so he maybe would have been exempt regardless. But he had this job. He got this job. He studied for it to become a wireless operator. It was quite a lot of books, I tell you. And then later years, he became a gemologist. I don't know if you know what that is. It's a specialty in jewellery, and he worked for H. Williams and Company on Church Street [0:15:00] until he died.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** He worked. He went into work when he was sick.
- Interviewer:** Well sounds as if he was quite organized and disciplined. He did the Morse code, and then he learned all about this...
- Respondent 1:** He had to leave school, you see, when he was eighteen because there was no way of...
- Respondent 2:** It was the Depression, so he had to leave school. There was no safety net or social net like there existed now.

- Respondent 1:** He was very studious and he studied it a lot. He did [0:15:30] a lot. He did a math course, and he did a jewellery course. He became a gemologist. He did a lot. He loved woodworking. He was quite the man. He was worth knowing, I'll tell you.
- Interviewer:** Good for you. So you chose well, and he chose well too.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. I hope so.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Okay. So in 1945 you returned to Toronto.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. After the war, he was stationed in Lethbridge, [0:16:00] Alberta, and that's where they gave him – I couldn't find a place to live. In North Battleford, I mean.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 1:** North Battleford. And you know, they still have outhouses in North Battleford at that time, and I went home because we were staying in a hotel, you know? It was too expensive. So I went home to Major Street and shortly thereafter he resigned and he was offered [0:16:30] a job with the United Nations. And he couldn't take his family in Malartic, to go to the Malartic. I don't know. That's what they – and he didn't go because he couldn't take me, and I already had Herbie.
- Respondent 2:** I forget where he went, but I remember the story that they want to use his Morse code skills, right?
- Respondent 1:** [0:17:00] Yeah. As a wireless operator, he was – he...
- Respondent 2:** It was in northern Canada somewhere.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Way up north.
- Respondent 2:** Way up north. I forget where. Some small village.
- Respondent 1:** His friend took it. He was single. His name was Harry Rash, and he went up there for about a year. You can't go up there without, you

know – this was the middle of nowhere, and you couldn't take a family, so.

Interviewer: [0:17:30] So 1945 you came, and he followed you back here. And would you just tell us for our recording where you moved to when you came back in 1945?

Respondent 1: I stayed with my mother.

Interviewer: So you were back at 67 Major.

Respondent 1: Yeah. And then I took over the flat.

Interviewer: That means you took over the second floor.

Respondent 1: And that's when I went to work in Toronto. I worked for Dominion Life Insurance company, and [0:18:00] then I became pregnant.

Interviewer: But you already had one child or no?

Respondent 1: No.

Interviewer: Oh, that's when you became pregnant.

Respondent 1: He was born in 1947.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Respondent 1: I worked at Dominion Life. My brother got me the job. He used to examine the applicants for insurance.

Respondent 2: Her older brother's a doctor.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah. My younger brother was a dentist.

Interviewer: Well educated.

Respondent 1: Yeah. We all went – we all had the [0:18:30] opportunity. My older brother was very education-conscious and he wanted us all to go to university. That's why I went to Harbord Collegiate because the

Harbord Collegiate led to university. It didn't lead to anything else pretty much, but when I became engaged my father said – I remember it like today. He says, "You have to know how to earn a living."

Interviewer: Woo.

Respondent 1: So I left [0:19:00] Harbord. I was in fourth year and I went to Central Commerce for eight months, got a job on Spadina Avenue. Eight dollars a week.

Interviewer: Oh my. What year was that then?

Respondent 1: When I came back, 1945.

Interviewer: Eight dollars a week.

Respondent 1: That was 1942. That's when I started to go with Maury. When I [0:19:30] started to go with Maury I had to – so it's 1938, '39 I went to school to Harbord.

Interviewer: Okay. And that's when your father said – that's interesting because there were people at that time who thought you really just have to get a husband, and earning...

Respondent 1: Well, if you didn't get a husband at nineteen, you were lost. I'll tell you that much.

Interviewer: And you were really getting old.

Respondent 1: Yeah. The old maid.

Interviewer: Right. Since we're talking about this, can you think back a little bit to what [0:20:00] dating was like? What did you and your friends do at fifteen, sixteen, eighteen?

Respondent 1: We went to the show on Saturday usually.

Interviewer: Now a boy and girl together?

- Respondent 1:** No. Girls. Girls.
- Interviewer:** A group of girls would go.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. We would go to the show, or we would hang out, but as a child we played house. A great deal of house.
- Interviewer:** And what did that mean? How would you play house?
- Respondent 1:** We would play. We had dolls and we played house, you know?
- Respondent 2:** [0:20:30] Even as a teenager?
- Respondent 1:** Doctor – yeah. No, as a teenager, no. A teenager, you already started to experiment with cigarettes [laughter] at that time.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So let's not move too quickly. When you played house, the girls played, and they had dolls, and you were mothers?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. We all played. We were mothers, or somebody was a sister, and somebody was a doctor. And you know, we copied the nuns a lot. But we all – we helped in the [0:21:00] house a lot, all of us. Of the children – it was hard times, you know, when I was growing up. It was the Depression.
- Interviewer:** And when they didn't have all the – right. And you didn't have the automatic washing machine.
- Respondent 1:** We had a piano at home, and I took piano lessons.
- Interviewer:** Let's come back for a minute. So as a young child you were playing house and then you said the teenagers were trying out smoking. I want to hear a little more about the dating or what things were like. Like when you were fifteen, when you were seventeen.
- Respondent 1:** Oh, when I was [0:21:30] sixteen, I had my first date with a boy. Cole was his name. And he – I borrowed a dress from the tenant that lived in our house, and she loaned me – I was a kid. Sixteen. And she loaned me a black dress, and they took me to – at that

time, I didn't know how old I was, to the Hotel Embassy. [0:22:00]
And my first drink was a gin gimlet. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: At sixteen, ma?

Interviewer: [Laughs] But you remember. That's a lot of years ago that you remember what you drank. Yeah.

Respondent 1: I don't drink, you see. I don't drink. That's why I remember it. And every time I did drink, I used to say gin gimlet because that's all I – but that was the – he was an old, older boy.

Interviewer: Which means?

Respondent 1: And he was a friend of my girlfriend's brother. [0:22:30] And the brother took out the girl, and I was like a double-date.

Interviewer: Okay. So you were sixteen, and how old was this older boy?

Respondent 1: He must have been about twenty.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Respondent 1: Twenty-one.

Interviewer: And how did you get to the hotel where you had that gin gimlet?

Respondent 1: By streetcar.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And what did you wear on your feet?

Respondent 1: Shoes.

Interviewer: But sensible shoes or heels?

Respondent 1: Heels. Heels.

Interviewer: Yeah. [Laughs]

Respondent 1: Well the heels weren't like now, [0:23:00] you know?

- Interviewer:** Yeah. Sure. But you wore heels and the borrowed dress.
- Respondent 1:** Borrowed black dress.
- Interviewer:** Any makeup?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Sure. Sixteen, you wore makeup.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** I was married when I was nineteen and I was still in school. I was in Harbord Collegiate when I started to go with my husband.
- Interviewer:** Was your husband also in Harbord Collegiate?
- Respondent 1:** No. He went to Central Tech.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** Like was daddy working when you met him?
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because my [0:23:30] dad's father had died.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent 2:** Right? So he had left – he had to leave school to support his younger brother and his mother.
- Interviewer:** That was the way it was at that time.
- Respondent 1:** There was no...
- Respondent 2:** There was no choice.
- Respondent 1:** There was an older brother too that helped.

Interviewer: And do you remember a second date? Did you go with Cole again or somebody else?

Respondent 1: No. I didn't. I didn't. I dated my – later on, that's how I met my husband. I dated my [0:24:00] sister-in-law's brother, took me out, and he took me up to the – they used to have boys' clubs, and he took me to this Club Rido, and my husband was there and he took his phone number, and he asked me out, and that's when we started to go together.

Interviewer: Who noticed who first? Did your husband notice you...

Respondent 1: Yes.

Interviewer: ...or did you notice him?

Respondent 1: He noticed me first.

Respondent 2: So was the Club Rido like the boys' club?

Respondent 1: At the boys' club.

Respondent 2: Okay.

Respondent 1: [0:24:30] And it was on College Street above a store, but I forget which store.

Interviewer: But College near where?

Respondent 1: Between Spadina and Major.

Interviewer: So right in our neighbourhood.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: So that was part of what we call Harbord Village now.

Respondent 1: Oh, is that what you call Harbord Village?

Interviewer: Now we're calling it that.

Respondent 1: Oh.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. So tell us a little about when you met your husband and – so he saw you at the Rido Club.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: And he took [0:25:00] your number.

Respondent 1: And he took my number from Phil. This is Phil. He took me out.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. So you were with Phil that night.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 1: And then my husband asked me out and we went about – like we started to go steady. Like I didn't date that much. I dated a non-Jewish boy, Wilmot Hill. Took me out once.

Respondent 2: This I did not know.

Respondent 1: Was my brother's [0:25:30] boyfriend. He had a crush on me, and then when I got – started to go with my husband, he had a crush on Riva. [Laughter] I have a picture of him here. [Laughter] He's a nice – I don't know what happened to him after the war, you know? Riva, my sister asked me, "What happened to Wilmot?" However.

Respondent 2: What's his name? I'll Google him. [Laughter]

Respondent 1: Yeah. Google him. Maybe he's still living. He'd be ninety-five. He's not living. Anyway.

Respondent 2: [0:26:00] What was his name?

Respondent 1: Wilmot Hill. W-I-L-M-O-T Hill, H-I-L-L.

Interviewer: And when you and your husband got married...

Respondent 1: At the Chudleigh House.

Interviewer: That's just what I was going to ask you. What was the Chudleigh House?

Respondent 1: It was like a – like now, what can I compare it to where they get married. It was just a hall.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: [0:26:30] Like you know, it wasn't a synagogue.

Interviewer: And did you have family there? Or some friends in addition?

Respondent 1: Yeah. I had a big wedding.

Interviewer: Oh, you did. What does big mean? Sixty people?

Respondent 1: Oh no. It was more because my husband's family was big, and my family's big, and I had a maid of honour. My sister was my maid of honour. She's five years younger, and it was a nice wedding actually. [0:27:00] Full-course dinner.

Interviewer: And a rabbi married you?

Respondent 1: Rabbi Zimmerman.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: They lived across the street from us on Major Street.

Interviewer: Oh, so he knew the family.

Respondent 1: And he signed the marriage...

Interviewer: The Ketubah.

Respondent 1: The Ketubah.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Were there any shuls in the neighbourhood at that time?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. The shul we went to was on Beverley Street. There were a lot of shuls on Beverley Street. The Henry Street shul, the Apter, which is now the **[indiscernible 0:27:30]**.
- Interviewer:** **[0:27:30]** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** So that, **[indiscernible 0:27:31]** – the Apter went with the **[indiscernible 0:27:34]**, and they were on Beverley Street, and my father belonged to the Apter. He was from Opatow.
- Interviewer:** What's that?
- Respondent 1:** From Poland.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 1:** Opatow.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's the name of the town or the village where he was from. Now there's a synagogue right now on Brunswick just north on Harbord called the Narayever. Was that there at that time? No.
- Respondent 1:** I don't remember that.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Were there any other synagogues in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent 1:** **[0:28:00]** Henry Street shul.
- Interviewer:** But north of College.
- Respondent 1:** North.
- Interviewer:** In our neighbourhood, or any shteebles?
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Interviewer:** No.

Respondent 1: Not that I remember.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: All I remember was the rabbi. He had a lot of traffic, right across the street from us. 63, 67. He was – I don't know what number.

Interviewer: To come back, you were talking about this was a very Jewish neighbourhood.

Respondent 1: Yeah. There was one Christian on Major Street.

Interviewer: I know. [0:28:30] You keep anticipating my questions. [Laughs] I was going to ask you about others.

Respondent 1: One Christian, but I don't know his name.

Interviewer: But mainly...

Respondent 1: Mainly it was Jews. You can go from one all the way to Bloor Street.

Interviewer: And what language? What did you speak at home?

Respondent 1: We speak Yiddish.

Interviewer: You spoke Yiddish at home. And a lot of your friends the same thing?

Respondent 1: Mostly Yiddish.

Interviewer: So how old were you when you learned English?

Respondent 1: I spoke to my mother in Yiddish [0:29:00] all her life. My mother was a housewife and she worked hard, and she didn't know any other language. My father could already – he worked for T. Eaton Company.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent 1: You remember T. Eaton Company?

Interviewer: Oh, absolutely. For sure.

Respondent 1: Well he worked for T. Eaton Company and he met the public, you know, and he could speak English. You know? He read – he could sign his name. My mother was basically – you would [0:29:30] say illiterate. Most women...

Interviewer: She eventually learned English.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah. She understood us, but...

Interviewer: But she couldn't read anything.

Respondent 1: No.

Interviewer: Could she read Yiddish?

Respondent 1: Yiddish.

Interviewer: She could read Yiddish and she spoke that. And Hebrew too.

Respondent 2: No, not Hebrew. Just the Yiddish.

Respondent 1: My mother? My mother could.

Respondent 2: Spoke Hebrew? No.

Respondent 1: No.

Respondent 2: She spoke Yiddish.

Respondent 1: She spoke Yiddish.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: Jewish, you know?

- Interviewer:** Yeah. I certainly do. Yeah, yeah. So as long as you lived there, there were no changes.
- Respondent 1:** [0:30:00] I spoke to my mother always in Jewish. Always. Until she died even, you know? She was a very sick woman.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. I wonder if you can talk a little bit about – you talk – I copied this picture of this fisherman who was – he was there on the street because he was functioning from the sidewalk.
- Respondent 1:** We used to have peddlers come with [0:30:30] rugs on a wagon with a horse and wagon pulled, and there was rugs. Actual rugs. And my mother used to buy them, you know, because you would buy them on credit. A quarter a week every Sunday or something. That's how she bought my trousseau.
- Interviewer:** Oh, isn't that wonderful. That is. How did they get your attention? Did they – what did they do?
- Respondent 1:** The [0:31:00] peddler – the fisherman used to yell, Weibe, Weibe.
- Interviewer:** Which means?
- Respondent 1:** "Women, women, women." And they used to come out. And the rug men – I forget how they used to – some of them rang a bell.
- Interviewer:** They had a big, noisy bell.
- Respondent 1:** Big. Sharpeners. Men who sharpen knives used to come also with a little wagon like that with all the – [0:31:30] and they used to sharpen the knife. And they would ring a bell.
- Interviewer:** What else came to your door?
- Respondent 1:** Came to my door?
- Interviewer:** Like the knives, the fish, the...
- Respondent 1:** And the milkman would come.

- Respondent 2:** With horses. I remember the horses. As a kid, I remember the horses.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. They had a horse and buggy.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So the person with...
- Respondent 1:** They would have cars later.
- Interviewer:** So the person with the knives didn't have a horse, but a lot of the – but the milkman had a horse.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And the fishman, [0:32:00] he didn't have a horse.
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** No. They came – they're just – their little wagon, but the carpet man did have a horse.
- Interviewer:** And that's how your mother brought some carpets for you for your trousseau.
- Respondent 1:** No. She didn't buy me carpet. She bought me linen.
- Interviewer:** Oh, linen.
- Respondent 1:** I still have.
- Interviewer:** So from somebody coming to the door?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. It was like a...
- Interviewer:** On the street?
- Respondent 1:** ...like they'd go from door to door. They would sell – like [0:32:30] now vendors.

- Interviewer:** Right. Was there also somebody – I'm thinking of the refrigerator, what you had at that time.
- Respondent 1:** Icebox. Icebox. You had an – an iceman would come. Greenberg was his name. And he would sell a block of ice and you have a basin underneath the icebox and it would drip down the water. And when the ice melted, you bought another one.
- Interviewer:** [0:33:00] So did he come daily? How long did this block of ice last?
- Respondent 1:** I can't recall, but I believe it was – they would come every day. And it was also a coalman in the winter. In the winter you didn't need an iceman because you had a – you put it in the summer kitchen. It was cold, you know?
- Interviewer:** So that same person delivered the coal in the cold weather?
- Respondent 1:** Winter.
- Interviewer:** And the ice in the hot weather.
- Respondent 1:** Greenberg [0:33:30] was his name.
- Interviewer:** Clear memories for you.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. I haven't talked about it for years. My sister would remember more. She's five years younger.
- Interviewer:** What about the horses? Where did the horses – where did they put the horses at night?
- Respondent 1:** You know, my girlfriend, Shirley...
- Respondent 2:** Shirley Keshina?
- Respondent 1:** No. I have two girlfriends named Shirley. Shirley [0:34:00] Wolfish was her – her father was a peddler. He would go – a junkman, you know?

- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** And he had his horse in his backyard.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 1:** And the wagon.
- Interviewer:** So he had something...
- Respondent 1:** Shirley Wolfish.
- Interviewer:** So he had some kind of little protection for the horse, I guess, in the winter.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. Sure.
- Interviewer:** In the backyard.
- Respondent 1:** In the backyard.
- Interviewer:** On Major Street?
- Respondent 1:** On Major near Bloor. They lived near Bloor.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 1:** [0:34:30] And once – both two sons were lawyers. Both sons. Wolfish.
- Interviewer:** But look how the – the father did something that was a much more basic – and then their children were educated.
- Respondent 1:** Most children were educated because if you didn't become a doctor, a lawyer, or a dentist, there was no place for a Jew to go because my brother wasn't accepted in the hospital in Toronto [0:35:00] for his internship.
- Interviewer:** Ah, because they didn't want any Jews.

- Respondent 1:** They didn't take many Jews into medicine either. There was a quota for Jewish people at that time.
- Interviewer:** And where did your brother study medicine?
- Respondent 1:** University of Toronto.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so he got in. He was one of the few who got in.
- Respondent 1:** He came here from the old country when he was ten, so he was a big boy when – you know? He worked. He worked at the post office sorting mail to help [0:35:30] for his education.
- Interviewer:** So he worked and he went to medical school.
- Respondent 1:** And my father was a tailor.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. But your brother could not do an internship or residency here, so he had to go to some other province?
- Respondent 1:** He went – yeah. He went into the United States.
- Respondent 2:** Well, where did he go? Was it New York or Boston?
- Respondent 1:** No.
- Interviewer:** And then did he come back to Toronto? Or did he stay...
- Respondent 1:** [0:36:00] Yes. He practiced here in Toronto.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** He contacted TB while he was in internship, and from London – he went to London in the TB clinic. He was there for, I think, a year.
- Interviewer:** That must have been a big worry for your family.
- Respondent 1:** Oh boy. And then he came back. He married his childhood [0:36:30] sweetheart, and they lived on – you know where they

lived? On Bathurst Street in a duplex. I don't know if it's still there. Bathurst and College.

Interviewer: Oh, right in the neighbourhood.

Respondent 1: Yeah. That's where they lived.

Interviewer: Now you said your father was a tailor. Did he work from home, or did he have a little space somewhere else?

Respondent 1: No. He worked for T. Eaton Company.

Interviewer: Oh, that's what he did at T. Eaton Company.

Respondent 1: Not the first job, that, but that's one of his jobs at T. Eaton Company. [0:37:00] Worked there for twenty-five years. He got a watch from – then when he retired he worked for the Maple Leaf Gardens, if you remember the Maple Leaf Gardens.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Respondent 1: Well he used to fix the uniforms for the ushers.

Interviewer: Oh, so he continued to work. When you said Maple Leaf Gardens I thought he must have changed his work, but no, he continued to be a tailor.

Respondent 1: He was a tailor. He used to take the kids in to see a hockey game. Don't ask. [0:37:30] They had fond memories.

Respondent 2: As kids, we used to think he owned the building because he would just walk in and say, "Hello, Mr. Birnbaum."

Respondent 1: "Hi, Joe." "Hi, Joe." [Laughter] He knew Harry Ballard. What was his name?

Respondent 2: I'm sure he made some suits on the side for people.

- Respondent 1:** Yeah. He did. He had a man that, you know, called – his name was Jack Mason. He made suits. Like my father measured. He was like a – you know?
- Respondent 2:** A freelance.
- Respondent 1:** **[0:38:00]** Freelancing. Is this going to be all on the...
- Interviewer:** It's all on. It's all on.
- Respondent 1:** You're not going to use all of it.
- Interviewer:** No, little bits and pieces.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, because it's not...
- Respondent 2:** You have to ask about the 3M club.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Herb was telling me about...
- Respondent 2:** My mother mentioned it.
- Interviewer:** Okay. You showed me a picture of the 3M club, you and your friends.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Triple M Club.
- Interviewer:** Triple M Club. So would you just talk about that a little **[0:38:30]** please?
- Respondent 2:** What did it stand for again?
- Respondent 1:** Merry Modern Missies.
- Respondent 2:** Merry Modern Missies.
- Respondent 1:** And we were a bunch of girls that just got together and just had fun.
- Interviewer:** And you got together...

- Respondent 1:** This is Wilmot Hill.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's Wilmot. The second date.
- Respondent 1:** Wilmot Hill.
- Interviewer:** Right. Or the third date. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** I'll show you my wedding picture after.
- Interviewer:** Is that it right here?
- Respondent 1:** No. That's my girlfriend.
- Interviewer:** **[0:39:00]** Okay. So tell me about the Triple M. How old were you and what did you do?
- Respondent 1:** I want to see how old I was. I don't remember. We were in our teens. In our teens. And we just got together and, you know, we didn't do anything. We had rings, we paid dues, you know? We really...
- Interviewer:** But you had a club.
- Respondent 1:** We had a club.
- Interviewer:** Where people belonged.
- Respondent 1:** We had a club, and it was fun. Here they are. Here we are.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** **[0:39:30]** See? See? I know – I can't remember her name. Betty. Betty. Nettie. Nettie Mendelssohn. I remember them all.
- Interviewer:** You all seem to be wearing white shirts.
- Respondent 1:** Overalls. Overalls.
- Interviewer:** And white shirts.

Respondent 1: Yeah. That was, you know...

Interviewer: It just happened. It wasn't a uniform.

Respondent 1: We were just kids, sixteen, seventeen, and we were [0:40:00] like friends. You know, go together, go to a movie, or whatever.

Interviewer: Now you talked about the ice and the coal. Did the furnace change during the years that you were there? Do you remember it changing?

Respondent 1: The furnace was coal.

Interviewer: It was coal the whole time that you were there.

Respondent 1: No.

Interviewer: No. It changed.

Respondent 1: Later. Later years they put in oil.

Interviewer: Okay. And what about the icebox? Did that change?

Respondent 1: [0:40:30] Yeah. To a fridge.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. But they weren't self-defrosting yet.

Respondent 1: No. You defrosted.

Interviewer: Yeah. Initially you had to defrost.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Respondent 1: Yeah. When I lived upstairs, I already had a 1945 – when I came back from the war, I already had a fridge.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

- Respondent 1:** As a matter of fact, I moved that fridge here and...
- Interviewer:** [0:41:00] You brought it to this house that we're in right now?
- Respondent 1:** From Major Street.
- Interviewer:** Do you have...
- Respondent 1:** We have a new one. It's in the basement.
- Interviewer:** Right. Right. Were there any people who had work at home – what we call cottage industry? Were any of the men or the women working from their homes that you knew about?
- Respondent 1:** Mr. Dell was a printer. No. He didn't work from home. Babbins, I don't [0:41:30] know. She didn't have a husband. I don't know what they did.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** The Rosses didn't work at home. The Minces – he did something from at home. I think he was – you know, I think he was an insurance man.
- Interviewer:** And he worked from his home maybe.
- Respondent 1:** I think so because I don't remember.
- Interviewer:** You talked about when you went on dates you would take the streetcar. Either you walked to College, or you took a streetcar.
- Respondent 1:** Mostly you would go – [0:42:00] if you went on a date, you would go to a club. They would take you to the club.
- Interviewer:** But to talk about the transportation now...
- Respondent 1:** One boy, Harry Siegel, he was killed in the war, but he had a car at that time. He belonged to this Club Rido, but he was from a wealthy family, but most people you walked or you took the streetcar.

- Interviewer:** So not...
- Respondent 1:** You didn't take taxis either because [0:42:30] if they had money to take you out, there wasn't that much.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. So people used the streetcars.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Now you said the back lane where you walked was muddy. Were all the back lanes muddy?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Pretty much? Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Sure.
- Interviewer:** Did you use the back lanes at any other times other than to get to school?
- Respondent 1:** Well once, Wilnot Hill tried to teach me how to ride a bicycle on the back lane, and [0:43:00] that's about it.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** Other than that, I...
- Respondent 2:** But as kids, I remember playing in the back lane.
- Respondent 1:** They played ball. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because we weren't on the main streets. We played in the lane.
- Interviewer:** Was it paved at that point? Or still not paved?
- Respondent 1:** They played baseball, the kids, in the back lanes.

- Respondent 2:** Stickball, we called it then.
- Interviewer:** Right. Okay. So later on it was used more for kids playing and having a good time.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** What about when your children were young and you were living there, what did your children [0:43:30] play?
- Respondent 1:** Oh, they went to nursery at three and four. When we came here, they played in the backyard.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** I have a big yard here.
- Interviewer:** And when you were downtown, what was in your backyard? What was behind your home?
- Respondent 1:** We had – my father had [0:44:00] a grapevine, and he had a pear tree, and flowers my mother planted, and grass. We had grass in the backyard.
- Interviewer:** And did you use the grapes?
- Respondent 1:** My father made – I don't know if you know what vishnick is.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** What do you call it in English? What do you call it?
- Respondent 2:** Is it a schnapps?
- Respondent 1:** No, it's delicious. I didn't know what you'd call it in English. [0:44:30] He made wine in the barrel, yeah.
- Interviewer:** So the grapes were not wasted.

Respondent 1: No. [Laughter] And they also bought grapes for that, for the wine because there wasn't enough.

Interviewer: Is the Vishnick a more – is it more strong, more concentrated than wine?

Respondent 1: Vishnick is like a delicacy. It's a brandy.

Interviewer: A liqueur?

Respondent 1: A brandy.

Interviewer: A brandy. Okay.

Respondent 1: That's what it is.

Interviewer: And the pears, did you use the pears?

Respondent 1: Yeah. We canned. My mother canned pineapple, [0:45:00] pears. She worked hard. Oh, my.

Interviewer: Yeah. Those women did work hard at home.

Respondent 1: They did work hard.

Interviewer: Yeah. So she had a very active kitchen too, and a very active washing machine.

Respondent 1: We all helped. We all helped. My sister helped. We used to wash the chairs every Thursday, white chairs, painted.

Interviewer: White. [Laughs] With those muddy back gardens. Yeah. Do you remember anything about garbage collection?

Respondent 1: No. I don't.

Interviewer: [0:45:30] Anything about the roads? I mean what was on the roads? How were they used?

Respondent 1: Gravel. Gravel.

Interviewer: So they weren't – so you're saying some of them were not paved.

Respondent 1: Some were not paved.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: Later on they were paved, but the beginning it was gravel. Hard gravel.

Interviewer: Right. Yeah.

Respondent 1: Like pavement.

Interviewer: And so most people use public transportation and there were these kind of horse and buggies, or people just using their carts and coming to sell things to you. Do you remember when there began **[0:46:00]** to be some more cars, or was that not while you were down there?

Respondent 1: Not many cars.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Not that I remember. You had to be pretty well...

Respondent 2: We didn't even have a car when we moved up here, so you can imagine.

Respondent 1: And the nearest store to me was the butcher at Bathurst and Wilson.

Interviewer: Whoa. So that was a schlep.

Respondent 1: Mm. And that was where the bus stopped when I cried buckets when I moved up here. Oh, I hated it. I hated this house. **[0:46:30]** It's a wonder I'm still here. [Laughter]

Interviewer: How many years ago was that? How many years have you been in this house?

Respondent 1: Sixty-one.

Interviewer: Woo. So you cried...

Respondent 1: I've lived here over sixty years.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent 1: But my husband didn't want to move. Every time we – he always used to say, "I don't want to be house poor. I don't want to be house poor." So we stayed on. And then when we were ready to go into a condo, we went to look at the condo, we were already at **[0:47:00]** – coming to the condos, he came in, he said, "Yeah, yeah." And finally, "Well, we'll get a lawyer," blah, blah, blah. Then we came home and he opened the front door and he says, "Nah." He says, "I'll be lost up there because I won't have the garden," and we never moved. And after he died, I wasn't prepared to move.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent 1: And now I'm really not prepared to move. I still have the big backyard, and this is **[0:47:30]** where I'll...

Interviewer: Well you've been here for more than half a century. That's a lot of years. This is really home.

Respondent 1: Yeah, but the neighbours are nice to me.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. That's good.

Respondent 1: Like I have a lot of Orthodox neighbours, and they revere old people, and they are very nice to me. They didn't know how old I was until this year.

Interviewer: Did you have a special birthday this year?

Respondent 1: Well, she asked me. She kept asking me. She kept asking me. And she says, **[0:48:00]** "I know last year you were in your eighties, but you can't be in your eighties forever." [Laughter] And so I told her,

and she told her next door neighbour, and so it went. But now I don't tell my age.

Interviewer: So we shouldn't say on the recorder how old you are.

Respondent 1: No.

Interviewer: Okay. When I'm your age and I look like you, I'm going to make sure everybody knows, if I'm lucky enough to look like you.

Respondent 1: That's what everybody says.

Respondent 2: Her father lived to be...

Respondent 1: Ninety-five.

Respondent 2: ...ninety-six. I [0:48:30] think I saw his birth certificate, it was all in Polish, that said – which would have made him ninety-eight.

Interviewer: So your father lived a long life.

Respondent 1: Yeah. When he died, we all said it didn't bother anybody. He could have lived a little longer. Never sick a day in his life. Didn't have arthritis. He walked from Major Street to the Island ferry.

Interviewer: Woo.

Respondent 1: Walked every day to work to Eaton's and back. Eaton's was [0:49:00] down on Queen Street, and we lived on Major Street, and he walked there and back. Ate black bread.

Interviewer: So he did something right. I mean that sounds very right to me.

Respondent 1: My mother, you know, she cooked different than we do, but you know, it was a well-balanced meal. Like she made a [indiscernible 0:49:16] by using soup, and the vegetable was in the [indiscernible 0:49:22], and so on. But you know, it was a well-balanced – and he was strong. Wasn't he strong? He gave you a handshake like you [0:49:30] wouldn't believe.

- Interviewer:** Sounds like he was a remarkable man.
- Respondent 1:** What a man. What a man.
- Respondent 2:** You should add the only thing he drank was every night at dinner, before he sat down, he had a shot.
- Respondent 1:** One shot.
- Respondent 2:** One shot of whiskey, that was it. Sat down and ate his meal. Didn't talk until he finished eating, then he'd talk. But he never had anything else to drink.
- Interviewer:** So maybe we should all have a shot of whiskey and live ninety-eight and healthy.
- Respondent 1:** He was okay. He was only in the hospital once that I remember [0:50:00] for prostate.
- Interviewer:** Well, but you also said earlier that he was a runner, so he all...
- Respondent 2:** No, no, no.
- Interviewer:** Who was the runner?
- Respondent 2:** Her...
- Interviewer:** Oh, that was your husband.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And your father was. So your husband was a runner, and your father was the walker. And a tailor who was a major walker. Got it. Okay.
- Respondent 1:** But he didn't have a car. He had to...
- Respondent 2:** Why should you pay for a streetcar?

Respondent 1: He had to save a car ticket. It was Depression. It was hard growing up. If I got ten cents for the show a week, that was [0:50:30] a lot, and the reason I had money was because I used to get money for a drink at school, at Harbord. You take your lunch, and I used to save it up, and that's how I would have a quarter. Yeah. It was hard times. It wasn't easy for my parents when my brother was at school, my older brother.

Interviewer: So they sacrificed because they wanted him to have good education.

Respondent 1: Well he wanted it. He believed in it. He [0:51:00] did.

Interviewer: I'm sure your parents believed in it too.

Respondent 1: Yeah, well it was that or nothing. Most of our generation, the men are professional. Like I told you, my girlfriend's brothers, two brothers, lawyers. My younger brother was a dentist, but he was in the Air Force, and he went when he – the war was over, he went through the – he went back to [0:51:30] school, got his matriculation from Harbord, and then he went to university and became a dentist.

Interviewer: When you were living in that neighbourhood, was it considered a safe neighbourhood

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent 1: There wasn't much crime. There was a Chinese laundry at the corner of Ulster and [0:52:00] Major.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent 1: Across the road from that was a grocery store. You know?

Respondent 2: Well that's where all the grocery stores were was on corners and those neighbourhoods. You could still see it in the architecture that's there now.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: They're all converted.

Respondent 1: Yeah, but mostly we shopped in Kensington, but Passover, my mother used to give her – she believed in supporting Jewish – **[0:52:30]** so she would give an order to this little grocery store. It was too expensive to shop in a grocery – it's like here now, you know? You go into Pusateri, you pay through the nose.

Interviewer: But you're saying your family shopped mainly in the Market because the prices were better.

Respondent 1: Well she carried her own baskets of fruit, and chickens...

Respondent 2: Ten people. She went there every day.

Respondent 1: Fish. Everything.

Interviewer: And do you remember how they sold the chickens?

Respondent 1: They sold the chickens live. They would **[0:53:00]** go out, pick a hen. They would take it to the shochet and kill it, and then...

Interviewer: Was it – go ahead. Sorry.

Respondent 1: And then they would pluck it, and to save a dime or whatever it cost to have somebody pluck it, you plucked it yourself.

Interviewer: So your mother was busy plucking the feathers.

Respondent 1: You plucked the chicken.

Interviewer: Well that's changed a lot. Nobody is – nobody's buying a live chicken these days.

Respondent 1: Well even there's a time before Yom Kippur **[0:53:30]** where you make a sacrifice, and now they do it with money. But when I was

growing up, they did it with live chicken. My mother used to bring home a live chicken and she would...

Interviewer: Around her head. Swing her.

Respondent 1: Around her head, and she would say, "Death to the chicken. Long life to the" – you know, she would – it's going back, boy. I was a kid.

Interviewer: [0:54:00] Yeah. But those were the rituals of the time and the traditions of the time.

Respondent 1: They were religious. Like they used to go [indiscernible 0:54:07]. I don't know what they call it now.

Interviewer: They still call it that.

Respondent 1: They used to go to feed the fish. We used to walk to the island and we used to take bread and feed the fish.

Interviewer: You're looking at your watch.

Respondent 1: No, I'm not. I'm not picked up until five o'clock. I'm fine.

Interviewer: I'm wondering if you [0:54:30] had any connection at all with the university being close by. Did that affect you in any way? Were you aware of it?

Respondent 1: No, I didn't go to university. I went to – from Harbord, I was in my fourth year. I went to – I didn't graduate, and I went to Central Commerce for eight months and then I got a job after eight months.

Interviewer: Well I think we've covered an awful lot today. [0:55:00] It's been fabulous listening to you, but I'm wondering, Tillie or Herb, if there's something that I did not bring up that you might have thought about before I came that would have been interesting to talk about all those years ago when you lived in the neighbourhood.

Respondent 2: I can't think of anything about your life or life down there that you have told me.

Respondent 1: I used to play double-dutch and skipping a lot, you know? We would [0:55:30] play alleys.

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Respondent 1: Do you remember alleys?

Interviewer: I sure do. Yeah.

Respondent 1: And we used to shoot – the girls too. And if they were – if you had money, you know, the kids would have bicycles, they would have roller skates.

Interviewer: Roller skates that you attached to your shoes.

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Interviewer: That's what I grew up with.

Respondent 1: My brother didn't get roller skates until after his bar mitzvah.

Interviewer: With some of the bar mitzvah [0:56:00] money?

Respondent 1: My mother – we didn't have money for – every Passover we would get new clothes – new shoes, new clothes, but we didn't have money for – my mother used to call it luxuries in Jewish.

Interviewer: What's the word in Yiddish?

Respondent 1: [Indiscernible 0:56:15].

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: I think. And we didn't have that, but we had – I was always dressed to the umph.

Interviewer: Really?

Respondent 1: My father was a tailor. He made me suits.

Interviewer: [0:56:30] Oh, so your father made clothes for you.

Respondent 1: My mother sewed too for us. Made dresses. Yeah. It was hard growing up because they had to save money to bring over each – a sibling, and they had to – the kids were at school if you had children. You had school. They had to support the children. It was hard.

Interviewer: So...

Respondent 2: How big [0:57:00] were the classes? How many kids were in a class at school?

Respondent 1: In the '20s, thirty.

Respondent 2: The same as now. That hasn't changed...

Respondent 1: Yeah.

Respondent 2: ...I guess.

Interviewer: But that was another thing – that they didn't have much money, but they still used some of their money to bring other family members from Europe.

Respondent 1: Yeah, yeah, yeah. They did. There was an immigration man called Mr. Wise. I don't remember. Angelo Wise, my father used to call him. [0:57:30] Angelo would be Angelo – Sydney?

Interviewer: Angelo is fine.

Respondent 1: And Wise was his name. And he was like a – he would bring them over. He would, like, lay out the money.

Interviewer: Oh. And then – so he would lay out the money, but then the families would repay him probably with some interest on top of it for his money. Yeah.

Respondent 1: [0:58:00] It was hard times.

- Respondent 2:** So like he would bring them over and finance their fares?
- Respondent 1:** You know, my father came over with my mother's father, and my mother's father didn't like it here and he went back to the old country and he was killed by the [indiscernible 0:58:15]. My mother's father. But my father came and brother, his brother. I think his brother brought him. They had [0:58:30] to have a sponsor. Like my friends today, the Philipinos, they come – they have to have a sponsor. So they had a sponsor, and he brought his sister. The two brothers brought the sister, they brought a niece.
- Interviewer:** And they brought them into their homes too.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Often.
- Interviewer:** For the most part.
- Respondent 1:** For the most part.
- Interviewer:** And kept them there until they got on their own feet.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, well they lived – my father lived with his brother for a while, and then when my mother came, they lived on [0:59:00] Euclid for a little while, and then they moved to Major. They bought the house. They lived on Markham too. That was before me.
- Interviewer:** Well...
- Respondent 1:** It's a wonder I remember all of this.
- Interviewer:** Have you heard some new stories, Herb?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I never knew about the Wilmot Hill. [Laughter] And I Googled him and nothing came up. [Laughter] Except that there's a [0:59:30] Wilmot Hill winery near Sydney. Not Nova Scotia, but...
- Interviewer:** Australia.
- Respondent 2:** Australia. So maybe the guy made it big, mom. [Laughter]

Respondent 1: He used to come into the house. I can't remember when he didn't. And then after the war, we didn't see him.

Respondent 2: Maybe he was killed.

Respondent 1: Maybe he was killed in the war. Could be.

Interviewer: I think we're going to wind up now, but I want to say to you, Tillie, and to you, Herb, for making the [1:00:00] connection, for making a [indiscernible 01:00:02].

Respondent 1: Go up and bring down my wedding picture. I want to show her.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 1: I just want to show you just for a minute.

Interviewer: I'm very happy to see it, but while the tape is on, I just want to say thank you, Tillie. Thank you so much for...

Respondent 1: You're very welcome.

Interviewer: I really enjoyed speaking to you.

Respondent 1: I hope you can use some of it, and if you can't, it's also good. It was a nice afternoon.

Interviewer: For me too. Thank you very, very much.

Respondent 1: You're welcome.

[01:00:28]

[End of recording]