

096 Terence Macartney-Filgate

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

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: The date today is the 24th of February...

Respondent: Correct.

Interviewer: 2013. And I'm sitting with Terence Macartney-Filgate. Thank you very much for coming. I'd like to start with some facts, and that is would you tell me where you have lived and the years that you lived there in Harbord Village?

Respondent: I've lived in Harbord Village. I moved in '72 [0:00:30] to Willcocks street...

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: And was there from '72 to '85, then I was away for five years, and then back onto Willcocks in '90 to the present.

Interviewer: So you've spent – except for five years in between, you've been there since 1972.

Respondent: Yeah. And I was always in contact with this street because Barker was a good friend of mine and things.

Interviewer: [0:01:00] What brought you to that street the first time, and what brought you back?

Respondent: Both the same. Barker Fairley. I did a film on him, and you know, and then he'd phoned me up. I knew him for, well, about two years then and then we'd see him, and he said, "There's a house for sale next door. Come and buy it." So I went down and bought the house and moved.

Interviewer: You were very obedient.

- Respondent:** Yeah. He was a good friend. Barker was very – so he was – "Come on by" **[0:01:30]** when I was there.
- Interviewer:** So obviously...
- Respondent:** And the houses cost a lot less, I think. It went for sort of under forty thousand in those days.
- Interviewer:** But I'll bet that probably was still not easy, forty thousand in 1972.
- Respondent:** No, but it wasn't a blast interest rate for a mortgage.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm. So were you living next door to him? Or...
- Respondent:** No, two doors.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** **[0:02:00]** That's it. Yeah. Two doors from him. Three. Three or two, I can't remember.
- Interviewer:** That was your first motivation. You got a phone call, he said, "Come." You came, you bought.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. I'd see him regularly, see, and hadn't thought of the – the property was never that long on the market. Still it goes, you know, in a couple of weeks in this area. And no, Barker said the house next door, "Come down. Come look." And I had a production **[0:02:30]** assistant who was into real estate. She actually became a professional real estate, so she came down and looked at it and said, "It's a good buy." I trusted Lila as – over the years. So it all started doing a profile on him, a film profile. I was a CBC producer, and – which I did in 1970. I met him, became friendly.
- Interviewer:** **[0:03:00]** So you moved there in 1972. Was it a good move for you?
- Respondent:** Oh yes. I moved into a wonderful area.

Interviewer: Please tell me, what was wonderful about it?

Respondent: I don't know. There's a great mix of people. People mind their own business, but a great mix of people. My gosh, who was on the street then when – I was saying there was Catherine Corbin, and there was Nan Fairley and Barker Fairley, and my next-door **[0:03:30]** neighbour then was Bud Milne. He was the professor at German, and Barker was the professor emeritus, so – or German. And Barker had done his PhD in Germany before the First World War.

Interviewer: Whoa.

Respondent: And he met a man in **[indiscernible 0:03:57]**, and they spent an hour **[0:04:00]** talking, and it then turned out that this guy was Canadian and they were speaking in German to each other. And he'd come over to recruit somebody to come over and teach in the German Department of – build it in the University of Alberta. Barker was out in 1913 or so to Alberta, and then from there he came to – when he lived in Toronto – his wife has a park, his first wife down here. Margaret Fairley Park.

Interviewer: **[0:04:30]** Oh right. Of course.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah, I know that park.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I brought my grandchildren there.

Respondent: Well that was his first wife, and she was English also, and she was Dean of Women at the University of Alberta, and then they moved to Toronto, I think, about the First World War in the beginning and he became ultimately – I can't remember when, but before my time – Professor of German. **[0:05:00]** And he's well known for some of his translations. His translation of Faust.

- Interviewer:** So you're saying an answer to my question that you liked the people who surrounded you. Anything more that you want to say about living on Willcocks or living in this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** No. The people – no. There's nothing beyond it's – it's always been friendly. **[0:05:30]** I mean, but without being chummy chummy, you know?
- Interviewer:** So you respect each other's space and privacy.
- Respondent:** Very much so, yeah.
- Interviewer:** And that's important to you.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you were there until '85 and then you left for five years.
- Respondent:** I went to Cabbagetown. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But you came back. What brought you back?
- Respondent:** I don't really know. Oh, the house. The house that – it's a long – I mean a complicated **[0:06:00]** story. I was living with somebody else and we owned property, and then we split the property and so I got 94 then.
- Interviewer:** So you have been there now five years since 1972. Are there some changes that you can describe to me?
- Respondent:** Well it's got more noisy as there's more – not threat, but you know, the student. But there was always a problem with the student residents and people **[0:06:30]** boozing it up on Saturday nights, which people still suffer from on Robert Street. There was a couple...
- Interviewer:** So you're saying you have it on Willcocks and they have it on Robert Street. Or you had it worse.

- Respondent:** No, no. There's a co-op on right opposite, but that never seems to be particularly noisy.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** On Robert, now I'm speaking outside my own area because it's not – a hundred. No, it's less than a hundred meters away.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent:** There's a house [0:07:00] that students rent. It used to be the swimming team, and they were always drunk and trying to be a part of something. So the people who lived over there were always unhappy, but Robert Street's far away.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Right.
- Respondent:** It's as far as the bottom that you'll go from there.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent:** But it wasn't called the Lower Annex or anything. I think it was always thought of as the Sussex...
- Interviewer:** Sussex-Ulster lower side. Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Which it still goes – which was active [0:07:30] in at least the '70s. I don't know when it started, but it was fairly pretty active.
- Interviewer:** You mean the Residents' Association?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Oh, it's been a very active Residents' Association.
- Respondent:** But in those days, I said it was active.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

- Respondent:** And there wasn't any really big redevelopments going on in the neighbourhood.
- Interviewer:** Are you – is that related to the active Residents' Association? The fact that there weren't big developments happening?
- Respondent:** Oh, I would think so.
- Interviewer:** So they fought to keep it.
- Respondent:** There wasn't much to [0:08:00] complain about.
- Interviewer:** I don't remember the exact years of the Spadina Expressway issue. Were you there at that time?
- Respondent:** Yeah. That started, I suppose, in the late '60s. I mean I wasn't living on the Willcocks actually in the late '60s. I was up here working for CBC, but I lived in New York and would commute. [0:08:30] Yeah. Because the exit ramp was due to drop off about where the end of Willcocks is down to Spadina. And that – but that was still going on in the '70s, and then under the Davis government, that was an important strip, you know, three-foot strip of land, so they couldn't – across it. You'd have to look up the history about that.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So you came at the tail end of it, I think you're saying.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Well I think we're all grateful [0:09:00] that that never happened.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Well it would have been – well because it would have gone to a big chunk of Forest Hill, so there was a lot of...
- Interviewer:** So there was resistance up there too.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. But to come down through Forest Hill would come a long way. I know – I can't remember exactly, but I know where the exit ramps were, where they are now.

- Interviewer:** Well that would have been the end of this community as it is now with our...
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. It would have just destroyed it.
- Interviewer:** Right. **[0:09:30]** When we're discussing who made up the population of Willcocks, who else was – I mean you're talking about some...
- Respondent:** You had the Portuguese, and some Italians, but there's the Portuguese which – you can – who Portuguesed their houses. I think I'm venting, which is the bottom opening windows, you cut all the wood away and use wrought iron. You take bottom-opening windows. Somebody **[0:10:00]** in the Portuguese community must have had a special deal on bottom back then because you flattened the roof of the house and took all this, de-Portuguese a house.
- Interviewer:** De-Portuguese a house. Are you using that as a verb?
- Respondent:** Yeah. I've vented. Yes. Way back when. Well there's a classic case on Robert Street. If you look just where Willcocks – where are we today?
- Interviewer:** Oh, Willcocks moves into Robert Street.
- Respondent:** Okay. And you just look across, there's a **[0:10:30]** row of about five charming little houses, and they've all been Portuguesed except one at each end, which you can see what it used to be like, and that was about – I think of it as being done, or had just been done when we moved originally to Willcocks.
- Interviewer:** And the windows, are those the windows that open sideways?
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** I know those. So you get a little bit of air.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Bottom-opening. When you get your air conditioner in and – **[0:11:00]** I don't know what it is. Most of the Portuguese came from the Azores, not from Portugal itself.

- Interviewer:** Yes. I used to live on Robert Street. Yeah.
- Respondent:** So I don't know, you know. They were, of course, a big predominant – and just as you look at the school playground, you can see the sort of whole ethnic change in the mixture of Toronto, you know? The public school just down the road.
- Interviewer:** Right. Lansdowne.
- Respondent:** Lansdowne. Lord [0:11:30] Lansdowne.
- Interviewer:** So you've watched some changes, waves of immigration.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Well Lord Lansdowne serves more, I think south. I don't know. It's hard to tell, but it may be through south of College.
- Interviewer:** Oh, and north of College because when I lived on Robert Street, my neighbours went. I lived between Harbord and Willcocks, and my neighbours, the children certainly went there. Yeah.
- Respondent:** No. I would [0:12:00] say the Portuguese because then it starts to be gentrified, as they used to say, or white-painted. I think white-painted word comes in before gentrification. Not that there are any white houses left, but that was the first thing, you know? Paint the bricks.
- Interviewer:** Oh. Painting the bricks. So they didn't necessarily paint them white; they just painted them.
- Respondent:** Well it was a tendency to paint white, and then various other colours, and...
- Interviewer:** [0:12:30] And now they're blasting or sandblasting.
- Respondent:** Yeah. That's expensive. I mean it's a very expensive job to sandblast and repaint.

Interviewer: In terms of the atmosphere of the neighbourhood, because you've been here – now it's forty-one years. Well, a couple of years off in between – do you see some changes that have occurred?

Respondent: Well there's little bits. I mean originally way before when you walk anywhere here, you [0:13:00] realize every corner had a corner store.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: And the corner of Spadina, the northwest corner of Spadina and Willcocks was a little local store run by two Chinese brothers who could also repair clocks. I mean it's suddenly obscure. And that now was bought by – it was a little art gallery for a year or so, and that is an expensive property being done up, [0:13:30] at the northwest corner. But there still was a local store there, and there were plenty – of course, property was cheaper, but there were a lot of communal houses, young people, and I remember – and I would have to look up the corner of the Robert and Sussex, I think at the corner. There were complaints because they grew cabbage in the first yards, front yards of growing cabbages, which of course as they rot, [0:14:00] smell.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: That was the origin of Cabbagetown because the Irish who, in Cabbagetown, grew cabbages on the front.

Interviewer: So when that happened on Robert Street, you're saying people complained.

Respondent: Yeah. There were complaints, I remember, in the – because there were quite a lot of – property was cheap and there were a lot of, you know, this is just sort of post-hippie, you know? And so there were lots of houses, which you know, had six, seven people [0:14:30] living. Anyway, they – I remember cultivating their cabbages and their neighbours complained. Cabbages smelled when they were all...

Interviewer: Yeah. And they also smell when they're being cooked, I think, too.

- Respondent:** Yeah. But you need to cook a lot to make the difference.
- Interviewer:** You mentioned some corner stores.
- Respondent:** That was the only one left. There's a couple. There's [0:15:00] one on Sussex and Brunswick, I think, on the northwest corner. There's a store there still.
- Interviewer:** And at that time, what were the stores like in, say, '72 to '75?
- Respondent:** Oh. You know, there used to be one right opposite Lord Lansdowne, which is now a private property. It's never been fully fixed, which I think they were a German couple. A very neat, [0:15:30] neat store. They'd sell, you know...
- Interviewer:** When I first moved here, I remember enjoying their lovely old wooden floors. I remember that.
- Respondent:** Right.
- Interviewer:** So are they still – I mean I know that the store closed about ten years ago, but nobody...
- Respondent:** Well somebody fixed it up, and then they'd never really opened the front up. There's still sort of paper on the window and I can't remember – well you talked to Tim Knight, have you?
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent:** Well he's [0:16:00] President of the Residents' Association.
- Interviewer:** Oh, Tim Grant.
- Respondent:** Tim Grant. Sorry. Tim Knight I think is – Tim Grant. But he knows all that sort of detail.
- Interviewer:** Oh, I'll discuss that with him, yeah.

- Respondent:** Go for him – you know, what happened to the store, why would they move.
- Interviewer:** I certainly watched that store. It was around when I moved onto Robert Street.
- Respondent:** Right.
- Interviewer:** And then with not very much on the shelves, and then it closed. Yeah. Anything else [0:16:30] remarkable or interesting about the stores, whether they were on...
- Respondent:** No, because there were only – there was that store, the two Chinese brothers who were down to a few tins of milk, I think. And I think they were gone by '85.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** I'm pretty certain.
- Interviewer:** And on Bloor Street or College, did you use those streets much?
- Respondent:** I'm just trying to think in those days if the [0:17:00] Dominion there, well the Metro, I think that was open, but that must have been about that time. College? It wasn't – it was non-descript. It hadn't become computer alley, you know? There are a lot of the computer – that are empty. There's a least four computer stores emptied out there now.
- Interviewer:** So even the computer stores are...
- Respondent:** Yeah. There was a movie house there. The Cinema Lumiere, which is where [0:17:30] Home Hardware has moved to.
- Interviewer:** And that's now closed too.
- Respondent:** No. They've just moved down.
- Interviewer:** Oh, they moved.

- Respondent:** To the east.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So the cinema, was that a regular cinema? Or a special kind of...
- Respondent:** Yeah. It's one of these cinemas run, I don't know. A couple of people have bought it and ran it. No, it was a bit of a small movie house. So that was quite – that became Factory Direct, who have now moved over to **[0:18:00]** Christie Pits. And then Home Hardware's come down, gone east, whatever it is. Five or six.
- Interviewer:** Any other movie houses in this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** No. There was always the Bloor as well, which is a staple of the neighbourhood.
- Interviewer:** I'm so pleased about that. I am.
- Respondent:** But I can't always see the first runs because they've always waited until the first-run movies came out of Varsity and things and came to the Bloor, you know, within three or four weeks.
- Interviewer:** **[0:18:30]** Oh, so that's a big change.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** How the Bloor's being used now.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Now it's the documentary and it's flourishing, I hope, which I'm sure it is, but during the days of taking second runs, you know, it's new films. But the Cinema Lumiere was a nice little theatre.
- Interviewer:** And very convenient for those of us in this neighbourhood.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. I don't know who. You would have to go into somebody – I suppose – what's his name? **[0:19:00]** Our orderman.
- Interviewer:** Colin Vaughan.

- Respondent:** Colin. He should know. Or somebody in his office would know what was the history of the cinema. Cinema Lumiere. From the very name you can tell it was not within the normal run.
- Interviewer:** Well that's why I was asking. It sounds like a more artistic kind of...
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. It was.
- Interviewer:** With a name like that, yeah.
- Respondent:** But it was a small house. Definitely a small house.
- Interviewer:** When you started to live here, [0:19:30] were there children on the streets on Willcocks or Robert?
- Respondent:** I don't think – it wasn't a big child populated neighbourhood. I never remember that. I was the only – you were never conscious of it. Though it must have been more because there used to be an ice cream truck. Robert was one where you were going north in those – and you could hear the ice cream truck with his [0:20:00] – playing his tune come up in the summer, and would park on the corner of Willcocks and things. And I expect it would go up to Harbord and park near there, but you could hear the music coming from...
- Interviewer:** Which would get all the kids dragging their parents out.
- Respondent:** Yeah. The ice cream. So there must have been more children.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. But there were never – I mean the houses are quite close to each other, so it could have been a higher density, but with children, but it wasn't you're saying.
- Respondent:** Not in those days. [0:20:30] I don't think. And who else? Just out of interest, Gail can now tell you. And I'm trying to think. He's a Nobel Prize winner. Where she is now, he rented – he's at the U of T. Not that many Nobel Prize winners kicking around the U of T.
- Interviewer:** So Gail Singer bought her house from this fellow?

- Respondent:** Not from him. He was renting.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. But she lived there after he did then.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:21:00] Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** No, the person who owned that house, she – I think she's in California. Used to commute out to California. And then, if my memory remains, the Nobel Prize winner there, with his lady's candle, she got a commission to paint him and made off with him.
- Interviewer:** Oh. Oh, so there's some good...
- Respondent:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...good gossip and good stories on Willcocks Street.
- Respondent:** Now Gail could probably fill you in more. She's – have you talked to Gail?
- Interviewer:** [0:21:30] No. I don't know how long she's been there.
- Respondent:** She's been in Africa. Gail moved – she must have moved about '85, I think. '84, '85.
- Interviewer:** Yeah that's too late. I want people who were there 1975 at the very latest, so she's just a newcomer for our purposes.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I'm trying to think. Tim would know. Tim Grant would know who would be all – and he should – [0:22:00] very much keeps his finger on the pulse. He's a very good person too.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah. He's fabulous. And well you know, he's the head of the HVR.
- Respondent:** Yeah. No, I know.
- Interviewer:** And hardworking.

- Respondent:** But he would know who were the...
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Well I have a number of people feeding names to me, just the way I got yours.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I was thinking of you need a Portuguese researcher to go and dig the old ladies out.
- Interviewer:** Well I lived next door to a [0:22:30] family when I was on Robert at 158, and I have yet to interview them because they come from the Azores, as you know, and there are three generations living there, so I have to call them and make an appointment with them. But you're right because the woman there doesn't speak English, but her husband does.
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. Now you need that, I think, with the – I mean the row is far more older ladies in black mourning than you see now. I think [0:23:00] the Portuguese are largely, excuse me, moved out. The Italians who were a bit further west in this town when I've done research, the Italians and the Jews almost went in lock-step as immigrant groups because the Italians – the Chinese were around City Hall, the original Chinatown, and then just south of there, the Italians had come in. The Jews were there, [0:23:30] and then extend to this area. And the Italians keeping a little bit that way, and then they all went off in the late '70s or early – no, early '70s up to Eglinton West. So that's why those are immigrant groups that sort of...
- Interviewer:** Do you have any understanding of why they moved?
- Respondent:** I think they wanted, you know, the bigger suburban house.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** Basically. You know, [0:24:00] dreams of glory.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I think possibly it was also a measure of success with moving to a bigger home.

Respondent: I mean they worked hard and saved their money and moved. And you know, there's that whole Italian area along Eglinton West, but a lot of that came from down here and the movement. I did research on them once, that's why I sort of know about them.

Interviewer: Mm. What's your impression about [0:24:30] assimilation in this neighbourhood in the '70s when you were here and there were...

Respondent: Well the Portuguese, they didn't speak English. I don't know. You would have to live next door. I mean absolutely contiguous, I think. The men all worked in street construction, things like that. You know, streetcar tracks. There was no any sense of any tension or anything. [0:25:00] I don't know what they felt when they saw the stuff being – the white-painters or the...

Interviewer: You mean the people who had been here before, what they felt to see what was being done...

Respondent: It's worth looking at the war memorial in Lord Lansdowne in the school because you look at the war – a long time since I've been in there, but I seem to remember there was a war memorial for the '14, '18 war, and then '39, '45, and then you have a good [0:25:30] guess at the Jews in the Kensington Market. So probably coming north. This would have been the outer fringe where you've got the little temple here. Here.

Interviewer: The Narayever, right – just north of Harbord.

Respondent: Yeah. They always annoy me because they don't put the date it was built. It's got a historic plaque, and I keep on thinking about bugging them say, "Why don't you have the date. It'd be so..."

Interviewer: You're right. You're right.

Respondent: "Please have a look at the plaques." And it says it's a preserved – it's a very neat little [0:26:00] building with an active congregation, of course, that comes on a Friday or Saturday. But I like to see the date.

Interviewer: Yeah. It's an oversight. Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Well I just have to tell you...

Respondent: Because the big one down – that's 1912, I think, in the Kensington Market because I remember when the Kensington Market was always called the Jewish Market when I came here.

Interviewer: Yes. I've heard it.

Respondent: Then it was called the Portuguese Market. Now it's just Kensington [0:26:30] Market.

Interviewer: Is that a place that you've gone to, used?

Respondent: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Interviewer: And how have you used that?

Respondent: Restaurants. There used to be one called the Blue Wall Portuguese, which they're very good chicken – very – a West African dish from very, very – and that's because that's all developed very much so.

Interviewer: And when you say developed, [0:27:00] what are you referring to?

Respondent: Well I'm referring to the number of stores, restaurants, and things, you know, and that's widened its economic social range, I would think.

Interviewer: Do you go down sometimes?

Respondent: I don't eat there very much. If we go out, I do the cooking, but I go locally a lot. More this...

Interviewer: Does locally mean Harbord, or Bloor, or other?

Respondent: Well [0:27:30] we've been going to Momo's for years.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** And I mean he's been there thirty, thirty-two years or more. So that, if one sort of just goes locally, tend to go to Momo's.
- Interviewer:** Has he sold it yet? I know he's selling it. I don't know if he's sold it.
- Respondent:** Well that and he's got no sign up or anything. But that wouldn't be good for restaurants, eh? For sale.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. But I know he's definitely trying to sell it.
- Respondent:** No, I heard that from sources. He owns the whole building, I think.
- Interviewer:** Yes, he does. And he's also upgraded it. **[0:28:00]** It was pretty shabby when he bought it.
- Respondent:** Oh, he's worked on it for years. He's got the nicest patio because he put in real grapes.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. It's lovely.
- Respondent:** It's the only patio I know in town, which has genuine grapes hanging there.
- Interviewer:** So that's a favourite of yours when you're going out to eat.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Oh yeah. Gone there ever since I moved or he moved there. I mean one local – and then of course Bloor Street.
- Interviewer:** **[0:28:30]** Are there any restaurants on Bloor that you like?
- Respondent:** Yeah. I used to go to Tafelmusik to support – we go to Tafelmusik. Staying where there's just no – billeted, as they say. We've had lots of...
- Interviewer:** So you do that – Tafelmusik knows that they can put people up with that?
- Respondent:** Oh they do. They asked for volunteers years ago.

- Interviewer:** Oh, so you meet a lot of musicians.
- Respondent:** Yeah. This one's a clarinet player from New York and he [0:29:00] stayed with us before, so we've had all sorts of people.
- Interviewer:** So that makes your life more interesting, I think.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Musicians go because they're always camping out, and when they bring in extras or supers, then they billet them around.
- Interviewer:** And of course you live a five-minute walk from the church.
- Respondent:** Which is absolutely perfect, so tend to eat in Tokyo Sushi on concerts, or – which is right across the road. And I was in for lunch the other [0:29:30] day to Mount Everest.
- Interviewer:** It's a favourite of mine.
- Respondent:** Well that's excellent, and their food is excellent as well.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I like their food very much. Yeah.
- Respondent:** So I mean that's another. And whatever other irrelevant things can I think of?
- Interviewer:** Or relevant. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** Yeah. Or relevant, but I was trying to think of something which is useful. Having spent a great chunk of my life on research for various [0:30:00] films.
- Interviewer:** Using this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Beg your pardon?
- Interviewer:** Using this neighbourhood in any ways?

- Respondent:** No. No. Barker was the only reason I knew it because I was living in those days up on Redpath. Not Redpath. Between Avenue Road and Yonge Street. Right up there by Ramsden Park.
- Interviewer:** [0:30:30] What about the roads, the transportation? Comments about that...
- Respondent:** Well since they've made it a maze, because that's dropped the traffic enormously and that's only recently really, the maze. There wasn't through-streets, as they say.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah. Going Bloor to College, and they would race through.
- Respondent:** Yeah. So the maze, when it starts somewhere in the '80s, [0:31:00] I think, that has been very successful.
- Interviewer:** Thanks to Richard Gilbert and his hard work. Yeah. And public transportation?
- Respondent:** Well I never thought how much an improvement the streetcar would be over the bus because remember Spadina used to be angled parking, which meant they cut the parking by fifty percent practically when they took out the [0:31:30] angle parking, but how efficient? Well until they're digging the tracks up just now, that streetcar...
- Interviewer:** Do you ever...
- Respondent:** ...in a dedicated way, they can't see why there was all this screaming and yelling on St. Clair when they did the same thing, put dedicated tracks there.
- Interviewer:** And there was plenty of it.
- Respondent:** No, there was plenty of it.
- Interviewer:** But for people who use public transportation...
- Respondent:** Esther Shiner. There's a name. Esther Shiner was a councilwoman up north who was vociferously [0:32:00] supporting the Spadina...

- Interviewer:** The Expressway?
- Respondent:** ...Expressway. Yeah. Just don't know why it comes out of my mind because I just remember from all the political fights.
- Interviewer:** So there would have been a lot of people in this neighbourhood, and Forest Hill who were angry at her, but she didn't get her way.
- Respondent:** No. I don't know whatever happened, but they had a lot of publicity at one time.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. And a lot of it was negative, [0:32:30] I suppose.
- Respondent:** Was certainly around then.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Do you feel safe in this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Been robbed once I think. That's all. A walk-in.
- Interviewer:** During the day, or at night?
- Respondent:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Were you there at the time?
- Respondent:** Mm-hm. Out in the back garden.
- Interviewer:** Did you know the person had come in?
- Respondent:** No.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so you were in the back garden and the person walked in and walked out with some of your property?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Mm-hm. That's the only time. I mean there'd been other [0:33:00] break-ins. I had my car broken into because of the back lanes, parking in the back lane.
- Interviewer:** Had your door been locked or unlocked?

- Respondent:** Yeah, it was unlocked.
- Interviewer:** Unlocked.
- Respondent:** No one would pick a lock in the daytime. I mean you try it and...
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So they just tried the door and it was open, and they felt welcome. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** Well they walked right in and walked out. My wife's purse and my camera. That's quite a long time ago.
- Interviewer:** But it's still a bad feeling.
- Respondent:** Yeah. But it's **[0:33:30]** not been a – the back lanes had been a problem.
- Interviewer:** In what ways?
- Respondent:** Well for break-ins of cars over the years. I mean I don't know what the rate is, but it's sort of fairly consistent.
- Interviewer:** Now you talk about people parking in the back lanes in garages, or just...
- Respondent:** Yeah. Like we don't have a garage.
- Interviewer:** So it's on your property.
- Respondent:** On property, but it's a very open space.
- Interviewer:** Right. So it's a quieter place to **[0:34:00]** break in.
- Respondent:** There's only, I think, three garages in our back lane. Mm-hm. So most people don't build a garage.
- Interviewer:** Do you lock your door now?

- Respondent:** Yeah. I usually leave the back sliding door open because we're a dog neighbourhood. I've got three dogs and a cat, which is a handful. As my wife says, three dogs are four too many.
- Interviewer:** [0:34:30] [Laughs] Is your – do a lot of your neighbours have dogs?
- Respondent:** Actually, yeah. I would say. Gail's got a dog. Next door to her are two dogs.
- Interviewer:** Sue Dexter has her dog.
- Respondent:** Sue Dexter, but she never takes for a walk, except just out and back. And then there's two across the road on Robert, and there's lots of dogs.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah. It's a big...
- Respondent:** Actually I've been [0:35:00] watching the number – a very high proportion of women owners of dogs.
- Interviewer:** So that's an interesting thing.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I just...
- Interviewer:** Is it the statistic?
- Respondent:** I've always had dogs, but it's really – because go over often – well today, it was icy through Central Tech through the playing field. Though it's a dog – for about an area, all the dog owners go there.
- Interviewer:** I know that spot. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And the number – and they're not the wife being sent out [0:35:30] to walk the dog. That doesn't work anymore. And – but I'm interested as a sort of social change. Fifty years ago, dogs for men, cats for women, you know? Sort of – but it's quite different. You go to Cherry Beach and I used – see, you know, you may get fifty, a hundred owners down there on Cherry Beach.
- Interviewer:** Do you sometimes take your dogs to Cherry Beach?

- Respondent:** Yeah. I used to.
- Interviewer:** [0:36:00] It's a big dog run there.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah, it's big.
- Interviewer:** It's huge.
- Respondent:** It's heaven. Dog heaven.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent:** It's very interesting.
- Interviewer:** So that's your own personal observational search.
- Respondent:** Observation. If you just watch people walking here, you know how many. But I said there must be five on our street, counting Sue in, I think.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** You know?
- Interviewer:** What about people using the street in [0:36:30] any way? Sitting around, conversations, the sidewalks.
- Respondent:** There's no porch-sitters on Willcocks. I think everybody's got adequate backyard. There used to be, and there still are, a lot of porch-sitters on Robert Street.
- Interviewer:** I was a porch-sitter on Robert Street.
- Respondent:** And there was a lovely Portuguese man, he's dead now, but he always sat out there.
- Interviewer:** Mario.
- Respondent:** [0:37:00] Mario.

- Interviewer:** Yes. I lived right across the street from Mario. Right across.
- Respondent:** He sticks in my mind, Mario.
- Interviewer:** Yes. Yes. Lovely.
- Respondent:** And he'd always say hello and have a good chat.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** His chair is still there.
- Interviewer:** Is it?
- Respondent:** Mario's chair.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. He said to me, "Anytime you need any help," and as I said he was right across, and it happened once. I did need help, and he came across.
- Respondent:** So I think there are, you know, I see – you know, the [0:37:30] Portuguese houses and things.
- Interviewer:** So you're saying it's the Portuguese people who use the front porches.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I think so. Yeah. Except the student residents, there's people – but no, I don't get the co-op opposite – I don't see people sit outside there.
- Interviewer:** What about behind the homes? What do you have behind your home? A garden?
- Respondent:** A [indiscernible 0:37:52] estate.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Do you have any garden? Do you use whatever you have behind your home?

- Respondent:** No. [0:38:00] We've got a – it's patioed and things, so there's only one bit of thing, it's patioed with wood and that. No really intensive gardening. Got tree problems. I'm getting depressed because the...
- Interviewer:** What's the matter?
- Respondent:** Well it's starting to grow out and lean on the fence, a big tree, and it starts on our property on the parking lot. Very expensive business to haul a tree down.
- Interviewer:** [0:38:30] Oh yes. And we've had several that have had to come down from here because they were so rotten. Big, beautiful trees.
- Respondent:** Yeah, on their own. Yeah. But where it starts on your property, you're responsible for it.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I know. A few thousand dollars, I think.
- Respondent:** It's already leaning against the telephone pole or whatever. I won't think about it just now.
- Interviewer:** Have you changed the heating in your home?
- Respondent:** Heating was always – yeah. I had a new furnace.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But nothing...
- Respondent:** Nothing. No.
- Interviewer:** You didn't [0:39:00] start with coal.
- Respondent:** No. I lived in Montreal with that, where you became neurotic about your furnace going out.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Did I rake it? Did I stash it up, and – Robertson [indiscernible 0:39:16] in the something papers – I can't remember – essays from the '30s wrote a great thing about furnace and how it governed your life. The stoking, and raking it, and things.

Interviewer: [0:39:30] well I was just telling my husband last night that where I grew up in Montreal, for the first, say, fifteen years of my life, the landlord lived on the second floor and he turned on the heat whenever it was cold. Then he sold the building, so from fifteen years old until I eventually moved out, it was an absentee landlord, so he turned on the heat only when it was required by law. So we talked about heat too because sometimes we were very cold.
[Laughs]

Respondent: Well [0:40:00] I lived in Montreal on Lorne Crescent one floor up, you know, kind of thing, and each floor had its furnace.

Interviewer: Oh. So you could turn it on and off.

Respondent: Yeah. But you were left always – have a dead-eye stoke it, you know? The idea of it going out while you were out at a party or something.

Interviewer: Or sleeping at home.

Respondent: Or having an explosion with your furnace, which was – because you're using anthracite, not straight coal, which would put off gas. [0:40:30] And when you stoked your furnace, you didn't close the door. You then threw in a burning newspaper or stick, and there would be a great "woof" as you burned the gas off. Now you can close the door, but if you omitted to do that, you get an explosion in the furnace which would lift the cover of the furnace off, and you used asbestos cement, was called furnace cement, to seal all the cracks up.

Interviewer: Was a thick kind of...

Respondent: [0:41:00] Yeah.

Interviewer: I remember that coming in a thick covering.

Respondent: So now you're really going back, see, and nobody would know what we're talking about. Furnace cement. [Laughter] Made from asbestos. But I remember that.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. I remember it well too. Churches, synagogues, any recollection of...
- Respondent:** No. They didn't start going – Tafel doesn't start until the '70s. **[0:41:30]** No. Actually the house, 94, and I don't know the right term, the equivalent where the temple, the synagogue of the sexton who looked after it, what's the word? There's a word for it.
- Interviewer:** The person who looked after...
- Respondent:** Like a church sexton. Like a manager who sees the furnace is on and everything's repaired, and the sextons, and does all the laboursness of it. Anyway, **[0:42:00]** whoever looked after the little temple over here, he lived at 94.
- Interviewer:** Ah. Oh really?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Ah.
- Respondent:** And I remember being so impressed when I got there. His son-in-law would visit, and his son-in-law was well into the seventies. His seventies. He was very old.
- Interviewer:** Yes, yes. What about the JCC? Has that been something that's figured into your life at all?
- Respondent:** No. JCC doesn't really come **[0:42:30]** up, I suppose, until the last ten, fifteen years. You know, when it was really done and becomes much more of a cultural centre and things.
- Interviewer:** It is. It is.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Both a cultural centre...
- Respondent:** But that's modern, you know?

- Interviewer:** Yeah. You talked about the students living on your street and sometimes being noisy.
- Respondent:** The noise is way back when. We never had great noise. I think **[0:43:00]** Sue, Sue Dexter, because she's contiguous, she's probably – have you interviewed her?
- Interviewer:** No, I haven't. I'm on the Board of Directors with her, but I haven't interviewed her. Do you have any thoughts about the university being so close to our neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Not about being close. I have thoughts about its development and the whole business over the student high-rise. The one on Spadina, which **[0:43:30]** is being fought over now at the OMB. And the – it's been bad developers when you look at Fort Jock, the...
- Interviewer:** What's that?
- Respondent:** The Athletic Centre.
- Interviewer:** Fort Jock?
- Respondent:** Yup. And there's Fort Book. [Laughter] You know, Fort Book looks like, you know, the Stasi headquarters or whoever the secret police are.
- Interviewer:** That's a very good word, "fort."
- Respondent:** But the **[0:44:00]** Fort Book, that predates the Fort Book, the late '60s. Funny, I was coming back from the Con Hall the other day thinking the developments of the university have been very poor architecturally in the last forty years. They really have not – you look at the Massey Hall and its sort of little fussiness dates it to the late '60s. And the **[0:44:30]** Athletic Complex didn't need to be such a slab of concrete, and the grad student residence with the sign over, you know?
- Interviewer:** So you're saying that they could have used some more creativity and imagination and beauty.

- Respondent:** I think so. They've not been generally good developers, you know what I mean? Their deal – well you know all about it because they sell the rights to the land [0:45:00] and they're not going to manage the buildings, so.
- Interviewer:** Well now we have to wait and see what will happen where we have Top Cuts and the post office...
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...because the post office is now empty. So we might have another battle on our hands.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And what goes in, and then the one in on the – used to be Ukrainian National Home, and then it became the Buddhist – that's what happens [0:45:30] there.
- Interviewer:** Well it certainly our rate payers' associations working. I think that I have kind of touched most of the areas that I was hoping to touch on with you. When you knew that you were coming, did you have any thoughts about what you thought would be interesting for us to...
- Respondent:** I do. When I combed my mind, I said just – well-known people. Catherine Corbin. Nan could tell you far more about that. [0:46:00] She moved in, I think, around about '64.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's good.
- Respondent:** '65.
- Interviewer:** That's good for me. I will phone her.
- Respondent:** I think somewhere around about that.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** And so she would have moved in with Barker. That's whatever – one sec. He's ninety. Eighty-eight or ninety. I can't remember.

- Interviewer:** What's the feeling? What's your **[0:46:30]** feeling about those of you who are living on Willcocks? Is there a community feeling? Or is it...
- Respondent:** I don't know, but it's sort of subliminal unless there's some problem. Things – I can remember odd people. Well I know Sue well because we were in the CBC at the same time, and Gail. Well, **[0:47:00]** and it's more of the others are just sort of passing. Those are – we had an American family on the corner of Willcocks. The northeast side of – who went off – sort of during the Cultural Revolution. They were going to go to China and learn traditional Chinese medicine. It was the very late hippies. He was at OISE I remember. That's at the house on the corner, which is a nice house. Northeast **[0:47:30]** corner.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** Which is actually a very nice house with a two-car garage and everything. But they were, I mean...
- Interviewer:** Idealistic.
- Respondent:** Yes. But they're sort of inappropriately – their possessions.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's interesting. [Laughs] Rich hippies.
- Respondent:** No. We'd sort of say hello. And we have the **[0:48:00]** back lane due in June. I think it's in June.
- Interviewer:** A naming of a lane, you mean?
- Respondent:** No, no. The lane behind us, which I'd suggested – and other people – could be called Barker Fairley lane.
- Interviewer:** Has that been accepted? I know...
- Respondent:** I think it's been accepted, and then...
- Interviewer:** Oh, so you're going to have a ceremony?

- Respondent:** There were too many letters.
- Interviewer:** I know. But there were some issues with that. I don't know...
- Respondent:** Yeah. I think it's been accepted because he – certainly it's the most prominent [0:48:30] person. And we have a sort of – everybody puts – we put folding tables out and food.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so you have a kind of picnic every spring or something?
- Respondent:** I don't remember if it's spring, if it's June, or if it's in the beginning of September. But it's very nice. Everybody from...
- Interviewer:** So people on Willcocks.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And Robert, around there, but [0:49:00] come – everybody brings dishes.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so it's a potluck.
- Respondent:** It's potluck and lays their food out for everybody.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that sounds wonderful.
- Respondent:** No, it's lovely.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. It sounds wonderful.
- Respondent:** It's usually about forty people there. The kids, and – no, you should investigate that because that would be a great thing.
- Interviewer:** Maybe I'll crash it. Never mind investigate.
- Respondent:** No, to crash it and talk to people.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** And Tim, Tim Grant – [0:49:30] that. But it's really nice.

Interviewer: Well I see Tim and I see Sue every month at our meetings, so...

Respondent: Yeah. We'll ask about that.

Interviewer: Another street does it too. It might be Major Street that does it.

Respondent: Yeah, I know it's not the only street.

Interviewer: Yeah. But it's a lovely thing to do.

Respondent: Mm-hm.

Interviewer: Yeah. Well it's been a pleasure for me to meet you.

Respondent: And if anything, you've got my number. Anything I can do. And if you have any problems with [0:50:00] Nan, just say I spoke and said she was a source of information and things.

Interviewer: I will do that. I just want to say thank you very much.

Respondent: No, no. I'd be delighted.

[00:50:11]

[End of recording]