

116 Saul Glass

- Interviewer:** The date today is the 15th of July and I'm happily meeting with Saul Glass, who lived at 160 Robert Street from 1933 when you were how old? You were about six?
- Respondent:** Six, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So from 1933 when you were six to 1950 and you were twenty-two years old. So you lived there ages six to twenty-two. **[0:00:30]** It's a – I like knowing the ages because then I can know what stage of life you were at.
- Respondent:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** And I'll ask some questions related to that.
- Respondent:** Okay.
- Interviewer:** But I do want to say thank you for coming all the way from Pickering...
- Respondent:** Not at all.
- Interviewer:** ...in this thirty-three degree heat day to talk to me about your life on Robert Street such a very long time ago.
- Respondent:** It is. Yeah. It's, as I say, it gets a little scary, but nevertheless, we're all still here.
- Interviewer:** Well your family moved there **[0:01:00]** such a long time ago. Do you have any idea why they chose this part of the city and Robert Street?
- Respondent:** I'm really not sure. We had relatives all within a few minutes' walk between Robert Street and Brunswick and so forth. And we – before that, we lived on Baldwin Street...
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

Respondent: ...renting.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: So I think what my father wanted to do, and my mother, they wanted to have a house that they owned, so that particular house, I guess, was on the **[0:01:30]** market, and I was too young to know what was happening, but I remember walking from the old place on Baldwin Street up to the – to 160.

Interviewer: Do you have any idea what they paid for it at that time?

Respondent: Something around three thousand dollars is what I understand.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Oh my god. Oh, that three thousand dollars was a lot of money at that time.

Respondent: Oh yes. Oh yes. Well, when the average – I'm not sure. I think my father might have been making twenty dollars a week, if that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. **[0:02:00]** Your family moved there in 1933. Your parents and you. Anybody else?

Respondent: Yeah. My brother would have been just a newborn at that time.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: And my sister came later while we were living there.

Interviewer: So there were eventually five people in that house.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And were there ever any other people who moved in with you?

Respondent: Yeah. My parents rented the upstairs for a number of years to another family. **[0:02:30]** Can't remember exactly the year, but it was in the – it was just before the war because I remember the war coming along and these other people were still renting the flat upstairs, so that was a family of four.

- Interviewer:** That means – did your – is this a house that had two floors? Or was there a third floor?
- Respondent:** I understand there's a third floor, which was a little more than an attic. I never – I was never up to see that, but a living space was in two floors.
- Interviewer:** **[0:03:00]** Okay. So that means, I'm assuming, that your family lived on the first floor, and the other family lived on the second floor.
- Respondent:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** So what I would consider a living room and dining room – where did everybody sleep? The five of you on that first floor.
- Respondent:** What was the original dining room of the house...
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** ...my parents had that as their bedroom at that stage of the game.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** And what was the original living room, which had the windows right onto the verandah, was still **[0:03:30]** a living room.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. And – but there was some room for children to sleep somewhere.
- Respondent:** Yeah. My brother and I slept in the addition that was built behind.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. But you described that was built, but it was hot in the summer but cold in the winter.
- Respondent:** It wasn't insulated. It was only – I think it had brick walls, but nothing much more than that.
- Interviewer:** So that was not a comfortable place.

- Respondent:** No, no. I don't remember it being that uncomfortable, but it probably wasn't a hundred percent.
- Interviewer:** But it was [0:04:00] definitely subject to whatever the weather was.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And it wasn't too different inside.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** It was heated in the winter. They extended heating out there somehow. I'm not sure exactly what they did, but there was a radiator in the place.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm. So you had your family on the first floor, another family on the second floor. Did your parents ever take that back?
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. Actually after I moved out, they eventually [0:04:30] took back that upstairs.
- Interviewer:** So that around – sometime after 1950.
- Respondent:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** So you had tenants for many years up there.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I guess they helped your parents pay off that three thousand dollar mortgage.
- Respondent:** I guess that was the idea. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** What kind of work was your father doing?

- Respondent:** He was working in the leather goods manufacturing. Mostly it was making ladies' purses. Like not making the leather, but making the finished product. Purses.
- Interviewer:** And was that [0:05:00] in this neighbourhood? Or was that somewhere out of the neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** No, that factory that he worked in was originally on St. Patrick Street just north of Queen.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** Later it moved to the Adelaide, Bathurst area.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. And did your mother raise the children and do other work too? Or was she – she was a homemaker?
- Respondent:** She was a homemaker. I don't recall her ever having any kind of work.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Well there was a lot more work to run a household at [0:05:30] that time.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Washing machines were different and...
- Respondent:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Do you remember were there any – of the children you grew up with, were there any families that had any kind of businesses in the home?
- Respondent:** Yeah. North on Robert Street, north of us...
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** ...right adjacent to the – is it the Kosower Lane that they now call it?

Interviewer: Yes, yes. Yes.

Respondent: Right on that corner of the [0:06:00] Kosower Lane there lived the Lutsky family.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: L-U-T-S-K-Y.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: And in the back of that house, which I walked by there today, the building is still there, he had a woodworking business. He made chairs, and picture frames, and things like that. A carpentry shop.

Interviewer: So that was adjacent to his home? Or what?

Respondent: It was right behind the home adjacent to the laneway.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: It went across that laneway, the Kosower laneway, that comes to a T.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And right on that T, if you make [0:06:30] a left turn, that woodworking shop was right there. Where you turned left, it was still there for a few feet...

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: ...and still is. I don't – it's not a woodworking shop now...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: ...but the building is still there.

Interviewer: So he had a business that was right there adjacent to his home.

- Respondent:** That's right.
- Interviewer:** And was that something he did? Or do you think his wife worked there too?
- Respondent:** I don't think so. As far as I know, he and his son worked there.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** His son was the father of one of my friends [0:07:00] at that time.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Any other businesses right in this neighbourhood or in people's homes, or adjacent?
- Respondent:** Not to my knowledge. I might – if I think of it later, I can tell you, but I can't think of any other businesses that were right on the street proper there.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Excuse me. There were some on the corner. Like where there's a flower shop, a gardening supply shop right at the corner of Robert and Harbord right now on the [0:07:30] southwest corner was a grocery store.
- Interviewer:** That was a grocery store that long ago.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So it's been a grocery store for many decades, like eighty years, close to eighty years.
- Respondent:** Some kind of a store. Yeah. It's – I notice they now have flowers.
- Interviewer:** It's a grocery store and they have all these flowers too.
- Respondent:** Oh I see. Okay.
- Interviewer:** It is. It's a corner store with, you know, milk, and cheese, and canned goods.

Respondent: Oh.

Interviewer: And they have a lot of flowers. I guess it's a good...

Respondent: Okay. Well what it was in those days was a grocery store. Pure and simple.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: **[0:08:00]** Across from that, also on Robert Street and Harbord but on the east corner...

Interviewer: On the southeast corner.

Respondent: ...southeast corner was a butcher shop. It was a German butcher shop so we never got in there too much. A German delicatessen is what it was more like.

Interviewer: Oh. So you're talking about so long ago that I haven't – I don't know about these places.

Respondent: Oh, you never know that. No.

Interviewer: So it was a German butcher shop.

Respondent: Yeah. Definitely not kosher, so my family **[0:08:30]** never went in there.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Respondent: But the other one that I'm telling you about, the grocery store, was run by a – I'm pretty sure the family's name was Shilman. And if we ever ran out of milk or bread or something like that on Sunday, we used to sneak in the back door to buy it. You had to sneak in because the police would nail you for shopping on Sundays.

Interviewer: So all the stores – those stores were forced to be shut on Sundays.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Nothing was open on Sundays.

Respondent: That's right.

Interviewer: But the owner, you would call the owner? Or he was around [0:09:00] anyway. You knew he was in there.

Respondent: I – my mother or father must have phoned first to tell him we were coming to get a loaf of bread or something.

Interviewer: And he would open up for – or let you in the back door.

Respondent: Let us in the back door.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Did he charge extra because it was Sunday?

Respondent: I don't know. I couldn't tell you that.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Probably not.

Respondent: Yeah. Couldn't tell you that.

Interviewer: Now you said that your family would not have shopped at that German delicatessen. Did your family have a kosher home?

Respondent: More or less.

Interviewer: Kosher style?

Respondent: They were conservative, but [0:09:30] I don't think they were that strict about it.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: But they wouldn't buy stuff that was non-kosher to their knowledge.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: Yeah.

- Interviewer:** So coming to that, I wonder were there some synagogues that long ago in this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** There were some in houses. I'm trying to think of which one. There was one on Major Street, **[0:10:00]** I think. And there was another one or maybe two of them on Brunswick that were – they were private houses being used as a synagogue.
- Interviewer:** So like shteebles.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I guess so. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** In private homes. So they would have a small group of people come and pray in there.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** And just south of us on Robert Street, and I can't remember the number now, but I could take you to the house...
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** ...it's about four or five doors down. There was **[0:10:30]** a byzantine rabbi, like a Turkish rabbi or something like that. He was tall, and gaunt, and wore black gowns, and...
- Interviewer:** And he was a rabbi?
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. And there were some services in that house.
- Interviewer:** So would that have been a Sephardic service, do you think?
- Respondent:** I would think so, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Yeah.

Interviewer: And so he lived there and he had services there.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. He lived there with a sister.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: And I'm not sure the number, what it would have been. It would have been something **[0:11:00]** around – the house number would be around 1950 or '54. One of those houses on that same side of the street.

Interviewer: So it would have been 154.

Respondent: Yeah. Did I say...

Interviewer: You said 1954.

Respondent: Oh. Okay. Yeah.

Interviewer: So it would have been around 154. Just as you say, a few buildings south of you.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: That's interesting that he had a different kind – because the other synagogues would have been Ashkenazi probably.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And his was Sephardic.

Respondent: That's right. **[0:11:30]** Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Did your family belong to a synagogue or go to any synagogue?

Respondent: They belonged to one that was called the Radimer, and it was on Beverly Street. Beverly just north of Cecil.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: I think it's now a Native Indian centre of some kind.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: It was the forerunner of what is now known as a Beth Radom, which is on Bathurst in the Bathurst and Sheppard area somewhere.

Interviewer: Oh, so it's really...

Respondent: But at that time, [0:12:00] as an old house, it was a large house on Beverly Street.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Did you have a bar mitzvah?

Respondent: Yeah, but not there.

Interviewer: Where did you have it?

Respondent: It was on what they called the Romanisha shul.

Interviewer: And where was that?

Respondent: On Centre Avenue just south on Dundas, it was. You wouldn't find it now because the whole street has been ripped up and redeveloped.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Listen, when you lived in this neighbourhood from 1933 to 1950, what was the makeup in terms of [0:12:30] what religions people were, or what ethnic groups they were?

Respondent: As far as I knew, I thought it was almost one hundred percent Jewish, and I wouldn't want to give an exact percentage because I don't know. We did have German families scattered around our house on Robert Street on both sides of the street, but otherwise, I'd say it was close to ninety percent would be Jewish.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. [0:13:00] Were a lot of them new immigrants?

- Respondent:** Was a mix. It was a, you know, it was a mix.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** My parents came over in the early 1920s, so by 1933, whether they'd be called new immigrants by then or not, they weren't fresh new immigrants.
- Interviewer:** Right. Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent:** And I think most of the others in our area were probably the same era of having come from overseas.
- Interviewer:** Was there a lot of Yiddish spoken at the time?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** In people's homes.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:13:30] Uh-huh. What language did you speak at home?
- Respondent:** I spoke English.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** I could understand the Yiddish, but to my knowledge, I spoke English all the time.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Was the JCC in existence at that time?
- Respondent:** No. It was – you're talking about the one at...
- Interviewer:** Brunswick. Well it's at Bloor and Spadina now. There was some JCC at Brunswick at that...
- Respondent:** Okay.
- Interviewer:** Earlier. I don't know when.

Respondent: Yeah. On Brunswick just north of...

Interviewer: And College.

Respondent: ...College.

Interviewer: [0:14:00] Yes.

Respondent: There was a YMHA is what it was.

Interviewer: Yes, yes, yes.

Respondent: On the east side. It was almost next door to a Hebrew free school building. It wasn't called the JCC to my knowledge.

Interviewer: Yeah. It was the YMHA. Yes.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And I think it was some years after, but I can't say when, it got relocated to the Bloor and Spadina area.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think it's – the JCC I think just celebrated sixtieth [0:14:30] anniversary at Bloor and Spadina.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: So that's when it would have moved up there before that, while you were here, then it was the Y. And when it moved up north it was – I mean to Bloor and Spadina, it was still the YMHA. And some of us still like to call it the Y.

Respondent: Oh, I didn't know that. Yeah. Because I guess I was gone by then.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Did you ever go to the Y?

- Respondent:** When it was on Brunswick, yeah. They had a little swimming pool in the place, and they had gyms, and boxing rings. My uncles used to do that sort of stuff. I did **[0:15:00]** the swimming in the swimming pool. When I think of it right now, I don't think the swimming pool was much bigger than a big bathtub. [Laughter] But it was a swimming pool.
- Interviewer:** It was an excuse for a swimming pool.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Did you do boxing too? You mentioned boxing.
- Respondent:** No, I didn't.
- Interviewer:** Did your uncles?
- Respondent:** My uncles did, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Really?
- Respondent:** Yeah. No, I stuck with the pool.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Did you have social – any kind of social life at the Y?
- Respondent:** Not really. There was some concerts and dances **[0:15:30]** we used to attend in the auditorium of that – what they called the Hebrew free school.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** Almost next door to the Y to the south.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. So that would have been when you were sixteen?
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Seventeen?
- Respondent:** Yeah.

Interviewer: They had dances.

Respondent: Yeah. As I recall, they had occasional dances and concerts, and things like that in that – what was – it was like a school building. And I'm not sure...

Interviewer: So I know that there was a Hebrew day school and the Y. They were both at Brunswick and [0:16:00] College.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Just to stick with the Y for a while, your uncles went and they learned to box and they were in boxing matches there?

Respondent: Yeah, my uncle Joe, his name wasn't Glass, his name was Klein. He did a fair amount of boxing in that ring they had there, and I think he also did – but I'm not sure of this – I think he also did sparring partners with [0:16:30] some of the reasonably well-known boxers of the day.

Interviewer: So he was a pretty good boxer, your uncle Joe.

Respondent: Well he was fairly well into it in his younger years, yeah.

Interviewer: Did he work in addition? Or does he just hang around the boxing rink?

Respondent: Oh no, he worked, but I can't tell you exactly what he did other than I know what he did after the war, but before the war he just hung around there.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So he must have been quite fit, I would think too.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And how else did any other family members use the Y? [0:17:00]
Did your parents ever use it?

Respondent: No, no. They never did. Not to my knowledge. My uncles on my mother's side mostly used it.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Now we're – I'm going to come back a bit but not yet. We're talking about you would sometimes go to dances. Could you talk a little bit about what dating was like at that time when you were fourteen? Did you date? Or sixteen, or eighteen? What was the social [0:17:30] situation in terms of courting and dating?

Respondent: I don't remember dating at any of those functions. I just remember going there.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: Now I did have a – what was I? Sixteen or so at the time. I did have a girlfriend, if you want to use that term...

Interviewer: I do.

Respondent: ...who lived on Major Street.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Just north of College.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: But we went elsewhere when we went out. We went with friends to other venues in the city.

Interviewer: Like what? What would you have done?

Respondent: [0:18:00] We used to go a lot in those days to a club that was in the Sunnyside area called the Club Top Hat.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: And I can't – I can't – and we went to friends' houses a lot, but I can't remember – oh, and to Casa Loma as well. Casa Loma had a – I don't know what they call it today. It's an arboretum today, but they did have a Kiwanis Club dances there [0:18:30] frequently on Saturdays and suchly. So that's another place we went. And we went to shows.

Interviewer: You mean movies?

Respondent: To the downtown.

Interviewer: The theatre?

Respondent: To the downtown movies, yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Respondent: That was about the limit of our – what we could afford and what was available in those days.

Interviewer: How did you travel to all these different places?

Respondent: Streetcar or walk, if they were close enough.

Interviewer: Right. So you would – would you go and pick her up and then you would go to the streetcar?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Or would you meet at the streetcar there on the corner?

Respondent: [0:19:00] Oh no. I remember picking her up at the apartment she lived on. It was a small apartment building on Major Street on the east side north of College. So yeah, I would go there because I was

only one street over, and then wherever we went, we would go by streetcar.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Do you remember her name?

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah, I remember her name. Her name was Cecile Markowitz.

Interviewer: And she's not the woman you're married to.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: You never married.

Respondent: No. No. [0:19:30] And I lost track of this one.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. But you do remember her name. [Laughs]

Respondent: I remember her name. Yeah.

Interviewer: Was she your first girlfriend?

Respondent: Yeah. [Laughter] She could have an altogether different name now.

Interviewer: Yeah. Most likely. Yeah. Anything else about dating, how people did it or what they did?

Respondent: No. To my knowledge, that's more or less the way we used to do it in those days. We'd – as I'd say, we would go to a show or go to a dance at one of the venues in and around, [0:20:00] not too far away. I guess when we went to a place like Club Top Hat in Sunnyside was about as far as we ever went.

Interviewer: What was the dress code if you were going to that club? How would you dress for that?

Respondent: I think we just went in either suits or sports coats.

Interviewer: But you dressed nicely. You weren't wearing jeans and a t-shirt.

- Respondent:** No. That was, no, that was unknown then.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. So but – which means you dressed nicely and...
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...the girls might have worn high heels possibly?
- Respondent:** [0:20:30] Yeah, I think so. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Times have changed that way.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Much more casual these days.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. As I recall, we never went to any of those places in casual clothes, other than the movie shows.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. We did get dressed up much more. When you lived in this neighbourhood, how would you describe – to use a class structure. Who was living here? [0:21:00] What kind of financial situations were people living with here?
- Respondent:** I wasn't that conscious of class structure in those days, but as far as I can recall, I would say almost everybody was working people.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** One friend that I had on Robert Street south of me, his father was a furrier. I don't think he owned the business. As far as I knew, he worked in it.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** To my knowledge, everybody either owned a store of some kind, [0:21:30] or worked.
- Interviewer:** And any professional doctors, lawyers? Were they living here?

Respondent: Any of the doctors that I knew, to my knowledge, didn't live right around here.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. I'm not surprised to hear that, but I just wanted to...

Respondent: Yeah. Our family doctor that we went to was at the corner of Harbord and Bathurst. I think it's now a dentist's office on the northwest corner.

Interviewer: Who was that family doctor?

Respondent: That was Dr. [0:22:00] Goldin, but I don't think he lived around here. I can't tell you where he lived, but to my knowledge he didn't live around here.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. But he had a clinic there.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Or an office there.

Respondent: Yeah. And there were some druggists. There was on – well there was quite a lot on the corner, drugstores.

Interviewer: In this neighbourhood?

Respondent: Yeah. There was one that I delivered for on a bicycle for a few years on Brunswick [0:22:30] just north of Harbord on the east side. It was called Feld's Pharmacy. And I believe he lived upstairs from it.

Interviewer: So that was on Brunswick just north of – there's a synagogue there now. There's a little park there now. So that – it must have been – and you said it was on the east side?

Respondent: On the east side. Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Oh, that's long gone.

Respondent: Yeah. Oh, there is no sign of it there now.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. And you delivered?

Respondent: You know what? [0:23:00] I think it was right on the northeast corner.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Okay.

Respondent: Where it was. Now that I think about it a little more. Yeah. You know, in those days we delivered – after school, we drove bicycles around to deliver pop, cigarettes, anything else people didn't feel like walking out for.

Interviewer: So how old were you when you began to work for the pharmacy?

Respondent: I guess I was probably eleven or twelve, or maybe thirteen. [Laughter] It was after school and stuff.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. But you earned some money.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. [0:23:30] And there were numerous ones like that on the corners. There was right at the bottom of Major, corner of College, west side if I remember right was a drugstore, and I get mixed up. There were two of them that we used to like to work for. One was called Koffler's, which is now...

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: You know what it is now.

Interviewer: I sure do.

Respondent: And another one was called Rothbart's, but I think it was more on Spadina south of College.

Interviewer: But – so that's [0:24:00] a lot of pharmacies for the neighbourhood.

Respondent: There was almost one or two pharmacies on practically every street. And another pharmacy I never worked for was on Willcocks and Spadina.

Interviewer: Oh another. Yeah.

Respondent: Last time I saw it, it was like a variety store.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Respondent: It was on the north side of Willcocks and on the west side of Harbord, right on that corner. And he was [0:24:30] about the only non-Jewish one. I remember his name. It was McEnny. That pharmacy. So they were dotted all over the place. Wherever you went, there was another pharmacy.

Interviewer: But the Koffler store you're talking about, that was the first store that eventually erupted into being all this major Shoppers.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: But I could be wrong because I keep getting Koffler's and Rothbart's mixed up. One or the other.

Interviewer: The Shoppers [0:25:00] is Koffler. Koffler.

Respondent: Yeah. But I get them mixed up as to where they were in those days.

Interviewer: Yeah. Right. Yeah.

Respondent: The one I'm thinking about, I believe, was on Major and College. Right on the corner on the northeast corner.

Interviewer: What are some of the other stores you remember? Okay. So you lived south of Harbord but close to Harbord.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: What I've found is people usually knew the stores that they were closest to. So people near Harbord [0:25:30] knew the Harbord stores best. People near College knew the College stores best. But

talk to me please about what you remember about the stores in the neighbourhood and what streets they were on.

Respondent: Okay. I already mentioned to you the Shilman's store that was on Harbord and Robert.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: Now further down Robert Street on the west side, almost facing Lansdowne school was a grocery store called Bands. B-A-N-D-S.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: [0:26:00] And it was a little grocery store right on the street. It wasn't on the corner. It was right on the street facing the school. So I remember that one.

Interviewer: Did you shop there?

Respondent: Very rarely, but the odd time when the Shilman store didn't have what we wanted or something, and we walked down Robert Street to that other one.

Interviewer: Did they have candies?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Because I'm thinking you went to school right across the street.

Respondent: Yeah. Yes.

Interviewer: Did you ever have one or two pennies to spend at that store?

Respondent: Yeah. We bought grab bags with [0:26:30] licorice and stuff like that for about one or two cents.

Interviewer: At that store?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Yeah. So I remember that store. On the bottom of Robert, on that same side, there was a hardware store. And across the road on the east side there was a hardware store, so there was two hardware stores facing one another. The one on the west side, the side of the street we lived on at College was Gerstein's [0:27:00] Hardware. And on College Street between Robert and Major was a Gerstein barber. I believe they were brothers. And again, I don't know if they – I think they lived – I think the Gerstein's lived upstairs from the barbershop, but I'm not sure. I believe they lived upstairs because his wife and daughter were often in the store. And there were so many others, I wouldn't even try to [0:27:30] give you all the names.

Interviewer: Oh. What do you remember about theatres in the neighbourhood?

Respondent: Okay. I remember some of them.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: On College Street between Robert and Spadina, north side, was a place called the Garden Theatre. I have no idea what it is now or if it's even still there. Also [0:28:00] on the north side of College Street near Brunswick was a theatre called the Playhouse. It wasn't a playhouse; it was a movie theatre.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: And then on the – after you cross Brunswick walking west almost facing the fire hall, there was a theatre called – I'm pretty sure it was called the Bellevue. So in that stretch between Spadina and just the other side of Brunswick, there were those three.

Interviewer: Yeah. [0:28:30] Oh they're long gone. I think – I mean I've been in the neighbourhood now for twenty-six years. There are no sign of them.

Respondent: I don't think that they – and up here on Bloor Street on the north side of Bloor just west of Bathurst there was the Alhambra theatre.

On the south side of Bloor just east of Bathurst there was the Bloor theatre. Almost across the street from that, and the [0:29:00] building is still there, was another theatre and I can't remember its name. Midtown. That's what it was called.

Interviewer: So that might be the Bloor cinema now because on the north side of Bloor east of Bathurst is some – the Bloor cinema that shows documentaries. That's the only theatre that still exists.

Respondent: Okay. So its original name was the Midtown.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: And the Bloor theatre...

Interviewer: Was on the south side.

Respondent: ...was on the south side.

Interviewer: No, that's long gone.

Respondent: And there's no sign of it...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: ...that I can recognize.

Interviewer: So we're left with one theatre where you had many to choose [0:29:30] from when you were growing up.

Respondent: That's right. Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: What about restaurants?

Respondent: Restaurants were not anywhere near as common as they are now.

Interviewer: There are more theatres and not many restaurants.

Respondent: That's right.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I don't remember any restaurants as there is now. The nearest one I remember is on Bloor Street just east of Spadina. It was called the Madison. And there might have been one or two others on Bloor [0:30:00] Street, but we – well, there were lots of delicatessens. Lots of those. Brunswick and College was Kwinter's, which is now, you know, they now are manufacturers. They sell Kwinter's hot dogs all over the place.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: On College Street almost opposite Brunswick, a little bit to the east was a place called Becker's. [0:30:30] They were two or three delicatessens on the north side of College just in off Brunswick. I can't remember their names. So yeah, there are lots of those.

Interviewer: So delicatessens were a bit – the most common kind of restaurant around.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Jewish delicatessens?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: German delicatessens?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Jewish.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Yeah. Almost exclusively. And Spadina Avenue, way before it became Chinatown, there was delicatessens almost every third or fourth store.

- Interviewer:** [Laughs] [0:31:00] You get your choice of French fries and pickles...
- Respondent:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...and smoked meat.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. [Laughter] Yeah. I can't – I remember some of their names, but I can't remember all of their names.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Well but that's interesting that so many of those have been replaced. There's only one theatre left, and there are lots of Japanese restaurants now.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And at that time there were not that many restaurants, but those that were there were mainly delicatessens.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And that's what my [0:31:30] memory is.
- Interviewer:** Any other kinds of businesses that you recall? Different kinds of businesses.
- Respondent:** Okay. Right up north of you here where there's an ivy-covered, looks like a residence or apartment building on the north side of Harbord, and on the east side of Borden.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So that's some kind of subsidized housing now.
- Respondent:** Is it?
- Interviewer:** Yep.
- Respondent:** Well that was a Home Laundry. It's what they called Home Laundry.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Of course, that building is [0:32:00] not there. It's been entirely replaced.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: But it was a one- or two-storey ugly type of square building, and most people took the – I don't know if they took their ordinary clothing or laundry there too often, but they took bigger stuff like bedding, and bed sheets and things like that, and I remember it being opposite the school there, and it was a thriving laundry for all the years I was here. No sign of it now, of course.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: So yeah, there was that one. And [0:32:30] what else?

Interviewer: Any other kind of food stores?

Respondent: Well aside from the Harbord Bakery, and the fish store, and the grocery stores.

Interviewer: How many fish stores were there?

Respondent: Well the only one that I remember is Kushner's. It used to be on the north side of Harbord, and later was right on the south side at Harbord and Major.

Interviewer: Okay. I've heard about that. Yeah. What do you remember about it, the fish store?

Respondent: [0:33:00] Well I remember that just in off the window they had big tanks with fish swimming in the tanks [laughter], and people picked the fish they bought.

Interviewer: They would point, "Okay, I want that one that's at the top of the tank." [Laughs]

Respondent: That's right. That sort of thing.

Interviewer: Did your family shop at that fish shop?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Yeah, they did. Yeah. Yeah. And sometimes they would bring the fish home live.

Interviewer: Oh lovely. And then that means your mother or your father killed [0:33:30] it then.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. Off with the head.

Interviewer: You remember that?

Respondent: Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Was it fun, or disgusting? What was it like?

Respondent: Didn't bother me one way or the other. I didn't give it much thought.

Interviewer: And who was the one who did it?

Respondent: I think my mother did most of it. Yeah. [Laughter] There was a – yeah, okay. There was a slaughterhouse, a shoichet.

Interviewer: Yeah. Where was that?

Respondent: On the south side of Harbord. Where are we now at? Borden?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I think the low-lying building [0:34:00] is still there. It's something else now.

Interviewer: So it was on Harbord at what street?

Respondent: Before you got to Major. It was either just before Brunswick or just before Major on the south side.

Interviewer: And when you say a slaughterhouse, what does that mean?

Respondent: Chickens.

Interviewer: Yeah. So the chickens were brought there to be slaughtered?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh they were – so they were – uh-huh.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And in a kosher way then, make them kosher.

Respondent: Yeah. I think mostly I think people would buy the live chickens in Kensington Market, [0:34:30] and take them up to that place to be slaughtered.

Interviewer: Was it noisy? Smelly? What was...

Respondent: It was smelly. I can't remember much noise.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Not for long anyway.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. [Laughter] And right – one or two stores, or one or two places next door, either side and I can't remember which, I'm going to get you mixed up if I try, there was a small garage. A guy operated a garage.

Interviewer: Now what street was that?

Respondent: On Harbord on the [0:35:00] south side. One or two...

Interviewer: Where you could get gas? Or they repaired cars?

Respondent: They repaired cars. It wasn't a gas station. It was just a car repair.

Interviewer: And it was just on Harbord.

Respondent: Yeah. Right on Harbord.

Interviewer: Near Brunswick? Major?

Respondent: Near one of those two. I can't say.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Respondent: I remember another hardware store on Spadina north of Harbord, west side. It was a general hardware store and [0:35:30] up until the time I moved away in 1950, they still had one of those curbside gas pumps at the curb with the glass tanks on top where you pumped the gas up from the tank below and you filled up the glass top, and it was graduated.

Interviewer: I'd never seen that. I've never heard of it.

Respondent: You'll see them all a lot now in antique stores and memorabilia things. Curbside gas pumps. They were outlawed early in the 1950s, but this [0:36:00] hardware store that I'm talking about was there on Harbord, on Spadina just north of Harbord.

Interviewer: The hardware store had a gas pump?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh. This is...

Respondent: Yeah. The gas pump at the curb.

Interviewer: And – but somebody worked there and they would fill your gas tank for you.

Respondent: Well yeah. Yeah. First of all, they had a big handle. They had to pull back and forth to pump the gas out of the ground into the tank.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: And when that hit the tank on top, then you put the hose in your [0:36:30] car and it was gravity-fed, so the...

Interviewer: Oh my gosh.

Respondent: So the gasoline just fell down the hose, and you looked at it until you got the number of gallon mark that you wanted in your car. And I think customers served themselves, but the hardware store would do it as well if you wanted them to.

Interviewer: Well this is amazing. In my whole life, I haven't heard of this. At the hardware, had a gas tank, you filled it yourself, and you had to pump it out of the ground first.

Respondent: Yeah. It was a big lever beside, like the – **[0:37:00]** I don't have a picture of one, but it was a stand coming out of the sidewalk...

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: ...about shoulder-high.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: It was a cast iron thing. On top of that was a glass tank with graduations on it. On the shell it came up like a pillar, like a big lamppost. There was a big lever that you pumped back and forth to get the gas out of the ground.

Interviewer: That is wonderful.

Respondent: You've probably seen pictures of them in the antique – in old-time, **[0:37:30]** 1920s or earlier era.

Interviewer: Well I will certainly Google it and find it because I haven't. I mean I'm twelve years younger than you, which is not a huge amount, but I – and I grew up in Montreal, but I don't remember ever seeing that.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So this is quite exciting.

Respondent: Yeah. If you get on your computer you'll find pictures.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So there was that one that was at Harbord and Spadina. There was another one that was on Baldwin Street where we used to live.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Also in front of a hardware store. Same. Exact same thing.

Interviewer: [0:38:00] Oh, isn't that amazing? Well there's something new. Thank you very much. [Laughs]

Respondent: Now other businesses that are around. At the corner of Harbord and Spadina on the east, northeast corner was a Chinese laundry. In those days, that's all you had. Like to do ordinary shirts and things like that, you went to the Chinese laundry. It was right beside a Royal Bank building on the [0:38:30] corner of Harbord and Spadina. What did I say? Northeast. Yeah. Yeah. So there's a laundry and a bank right there. Down Robert Street, coming back down there on the east side of Robert, just north of College, next door, south, just south of the school next door was a car repair shop. And there still is. I think he [0:39:00] specializes in Volkswagens these days.

Interviewer: There is. Yeah. I fill my gas tank...

Respondent: It was always there.

Interviewer: So that's been there a very long time.

Respondent: Yeah. Because my father used to take his 1933 DeSoto there to get fixed.

Interviewer: The DeSoto. Tell me about Harbord Bakery because you remember that.

Respondent: Yeah. Now, I remember the pre-war owners. I can't remember their names. I don't think it's the same as what it is now.

Interviewer: I think that the [0:39:30] Kosower family bought it in 1945.

- Respondent:** Yeah. I saw that somewhere, and there was another family...
- Interviewer:** So you remember the people who owned it originally.
- Respondent:** But I don't know their name.
- Interviewer:** Not their name, but you remember that the bakery was there.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** And then the fish store was adjacent to it.
- Respondent:** Not at first.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Coming next door to it came later. I don't want to tell you the year because I may not be right.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay.
- Respondent:** But it would be either towards the end of the war, or maybe just **[0:40:00]** at the end of the war when it – the fish store was located next to the bakery. Before that, the fish store was on the north side of Harbord.
- Interviewer:** And so then it moved. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You mentioned the war. Do you remember the end of the war? And if yes, what do you remember happened in this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Well I don't remember anything spectacular happening as the war ended. I was certainly involved in some way. **[0:40:30]** Like, I was too young to be in the service at that time, but I was in the Sea Cadets, but I can't remember any major change suddenly happening at that time. I don't think big changes happened until after I left in the '50s.

Interviewer: Or just announcing the end of the war. Do you remember families having any response? Or is that not something you remember?

Respondent: I don't remember that.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: No, I don't remember that.

Interviewer: And you were in the Sea Cadets. What was that about?

Respondent: Well Sea Cadets was, still is, where they took in [0:41:00] kids at fourteen in those days, and at that age, what did we know about how long the war was going to last? All I knew is I didn't want to be in the army. If I wanted to be in anything, I wanted to be in the Navy. So as a kid I joined the Sea Cadets, and I was in them until the war ended. Now the Sea Cadets at that time was in a building at the east end of Sunnyside at the foot of Dowling at Lakeshore Boulevard, [0:41:30] and we were able to get there with no problem at all by streetcar. I would go to Spadina Avenue, get the streetcar down to King, and take the King to Dowling out to the west end. It wasn't a long run to us in those days. So yeah, I spent the war years as a Cadet. But again...

Interviewer: Was that full-time?

Respondent: No. That was two nights a week.

Interviewer: And they taught you certain manoeuvres? What did they – happened?

Respondent: Yeah. They taught us Naval basics.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Naval traditions, [0:42:00] Naval ranks, and all the stuff that people would learn if they joined the Navy. It was called basic training, but it's – but we already knew all that. If we joined the Navy, we would already have our basic training behind us.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Respondent: But that never came about because the war ended and I was still a little bit underage.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So that was...

Interviewer: Did your family use Kensington Market?

Respondent: Yeah. A lot.

Interviewer: Is that where they did most of their food shopping?

Respondent: I wouldn't say most, [0:42:30] but certainly a lot.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: And other odds and ends that they would pick up there, like bits of clothing and one thing or another. But yeah, they bought their fish and chicken, and pickles, and all that stuff usually at the Market.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: At Kensington Market.

Interviewer: And some clothing too, you're saying.

Respondent: Yeah. They had some clothing that they would buy. There was a big bazaar-type thing there in those days, and they even had toys that you could [0:43:00] buy.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Respondent: But yeah, I'm sure – my memory isn't a hundred percent on that, but I'm sure they were there about once a week on average.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

Respondent: Maybe more.

Interviewer: I'm going to go backwards a little bit. When you were young and playing on the street -- did you play on the street?

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you play -- so what kinds of games did you play?

Respondent: Well, in the wintertime when there'd be maybe only one or two cars an hour come up there, we played hockey in the street.

Interviewer: Right on the road.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: [0:43:30] And likewise, in the better weather, we often played ball. Mostly it was catch in the roadway. And there was still few enough cars where somebody was able to say, "Car coming."

Interviewer: Yeah. [Laughs]

Respondent: There's no way you even think of doing that today, I don't think.

Interviewer: So very few people had cars is what you're saying.

Respondent: My father and maybe another handful of people on the whole street had a car. That was very few.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: You could walk [0:44:00] up the street any time of day and there might be three cars parked.

Interviewer: So that's a big change.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So yeah, we also played ball. There was a laneway. I think they have it named now, but I can't remember what

the name is. It's a laneway that runs on the east side of Harbord, east side of Robert.

Interviewer: There's Porretta Lane, [0:44:30] there's Kosower Lane.

Respondent: Kosower Lane is the one that runs behind the Harbord Bakery.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: The one I'm talking about runs parallel to Robert Street, but on...

Interviewer: Parallel to Robert Street. Okay. I know I'm thinking of another one that runs perpendicular to Robert Street. We're just naming the lanes right now. We're in the midst of naming the lanes, so they don't all have names yet.

Respondent: I can tell you the district like the palm of my hand, but I can't tell you the names of the lanes because they weren't [0:45:00] named in those days.

Interviewer: Yeah. They weren't named. Really it's just happening as we speak. We just had two ceremonies, one Saturday, one Sunday this past weekend, and we're – it's a big project at this time for us.

Respondent: The lane I'm talking about runs between Robert and Spadina.

Interviewer: Yeah, I know that lane.

Respondent: South.

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: And it was paved. It was cement. And it was a little wider than the one that was behind our house on Robert Street.

Interviewer: Oh, that's still a very narrow lane behind Robert Street.

Respondent: But I notice today it's paved.

Interviewer: [0:45:30] Yes. Okay.

- Respondent:** In those days it was dirt. It's all it was was dirt.
- Interviewer:** And what did you do in the lane? Was that a place that you hung out? Or?
- Respondent:** No, not in that laneway. We hung out mostly in the other, in the first one I'm talking about. The one that's paved. The one that's between Spadina and Robert.
- Interviewer:** And that was wider also.
- Respondent:** It's wider, and it was paved. And when we got kicked off the street from playing ball, we would go there and play ball.
- Interviewer:** So as – there were few cars on the street and probably fewer in the lane.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Oh yeah. The laneway was [0:46:00] our ball place.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. But the lane behind your house, that very narrow lane, was not paved at that time, so that would have been very muddy. Messy.
- Respondent:** It was a dirt lane. That's all it was. Dirt, and weeds, and in the springtime it was mud. And it was ruts. And...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Not people-friendly. Probably not even too car-friendly.
- Respondent:** No. And in those days, I mentioned the 1933 DeSoto that my father had, [laughter] and [0:46:30] we were able to drive it in on what is now the Kosower Lane off Robert Street.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Make the left turn around that woodworking factory or shop I told you about...
- Interviewer:** Yes.

Respondent: ...and we could get down the lane and go just past the garage and open the doors, and back into the garage.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: I don't think today's cars would do that. Although I notice today that there are some fairly recent-looking garages there.

Interviewer: Oh, people are upgrading the garages. The lanes are getting nicer and nicer.

Respondent: Yeah. There still are some – on the **[0:47:00]** other side of that lane, which is really the houses that are on Major Street, there still are some original ramshackle garages that are still there. I don't think you can get anything in them today, but the garages are still there.

Interviewer: Did your family have anything behind your house? A garden, or any – or growing anything?

Respondent: No. This picture – I guess you can't see this on a tape recorder.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: But that was the **[0:47:30]** width of the yard.

Interviewer: Oh very...

Respondent: From the house to the fence of the house you lived in.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: So you can almost – if you touch the house with one outstretched arm, you could touch the fence with the other outstretched arm.

Interviewer: Okay. So the whole thing was two yards at most. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah. And then a little ways past that picture was the garage. And likewise, you could touch the edge of the garage.

- Interviewer:** Yeah. So it was really just a walkway. Not wider than...
- Respondent:** Yeah. It was filled up mostly with a garage. It was just a corrugated iron garage [0:48:00] is all it was.
- Interviewer:** Was there a front porch at that time?
- Respondent:** Of the house?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And was that used at all?
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. The front verandah, that was – the front of our house on Robert Street is identical to the one that's right...
- Interviewer:** Adjacent to mine here. Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Exactly.
- Interviewer:** I remember that. As you said you lived at 160 Robert and I lived at 158, and I remember that verandah. And when I lived there twenty years ago, the people sat outside a lot. And you're saying your [0:48:30] parents in 1933 and '43 and '53 also sat out there.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Who else sat out there? Did you sit out there?
- Respondent:** Oh yes. Mm-hm. Sure. Because the house – there was no air conditioning. You couldn't stay in the house on a hot day, so the verandah was a cool place to sit.
- Interviewer:** Did you sleep out there on a very hot day?
- Respondent:** The odd time we did, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.

- Respondent:** And not only that, but I never noticed when I came into your door here of your next door neighbour, but our verandah on Robert Street had a railing up on the roof of it, [0:49:00] so you can get out from the upstairs bedroom.
- Interviewer:** Oh yes. Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Onto that roof.
- Interviewer:** Did you do that sometimes?
- Respondent:** Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** So it was strong enough to hold your body weight.
- Respondent:** Oh yes.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent:** Oh yes. But the last time I was there that I saw the place was in the '60s when I was teaching here at Central Tech, and I took a walk there one day and by that time it was a wrought iron railing verandah. It wasn't a wooden one like you got next door here.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** It was all [0:49:30] ornamental iron.
- Interviewer:** I remember. When I lived there, they still had that same wrought iron one.
- Respondent:** Yeah. So okay, that's – now the original verandah was exactly like you got next door to you here.
- Interviewer:** So that was a popular spot because it was hot, and also it was a social thing to do, just hang around outside.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. Watch who was walking by.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

Respondent: And as kids also we would – as young teenagers we would sit on the verandah with our buddies.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. Uh-huh.

Respondent: And [0:50:00] heckle those that walked by that we didn't like.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Was the neighbourhood a safe place?

Respondent: Oh yeah. I never thought of it as unsafe that I remember at any time.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. So you just took it for granted, this is a safe place.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: And walk up and down the streets or the lanes.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. And the streets were patrolled by police on foot that walked around.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: [0:50:30] Every day. You can almost set your watch by the time of day that the cop walked by. They had a beat that they walked around.

Interviewer: Oh. Well that's certainly disappeared a long time ago.

Respondent: Yeah. They didn't come around in cruisers at that time. They came around on foot.

Interviewer: Did you get to know some of them?

Respondent: Well, we knew the one guy because year after year it would be the same guy that would come by. They didn't have different [0:51:00] ones. Oh, I guess maybe if they had a day off and sometimes...

Interviewer: But that was his route.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: And in those days too, they didn't have walkie-talkies or anything like that; they had call boxes. I can't remember where they were located, but they were on lampposts.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Little boxes that would hold a telephone, and they would have to check-in to their station at a certain time of day to tell them where they were, or to check in to make sure that – for the station to make sure that they were on the job.

Interviewer: Did you ever **[0:51:30]** learn the names of these police who were so predictably walking up and down your street?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: You didn't.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Would they have said hello to you?

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: But you didn't learn each other's names.

Respondent: Not really, no.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: I guess the police would probably know the names of some of the bad actors we had, but...

Interviewer: [Laughs] So they didn't get to know your name, or they did?
[Laughs]

Respondent: I don't think so.

Interviewer: Now you told me that you taught at Central Tech.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: When was that? Like you moved, you got married and moved in 1950.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: When did you teach at Central Tech?

Respondent: **[0:52:00]** I came back to teach at Central Tech for one year, the school year 1962, 1963.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. What were you teaching?

Respondent: Auto mechanics. And I lived in Scarborough then.

Interviewer: Oh, that was a trek.

Respondent: So yeah. And I would probably have stayed at Central Tech until I retired, but the subway wasn't in there in that year.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: The only way I could get there was by driving, **[0:52:30]** and in the wintertime, that was a nightmare. So the – an opening came up about five or ten minutes from where I lived in Scarborough, so I left Central Tech reluctantly to take on the position in Scarborough.

Interviewer: Okay. So you said you left it reluctantly. What made you reluctant to leave?

- Respondent:** Well I liked the school.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Did you go to Central Tech?
- Respondent:** I went there as a kid, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god. So you came back.
- Respondent:** Yeah. I liked the school, and some of those that [0:53:00] were teachers of mine when I was there as a kid in the '40s were still there when I came back in 1962, so yeah. I liked the school. I liked it altogether, but I would never have left, except the driving was not fun in the winter.
- Interviewer:** For sure. So you went to Lansdowne school and then you went to Central Tech.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And you studied car mechanics? Is that...
- Respondent:** Yeah. Yeah. That's what I did at Central.
- Interviewer:** That was very convenient for you living on Robert Street and walking to Central Tech.
- Respondent:** Oh yeah. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:53:30] Can you talk a little bit about Central Tech, please?
- Respondent:** Well you know, I can. I enjoyed it. As far as I remember as a kid right from grade nine to grade twelve, I enjoyed it. I had four good high school years.
- Interviewer:** And you studied car mechanics the whole time.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you – that was your life's work after that, I assume.

Respondent: Yeah. Well the auto mechanics in high school then, and as now, you didn't study it all day long. You had to take all the other school subjects.

Interviewer: You took academic courses [0:54:00] and you learned to repair cars.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So now, you didn't get deeply into the car repair until you were into grade eleven or grade twelve. Grade nine or grade ten it was just general shop work. You took different subjects all the time. General – machine, shop, carpentry, all the other subjects that they had, as well as the academic courses. Then in grade eleven you had a choice of specializing if you wanted to, and I picked [0:54:30] auto mechanics simply because I was curious as to how a car worked. But I stuck with it anyway.

Interviewer: But you remember your father's DeSoto. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah. And in fact, it spent a year in the shop at Central Tech because he couldn't drive in the winter anyway. You couldn't get in or out of that garage in the winter.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: So it needed a lot of work, so I took it in and it spent one year at the school being worked on.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Oh.

Respondent: It was the year's project.

Interviewer: [0:55:00] But that's interesting too then that if you use that laneway between Robert and Major, the cars stayed in the garage all winter because it wasn't plowed at all.

Respondent: No. Oh no. Oh no. They never cleared that part. It was just knee-deep in snow before December came.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: So if you had a car in the garage, it stayed there.

Interviewer: Yeah. So it hibernated.

Respondent: Yeah. And if you [0:55:30] didn't get it into the garage before the snow got deep, I don't know what. You couldn't leave it on the street, so I don't know what you could do with it.

Interviewer: Bring it to Central Tech. [Laughs]

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah. So what they had to do, my father and whoever else had a car, which I say was very few, when winter was approaching, you took that car, put it in the garage, we jacked it up so the wheels wouldn't be resting on the ground all the time, and that's where it stayed until spring. You'd never get it out once [0:56:00] winter came in.

Interviewer: Wow. So really the cars were according to season.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Because even if you had a car, if you used the garage, and you couldn't park on the street so it was pretty tricky. Yeah.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Yeah. What about the heating of your homes? How was your home heated?

Respondent: It was coal. It was a coal furnace with all those octopus hoses coming out in all directions. And there was a coal bin in the garage, [0:56:30] when they delivered coal once, maybe two or three times over the winter, the coal got poured in through one of the basement windows, and the basement was black with coal dust for a day or two.

Interviewer: I'll bet.

Respondent: So was the house.

Interviewer: Oh. So unpleasant.

Respondent: But yeah. Yeah, it was a coal furnace. And you had to take ashes out every – I think they picked up the ashes at the curb twice a week, so you had to put them out in an ash can.

Interviewer: A lot of work and a lot of [0:57:00] mess.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: But the houses were warm enough during the winter then?

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Did your family change the heating system? Or was it the family after yours?

Respondent: I think the heating was changed after.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent: For all the years I was there, it was the old coal.

Interviewer: Dirty, messy coal.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: But cheap and efficient.

Respondent: Yeah. And the other thing I remember, and it hasn't happened to me since, in the wintertime, whenever we would walk to school or anywhere else we went, we went ice skating a lot to the local parks [0:57:30] out the outside rinks that they were. I very rarely got somewhere and home again without a cinder or two, you know, a speck in the eye because coal dust was in the air, or ashes.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. So the good old days were not such healthy days necessarily.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: What about health care? Hospitals, doctors?

Respondent: Well, [0:58:00] all I know is whenever we got sick – sore throats and all these other things that we used to get – we'd called Dr. Goldin at the corner here, and he'd come around with his sachel.

Interviewer: Oh.

Respondent: And I don't think there was health care then. I think they had to pay a fee every time you came.

Interviewer: But he came to your house.

Respondent: Came to the house. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Or if it was less – more minor things, we would go to the office over here.

Interviewer: Mm-hm. So he had some office hours, [0:58:30] but if you were sick, he would come. That's totally changed.

Respondent: That's gone. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. You moved away – how old were you? Twenty?

Respondent: Twenty-two.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. The university was there, U of T was there at that time.

Respondent: Well yeah, yeah. But it hadn't reached out as it is doing now.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So it wasn't encroaching on this...

- Respondent:** No. The university [0:59:00] to us anyway, the university sort of ended at St. George Street. Maybe there would be some residences on Huron Street that people would board.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that was really a few blocks away.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent:** Yeah, but there was no sign, or nobody thought that it would ever start creeping out as it's doing now.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. It certainly has been. People feel it's galloped out. [Laughs] But it is very much on our [0:59:30] doorstep.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well I think we've touched on all the major topics. When you knew that you and I were going to be having a conversation with each other about the neighbourhood, were there some stories, memories, experiences that you thought about that I haven't asked you about?
- Respondent:** Not really. I think you've covered, we've both covered a lot of ground. [1:00:00] Oh, you asked me earlier about whether this was a safe neighbourhood. There were some things going on that I didn't know about. I only found out about it through one of my teachers when he was retiring, and I attended a retirement party. This was when I was in the profession, and by that time he had moved out into Scarborough too, but he was one of my teachers at Lansdowne and he told me that as a teacher at Lansdowne, he and a few of his friends were looking for a good place [1:00:30] to have lunch. So they went to some restaurant on College Street in between Spadina and Robert on the north side. There was a place there that was labelled a restaurant. And when he went into it, he and his fellow teachers, the guys – they couldn't see much food on the tables. They saw tables and chairs, but nobody else there. The guy came out and asked them what they wanted and they said,

"Well, we'd like a sandwich for lunch." [1:01:00] The guy said, "Well, okay. I'll get you something." They didn't realize that it was the front for a gambling place. It was a gambling place in the back. [Laughter] I think they were doing horse bets and cards. But he says that gave the guy an idea, to expand and really make it into a working restaurant, so it would disguise what they were doing in behind. [Laughter] Now I only learned of that in the '70s.

Interviewer: And this would have happened in the '40s?

Respondent: This would have happened in the '30s.

Interviewer: [1:01:30] In the '30s.

Respondent: When I was still at public school.

Interviewer: So it was a gambling joint...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: ...with just this space and tables...

Respondent: To make it look like a restaurant.

Interviewer: So they've made it into a restaurant with some simple sandwiches.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah, he said they gave the guy the idea to make it into a restaurant to take attention away from what was going on in the back.

Interviewer: Well they should have had a cut in the business then. [Laughter] That's a cute story. A very good story.

Respondent: Yeah. He did, in fact, say that the guy gave him a [1:02:00] special rate for their lunch whenever they went in there.

Interviewer: Oh that's nice.

Respondent: [Laughs] To entice them in.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** But it's something I never knew 'til then. But...
- Interviewer:** Other gambling or drinking in the neighbourhood? Anything? Stories you can think of?
- Respondent:** Yeah. There was quite a lot of gambling. I don't know about drinking.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent:** There was a lot of gambling going on. There was a pool room, you know where I told you about that Garden theatre that was on the north side of College between Robert and [1:02:30] Spadina?
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent:** Alongside of that and upstairs – not upstairs from the theatre, but upstairs from the next door building there was a pool room. It was all – until we were later teenagers, we didn't realize that it was all full of pool sharks.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent:** And it was major gambling going on up there, but it was all beyond our knowledge. But I found out later that it was a big-time gambling place.
- Interviewer:** So there was more life in this neighbourhood than you [1:03:00] realized.
- Respondent:** That's right. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well, Saul Glass, you lived here in 1933 to 1950, age six to twenty-two, which is – it's a long time ago, and it's also right through your childhood, through your adolescence, so you could talk to me about what happened a long time ago during a period of time in your life that I haven't had a whole lot of that, so it has really been such a

pleasure to listen to your stories and to hear your memories. I want to say thank you [1:03:30] very much.

Respondent: Yeah. Well they were formative years, so you remember those more than anything else.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Oh, and before I go, you asked me something earlier. I can't remember the exact question, but it brought to mind – one of the houses, I told you about the Lutsky that had the woodworking business behind him.

Interviewer: That's right. Right in the lane.

Respondent: In the laneway.

Interviewer: From Robert. Between Robert and Major.

Respondent: Okay. Now right beside him on Robert Street, the house immediately to the south lived the Gladstone family.

Interviewer: [1:04:00] Mm-hm.

Respondent: I don't know if you ever heard of Gerald Gladstone. He's a very prominent and nationally, and maybe internationally known artist and sculptor.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent: But he lived there, right next door to the Lutsky's on Robert Street. So.

Interviewer: So they weren't wealthy people, but there were some creative people and hardworking people.

Respondent: Actually it was a working family...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: ...and he was more like my brother's age, six years younger than I am, this Gerald Gladstone, but since then he's become a very [1:04:30] well-known, as far as I know he's probably still alive. He's a very well-known artist and sculptor.

Interviewer: And he had his roots on Robert Street in Harbord Village.

Respondent: Yeah. And another thing is right across the road from us on Robert Street, I don't know if you ever heard of the Cy Mann. He was a men's clothier. He was a big-time men's clothier. Not as big as Tom in Kensington, who's an elder.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Respondent: Along those lines. Well, Cy Mann, his [1:05:00] real name was Seymour Glickman.

Interviewer: Oh. [Laughs]

Respondent: And he lived right across the road from us. [Laughter] I think he's now long retired.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

Respondent: But those are some of the names in the area that a lot of people don't know came from here.

Interviewer: Well it's a good neighbourhood to have come from, and for some of us, it's a wonderful neighbourhood to still be in.

Respondent: Yeah. It was a poor working class, but most of us seemed to have survived.

Interviewer: And have survived well.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: [1:05:30] Thank you very much, Saul Glass.

[1:05:32]

[At this time the recorder was turned off,
then turned on again a few minutes later for a few final remarks.]

Interviewer: Saul, you said you wanted to talk a little bit more about – when I had asked you about safety of the neighbourhood, a few more memories emerged. So please tell me what you were thinking about.

Respondent: Yeah. I didn't think of it then, but there was one case with one of our teachers at Central Tech in 1940, '41 area when I was in grade nine. And instead of teaching us what he was supposed to teach us, he spent a period rambling about things, and he went [0:00:30] on to tell us that there's one thing that Hitler is doing right, and that is to get rid of the Jews. And we didn't think of – it just didn't occur to us that that should maybe be reported. And if we did report it, I'm not too sure anybody would listen to us anyway. And there was a German neighbour down the street also that said much the same thing. That "Hitler will get you guys."

Interviewer: So was that something that you remember – those [0:01:00] two stories specifically, was that something that you remember occurred frequently? Or were those quite isolated? What was your feeling now that you think back?

Respondent: I wouldn't call them isolated. I wouldn't call them every day either, but it was just, it was just little snippets that came up from time to time.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. So they were there.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So walking around the neighbourhood generally was safe, but you're saying the anti-Semitism was [0:01:30] around.

Respondent: Yes. It existed.

Interviewer: Yeah. It existed.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Anything else you want to talk about before you...

Respondent: No. I think...

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: That's what I had...

Interviewer: Saul Glass, I thank you again.

Respondent: Okay.

[0:01:41]

[End of recording]