

022 Harvey Jacobs

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

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Harvey, I want to thank you for being willing to be interviewed by me. You and I know each other from Second Cup at the JCC, and I appreciate the fact that you are being interviewed by me. I'd like to start...

Respondent: My pleasure.

Interviewer: Yeah. Thank you, Harvey. [Laughs] I'm on the Board of Directors of Harbord Village Residents' Association, and one of our current projects is to [0:00:30] study our neighbourhood, meet people who have been here for many years, and ask them about the changes that they have experienced and observed. So let's start with when you moved into the neighbourhood. And how old were you at the time?

Respondent: I was born into the neighbourhood. I was born on Borden Street. I think it was 81 or 82 Borden. I don't know. In 1938. And then I – [0:01:00] shall I continue on that theme? Then we moved when I was about two to 113 Major Street, and we lived there for about ten years. And then about 1948 we moved – my family moved to Dalton Road.

Interviewer: Okay. But you have been living in this neighbourhood with your wife. Did you raise your daughter in this neighbourhood?

Respondent: Well when we were married, [0:01:30] we lived outside the neighbourhood for the first four years, and then we moved back to Dalton Road when my parents passed away. So we've been there for over twenty years as a family.

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Respondent: But I was there for many years before that off and on.

- Interviewer:** So I think you're a wonderful person to be able to describe.
- Respondent:** I'll try. But I was out of the neighbourhood from time to time, working [0:02:00] in other cities and so on. But not for long.
- Interviewer:** And when you first lived in the neighbourhood, who was living under that roof with you?
- Respondent:** Are we talking at birth?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** I don't remember. But on Major Street we were the tenants on the second floor of a three-room little flat, which had a kitchen, a bedroom, and a little living room, and we had various – I can give you names. [0:02:30] Should I give you names? Okay. One of our first – my first group were the Kaplans. I remember them. An older couple. And then, interesting, we had the Bornsteins, who had a little daughter called Marilyn, who grew up to marry Mr. Lastman.
- Interviewer:** Oh. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** Yeah. Marilyn Lastman.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, right.
- Respondent:** She was Marilyn Bornstein. And then after that we had the [0:03:00] Coopersmiths, and then we moved. Is that answering your question? I don't know.
- Interviewer:** It's answering my question. Do you have any siblings?
- Respondent:** No.
- Interviewer:** So when you were living there with your parents, did your parents and you each have a bedroom, or did...
- Respondent:** That's a good question. Yeah. I was in a different room. I probably had what became the den. This is before the days of television, so

there wasn't like that common room. **[0:03:30]** I had a little room. Not the same room as my parents, not that I recall. It got complicated after the war when my cousin and his mother came from Europe as refugees, right? So there were then five of us in those three rooms, and I have no idea how the sleeping arrangements were, for about a year.

Interviewer: Yeah. But that was a lot of you sleeping.

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: In a place that really had only one bedroom.

Respondent: Yes. Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. And one **[0:04:00]** bathroom.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'd like to discuss just generally the changes in the neighbourhood.

Respondent: The changes.

Interviewer: So that's just a very vague, open question. I'll come back to specifics later, but if you can think of some of the global changes.

Respondent: Yeah. Most of them are fairly obvious. I don't recall supermarkets, okay, as a young kid. I don't recall Dominion, **[0:04:30]** or Metro, whatever it's called. I don't remember when that changed. We used to shop at Kensington, and I would go with my mother and she had her little routes that she took, and we also go to Harbord Bakery, the Harbord Fish Market, which was there. It was local shops. People now seem to do a lot of their stuff in one big venue. Greenspan's, Colman Greenspan Butchers, if that means anything. **[0:05:00]** Feld's had a drugstore at Brunswick and Harbord – probably others have mentioned it. That was one change that I remember. Second change as a kid, going to, say, baseball games or hockey games, they were close. You just took the – Sunnyside was very big. You take a streetcar at Bathurst and you're there

basically, right? A lot of movie theatres, because this was before television. On College Street, which was the centre of [0:05:30] our life really, there were at least three movie theatres close by.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: Which – should I name them? I can do even now. The Garden, which became The Garden Billiards, which became, I think, Club 300. Does that mean anything to you at all?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: 300 College, obviously. The Bellevue, which is now Kaplansky's Deli.

Interviewer: Oh my god, yeah.

Respondent: And then something called The Playhouse, which used to give free dishes away to – [0:06:00] which meant that my mother dragged me there to get her her whole set at that time. On Bloor Street, also three or four movie theatres, all within Bathurst and Brunswick.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: So, you know, that was a big thing, and that was a source. On Saturday, kids would go to one of these theatres and you'd get a free comic book, and you'd see all kinds of – I'm sure where you grew up in Montreal they had similar stuff?

Interviewer: No, no, no. Montreal [0:06:30] there was supposedly this big, terrible fire and children under sixteen could not get into movie theatres at all.

Respondent: Without the accompaniment of adult?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: Not at all.

Interviewer: They were not allowed in at all.

Respondent: Seriously?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Okay. Well we used to go without our adult supervision. It was very noisy, as you can imagine, but you'd see, like, little shorts like The Three Stooges. It was different. It was fun. There's a lot of – okay. It was fun. And then we listened to the radio a lot, as you can imagine. **[0:07:00]** Everybody had their favourite radio shows.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. But there were so many theatres that you could go to with parents or preferably without parents.

Respondent: Yeah. I'm going way back to what I remember.

Interviewer: And the Bloor Cinema, was that one of the theatres?

Respondent: The Bloor Cinema at that time is now Lee's Palace. It was called The Bloor. What's called the Bloor Cinema now, which is by the way in permanent repairs **[0:07:30]** it looks like, used to be the Midtown. Okay? And we knew the type of – the Bloor Cinema was actually an MGM – it gets complicated. Lowe's, which was on Yonge and Queen, was the MGM first run. The Bloor was MGM second run. Okay.

Interviewer: But a lot of movie theatres in the neighbourhood.

Respondent: I'm doing this from my **[0:08:00]** young lad's point of view, right? Because that's when you start noticing changes. Bowling was really popular. I'm now getting a little older, but people used to go bowling. There was the Spadina Bowl, which was at College and Spadina, which I think is a pool hall now, if I'm not mistaken, and there was the Midtown Bowl, which I think became – I don't know what it is now. I guess it's Sobey's now, right? But **[0:08:30]** it went through various stages. And everybody used to weave and form when there was about thirteen – we formed a local bowling league of the neighbourhood kids. You know, kids were pretty independent.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

Respondent: Another change, we all belonged to teenage clubs, and we all had club jackets. It wasn't that we were tough kids; we just had – we belonged to clubs. Some were supervised at the Y with adult leadership, right? We didn't. We [0:09:00] had our own leadership. Like we formed a club, which I thought was a great idea.

Interviewer: Well that's something that was similar to Montreal that we had in those clubs.

Respondent: Yeah. Really?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And with names.

Respondent: Yeah. And you'll learn a lot about yourself and other people by being in these clubs. In fact, I probably peaked as a teenager when I became the representative of the Canadian Jewish Congress for my club, which sort of made me a, you know, little minor [0:09:30] celebrity in my little group, but it was a real pain to go there, but that's another story.

Interviewer: But these were important little communities for you.

Respondent: Very much. Yeah. We had thirty members at our club.

Interviewer: And when you said at the Y, what do you mean when you said at the Y?

Respondent: I meant here, right here in this building that we're in now. It was called the YMHA. YM and YWHA.

Interviewer: Right. But this used to be at Brunswick and College?

Respondent: Yeah. But only when I was a very [0:10:00] young kid. When I was about fifteen I think they came here.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent: I used to go occasionally to Brunswick and College to swim.

Interviewer: Right. Okay.

Respondent: But it was right next to the **[indiscernible 0:10:10]** that I went to – Jewish school, which was right next door. And there's also a pool hall next door that I didn't go to, but others did. It was a different world.

Interviewer: Yeah, well and that's what I want you to...

Respondent: Any other change? Other change?

Interviewer: Yes, please.

Respondent: It seems that we can – I've talked to others about this – we could go to school on **[0:10:30]** our own when we were five years old, right? You would be taken once, maybe not even by your parent, but by an older kid, and then you were on your own because a lot of kids were going. You tended to walk to school. I used to walk through back lanes to school and thought nothing of it. But with my own child many years later, I wouldn't ever do that.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: I don't know what you were like with your kids. In a different age, your kids are older than mine.

Interviewer: Yeah. **[0:11:00]** So I think my children were in that kind of transition period. They did walk on their own. But I agree with you now that they don't, and that we did.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Without really worry, right?

Interviewer: Absolutely.

Respondent: Without worry. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I want to talk about immigration and the different waves of immigration.

Respondent: Sure.

Interviewer: So what can you talk about in this neighbourhood?

Respondent: Well personal observation, right after the war a lot of Jewish [0:11:30] people known as Greenhorns came over. I don't know if you had the same, right?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Including my cousin. We were thrilled that they were alive, by the way. It wasn't just they'd been having rough times. We were just glad they were alive. So they came over. That was fairly frequent. I remember it popping up in my class in public school around that time after the war. Would be kids who wouldn't speak English would pop up in your class, and then quickly move through the [0:12:00] grades as soon as they were picking up English until they were – some of them were brilliant, right? But you didn't know it because they couldn't speak. There was no resentment that I recall of anybody towards these kids; however, when I joined my club, there were some kids from a snobbier area who were in the club who resented some of the immigrant kids who were now in the club. And actually at one [0:12:30] point tried to get a couple of them expelled from the club, which is when I quit, by the way. They seemed to – they didn't like the – and I'm talking of 1956. They didn't seem to like that other kids were saying, "Oh, you've got a bunch of, you know, Greenhorns." It was a certain weird, sick prejudice...

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: ...by snobs. Okay. What else about immigration? Oh, I remember [0:13:00] a friend of mine was Japanese and he wasn't – especially an immigrant. He was one of those kids who had been interned in the west coast. Did you know about that?

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

- Respondent:** I'm sure you did. And I remember, you know, befriending him without really knowing much about his background at that point. So I recall that. I don't recall too many Chinese kids at all, and my school was Spadina and College. [0:13:30] I went to Lansdowne.
- Interviewer:** Oh, you did?
- Respondent:** Right, right. So, you know, it was different. Very few, if any, West Indy kids. There were a couple, but you know, you saw them but I didn't know who they were.
- Interviewer:** Now you said in this group, your group of about thirty, some of the kids were somewhat snobbish. What about in the school? How did all the different groups get along there?
- Respondent:** What level of school are we talking about?
- Interviewer:** I'm talking about grade two, grade five. Let's start with elementary school because [0:14:00] you were at Lansdowne.
- Respondent:** Elementary school I was not – because most of our parents were immigrants, so how could you possibly have any feeling about, you know – it was not any issue at all.
- Interviewer:** And what about children, say, Asian children or?
- Respondent:** There were very few. Hardly any that I remember. I should have brought a class photograph. Maybe I will later on, okay? I will. If you're going to be around in the next couple of days...
- Interviewer:** I will.
- Respondent:** I'll bring you my earlier – you won't see Asian kids [0:14:30] in the photograph.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. So it was a homogeneous group of kids.
- Respondent:** A lot of Jews in this area, plus others of various nationality.

Interviewer: And when you think of – I'm not talking about school per se, but just the waves of immigration, what have you seen over your whatever number, seventy-two – yeah [laughs].

Respondent: In this area?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

Respondent: Okay. That's a good question. [0:15:00] It depends what – do you consider Spadina and College the Annex?

Interviewer: Yeah. We're talking about Spadina to Bathurst, College to Bloor.

Respondent: Okay. Well I've seen a lot more Oriental kids. An awful lot. A lot of Portuguese kids. Again, my daughter went to a school, two schools actually near King Edward where a lot of Portuguese – and I remember going there on a parents' night and they had a little assembly for the [0:15:30] parents, and they had translators in four different Oriental languages, right, which I thought was wild. So a lot of Orientals, Portuguese. Italians at first, right? That was sort of the first wave. And I really didn't see any conflict. There may have been, right, but from what I...

Interviewer: And maybe there wasn't.

Respondent: Right. Right. But from my eyes, from my point of view growing up, [0:16:00] I didn't really notice anything bad. But you kind of learn instinctively as you go through where certain people hang out by ethnicity, okay? Like Bloor Street for a while seemed to be a Hungarian area. The restaurants.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's right.

Respondent: A sociologist once took me on a tour and he showed me how to figure out who lives where based on stores, and types – whatever. [0:16:30] So now obviously you can't walk three feet without a sushi restaurant, right?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

- Respondent:** And in Montreal, same where we were. Downtown Montreal. A lot of – I'm not even sure that they're – I'm not sure if they're Korean. Like I don't know who runs them. Okay. Is that okay?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Very much so. We're talking about the waves of immigration.
- Respondent:** [0:17:00] Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Can you talk about religion, and religious institutions?
- Respondent:** That's easy. Okay. From my point of view.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, of course.
- Respondent:** Okay. Growing up until I was maybe eighteen on Jewish holiday, we would go to a synagogue downtown and then during various breaks, a group of my friends and I would wander and visit other synagogues within walking distance, [0:17:30] and there was probably three or four very close by Spadina, just off – well one that you know, on Cecil Street.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** There was a synagogue.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** And as recently as ten years ago I think I went to some bar mitzvah party there. I don't know if there's still a synagogue. So there was that. A lot of the synagogues then became churches of various faiths, right? We noticed that. In this area, [0:18:00] on Brunswick, there were two synagogues, one was at Sussex and Brunswick, and then another one is where it is right now, the Narayever.
- Interviewer:** The Narayever. Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah. And I had my bar mitzvah in one of them. I don't remember which one at this point, but my grandfather used to go to the one at the corner. And then – well I don't want to get into the nasty politics,

but I noticed that – well, I'll put it [0:18:30] bluntly. I got the impression that in the Narayever there was a big movement by young families to kind of take over and run the agenda to benefit their own kids, which included probably education and, you know, just they're trying to get their kids to adhere, whereas the old folks were being kind of left out of their plans a little bit.

Interviewer: Yeah. When you're saying this...

Respondent: It's an observation.

Interviewer: ...no, but are you talking about when [0:19:00] you were twelve, when you were twenty, or when you were fifty?

Respondent: Well when I was – after I was eighteen, because my grandfather died when I was seventeen, and everything seemed okay then, but he was kind of content. But after that, I noticed there was a movement against – not against it. But my mother, for example, used to still try to go to Narayever. Now my father used to sing in a choir on the holiday. He was like a – my uncle was a cantor, [0:19:30] so they would do gigs all over the area. They'd go to Rochester, New York and do gigs, and St. Catharines. So I didn't exactly – they didn't have a synagogue that I belonged to. I would go to the closest one, or if they were in Toronto, I would go to where my dad was, right, which is normal, right? Okay. But my observation from talking to people was that this was going on here.

Interviewer: So this would have been...

Respondent: I don't know if it's true.

Interviewer: Right. Right. [0:20:00] So this would have been just before 1950.

Respondent: This would have been – yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: And I can even – there's a man I always associated – and I've gone to the synagogue since, and it seemed very welcoming, but I was there one day in the holidays about two years ago, and it was

almost empty. It seems that the people didn't go every single moment of all the services. It was really [0:20:30] strange. It was very strange. There's a – his wife used to be a teacher, I think a vice-principal or principal here. Shonbloom?

Interviewer: Schoenfeld.

Respondent: Schoenfeld. And he seemed to be, in my mind, one of the leaders of this movement. I'm sure you know him.

Interviewer: He belongs to the Narayever. Yeah.

Respondent: But at one point he was the Narayever, I thought.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Could be. I don't know.

Respondent: Do you know him at all?

Interviewer: Oh yeah. I used to...

Respondent: Yeah. He seems like a nice man, but you know, it's just – you're asking me changes.

Interviewer: Yeah. [0:21:00] And that's what we're looking at.

Respondent: Yeah. And it's only observation, and I could be wrong.

Interviewer: What about class structure? I mean you talked about when you were with that group and there were some of the kids who were snobbish about the, as you called them, Greenhorns. But generally speaking...

Respondent: They were socially upwardly mobile.

Interviewer: But generally in this neighbourhood what you saw fifty, sixty, seventy years ago, what you see now...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Changes?

- Respondent:** Yeah. That's easy again. [0:21:30] There's two groups. There's a group of people including my lawyer, is one of them. Can I mention the name?
- Interviewer:** Why not?
- Respondent:** Why not. Sheldon Silverman. You don't know him. He lives on Major Street. Grew up on Major Street. Lives in the north, as we call it, like north of Eglinton for many years, bringing up his kids there, and when his kids were grown he moved back to Major Street. He now lives just below Harbord [0:22:00] Street in the same home that Tony Aianno used to live in.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Right. Okay. And so there's a lot of people like that who – well I know all kinds of them, right? They grew up around here in public school. They probably went to Huron, or Lansdowne, or King Edward, then they moved up north, and some either went further up north like Thornhill, Richmond Hill, and then others settled here because [0:22:30] it was good memories and simple. Okay? And I'm not sure if that's snobbishness, and I'm not sure which group is the snobbish group. I think the one group wants – I think a lot of parents have in their mind that Jewish education, Jewish friends, whatever. I personally found this a great area to grow up in, a great area to raise my kid. Now you – did you raise your kids here or elsewhere?
- Interviewer:** No. I didn't raise my children here. [0:23:00] My children went to Bialik School.
- Respondent:** Okay.
- Interviewer:** And that's Bathurst, Eglinton. So I lived near there so they could go there.
- Respondent:** Okay.
- Interviewer:** And then as soon as they moved out I came down here.

- Respondent:** Because?
- Interviewer:** Because I love it down here.
- Respondent:** You see?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** But that's not snobbishness. You're thinking of your kids, right?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I wanted a Hebrew education. It didn't exist down here at that time.
- Respondent:** Well there was no, like, Talmud Torah they could have gone to?
- Interviewer:** I don't think...
- Respondent:** See for us it was easy, right? My generation, we just went to College and Brunswick.
- Interviewer:** [0:23:30] Yeah. It wasn't there when my children went to school.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Okay. By the way, my classes, once you hit about age ten – I went to my bar mitzvah and then beyond a little bit. When you were a little older your class ended about eight-thirty at night, so you'd have to go on your own from six-thirty to eight-thirty to – you know, and walking along Brunswick in the dark streets.
- Interviewer:** Well that's something I was going to come to later, so since you brought it up, [0:24:00] I'm going to put it in right now and that is safety and security in the neighbourhood. How it used to be and how you see it now.
- Respondent:** It's funny. Okay. Be very frank?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** When I was in grade eight a girl in my class was raped, a gang rape in Christie Pits. One of the culprits was in my class as well,

and he was hauled off, and I never saw him again. I'm giving you an example, okay? None of [0:24:30] these people involved were Jewish, right, in that incident. That's one. Were we worried about? There were certain – okay. A little anecdote. When I'm about ten years old, coming home from Jewish school to Dalton Road – eleven years old, I guess – a kid came out of the dark with a knife and he asked for my money, [0:25:00] and I didn't have any money, of course. And then another kid came out, bigger kid, and it was somebody I knew he said, "Oh, hi." He said, "It's Harvey. It's okay, he's a good guy." And so we had our own little rules. In other words, I always felt that my neighbourhood would take care of us. I was never – I can't recall ever being in a fight with a bully. I may have been bullied, but [0:25:30] I was too stupid to realize I was being bullied, so I didn't react. So we were safe that way. Friends of mine who went to Huron, right, which was – my best friend went to Huron, lived at Brunswick parallel to me. He was always running home from school being chased by a particular couple of bullies. I mean all stories really. Right? So I can't say – it was safe for me, I felt, but we didn't have our parents [0:26:00] in our mind to protect us.

Interviewer: Now you talked about this terrible thing that happened to this girl in Christie Pits, but generally speaking in the neighbourhood, did it feel like a safe, secure place? Or was...

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah.

Respondent: Well you kind of knew, like, you know, you knew. The Brunswick House was always there, so there'd be drunks coming out, but you wouldn't be around the Brunswick House when they were coming out.

Interviewer: Right. Did you lock your doors at night? Or during the day?

Respondent: That's a good question. [0:26:30] During the day for sure, but we're talking about – because we also – on Dalton we had a rooming house. We ran a rooming house, so we would lock it for the safety of our tenants. They didn't have keys to their rooms though, if you

want to get into that. That surprise you a bit? We had about three tenants. They were students, or one professor, a couple of students, and they didn't have keys to their rooms. They didn't have a key to the house. And my mother was a good landlady. There were rules [0:27:00] about, you know, visitors, believe it or not, and what – you know, common sense. Don't come home late.

Interviewer: Yeah. So one of the things that I was going to look at was kind of cottage industry and people working at home. So in that respect, your mother had that because she ran a little rooming house with three tenants.

Respondent: And she also made wedding dresses. She was a seamstress, so.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Respondent: So she would make wedding dresses. I [0:27:30] recall her doing that for a while. And after a while she didn't, and then we had a little store on Vaughan Road that she would – my father had to quit his job. My father was a tailor and a fur finisher, so he would quit his job, but he hated that. He hated – he loved hanging out in the shop talking to the boys as they worked, right? And so the idea of being in the store with my mother [0:28:00] bothered him.

Interviewer: So that was really her shop where she made wedding dresses?

Respondent: No. She made wedding dresses at home. We had a cleaning store basically where they did alterations, you know.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. And your mother was one of the people who did the alterations.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: But it sounds like she was a businesswoman, your mother.

Respondent: My mother had, in Poland when she was a late teenager, had her own business, and had about three girls working for her, again, to do with textile stuff.

Interviewer: So your mother had a [0:28:30] cleaning business on Vaughan.

Respondent: Briefly for a few years, for three years.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. But in terms of working at home, she had three tenants and she made these wedding dresses for a while.

Respondent: Occasionally. But yeah, for a while, that's right. Because my father was a tailor, a fur finisher, which is seasonal work, so he would be laid off for about four months every year, otherwise he was a freelance. He worked in several shops that, you know, he had good connections with, but then [0:29:00] during his late off-time he would bring in – still working freelance – he would be at home. We have two sewing machines still from – one is an old Singer foot pedal, and the other's electric one, and if somebody wants to buy one of them, they're welcome to.

Interviewer: [Laughs] Can you sew? Did you ever learn to sew? Are you a tailor at all?

Respondent: No, no.

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: My job, when their eyesight was failing, was to thread the needle.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: Did you ever do that?

Interviewer: Yeah. It's not easy.

Respondent: Yeah. No. Now I...

Interviewer: Now you [0:29:30] can't do it. Now somebody would have to do it for you.

Respondent: That's right. But I can't sew, no.

Interviewer: Did you see the streets changing? The streets that you walked on, the streets that you lived on?

Respondent: Yeah. Dalton Road. There was a house out – if you take a walk, there's no number 12 or 14 because there's a park there now. They took the houses away during the time that we were there, for example. Walking down Major, which you've done **[0:30:00]** probably...

Interviewer: Many times.

Respondent: ...right. Is there used to be St. John's Convent Hospital kind of thingy. It's now whatever – the old folks' home there. Part of the Doctor's Hospital, connected.

Interviewer: Oh, Kensington Gardens.

Respondent: Place or whatever it called...

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. But that used to be sort of a nunnery, we thought. I don't know what it was, but it was a convent – we saw nuns coming out.

Interviewer: Right, right, right. I've heard that before.

Respondent: Yeah. **[0:30:30]** So that changed.

Interviewer: Right. And any other changes that you can think of?

Respondent: A lot of houses are very similar to what they were they. If I walk down Major Street in particular, I wouldn't know what year it was except, you know, from the houses. Subtle changes. But an example, there's no apartment buildings on Major, and there's no apartment buildings – there's an old apartment building that's just a big house on Dalton right by Lowther, but you – would you know it?

Interviewer: Yeah, I do.

Respondent: Really? [0:31:00] Okay. Another change, Loretto College was a school on Brunswick right opposite Barton.

Interviewer: That's north of Bloor.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Right. And that's become a very...

Respondent: That's an apartment building.

Interviewer: Right, right.

Respondent: I'm trying to think more your neck of the woods. Well we had Central Tech kind of occupied a big chunk of Borden, didn't it?

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: So that didn't change, right?

Interviewer: Right. Right.

Respondent: Has anything changed on Borden? I don't think so.

Interviewer: Nothing significant, no.

Respondent: No. At [0:31:30] the corner of Sussex and Brunswick I notice change because it used to be a synagogue and now it's – what is it? Some sort of art thing?

Interviewer: Oh that's right. The pottery shop.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent: See? That's changed.

Interviewer: No, that's Harbord and Brunswick.

- Respondent:** Whatever.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah, there is a building there. It's some kind of office building.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** It's a government whatever.
- Interviewer:** Right, right, right. Yeah. What about – I'm talking about a kind of way of life. Traffic, [0:32:00] sidewalks.
- Respondent:** Oh. I'm not sure what you mean by sidewalk. What are you asking me about sidewalks? Yes there were.
- Interviewer:** And people using them in different ways. Using them...
- Respondent:** Well okay. One thing, on Major Street there were a lot of kids when I was growing up. This is me at different ages, so the Major Street kid, we'd have our little wagons, and bike, a tricycle, and [0:32:30] we'd be on the sidewalk. Zoom, zoom, zoom, right? Watching out for other people, of course. Not as a young kid playing on the street, on the road. We just didn't. And there were a lot of – again, you've heard this before – the ice truck.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** For example. There's also other, [0:33:00] like, horse-driven carriages. A lot of things that now would be motorized or horse-driven, so there's a lot of horse droppings.
- Interviewer:** Now was this individual families? Or was this delivery of different goods?
- Respondent:** This would be companies. Companies would deliver goods.
- Interviewer:** So what was delivered?

- Respondent:** Oh, the milkman and the – as kids you used to watch with amazement as the horse seemed to know where to stop, and the milkman would come [0:33:30] running out with the milk, and you would leave a little note as to how much milk you wanted, and you know. Oh for the ice, this will be interesting for you. We lived on the second floor on Major Street, so we had to put in the window a card, and the card had either fifty or twenty-five – the number of pounds we wanted him to drag upstairs, and he would look and he would go to his truck and take it...
- Interviewer:** For your icebox.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. That way, you know, he would know.
- Interviewer:** [0:34:00] Yeah. And what else was delivered by horse? So it was – you're talking about...
- Respondent:** That I remember.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Right.
- Respondent:** Okay. Eaton's, I think at one point, I think at one point, had a horse and wagons. [Laughter] And I seem to remember that. Again, it could be my mind playing – but I know for sure the iceman. And I know of others. Not the postman, that I can recall.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent:** And there were stables in the lanes behind. [0:34:30] You didn't know that.
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Where? So...
- Respondent:** On Major Street.
- Interviewer:** Oh.

- Respondent:** There would be stables here and there.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** And also I have a photograph of me as a child posing on a horse, a pony. There's a guy who went around the neighbourhood with a pony and a camera, and he would get the kids to plop up on it, and...
- Interviewer:** And pay him for it.
- Respondent:** ...take a picture.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Probably a nickel or something like that.
- Respondent:** And develop it right there.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Oh, so he had one of those cameras.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Whatever.
- Interviewer:** Those cameras that...
- Respondent:** I was three or four. [0:35:00] So I can actually say that probably the only time I ever rode a horse was that time, so yeah.
- Interviewer:** And how did people get around in your recollection?
- Respondent:** It depends. If you want to go downtown, if you lived at Harbord and anywhere, if you wanted to go shopping downtown there was a Harbord streetcar that – you may not know this – it went along Harbord to [0:35:30] Spadina, along Spadina to Dundas, and then along Dundas going east so that you'd get off at Dundas and Yonge, and the Harbord streetcar was out changing. At one point I worked at – in high school, I worked at – it was Simpson's, Sears. Do you know where that was at all? No. It was at Jarvis and Dundas, okay? And it was a – where [0:36:00] Sears would deliver stuff. We're going way back. And I would get to work by taking that

streetcar without having to change. There was no subway until about 1954.

Interviewer: But that means there were tracks on Harbord, which have been removed.

Respondent: Yeah, of course.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: And if you went to Harbord Collegiate, there were some kids who – just a little bit out of the way who would take the streetcar to get to Harbord Collegiate. I walked to Harbord Collegiate, which took fifteen minutes, whatever.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: **[0:36:30]** There weren't that many cars. There weren't that many cars. People – and when one of my uncles would buy a car, that was a big event. My parents did have a car later on, but you know, they would use it for outings to Lake Simcoe. They would go for a slow ride. Both of them could drive, by the way.

Interviewer: Oh, so your mother was...

Respondent: My mother was quite a **[0:37:00]** going concern, as you can tell.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Tough. After she passed away I was in the bank one day and Weiner Hardware...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: Yeah? So Weiner – did you know the Weiner brothers?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: No. So he turned to me, saw me, and he said, "Your mother was a real tough lady." He said that. As opposed to, "I'm sorry that your

mother passed." [Laughter] Okay. All right. So she had a certain reputation.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Harvey, [0:37:30] you mentioned that some of the lanes had stables for the horses.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: What else do you remember about the back lanes?

Respondent: Well a lot of horse droppings as well.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: They were well-travelled. We thought they were safe because they led right to the school. It almost seemed like this was a given way. You cut across through the lanes, and you had a choice of lanes. So which way shall I go today? Okay. I only lived five minutes away. That's basically – oh, [0:38:00] I remember some sort of weeds that would stick to you. I don't know what they were called.

Interviewer: They were growing in the lanes?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Between – they would come through the concrete?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Pretty tough weeds.

Respondent: Yeah. Tough weeds. Okay.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. So in terms of...

Respondent: Remember, we're talking about me way back. I'm not talking two – I'm trying to show you what it was like then, trying to show the – I haven't walked through the lanes much lately, like maybe hardly at all.

- Interviewer:** [0:38:30] Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** I don't even know if you can still do it.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah. I like the lanes. Yeah. Oh yeah.
- Respondent:** Okay. And you can cross into other streets?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** I know you can at Brunswick and Bloor, but can you do it just from Robert to Major? There used to be a connection.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, definitely. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Okay. It's good to know.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And did you and your friends ever use lanes, other than to walk to school?
- Respondent:** No. No. Not really. We didn't play in the lanes.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. What about backyards?
- Respondent:** [0:39:00] Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Did you have them? And how do you remember people using them at that time? And any comments on today?
- Respondent:** Okay. Well it's hardly ever do I remember backyards in Toronto. Only when people were moving north of Eglinton, we might visit somebody and he would take us to the backyard, and he'd have a table set up, and we might have coffee or something. But backyards was not a big thing. [0:39:30] Today it depends who it is, right? We have not much of a backyard for whatever reason. Hard to explain. My neighbours don't really have backyards as such.
- Interviewer:** Some people like the backyards a lot.
- Respondent:** Oh, some people would make that the feature of their existence.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** But that was not a big thing for us.
- Interviewer:** And what about were there...
- Respondent:** We had a garden at one point, if that means anything.
- Interviewer:** And what was growing in the garden?
- Respondent:** **[0:40:00]** For a while we had tomatoes, and different things like that. Some beans. One of the features of our house, we have a lilac bush, and neighbours will, even to this day, will come and help themselves at our invitation to lilacs.
- Interviewer:** And if it's not your invitation they might still help themselves?
- Respondent:** Of course. Of course. [Laughter] Of course. But you know, we know which neighbours like the lilacs.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Somebody **[0:40:30]** described to me – go ahead.
- Respondent:** Go ahead, please.
- Interviewer:** No, I was just saying somebody described to me that they used to go and take people's lilacs and then sell them. [Laughter]
- Respondent:** Really?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** Oh god.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** Well another thing that's very important to a kid, it was the chestnut tree.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So how...

Respondent: We had games involving chestnuts that you probably – by your face you don't know what I'm talking about. Okay. We'd gather chestnuts. I'm sure some people would roast them as well, [0:41:00] and we knew which – where the chestnut trees were on Major Street, right? That became a big thing. So at a certain point on a weekend, the first weekend that they were really out, you'd have a few kids there throwing sticks at the chestnuts. But one thing kids did, a game – you peeled a chestnut, and you would attach a string to it, through it. Kids did this. And then you would have fights with the chestnuts. So I would hold my chestnut and somebody [0:41:30] would try to smash it with his chestnut, trying not to break your knuckles. [Laughter] And let's suppose they did. Let's suppose that they did. They'd ask me, "Well how old was your chestnut?" And that meant, "How many chestnuts had your chestnut beaten?" So let's suppose my chestnut was four years old, right? Had four victories before he smashed it. He would get those four chestnuts to his. There was certain prestige [0:42:00] involving chestnuts. Sounds silly but...

Interviewer: No, it sounds wonderful.

Respondent: ...kids played all kinds of wonderful games.

Interviewer: Very creative.

Respondent: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer: I mean you weren't spending eighty dollars on toys. You just got some chestnuts.

Respondent: No. We also would do things with marbles at school. I don't know if you encountered it.

Interviewer: We played with marbles in the winter.

Respondent: Yeah. We had, like, it was almost like a casino. There'd be a wall of kids setting up marbles, and if you hit it you would win [0:42:30] marbles or money even. Like nickels, whatever. Kids were very inventive.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: There's a guy called Sam Goodmacher, who was known as Fat Sam, and he traded comics. And I remember one day, a knock on my door when I lived on Major, and he went upstairs with me and we traded comics, and that was a big thing. It's cheaper to trade than to always have to buy, right?

Interviewer: So there was no exchange of money. You just got each other's comics.

Respondent: That's right. And Classic [0:43:00] Comics...

Interviewer: Oh yeah.

Respondent: You remember those?

Interviewer: I do.

Respondent: Okay. It was two for one. If you wanted a Classic Comic, you had to trade two ordinary ones. [Laughter] It was very simple. But they were valuable because those book reports...

Interviewer: That's right. And it was an easier way to read those classic books.

Respondent: Wasn't it though?

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. What about heating? How were the homes heated?

Respondent: That's a good question also. Oil for the most part, that I remember. The coal [0:43:30] at one point. Oil later on. I don't remember anything else.

Interviewer: But the coal, they would shovel it in.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Good old dirty coal.

- Respondent:** Yeah. But remember, when we rented I didn't care. I was just a kid. When we had our own house, there was oil and they would – you know, I forget what the company was at this point.
- Interviewer:** Any memories about the collection of garbage? Or storage of **[0:44:00]** garbage?
- Respondent:** No. No.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** Seriously.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Any thoughts about...
- Respondent:** Probably more frequent than now, would be my guess.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Any recollection about, in your adolescence, dating then versus dating now?
- Respondent:** Oh boy. You're getting personal now. [Laughter] Give me an age period. When you say...
- Interviewer:** Let's say seventeen to twenty-three.
- Respondent:** Oh god. That's adolescence **[0:44:30]** for you?
- Interviewer:** I don't know. Twenty-three I was married. [Laughter]
- Respondent:** I know. That's what I'm saying. Okay. Well speaking from myself, okay, for the most part we're talking – let's say fifteen to twenty, okay? For the most part, you would ask out a girl. Or **[0:45:00]** actually, there's a lot of the girl asking you out. There was a lot of that, believe it or not. I was often considered a safe date to different bar mitzvahs and weddings. [Laughter] So I was an acceptable, nice boy, nice Jewish boy who would be – you know, somebody would phone me up and they'd say, "So and so knows you. Would you like to go?" But I didn't think of it as a romantic evening. **[0:45:30]** When I think back to it, I thought of it as – the part of thing of going out with almost a complete stranger who I had no feelings

for, right, at all, they were nice – very nice girls, probably – if I had given it much thought, I would have regret some opportunities that I...

Interviewer: Lost opportunity.

Respondent: Many. Many lost opportunities. [Laughter] One thing about me, and it shows how stupid I was or whatever, [0:46:00] okay, I would meet a girl and I would ask her out at a dance, at a whatever, at a party, and we'd go to a show, right, and I would take her home, and I would say good night, and oh, that was nice. We had a nice time, we talked, we went to the show. I'd ask her out again, same thing, and I asked her out a third time and she'd say no. Because, when I look back, I wasn't going anywhere with the relationship, [0:46:30] right? So there was no real deep romantic thing at all. It wasn't even shyness. I wasn't really – in my mind, these girls were girls to be companions and to go out with. I wasn't thinking seriously. I wasn't thinking of sex.

Interviewer: Or even kissing?

Respondent: I thought of kissing and occasionally I did [laughter], but it wasn't – you know, there was no consequences [0:47:00] to it, or nothing bad about it. Your point of view would be different because it's – there's so many elements of this that I could get into, but be specific. I'll be candid.

Interviewer: Well just dating in general, whether people went out as groups, or you dated...

Respondent: Oh, I was in a club, so we had club parties.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: We had rules about no alcohol [0:47:30] in our club party because, you know, most of the girls would still be underage and we were all underage. And I remember one guy did bring in a bottle of liquor and tried to spike some drinks. We had a party in the Barkley Hotel once where we rented a suite, but you know, it wasn't like mass sex going on. There was nothing going on, but it sounded good.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. [Laughs]

Respondent: No. It was very different. In my – [0:48:00] okay, I'll be very frank. In my high school, I only knew of one couple that actually had sex and that we all knew about it. What do you think of that? If they did, if others did, nobody talked about it. There was a group of guys that I knew who would go to a prostitute. How's that? And there was a well-known older woman, kay, who was a prostitute, [0:48:30] who was in her late forties, and so these guys would have their sexual initiation by going to this prostitute, and that was somehow considered okay.

Interviewer: Do you know how much they paid?

Respondent: No, no, no. I would guess – because there used to be a joke, ten and three. Have you ever heard that term before?

Interviewer: No, never.

Respondent: Okay. Ten and three referred to ten dollars for the girl, and three dollars [0:49:00] for the room.

Interviewer: Wow, so that was a lot of money.

Respondent: I don't know. [Laughs] I never. I only heard these things, and it's sad when you think back to it. Like it was just one of these taboo things where the word would get around very quickly. Oh, there was a grapevine like you wouldn't believe. Now I don't know if you had that in your...

Interviewer: I'm sure. I'm sure. Oh yeah, this stuff. Especially something like that, [0:49:30] which was much more taboo. Right now I think it's a different pressure, I think. Now it's more of a pressure to do it, and at that time it was to not do it, and if you did it was a secret.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: I think.

- Respondent:** I do know of one girl who had an abortion. She was a friend of mine, and she had to go to Buffalo to have the abortion.
- Interviewer:** And she would have been about what age?
- Respondent:** She would have been, I don't know, sixteen maybe?
- Interviewer:** Oh. So that would have been very tough at that time.
- Respondent:** Yeah, yeah. And her parents never knew about it.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god. So her friends arranged it, or her friends' parents?
- Respondent:** [0:50:00] Somebody arranged it. I don't know.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** I don't know. And I still see her and we don't talk about it.
- Interviewer:** But it's funny, all these decades later you remember.
- Respondent:** Well how could you not?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** This was very unusual, etcetera.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Must have been very...
- Respondent:** Oddly enough she married the guy eventually. Like many years later she married the guy.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** But you're asking about morals, right? Is that what you're talking about?
- Interviewer:** Just practice. Not morals. Well morals, that's – [0:50:30] of course, those would have changed also.

Respondent: Okay. I'll tell you a story.

Interviewer: Please.

Respondent: I used to work in Ottawa and I would get a lift back with a British guy who had been a race car driver in Britain, and he was a fellow teacher, right, in Ottawa. And he had a girlfriend in Toronto who was much younger than him, and more my age at the time, and I knew – I had heard – she was a Jewish girl, he was not, [0:51:00] and he had a very heavy sexual relationship with her, right? But in the Jewish community she was not in any way considered somebody who would have a sexual relationship with anybody. So in other words, there was that double standard. And Jewish girls basically kept themselves pure for possible marriage. Now, another [0:51:30] group of my friends – I'm giving you all kinds of secrets here. Another group of my friends used to go to Crystal Beach, and they would meet Jewish girls from Buffalo area who they knew they would never see in their ordinary thing, and they would get it on there. [Laughter] And this was well known to people. Okay? I found that whole thing creepy, by the way.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. But the local Jewish girls were meant to be pure, and...

Respondent: Yeah. [0:52:00] And occasionally one of our friends would fall in love with one of them, who the odd one wasn't pure. Usually they were from out of town, they were from small towns, and I know of a guy that I knew married one of them, and was sort of laughed at. Of course, she was extremely wealthy and so that was probably his motive for marrying her. I'm sure he knew what she was all about. We're talking, you know, certain morality. You don't want to share anything. You will after [0:52:30] this recording perhaps.

Interviewer: Sure. Right now we're getting...

Respondent: I know. I'm giving you a...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: ...thing of what was going on then, I thought. I was not part of much of that, put it that way.

Interviewer: And if you would compare then with now, what do you think are the major differences?

Respondent: Oh god. Okay. I think now my own observation, and I'm guessing because [0:53:00] what do I know – an awful lot of the girls that my daughter went to school with, by the time they were twenty had a steady boyfriend, were possibly living with them for a while. I find that the morality is much looser. There's also more divorces now, I think. I think people with – I'm not sure why they get married so early, but they do. You got married young.

Interviewer: Yup.

Respondent: Okay. [0:53:30] But you know, I don't know if in your world you've seen more – it isn't really promiscuity if everybody is carrying on the same way, and they're not doing it indiscriminately. They're having sex much more frequently, how's that?

Interviewer: More frequently and earlier, I think.

Respondent: Yeah. I don't know how earlier. That's what I don't know. I don't know. Do you know?

Interviewer: Well I think compared to what [0:54:00] we did in high school, and you and I are very close in age, I think there was less at that time, except as you said, if they would go away to get it somewhere else. Okay. I want to come back briefly – oh yeah. Anything about animals? Home pets? Animals?

Respondent: That's a good point. My parents didn't like pets, so when we had the house, we didn't have pets. Also we had tenants. They wouldn't like pets. When we lived on Major Street as tenants, [0:54:30] the people had a dog and a cat. I still remember the names of each of them because I liked them. The dog was Brownie and the cat was Snookums. Okay? And we didn't – in grade eight, a Japanese kid that I knew called Kenny Miyasaki sold me a goldfish as a pet. [Laughs] And I took this goldfish home, which of course died within

three days. [Laughter] And [0:55:00] I was actually heartbroken, and so I never had another pet. We did have – Dalton as a – for about eighteen years – two cats who recently passed away, which broke my wife's heart. Me, not so much.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: You know, she was really attached to them, and they were very expensive to take care of, and they died. I had nothing to do with it. They were put away actually.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Respondent: You have pets?

Interviewer: No. I have had, but [0:55:30] I don't now.

Respondent: Yeah. There's a certain heartbreak.

Interviewer: Oh, very much so. Yeah, very much so. Is there anything else you might like to say, because you've touched on it already, about the stores all the way – College, Harbord, Bloor?

Respondent: I love old stores. We lived on Major and Ulster, so there was two stores, one next to us almost two doors away, and another across the road, and they would be local convenience stores, and the type of thing you'd [0:56:00] buy there would be bubble gum, you know? I don't even know if they – I don't think they sold newspapers there. It was just very – I don't even know how they stayed in business to tell you the truth.

Interviewer: Did you get to know the owners quite well?

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. So it wasn't a kind of personal thing, but they were very small stores.

Respondent: Right. On Bloor Street, I got to know the owners a bit. When I say got to know, not even to say hello to most of them, but I might know

their kid, that type of thing. [0:56:30] One thing, oh this you'll find interesting, there used to be – if there was a sporting event, like a fight, very few people had television sets, but we would go to either one of the local restaurants that had a television. I could name them, but it wouldn't mean anything to you.

Interviewer: Where?

Respondent: There was a place called the Midtown Restaurant and the Java Shop.

Interviewer: On what street?

Respondent: On Bloor just east of Bathurst. There's probably [0:57:00] restaurants there now, but I don't know what they're called. These are – oh, when the kids went to – we had dances here four nights a week.

Interviewer: Here?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: At the Y?

Respondent: Yes, yes. [Laughter] Yes, at the Y. Wednesday, and Thursday, and Saturday, and Sunday night.

Interviewer: Whoa.

Respondent: There were dances.

Interviewer: Ballroom dancing?

Respondent: No, no, no. Record hops, basically. And different age groups slightly. Sixteen, a little younger. Like Wednesday was a little younger, and [0:57:30] Saturday was a little younger. And it was a great way to hang out.

Interviewer: Yeah. And it was somewhat supervised and...

Respondent: Yes, yes.

Interviewer: ...and controlled.

Respondent: Yes, yes. And you know, your typical day – I did very poorly in high school because of all these – these were major distractions. But it wasn't just to meet girls, although you did. It was also to hang out with your friends. It was a great meeting place. They don't have that anymore. And we played basketball at the time.

Interviewer: **[0:58:00]** Here. Right here also.

Respondent: We had pick-up teams right after school.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent: We could spend the whole day until the time to go to bed, right? I think that was very important for people my age.

Interviewer: Yeah. But I want to come back very briefly. There are a few places that have television sets.

Respondent: Yes. Oh, should I mention?

Interviewer: So you would go and order a Coke and watch the game or something like that?

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And including with my father, like whatever. **[0:58:30]** He liked to watch fights, so we'd go and we'd watch, say, Joe Louis. The later-day Joe Louis. Also, Danforth Radio was a store on Bloor, very much near the – what's the one here? Where they sell a lot of records on the north side of Bloor just west of Bathurst. It's a record store, big record store. No? But that **[0:59:00]** was a Danforth Radio there, and you'd sit on the floor and they'd let you watch a game. [Laughter] It was also, you know, good advertising. Maybe you'd want to buy one eventually. And televisions were very expensive, and only had one or two channels, and people were paying a fortune for little black and whites.

Interviewer: So those are...

- Respondent:** That was a big day when you got your TV. You probably remember that.
- Interviewer:** I do.
- Respondent:** Yeah?
- Interviewer:** I do. Yeah. Do you remember how old you were when you got a TV?
- Respondent:** Yeah. **[0:59:30]** But that's when my marks started going down even more. I think I was fifteen at the time.
- Interviewer:** Me too. I was fifteen when we got. [Laughs] It was a big day, yeah.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Where did you put the television set?
- Respondent:** In the living room.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** You?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. That's when my mother's ironing board moved from the kitchen into the living room, when the television set got there. Yeah. [Laughs]
- Respondent:** But that was a big thing for our age.
- Interviewer:** Do you have any thoughts about **[1:00:00]** the effect of the University of Toronto on this neighbourhood? And then Kensington Market on this neighbourhood?
- Respondent:** Okay. I have to again think of myself. Kensington Market, of course, isn't the same as it was then. I think Kensington Market for your neighbourhood you're talking about, right, was very important. That was our key. As I mentioned, that was our key shopping area, right,

for food. [1:00:30] Okay? And especially Jewish holidays. You didn't have to go up to Deiter's. Deiter's was downtown as a matter of fact, right? So you could get – we'd get a Passover order from Kensington Market, right?

Interviewer: Oh big change. Big change.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. I still, for Passover, I will go and get certain things at Kensington. There's a nut store in Kensington. Do you know it?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: [1:01:00]And I will get certain types of nuts that I need to make charoses.

Interviewer: Oh. So you go to that same store.

Respondent: And I still make the charoses. Yeah. Same store. Well I guess it's not the same. It's the same idea, okay. And there was a great cheese store in Kensington that's been there for years, right?

Interviewer: Yeah. There are a couple of them beside each other.

Respondent: And I think it's Globe, is it? Globe Cheese?

Interviewer: I don't know the name.

Respondent: Or whatever. Yeah, yeah. And I think they're owned by the same people actually. So it still has that charm for me, and I get a – it used to be even better when [1:01:30] Switzer's and...

Interviewer: Shopsy's.

Respondent: Shopsy's was...

Interviewer: And United.

Respondent: Yeah. Oh. Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

- Respondent:** I still occasionally will go up to Bathurst and Lawrence to go to United for a breakfast. You done that?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I like their pea soup.
- Respondent:** And I'll go to the Barbara Frum Library, which is a wonderful library.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So Kensington Market was central to your lives to do your shopping.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Very important, yeah. And remember, Harbord had the fish market?
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent:** So we didn't [1:02:00] get fish at Kensington, and Harbord had a bakery.
- Interviewer:** So that's been around a long time.
- Respondent:** Yeah. So we wouldn't get our bread from Kensington at all, right? I'm trying to think. You asked me something else about the effect of Kensington and...
- Interviewer:** And the University of Toronto.
- Respondent:** Oh okay. University of Toronto was a goal that existed, that you didn't really think of growing up. Like [1:02:30] I kind of always wanted to go to university, but seemed headed for accountancy because it was cheaper. You just go and work for an accountant. A lot of Jewish boys of my ilk ended up working for accountants. It was an acceptable profession, you made a certain amount of good living, you got to wear suits. And I did work there for two summers, and I went through all that. You know, you look like a mensch, as a seventeen, eighteen-year-old kid. But it's the most [1:03:00] boring job I could ever imagine. I don't know if you've ever thought of it.
- Interviewer:** No, no, no. But that would be my reaction for sure.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was horribly boring, but you act like a big-shot.

Interviewer: Yeah. You look like a big-shot.

Respondent: What?

Interviewer: You look like a big-shot.

Respondent: You look like a big-shot. Yeah. And you know, the guy that your clients – think what a smart, young boy you are, bah, bah, bah. Okay. So the university was there as a goal. I never used to wander into the university [1:03:30] in high school or public school. The closest we would get as a young kid, my mother would go to Queen's Park with me and with a stroller or something, right? I'm sure we did that a fair bit. And I...

Interviewer: Out for a walk.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah. But it wasn't – nobody in my family thought of going to university especially, okay? They were kind of happy when I decided to go, but you know, [1:04:00] they supported me in that. And I remember after my first year, waiting for my results, which were in the newspaper, by the way. Did you know that?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: They published all the results.

Interviewer: Oh my god.

Respondent: So you'd know what class you had, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And if you failed of course your name wouldn't appear, so there wasn't any embarrassment that way. If you had a supplementary to write, that would appear. Okay. But I remember after my year of [1:04:30] university, my first year, actually I was working for an accountant in the summer, expecting that if I didn't pass I would go and become an accountant. And I remember thinking I had a really nice time in university. I learned some things. I had some great lectures, had some wonderful profs. If I failed, fine. I had the experience. So when I passed I was very happy, and I continue

going. I was also happy when I [1:05:00] got the marks in grade thirteen to go to university, right? It was nice. I then unfortunately overstepped. I went into law, and so I had Osgoode Hall for one successful year, and after that I wanted to quit, but and do what? Right? So I went back foolishly to second year. There I am in second-year Osgoode, and I hated every second of it. Really, it was a bad – I knew from day one. I remember [1:05:30] day one and I didn't do any work, I didn't have the heart to tell my parents, "I'm not going to be a lawyer," and I just basically flunked completely.

Interviewer: So that was one way to get out.

Respondent: It was the easy way, yeah. [Laughter] It was the easy way.

Interviewer: Then you became a teacher.

Respondent: Yeah. And I used actually my credits from first-year law to help me upgrade myself, so there's nothing lost. And I can say, yeah, I went to Osgoode Hall, and even passed first year, which is a tough year, by the way. Your son went to Osgoode too? Or?

Interviewer: [1:06:00] No. He studied law in Winnipeg.

Respondent: In Winnipeg. Oh, okay.

Interviewer: But like you, he didn't like it either.

Respondent: No. But he didn't like it after doing it for about eight years. That's the difference.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. I'm just going to talk about several very large things, and then I think we'll come up with...

Respondent: Am I being too loquacious?

Interviewer: You're wonderful. Absolutely wonderful. Please. Were you around when the whole issue of the Spadina Expressway was supposed to be coming?

Respondent: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: [1:06:30] Did you have any – what do you remember about that?

Respondent: Well I remember my friend, who still is my friend, he lives on Cecil. Do you know where Cecil is?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: Okay. So I know it from a different point of – they wanted to go through his house and destroy his house for the Spadina Expressway, and he got Robert Kaplan who was against the Expressway. Did you know that at the time?

Interviewer: Yeah. I didn't know that he was, but yeah.

Respondent: Yeah. And my friend actually became the head of [1:07:00] the citizens against the Spadina Expressway for that area, and used to appear on television talking about it. So I sympathize with him. It didn't affect me because it didn't go – A, I don't drive a car, and secondly I wasn't going to go through my house.

Interviewer: But coming through the neighbourhood, did you think much about it?

Respondent: Well I knew that people with more influence than me were trying to stop it, and I trusted my – [1:07:30] for my friend to put himself out like that, you have to know him. That's really a step, okay?

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. So he was very upset about it. Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: You know, and he was right, as it turned out. They didn't do it right.

Interviewer: Oh, they stopped it at Eglinton.

Respondent: Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer: Because that neighbourhood beginning at Eglinton fought it.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: Very strongly, yeah.

Respondent: Okay.

Interviewer: Two others. One is Rochdale and the student activism.

Respondent: Oh, I know a lot about that.

Interviewer: Okay. So what was happening? What was your impression?

Respondent: [1:08:00] Okay. Okay. First of all, my contact with Rochdale starts off at something called a neighbourhood house on Harbord. There was a student house residence of really left-wing people of the university housing, led by a guy called Howard Adelman. Do you know who [1:08:30] I'm talking about?

Interviewer: Yeah, I know Howard.

Respondent: And there were three guys that I always connect that were kind of involved. One was Adelman, the other was Matt Cohen, who the park is named after him. He's a writer.

Interviewer: Yeah. Right.

Respondent: The late Matt Cohen. And the other one was an interesting guy who – I'm not going to mention too much, but Art Pape. Art Pape was actually the god of those three guys. Adelman was in charge, but Art [1:09:00] Pape was a driving force. I'd seen him here at the Y. He doesn't remember me. None of them remember me, as it turns out. But I was like a hanger-on. I was now in my twenties, and there were a couple of girls there that I fancied, and I would hang out in the hope of meeting them closer. And they went – at one point, their highlight was they all went to the March on Washington, the whole group of them. [1:09:30] When Luther King made the speech, right? And I tried to get there, but I got arrested on the way. I shouldn't have said that. I was hitchhiking near a throughway and I was picked up by a police.

Interviewer: Okay, go ahead.

Respondent: But Rochdale seemed to be a connection to that type of student residence, okay? And Rochdale at the time – I remember as [1:10:00] a very left-wing – the guy that I always think of with Rochdale is Dennis Lee, who is a poet...

Interviewer: Yes.

Respondent: ...who wrote "Alligator Pie."

Interviewer: Yes, yes.

Respondent: And he was a resident of Rochdale who romanticized it a bit. And I do remember going – I had a friend who lived there, and we went up and all kinds of people would be smoking dope.

Interviewer: Oh plenty of that.

Respondent: It was true.

Interviewer: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Respondent: It was true. [1:10:30] And it seemed to be – but they had guards at the door, security guards, whose job we thought was to alert the people when the cops were coming. That seemed to be the general wisdom of the time. And I'm trying to remember his name. He's a prof. He was a lawyer who works for the Chicago Seven. He had a ponytail. Famous lawyer. No? Doesn't [1:11:00] ring a bell?

Interviewer: It does ring a bell. I just can't retrieve a name.

Respondent: Yeah. And I remember he came to Rochdale once to speak or whatever, and it was strange because it was almost a scary place for me. Like it seemed that if I heard somebody was living at Rochdale, they were doomed to, you know, to become degenerate. That's how I thought of Rochdale. And it became a David Croll Senior Home...

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

- Respondent:** ...at some point, which is a sort of irony. And probably [1:11:30] some of the people of that era, that's their ambition – to grow old and move to David Croll, and smoke as much dope as they – I don't even know what goes on at David Croll. We're talking about changes.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Well that's a huge change.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But do you remember with a bit of concern about it.
- Respondent:** Well I knew that it was one of the places you had to be careful.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent:** There were certain places that you grow up. You only live as – if you're a male, and I was single for a long time, [1:12:00] you grow up knowing where to go and where not to go, and what to look out for. I don't know. Women, unless they're very, very independent, have that same way of looking at the world.
- Interviewer:** Well I guess we...
- Respondent:** Because they always have their husband, or their boyfriend helping them. You may be in a different kettle of fish.
- Interviewer:** That's for after the taping, Harvey.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And the last thing in terms of these big, historical events is the end of World [1:12:30] War II.
- Respondent:** Wow. It's funny. I don't remember it ending. I do remember one headline, and it was – and I remember the back of the Toronto Star that my dad used to bring. Oh, actually I remember two things. I remember the Toronto Star had the headline in the back, a big picture of FDR dead. And I [1:13:00] remember as a kid, I was six years old, running out on the street and pretending to be a newsboy

yelling, "Extra! Extra! Read all about it. FDR dead." I had no idea how significant that was, but I certainly was aware of Roosevelt, and Stalin, and all these...

Interviewer: You did that?

Respondent: Yes, I did. [Laughter] But almost playing at it, right?

Interviewer: Yeah, of course.

Respondent: The other thing I remember is...

Interviewer: That's a remarkable story.

Respondent: Well not to me. But the other one is my father coming upstairs [1:13:30] with a really determined look, and he had a Toronto Star, and he threw the Star on the table, and it opened up, and the headline was, "Hitler is dead," and I remember that was a wonderful day. But the look on my father's face was incredible. Didn't say a word. I don't remember the war ending. I do remember, [1:14:00] okay, after math, some of our teachers coming home from service. We had never known these teachers, right? But there'd be a Mr. Chik or whatever, and the word was he had been in the army. And I remember in high school we had Cadet inspections. Did you have that in your school ever?

Interviewer: I remember there were Cadets.

Respondent: But no, everybody in the school was a Cadet. All the boys had to march all the way through from grade nine up to [1:14:30] grade thirteen, as I recall, and you'd been in platoons of your class, of the boys in your class. And some of the teachers would wear their military outfits and medals...

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent: ...for that. I have a horrible memory of that because I was in the marching band, and I played the base drum, and I had to wear a uniform and I was a terrible base drummer. [Laughter] And I have a picture of [1:15:00] me in my uniform.

- Interviewer:** But those are colourful memories.
- Respondent:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Especially of the teachers.
- Respondent:** And at the time.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent:** How about being balled out in front of nine hundred students? And my friend still makes fun of it. He was there, he knew me, and imagine a teacher, a music teacher, coming over, yelling, "It's boom, boom, Jacobs. It's boom, boom." So I became known as "Boom boom Jacobs."
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] You can laugh at it now.
- Respondent:** I can laugh at it now. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So Harvey, [1:15:30] before we say goodbye...
- Respondent:** Sum up.
- Interviewer:** ...sum up, I'm wondering if there's anything – when you think of the changes that you have lived with, observed, experienced, if there's anything else that you want to talk about that I might not have brought up?
- Respondent:** That's a good question also, and I have to think. Obviously what am I going to think of? Okay. I think overall that it was more [1:16:00] fun being a teenager, and easier to be a teenager then than it is now for all the reason that I've said. We had places to go without parental supervision or worry, we also seemed to be more responsible about drinking. The fact that I was in a club without adult supervision, right? And we managed to monitor ourselves, I thought, was a wonderful experience. I don't think they could [1:16:30] allow that now. Could you allow your kids to have a party

in a hotel room when they were sixteen? Would you let your daughter go there, if you had a daughter?

Interviewer: I had only sons. [Laughs]

Respondent: I know.

Interviewer: No, but yeah. But I can see what you're saying.

Respondent: Yeah. And we had places to go every night.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent: Okay, here as a member, I would find it hard to know which time is available for me to go swimming. Which time can I use the gym? It [1:17:00] seems to be really restricted because of all the groups, and classes, and money-making, and all of that, right? It was a much simpler time.

Interviewer: Yeah, I agree. Yeah. Yeah.

Respondent: And it's too bad. You think it also would have been easier growing up then than now.

Interviewer: I'm not doing it now, but I mean we did play on the street, and that kind of thing, and children didn't have play dates the way they do it.

Respondent: Yeah.

Interviewer: So there was [1:17:30] less monitoring of the children at that time.

Respondent: Yeah. Now in the school, we fooled around a lot more, I felt, than in my own experience teaching. I found that I was forever as a student, you know, talking to classmates about the things not to do at school. We didn't throw paper airplanes. I mean it wasn't silly, but there was a certain – and Jewish school was a horrible [1:18:00] experience. Did you go after school?

Interviewer: After school at four o'clock in the afternoon.

Respondent: Yeah. That was the worst possible idea. And I don't know, as a girl it would have been horrible to be – you probably didn't have a bat mitzvah.

Interviewer: Right. No.

Respondent: So we had this goal, oh, you've got to study from the time you're five year's old, bah, bah, bah, bah, bah. And I mentioned you can turn out two ways. I started Jewish school with a private teacher. We paid very little. There were only two of us in **[1:18:30]** the class. The other guy, he was Eddy Goldfarb, who became a rabbi. Do you know Eddy? Or no?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent: No. Okay. I became me. You know, just how you turned out. But he knew he was going to be a rabbi from the time he started, I think. That's it?

Interviewer: Well Harvey, this has been – let me – I just want to thank you very, very much.

Respondent: My pleasure. My pleasure.

Interviewer: That we have a lot of extremely interesting information. And when we finally do something with it, you can be sure I'll let you know...

Respondent: Please.

Interviewer: ...where you can read about it.

Respondent: Thank you. Thank you.

[01:19:00]

[End of recording]