

050 Ann Sobel Stone

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

[0:00:00]

Interviewer: Okay. Today is the 23rd of March and I'm in the home of Freddy and Ann Stone.

Respondent 1: Your month is wrong.

Interviewer: April.

Respondent 1: Mm-hm.

Interviewer: Oh okay. The 23rd of April. And I want to thank – Freddy did not live in this neighbourhood, so really I'm interviewing Ann who lived in this neighbourhood from 1926 to 1956. So [0:00:30] the information you're going to give me, not too many people can give me. And right now you're ninety-two years old, and looking great. [Laughs]

Respondent 2: I feel it though after, with him in this week, this month...

Respondent 1: She lost a lot of weight.

Respondent 2: I lost weight.

Interviewer: Yeah. So I just first of all want to say thank you very much for allowing me to come to your home and to interview you.

Respondent 2: Oh I told you I would, but I couldn't. When you phoned, he had just fallen.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent 2: It's [0:01:00] about a month ago.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent 2: And he needed a lot of help.

Interviewer: And you were there for him.

Respondent 2: Who else?

Interviewer: Yeah. So do you have any idea what prompted your family to choose to live at 5 Major Street in 1926? Do you have any idea?

Respondent 2: We lived – do you know where we lived before that?

Interviewer: Where?

Respondent 2: What's the name of the street?

Respondent 1: Fitzroy Terrace.

Respondent 2: Do you know where Fitzroy Terrace is?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent 2: You don't?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent 2: You know where [0:01:30] Kensington is?

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent 2: Well Kensington had a laneway...

Respondent 1: No. Yeah, there was Kensington, yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Respondent 1: Baldwin.

Respondent 2: Baldwin. Kensington had a laneway and it was called Fitzroy Terrace. Now I think if my memory – it's a long time ago – that

Harold was born in Fitzroy Terrace. See, Alec was older, and Harold was the youngest one.

Interviewer: [0:02:00] You want to explain who Harold is?

Respondent 2: Harold is the one that was killed and buried in Holland.

Interviewer: Okay. And he's one of the Boys of Major Street.

Respondent 2: That's right.

Interviewer: And he's your younger brother.

Respondent 2: And he was my kid brother.

Interviewer: Good. That's what I wanted on the tape.

Respondent 2: And Alec was older than him. Alec was two years older than him. We were all two years apart.

Interviewer: Right. And how many children...

Respondent 2: And there was six of us.

Interviewer: Okay. Yeah.

Respondent 2: I had three wonderful sisters, and they're all gone, [0:02:30] and my two brothers.

Interviewer: Right, right. Was Harold the youngest of the children? He was the baby of the family.

Respondent 2: He was the baby.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Must have been some very hard times in your family when he died.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah. We didn't tell my father because we didn't want him to know. Anyway...

Interviewer: So your father...

Respondent 2: ...he worked on Spadina Avenue with my uncle. We had an uncle that lived on [0:03:00] Camden Street, and he – so somebody met my father on Spadina Avenue and said, "I'm sorry to hear about" – Fred, you take the phone and tell them I'll call back. He said, "I'm sorry to hear about your son." It was in the paper. Because that's what was in the Star, which was unusual for the Star. The Star at one time was not a Jewish paper.

Interviewer: Mm-hm.

Respondent 2: They didn't [0:03:30] come anywhere close to saying about the boys. But anyway, that's how he learned about it.

Interviewer: So somebody on the street expressed condolences and that's how your father learned about his son. Oh, that must have been devastating.

Respondent 2: So my mother was very strong. She was little, like me, even smaller, but she was [0:04:00] a bright lady.

Interviewer: Right. So somehow or other your family felt that she would be able to handle it, and you were worried about...

Respondent 2: Oh she did. She did. She handled it very well.

Interviewer: What do you mean when you say that?

Respondent 2: Well she didn't break down like my father did. She didn't break down. She was strong. Freddy always said that.

Interviewer: So what happened with your father when you said he broke down?

Respondent 2: Well he was very unhappy about it, [0:04:30] and he died young. My father wasn't sixty-five, I don't think, when he died.

Interviewer: So you think this had an impact on him that shortened his life.

Respondent 2: Yeah. He died very young, my dad.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. He sure did. Yeah. So to come back to what brought your family to this particular area, do you have any idea what made them move to Major Street?
- Respondent 2:** Up here?
- Interviewer:** No, to Major Street.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, to Major Street. Yeah. We moved out of Fitzroy Terrace. It was a laneway. **[0:05:00]** It was nice...
- Respondent 1:** You couldn't get a car today. Today a car couldn't get in. Unless they widened it, I don't think a car fits there.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So a narrow laneway is what you were living in.
- Respondent 2:** And that's when we moved to Major Street. And I lived there until I was married, and I didn't get married the first time until I was thirty.
- Interviewer:** So you lived there from about age six or seven until age thirty. So you have a lot that you can tell me. Any kind of memories will be much appreciated. And now you're **[0:05:30]** ninety-two, so it's a lot of years ago. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Well we had all these kids. Chucky and Sauly, and his family, they – like they lived 3, we lived number 5. And he was – they were always in our house, and my kid brother, Harold – why I ever left it there, I'll never know. He drew a music box and it stood about **[0:06:00]** so high.
- Interviewer:** Oh, and what you're pointing is it's very high.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, it was very high.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And when we moved from Major Street, my mother always lived with me because I wasn't married at first. And then we moved up

here. We moved into this house and this is where I've been living. I don't believe in moving around.

Interviewer: That's for sure. [Laughs] So you've been in this house for fifty years.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And as he's told me, you love it here and you don't plan **[0:06:30]** to move.

Respondent 2: Oh no, I don't even plan to...

Respondent 1: Not when we were younger.

Respondent 2: No. We'll stay here as long as we can.

Respondent 1: We know eventually we couldn't handle it, but what's there to handle? The DVA handles everything for us.

Respondent 2: They do everything.

Interviewer: So when you were living in your house, there were six children...

Respondent 2: There were six of us.

Interviewer: ...and two adults.

Respondent 2: Right.

Interviewer: Were there ever any other people living there with you?

Respondent 2: Yeah. Downstairs. We lived on the flat.

Interviewer: So who lived downstairs from you?

Respondent 2: **[0:07:00]** Their name was Eisand. It was one family that I remember. I don't remember the others. I really don't. But Eisand...

Interviewer: But you were eight people living upstairs and there was a whole other family living downstairs?

Respondent 2: That's right.

Interviewer: So there were a lot of people in every room.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah. And in the summer, you used to sleep out on – we had like a little porch upstairs, and we'd sleep out there because nobody [0:07:30] had air conditioning.

Interviewer: Right. So it got very hot, and especially if you were upstairs, it trapped the heat there.

Respondent 2: Of course.

Interviewer: It was hotter upstairs. Yeah.

Respondent 2: Yeah. So that's what we did. We lived there, and then I moved here when I got married.

Interviewer: So your family lived upstairs, eight of you, and the family downstairs. So you had a bathroom upstairs for your family, and a kitchen, and they had a bathroom and a kitchen for them?

Respondent 2: No, we had the one bathroom.

Interviewer: So one bathroom...

Respondent 2: Who had two bathrooms?

Interviewer: Okay. So that's what [0:08:00] I need to understand. So you had a bathroom, there were eight of you, and there was a family downstairs, and you all shared one bathroom.

Respondent 2: That's right.

Interviewer: How many were in the downstairs family?

- Respondent 2:** I think the Eisands had two girls. Perly was one. It's such a long time ago.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, it is. Okay. Anyway, so you were – there were at least twelve people sharing that one bathroom.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Right. And what about [0:08:30] kitchen?
- Respondent 2:** And now – a kitchen, no. My mother had a kitchen upstairs.
- Interviewer:** Okay. But it couldn't have been too big obviously.
- Respondent 2:** Oh no, it wasn't big.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** But I'll tell you one thing, nobody was dressed cleaner or nicer than I was.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So your mother took pride in dressing her children.
- Respondent 2:** My stockings were white, pure white.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** They were clean, very clean. One woman stopped me on the street and wanted to know who dressed me.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** That I do remember.
- Interviewer:** [0:09:00] So your mother was a very fussy housekeeper then.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: A good housekeeper. Right.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 2: Even when we moved up here, she loved this street. She loved this house.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 2: She had – where Freddy sits and watches television, that was her bedroom. And then our bedroom was over there, and then Freddy has the den. Now he has two places – the office, and he has his den to watch television.

Interviewer: Well this is a lovely home. It's a very comfortable and **[0:09:30]** pretty home, and bright and cheerful.

Respondent 1: Not so much cheerful.

Interviewer: No?

Respondent 1: No. We fight. [Laughter]

Respondent 2: Well we have nothing else to do, especially now. I've been cooking three meals a day. No, I shouldn't say cooking. He's doing the breakfast now.

Interviewer: Yeah. But you spend a lot of hours with each other.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah. We sure do.

Interviewer: When you were living down there, **[0:10:00]** who made up the majority of people in terms of religion?

Respondent 2: Oh, they were all Jewish. They were all Jewish. The Kaplitzky's, there was the – okay, the stars were number 2 or 1, I forget how it

was. 1, 3, 5. It must have been 1. Stars lived in the first. There was Rothbart's Drugstore.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 2: And he had the drugstore, and every Friday my mother would make him **[indiscernible 0:10:29] [0:10:30]** and take it into the boys. There was Bernie Markson there, Percy Spencer.

Interviewer: So he had a drugstore, you're saying.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: And what was the location of the drugstore?

Respondent 2: Right at the corner of College and Major.

Interviewer: So right close to your home.

Respondent 2: Right close to the home. And if I couldn't find my mother at home when I'd call her at lunch hour, I'd call the drugstore and the boys would say, "Oh, she's in here."

Interviewer: So she hung out around...

Respondent 2: She went **[0:11:00]** into the drugstore because she took in baking stuff for them.

Interviewer: Wow.

Respondent 2: And the boys that worked there was Percy Spencer, Markson, his brother was our doctor, Dr. Markson was our doctor, and his brother worked in the drugstore at the time. I think he's still living.

Respondent 1: I don't know. He would be older though.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah. He would be older than us. A lot older.

- Interviewer:** So [0:11:30] now that you're talking to me a little bit about the stores, so you talked to me about the drugstore. That was Major and College. Do you remember any other stores on College?
- Respondent 2:** Yes. There was Louie the Baker.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Jewish? Not Jewish?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, Jewish.
- Respondent 1:** All Jewish.
- Respondent 2:** Jewish. As a matter of fact, every Saturday we used to go to the Bagel on Wilson, and his daughter...
- Interviewer:** On Wilson? You went all the way up to Wilson?
- Respondent 1:** [0:12:00] Not from Major Street. From here.
- Respondent 2:** No, from here.
- Interviewer:** Oh, you're talking about after you had moved here.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Once we moved here, Freddy and I – I have friends from Montreal. The Greenbergs. You don't know the Greenbergs?
- Interviewer:** No, no.
- Respondent 2:** And the Waxmans.
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent 2:** Noland Waxman was from Toronto. No, he was...
- Respondent 1:** Mr. Greenberg was a friend of ours just sold his company, him and his brother.
- Respondent 2:** There were four brothers, but now it's two left.
- Respondent 1:** There was only two left. [0:12:30] Two-and-a-half billion.

- Interviewer:** Whoa. Oh my god. Two-and-a-half billion. Oh Lily Greenberg did a....
- Respondent 1:** They're people to suck up to.
- Respondent 2:** You don't know the Greenbergs?
- Interviewer:** No, I don't. Okay. So you're saying it was very Jewish, but I want to talk – since we're talking about stores, to stay with that for a bit. Just the stores that you remember on College Street, you talked about the bakery and the pharmacy.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah, the pharmacist. **[0:13:00]** Then Percy Spencer opened his own pharmacist on Borden and College.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** He opened up a place on his own once he graduated as a pharmacist. His brother was a doctor. Sammy Spencer.
- Interviewer:** So the first pharmacy – there was a pharmacy there – their father owned that?
- Respondent 2:** The who?
- Interviewer:** You said there was a pharmacy there.
- Respondent 2:** There was Rothbart's and...
- Interviewer:** Oh, Rothbart's. **[0:13:30]** Rothbart's. Okay.
- Respondent 2:** And these boys, when they went to school, worked in the drugstore on the weekends.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent 2:** But they also became very close with us because we were all close by.

- Interviewer:** Right. So then one became a pharmacist and one became a doctor, those two brothers. And he opened one on Borden and College. Another one on Borden and College?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh, the other one was Major.
- Respondent 2:** No. We were at Major and College, and I think he – either Robert or **[0:14:00]** Barton, I'm not sure.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So another pharmacy. It was opened by one of those brothers. Any other stores, or restaurants, or movie theatres that you remember?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. What was that restaurant on Spadina and College?
- Respondent 1:** Eppes Essen.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Eppes Essen?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's a great name.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. The hot dogs were the best. And...
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 2:** And what else was there, Fred?
- Respondent 1:** Well there was the Playhouse, was the theatre.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And the College...
- Respondent 1:** **[0:14:30]** And as a matter of fact, right near the corner was the – I don't know if it's still called the Doctor's Hospital...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 2: On Brunswick.

Respondent 1: On Brunswick.

Respondent 2: Is it still there?

Interviewer: No. It's a big nursing home now.

Respondent 2: Oh.

Interviewer: And Doctor's Hospital, a lot of those people went – it closed and a lot of people went – some of those people went to work at the Toronto Western, but that hospital is gone.

Respondent 2: Oh, it's not there anymore.

Interviewer: It's not there. It's a lovely, modern, new nursing home.

Respondent 1: And they had the – I think the [indiscernible 0:15:00] [0:15:00] was the Brunswick Talmud Torah.

Interviewer: That's right.

Respondent 1: Is it still there?

Interviewer: No, no. That's gone.

Respondent 1: We haven't been down in that area god knows how long.

Interviewer: So did you go to Brunswick Talmud Torah?

Respondent 1: I did.

Interviewer: You did. Yeah.

Respondent 2: I have a girlfriend, two girlfriends that were the same age, the three of us. One is Susie Taplitsky – that was her maiden name, and her

married name was Steinberg. She lives in Florida. My girlfriend, Dora...

Interviewer: [0:15:30] Uh-huh.

Respondent 2: ...who lives in Chicago, and is also the same age as we – we call each other at our birthdays the three of us.

Respondent 1: No, when we go down to Florida, which we have – this year we didn't go, but for the past twenty years when we've gone down and we always see Susie, she...

Respondent 2: We see Susie.

Interviewer: Okay. We're going to come back to this. What were the languages that were spoken in the neighbourhood at that [0:16:00] time?

Respondent 2: Always Jewish.

Interviewer: At home? On the street? Where?

Respondent 2: Oh at home, my mother always spoke to us in Jewish and we answered in English.

Interviewer: Uh-huh. Uh-uh. So what language did your parents speak to each other?

Respondent 2: Jewish.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah.

Respondent 2: They always spoke Jewish.

Interviewer: And did you learn English when you went to school? Or did you learn it because you played on the street before kindergarten or grade one? When did you learn English?

Respondent 2: I guess when we went to school.

Interviewer: Yeah.

- Respondent 1:** You learned [0:16:30] English really before you went to school, because I did.
- Interviewer:** But not – no, no, no. Not all children did. A lot of the children didn't learn until they went to school.
- Respondent 2:** No we spoke English because as I said, my mother spoke to us in Jewish and we answered English. But don't forget, I had three sisters older than me.
- Interviewer:** Oh right.
- Respondent 2:** So they helped me in many ways.
- Interviewer:** Right. Because they were out in the street and going to schools.
- Respondent 2:** Esther, Jean, [0:17:00] and Bunny.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** You might know the Schoons.
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent 1:** No? Who do you know? [Laughter]
- Respondent 2:** She lives downtown, dear.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Right. Right. Were any people that you knew working at home? Did any of the mothers or the fathers of your friends have jobs that they did at home?
- Respondent 2:** No.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** I don't think any of them did that.

Interviewer: Right. Did any – what kind of work were some of the fathers doing that you knew of?

Respondent 2: Well [0:17:30] see, my mother – she was busy with six kids. She didn't have time for anybody, and then my girlfriend, Susie, who lived at number 9 Major Street and – her father was – he worked in a hat place, and...

Interviewer: Mm-hm. And what did your father do?

Respondent 2: My father was a furrier.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 1: Mostly clothing.

Interviewer: Okay. [0:18:00] Schmatta business of some sort.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Clothing.

Respondent 2: That's what they did, a lot of those did that.

Interviewer: Right. Uh-huh. But I agree. The mothers – like right now, the washing machines are automatic. They were not automatic at that time.

Respondent 2: Oh no.

Interviewer: So laundry for eight people...

Respondent 2: My mother didn't – had no machines. She did everything by hand.

Interviewer: Yeah. So that...

Respondent 2: I remember she would put a boiling hot water on the stove to put some clothes into, I guess to clean [0:18:30] them. I don't know.

- Interviewer:** So when we're talking about being at home, what about keeping food fresh? What do you remember about – a refrigerator?
- Respondent 2:** No, we didn't have – we had...
- Respondent 1:** An icebox.
- Respondent 2:** ...an icebox.
- Interviewer:** Okay. And how was the ice delivered?
- Respondent 2:** Delivered by the iceman.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** He would bring it to the – and put it in for my mother, and downstairs. We all – there's no such thing as refrigerators.
- Interviewer:** Right. Right. And do you remember how he – did he [0:19:00] have a truck? How did he travel? Horse? Horse and buggy?
- Respondent 2:** Well he must have had a truck.
- Respondent 1:** I guess maybe horse and wagon.
- Respondent 2:** Maybe a horse and wagon. I don't...
- Interviewer:** So do you remember anything about delivery of food?
- Respondent 2:** Of food?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** No, no.
- Interviewer:** Any kind of delivery?
- Respondent 2:** There was no food delivered that I remember. I know my mother did all the cooking and we worked hard at it. But she always had food, always had food for us.

- Respondent 1:** And there were six, eight?
- Interviewer:** Yeah. That's a lot of people to cook for.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:19:30] Every day.
- Respondent 1:** She was quite a [indiscernible 0:19:31].
- Respondent 2:** And when we came up here, my sisters – one lived on – what was the name of the street near the mall?
- Respondent 1:** What street?
- Respondent 2:** Where Bunny lived. Bunny and Morris.
- Respondent 1:** Argon?
- Respondent 2:** Argon, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Okay. What about education? Where did you go to school?
- Respondent 2:** We went to Lansdowne, King Edward. My sisters went to King Edward. We went to Lansdowne, and then [0:20:00] I went into Commerce, but I had to go to work. My sister, Bunny, may she rest in peace, was a very intelligent person, and she was in all sports. There was a Blackie, his name was. Claire and Blackie. And they belonged to the Jewish Y, and they...
- Interviewer:** That was on College and Brunswick at that time?
- Respondent 2:** I think so.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** [0:20:30] I'll show you a picture of Bunny.
- Interviewer:** Okay. Let's do that later, okay?

- Respondent 2:** That she used to play basketball and baseball.
- Interviewer:** So she was a big athlete.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah, she was very good.
- Respondent 1:** Well she was small...
- Interviewer:** So she was small, but very athletic.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. They were all small.
- Respondent 2:** She was no taller than me, but with basketball she played...
- Respondent 1:** And golf.
- Respondent 2:** ...beautifully. And golf – and then later in years they belonged to the golf course.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent 2:** When she got married.
- Interviewer:** [0:21:00] So how far did you go with your education? Until what grade?
- Respondent 2:** I didn't I had to quit.
- Interviewer:** At what? Grade five? Grade two? Grade seven.
- Respondent 2:** Because...
- Respondent 1:** There was no such thing then.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** There was junior third, junior second, senior first, senior second.
- Interviewer:** So at what age did you leave school in order to go and work?

Respondent 2: I left – I was very young, but I had to go to work because Bunny didn't want to work because she wouldn't take just any job. And [0:21:30] my sister, Esther, worked for Clayton's. You don't know that. As a matter of fact, we go to a restaurant on Steeles and Bathurst. It's called Steeles Deli. They have a picture of Reitmans. That's where I first started.

Interviewer: At Reitmans?

Respondent 2: At Reitmans.

Interviewer: Okay.

Respondent 2: I worked there for thirty-three years.

Interviewer: Where was that located?

Respondent 2: Well they had a lot of stores all over.

Interviewer: But when you first worked, do you remember...

Respondent 2: Yeah. 188 Yonge, before [0:22:00] Eaton Centre went in.

Interviewer: Okay. So it was Yonge and Dundas or Yonge and Queen.

Respondent 2: No, Yonge and Queen.

Interviewer: Yonge and Queen. And that was Reitmans. So Reitmans has been around a long time.

Respondent 2: Oh, do you know who's running it now?

Interviewer: No.

Respondent 2: Two grandchildren.

Interviewer: Good for them.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

- Interviewer:** It's still successful.
- Respondent 2:** Two boys. It's Jack Reitman's two sons.
- Interviewer:** So you worked at Reitmans for thirty-three years. You have a very strong work record.
- Respondent 2:** And I worked for Progressive Leather Goods before that. I had two [0:22:30] jobs. Progressive Leather Goods for Mr. Rum. As a matter of fact, we had one of the biggest snowstorms during the war. During the war. And if I had to go to work, it didn't matter what the weather was. I put on my riding boots – I used to go horseback riding – and I put on my riding boots, and I walked to [0:23:00] King Street.
- Interviewer:** Oh, it's a good walk.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But you went...
- Respondent 2:** If I had to work.
- Interviewer:** ...so they say...
- Respondent 2:** So if I came in, there was no elevator because nobody showed up. So my boss at the time, Mr. Rum, he was the nicest man. He says, "That could only be little Annie."
- Interviewer:** Aww.
- Respondent 2:** He knew exactly when I'd get there.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. He knew he could count on you.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** She got a big raise for that. A dollar a week.

- Interviewer:** Oh. Do you remember what you were earning at first?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I worked – I think I got about four dollars [0:23:30] a week.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god. So what year would that have been? Did you start working about twelve years old, do you think?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah?
- Respondent 1:** At twelve?
- Respondent 2:** No. It wasn't at twelve. I was older than twelve when I went to work. I had to work because nobody was working.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** My sister, Jean, didn't work, Esther worked at Clayton's, the hat store, and Bunny didn't want to work because she wouldn't take just any job. And I went to work, and I used to give my mother – [0:24:00] I think I made two dollars. I gave my mother a dollar and I gave Bunny fifty cents.
- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 2:** And I bought tickets for fifty cents. I never used it. I always walked to work.
- Interviewer:** So you started young and you worked for many, many years.
- Respondent 2:** I was a good walker.
- Interviewer:** A good walker and a good worker.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Totally very reliable.

- Respondent 2:** And then I worked for Reitmans. Allan Hirschman was my boss at the time. Even now, he just called Freddy [0:24:30] yesterday. Lou Waxman, he worked for Reitmans too, and he's from Montreal. He worked in Montreal. You don't know any of these people from Montreal?
- Interviewer:** No, no, no. Well I wasn't born until 1940, so you might be talking about people who were adults when I was a child.
- Respondent 2:** Well they were here. I think the Greenbergs have been here almost thirty years in Toronto.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And I think Lou Waxman too.
- Respondent 1:** They're not much older [0:25:00] than you.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay. So let's talk a little bit more about living on Major Street. Did you have a back lane behind you?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Was it paved?
- Respondent 2:** [Laughter] No. Half and half.
- Interviewer:** Right. And did you use the back lane at all? Did you ever use it? Or you or your...
- Respondent 2:** No, we never had a car.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** We never needed it.

- Interviewer:** Yeah. But did the kids ever play in the back lane?
- Respondent 2:** No. We went to the playground, Lansdowne playground.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So that [0:25:30] was right near the school.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. It wasn't far from us, from our house. It was on Robert Street, I think.
- Interviewer:** Yes, yes.
- Respondent 2:** Wasn't it?
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Robert, north.
- Respondent 2:** So how far was it from Major? It wasn't.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. So you didn't use the lanes. How did the neighbourhood get along? How did people get along?
- Respondent 2:** We all got along.
- Interviewer:** Tell me.
- Respondent 2:** Everybody got – like I said, all these boys were on our steps every day. Percy – [0:26:00] he isn't here on this one. As a matter of fact, he just died. Percy. I forget his last name. It's been such a long time.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, it has been a long time. I know that I'm pulling stories from a long, long, long time ago, but you're remembering quite a bit.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. I remember.
- Interviewer:** But you said that the Boys of Major Street who tragically died, when they were five, ten, fifteen, a lot of hanging around in...
- Respondent 2:** Oh, in our place.
- Interviewer:** [0:26:30] Yeah.

- Respondent 2:** In our house because my mother was always very good to them.
- Interviewer:** In what way?
- Respondent 2:** In giving them cookies. [Laughter] My girlfriend, Susie, who lives in Florida, unfortunately she had one daughter and she used to come sit on our steps because they lived number 9, her grandparents. They lived number 9, and she used to come and sit on our steps just to get my mother's cookies.
- Interviewer:** Oh. So your [0:27:00] mother's cookies were famous.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** And multiple. She was generous with them.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. She made all the cookies for the boys in the drugstore.
- Interviewer:** So for the kids on the street, for the boys on Major Street, for the people in the drugstore...
- Respondent 2:** Very close.
- Interviewer:** ...so your mother did a lot of cooking, baking, and sharing.
- Respondent 2:** And sharing because there were very – everybody was very close, not like today. You never see them unless the weather is nice.
- Interviewer:** But Freddy made a good point that everybody was really quite poor. [0:27:30] Nobody had it – and that's why you had eight people upstairs and another whole family downstairs.
- Respondent 2:** Oh downstairs.
- Interviewer:** With one bathroom.
- Respondent 2:** One bathroom.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. So...

- Respondent 2:** I don't know how we managed, but we did.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Was there a backyard behind your house?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, we had a backyard.
- Interviewer:** And what was in the backyard?
- Respondent 2:** A lot of grass that was high. Nobody cut it.
- Interviewer:** So you didn't use it much then.
- Respondent 2:** **[0:28:00]** No, we did. We used it. We used it. We used to sit out in the back.
- Interviewer:** Where did you sit out more? The front or the back?
- Respondent 2:** Well we mostly were on the verandah on the steps. That's where we all – and then my girlfriend, Susie, would come over, my girlfriend, Dora. She lived on Major Street. And I told you she moved either on Borden – Robert. She lived on Robert.
- Interviewer:** Well you talk about everybody hanging around your house a lot, but when you played on the street, **[0:28:30]** what kind of games did you play?
- Respondent 2:** We played – my kid brother played tether pole. It was – you had little bats, and there was a ball, and you had to hit it and it would go around and round, and we also had a minister that lived on Major Street across the road from us. There was the Salvation Army, and this minister, the church at – I think it was St. **[0:29:00]** Stephen's church.
- Respondent 1:** It was south of College.
- Respondent 2:** Pardon?
- Respondent 1:** The church was south of College.

Respondent 2: No, it wasn't. It was right on Major, Fred. On that side of the street, across from the houses, they had the – yeah. We had the church, and we had the Salvation Army, and we had an old age – for old age people.

Interviewer: So all that was on Major Street...

Respondent 2: Yeah. Across...

Interviewer: ...north of College, across from your home.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So tell me that again. There was a [0:29:30] church and...

Respondent 2: I think it was St. Stephen's church, and the Minister – every Christmas he knew I liked dolls, and he gave me dolls, and he bought the boys skates.

Interviewer: Oh, that's beautiful.

Respondent 2: Yeah. They were very close. Everybody then. And the Salvation Army was very good to us.

Interviewer: So the Salvation Army also had a building there?

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: So there was a church...

Respondent 2: They had a house.

Interviewer: ...and a Salvation Army, and an old age home.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: On Major [0:30:00] across from you.

Respondent 2: Across from the houses.

Interviewer: Yeah. So is that – I wonder what's there now. I think they're homes there now.

Respondent 2: I haven't been down there, so I don't know.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah. But you know, you were there since 1926, so you're giving me information that nobody else has given me.

Respondent 2: Oh well I...

Interviewer: It's very interesting.

Respondent 2: And we had the fire station at the corner, across the road too. It was at the corner of College [0:30:30] and Major, and every Saturday when they cleaned the cars up, they used to take us on their wagon.

Interviewer: So they would take you for a ride?

Respondent 2: Oh yeah. Just from the station across the road or something, but they always took us on the...

Respondent 1: Why don't you tell them about your neighbours? Not on Major, I think it was on – what was it on?

Respondent 2: [0:31:00] Where?

Respondent 1: The black ones.

Respondent 2: Oh, that was on Major, Freddy. Yeah. There was – we were at 106 Major, and this couple, this black couple, one was 108 and they were West Indies, and the other black couple, the Jacksons, they were so good with us. We were – Edith and I never went without each other. She was the same age as I.

Interviewer: [0:31:30] So Edith was a Jackson?

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. Because I...

Respondent 2: Black girl.

Interviewer: ...just met – I just met a Jackson who was the grand – her husband was the grandson of Albert Jackson. So this is all one family, the Jacksons, and they owned several homes in the neighbourhood. So you were friendly with Edith Jackson.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: And she lived where?

Respondent 2: She lived with her parents...

Interviewer: On Major Street.

Respondent 2: ...yeah, on Major. And then at 108, [0:32:00] my sister, Bunny, you couldn't call her "dirty Jew." If you did, you were in trouble. This black family did not like my sister, and they called her a "dirty Jew." She got a black guy. Where did my mother take her? We didn't know anything about hospitals, emergencies. We didn't have emergencies then. Took her to Koffler's.

Interviewer: [Laughs] To the drugstore.

Respondent 2: Yeah. At Borden and College.

Interviewer: Okay. So that was another drugstore. So your sister [0:32:30] was a fighter, she was tough.

Respondent 2: Oh yeah.

Interviewer: So she got into a fight with somebody who called her a "dirty Jew."

Respondent 2: Yeah. Called her – the black people. And the Jacksons wouldn't talk to them because they started up with Bunny.

Interviewer: So this was not one of the Jackson family?

Respondent 2: No, no.

- Interviewer:** It was another – so it was another black family.
- Respondent 2:** They were West Indies.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So it was another black family.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And the Jacksons were angry at them for that language.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because we were very close.
- Interviewer:** [0:33:00] Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** They took me to Buffalo one year because I was Edith's best friend, and when we got to the border, they phoned my mother to see, "Where is your daughter, Annie?" And she says, "Oh, she's with the Jacksons. They're going to Buffalo."
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** But they wouldn't let me across the border with the Jacksons...
- Interviewer:** Until they phoned...
- Respondent 2:** ...until they phoned my mother.
- Interviewer:** Oh. So [0:33:30] they were afraid that something bad was happening.
- Respondent 2:** No, I wasn't afraid.
- Interviewer:** No, no, no. But the people at the border were suspicious.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah, at the border they thought they were taking a white child across the border.
- Interviewer:** Wow.

- Respondent 2:** And it was without my mother's permission. But when they phoned my mother, she says that there was, "She's with the Jacksons." And even Mr. Jackson even came up to this house where we're living now.
- Interviewer:** Really?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And [0:34:00] his family died very young. His wife, and his two daughters. I never knew what happened to Edith.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. But you're saying that the West Indian family called your sister, or your family "dirty Jews." But the Jacksons you got along really well with them, and they were close friends. The Jackson family, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. We were very close friends with the Jacksons, and they didn't like the idea at all. Freddy, where's your [0:34:30] cane, dear?
- Respondent 1:** I don't know. Somewhere.
- Respondent 2:** Well you better use it, please, I told you especially in the hall.
- Respondent 1:** Sorry.
- Interviewer:** Tell me about how the family heated the homes at that time.
- Respondent 2:** How did we eat? We ate very well.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** We ate very well.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** My mother always cooked, we always had a good meal.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay. Now I have another very unusual question. Because you lived there from six until thirty, tell me about the dating, the

boys and the girls dating at twelve, [0:35:00] fifteen, eighteen, twenty.

Respondent 2: Well I never went out too much with the boys. I was a loner really. I wasn't – I worked, and I went horseback riding with my older sister, Esther, and her boyfriend at the time. We used to go horseback riding to High Park.

Interviewer: Oh lovely. So that's something else nobody has talked about. But tell – so Esther was dating. [0:35:30] And was Bunny dating?

Respondent 2: Yeah. Bunny was dating Morris Schoon, and he was from the Junction.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 2: His family came from the junction, and every – and they were religious.

Interviewer: Uh-huh.

Respondent 2: To a point for [indiscernible 0:35:45].

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 2: And he would walk from the junction to our house...

Interviewer: Oh my god that's a...

Respondent 2: ...on Major Street.

Interviewer: ...very long walk.

Respondent 2: To be with Bunny.

Interviewer: Oh my god.

Respondent 2: And then they got married, and they lived on Major Street. [0:36:00] On number 30, I think.

- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So those two sisters did do some dating.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. Jean got married. She married Percy Grossberg, and that's her daughter that I asked if you knew her.
- Interviewer:** Right. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Because she has a friend on Brunswick.
- Interviewer:** So any other thoughts about dating? So your sisters did date. Would they go to movies? Would they go out with a group of friends? **[0:36:30]** What was happening?
- Respondent 2:** At that time, I couldn't tell you. I don't know.
- Interviewer:** They were the older sisters.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. They were older sisters.
- Interviewer:** Okay. What shuls and churches – you talked about the church that was across the street. Any synagogues that you remember in the neighbourhood?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. **[indiscernible 0:36:48]**.
- Interviewer:** And where was that?
- Respondent 2:** On Spadina.
- Interviewer:** Spadina north of College?
- Respondent 2:** I don't think I can remember.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So but the...
- Respondent 2:** **[0:37:00]** It was where my father went.

- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** And my uncles.
- Interviewer:** Did your whole family go to shul? Or just your father.
- Respondent 2:** Just my father.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** We didn't go.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent 2:** It wasn't like here now. You go to temple, your whole family goes. If you belong to temple, that's where we belong, to Temple Sinai.
- Interviewer:** Do you remember what Kensington Market was like for your family?
[0:37:30] Before the phone rang, I was just asking you about Kensington Market, if your family used it.
- Respondent 2:** I don't know where my mother shopped. I really don't know.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** You know, it's such a long time.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, it is. Do you remember the end of World War II? Do you remember when that happened?
- Respondent 2:** The one my kid brother was in.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And do you remember when the war ended, when...
- Respondent 2:** **[0:38:00]** Oh, when the war ended I was working for Progressive Leather Goods, and I didn't want to come home because I knew how my mother would feel. So we – my boss's son took me out to lunch for lobster.

- Interviewer:** Wow.
- Respondent 2:** I remember that part.
- Interviewer:** But you mean you didn't want to go home because...
- Respondent 2:** Because I knew what would be here.
- Interviewer:** He wasn't coming home. Is that what you're referring to?
- Respondent 2:** [0:38:30] Yeah. That's what...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** See, there was a rabbi, and I think it was Rabbi – the one that just died.
- Interviewer:** Plaut? Rabbi Plaut?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. He saw that my older brother, Harold – not Harold, Alec, was not sent overseas because he was the only son that was left. My kid brother was killed overseas, and he was buried in Holland. So he saw that my brother [0:39:00] was left home and stayed home.
- Interviewer:** So Rabbi Plaut intervened and said, "You can't send this other son. This family's already lost one son."
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So he helped...
- Respondent 2:** He helped.
- Interviewer:** ...arranged that...
- Respondent 2:** He stayed here.
- Interviewer:** Good for him.
- Respondent 2:** Oh he did a lot for the Jewish boys. He did.

- Interviewer:** That's a wonderful story. That he knew a family could not worry about [0:39:30] and then maybe have a second death.
- Respondent 2:** Especially a son. He was the only son because there were four girls. Because when I was born, I was the fourth girl.
- Interviewer:** Oh, so you were four girls and two boys. I didn't realize that.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Well good. That was a very major effort on Rabbi Plaut's part.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. He was very good that way.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm glad you told me that. [0:40:00] When you were living down there, do you remember whether it felt at night safe, dangerous...
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. I had a girlfriend, her name was Etta Gan, and she just died about a year ago, and they lived on Clinton.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm. My son lives right off Clinton.
- Respondent 2:** Does he?
- Interviewer:** A little street called Page. It starts at Clinton. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** We went to the Y, and she never played, but I played badminton with another friend of ours, [0:40:30] Anne Gangbart, and I used to walk Etta home to Clinton and then come home. Our door was never locked.
- Interviewer:** Okay. So that's two very good examples. One is you walked her all the way to Clinton and back to Major, and your door was not locked. So you're telling me that it was a safe neighbourhood.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, it was a safe neighbourhood. My mother never locked the door.

- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** There was nothing to steal anyway.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] That's true. That's true.
- Respondent 2:** So that's nothing to steal.
- Interviewer:** [0:41:00] Yeah, but still...
- Respondent 2:** But she never locked it. We always...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So you trusted the people who were in your neighbourhood.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** Right, right. Well I think that we've covered a lot of...
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...interesting times, and you've gold me information. Because you moved there in 1926, it's a long time ago and you were able to tell me things that I have heard from nobody else
- Respondent 2:** [0:41:30] Yeah? Well I remember a lot of things from Major, you know, from Major Street.
- Interviewer:** Do you want to talk about some more? Anything that you're thinking about?
- Respondent 2:** Well like Harold built this jukebox, and we used to have all the kids come over and we would dance, and play the music.
- Interviewer:** So he built the jukebox by himself?
- Respondent 2:** He built a jukebox.
- Interviewer:** So you didn't have enough...
- Respondent 2:** He was very handy.

- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** He was a very handy kid.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** And he was always – [0:42:00] of course, I never met him.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent 1:** But he used to bring home – well not all the time, but sometimes – little animals. Now Annie doesn't like cats.
- Respondent 2:** I'm afraid of cats.
- Respondent 1:** He brought home a cat. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** And he brought home a cat, and my mother said, "He wants it. Let him have it." She always made – and then the boys wanted a dog, so they [0:42:30] brought home a little dog, but the dog was a nuisance to my mother. I mean she had six kids to look after.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** So you know what she did? She took the dog for a walk...
- Interviewer:** And?
- Respondent 2:** ...and he came back. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** So she took the dog for a one-way walk...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...but the dog found...
- Respondent 2:** But he found his way home.
- Respondent 1:** He had a good...

- Interviewer:** But that was a lot of you. I mean eight of you living on the second floor and a whole other family downstairs, and then a cat, and a dog. **[0:43:00]** [Laughs] And a jukebox.
- Respondent 2:** And to this day, I'm scared silly of cats.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** We had a Jewish couple living in that house. They didn't own it; they just rented it. And he had four cats.
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 2:** Even his daughter, who – they were Israelis. Boy, were they dirty. Oh my god. I said, "You know what? I'm ashamed to say that you're Jewish." I was.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So they were...
- Respondent 2:** **[0:43:30]** Because the neighbours across the road were Gentile, two couples that we're friendly with, and they were just impossible. Finally, finally they bought a house near **[indiscernible 0:43:43]**. I don't know if you know where that shul is.
- Interviewer:** No.
- Respondent 2:** No, you wouldn't know this area.
- Interviewer:** I don't. I don't. But is there anything else that you can think of? Like this was a lovely little story about the jukebox that...
- Respondent 2:** That he built.
- Interviewer:** ...that your brother built.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And that was our entertainment.
- Interviewer:** **[0:44:00]** Yeah.

- Respondent 2:** We couldn't afford to go to shows.
- Respondent 1:** Did you tell the young lady here about Alec, they were trying to kidnap him?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** On Major Street, you mean?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So what's that about?
- Respondent 2:** On a bicycle he was gorgeous. He was very handsome when he got older, but when he was young, he was very, very good looking, and this – the coloured girls came out and I told them they took my brother. So they went [0:44:30] after him.
- Interviewer:** Who had taken – somebody had...
- Respondent 2:** Somebody on a bicycle kidnapped him.
- Interviewer:** My god.
- Respondent 2:** And the Jackson girls, Gwen, who was the older girl, she went after them and got my brother off the bike.
- Interviewer:** Oh. SO he was on a bike and he grabbed your brother and biked away with him?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And she went after them.
- Interviewer:** And she got him.
- Respondent 2:** And she got him.
- Interviewer:** Boy, those Jacksons were good family, good friends.
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. They were very [0:45:00] good with us.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Respondent 2: And I told her about the time they took me to Buffalo.

Respondent 1: Oh yeah. That was quite a story.

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Anything else before I turn off this tape?

Respondent 2: [Laughs] No, no. I can't think of anything else.

Interviewer: Well you've told me really wonderful stories. A lot of fabulous information. And I want to thank you, Freddy, for participating, although you didn't live in the neighbourhood, but you certainly had...

Respondent 1: No. I lived close. I lived on Nassau.

Interviewer: Right.

Respondent 1: It's about six blocks away.

Interviewer: Right. I...

Respondent 2: He didn't know me then.

Respondent 1: That was like another word then anyways.

Interviewer: [0:45:30] Yeah.

Respondent 1: Lived up the street.

Interviewer: But Ann, I want to thank you very much. It's been interesting, informative, and very enjoyable, and I want to thank you very, very much.

Respondent 2: You're welcome.

Respondent 1: Now you can't...

Respondent 2: It's nice what you're doing.

Respondent 1: Who do you work for? Or what's the...

[00:45:45]

[End of recording]