

**082 Shuck Chun Ho (with her son Paul Ho translating)**

Please note that any words or phrases spoken in Cantonese are marked with a **[Speech in Cantonese]** tag.

**[0:00:00]**

**Interviewer:** Today, the date is the 2nd of December, and I'm in the home of Shuck Chun Ho and her son, Paul, who came along to interpret when she would need it, which might be quite a bit. And I want to say to both of you thank you very much for allowing me into your home and for sharing your stories because – Mrs. Ho, you have lived here since 1970?

**Respondent 1:** Three.

**Interviewer:** Since 1973. Okay.

**Respondent 1:** **[0:00:30] [Speech in Cantonese]** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So I'm saying thank you.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh. April.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh, my parents bought this house in April, and we moved in in July.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And we talked about it before, just tell me when your family had come from Hong Kong.

**Respondent 1:** We immigrated to Canada, to Toronto in 1970, **[0:01:00]** January 6. Yeah. That was the first time I saw snow actually because back then you, you know, had to come off the plane onto the tarmac.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And that's when we first saw – you know, it was our first sight of snow. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Do you remember your reaction?

**Respondent 1:** Well I just remembered I didn't want to touch it. Yeah. There was some snow on the ground and I remember jumping over it, but we were all carrying suitcases and everything. Yeah, yeah. I was seven at the time. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** I think it's quite an adventure to see snow [laughter] for the **[0:01:30]** first time. That's pretty magical. Do you know at the time that your parents bought this house, what made them choose this neighbourhood?

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** **[0:02:00]** Okay.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** We were living at – we were renting on Cecil Street.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Mm-hm. Mm-hm.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. On number 9 Cecil Street. And then, you know, my mom **[0:02:30]** had saved, like, you know...

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** She saved like crazy because she didn't want to rent anymore. She wants to buy a house, and so this was – it was actually quite run-down. It's still run-down, but [laughs] – because my dad passed away, but it was – the house was big, yeah. The house was big for, you know, at that time – yeah. There was already five kids at that time.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** [0:03:00] Oh, this house was built in 1903, and my mom thinks there wasn't any renovations done. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** No renovations since 1903.

**Respondent 1:** When we bought it.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Oh, and so she said she knew from the deed that it was built in 1903. And so this house was close to...

**Interviewer:** More than a hundred years old. Yes, it's certainly...

**Respondent 1:** So it's close to Chinatown, close to where we were [0:03:30] renting on Cecil, it was large enough, and the price was right because it was run-down, and my father could renovate himself.

**Interviewer:** So he was a handy person.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** So as you can see, the lot is wider than some of the adjacent lots. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah, and the house is wider.

**Respondent 1:** Because this is split twenty-five – yeah.

**Interviewer:** Twenty-five feet?

**Respondent 1:** Twenty-five feet.

**Interviewer:** The house is twenty-five feet?

**Respondent 1:** The lot is twenty-five feet wide. **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh sorry. It's twenty-three and three-quarters. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** Oh she's a **[0:04:00]** perfectionist.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Interviewer:** So your family moved in here into this house, you were seven people, with the five children.

**Respondent 1:** We were five, six, seven. Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Seven.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And did you have anybody else live here with you during any of those years?

**Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. We – to make ends meet, my parents rented out the second floor and then rented out the basement. And they actually rented out the back room. [laughs]

**Interviewer:** **[0:04:30]** Okay.

**Respondent 1:** Behind the kitchen.

**Interviewer:** So what were the sleeping arrangements for the seven of you?

**Respondent 1:** Uh-huh. This sort of – this is the dining room.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. This was supposed to be the dining room here, which is my mom's current bedroom, but she doesn't want to climb the stairs. Plus she can't get upstairs, right?

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** So my parents slept there. The front room was a bedroom as well, which is the living room now. We also had bedrooms. And there's one room in [0:05:00] the back, which is two rooms now because my dad added an addition, and then I think – yeah. Three of us slept back there, and two of us slept in the front room, and then my parents slept in the middle room.

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

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** Two children in one, three in another, and your parents.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you all lived on this main floor.

**Respondent 1:** On this main floor, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So tell me how many people lived upstairs, downstairs.

**[Speech in Cantonese between the two participants]**

**Respondent 1:** [0:05:30] Oh actually you know what? You know where John lives? There's two units up there. You know, the little kitchen I showed you that was a kitchen?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent 1:** That was – there's another kitchen in the back, so there's actually two self-contained units, so there's two families up there...

**Interviewer:** At that time.

**Respondent 1:** At that time. Yeah. And then we rented a room in the basement too, so there could have been – you know, there's seven of us here, probably **[0:06:00]** four and two maybe, another six. Because, you know, tenants come and go, so. And then another two. I remember there was a brother and sister that lived downstairs that went to U of T. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And upstairs, each of those had their own kitchen, I assume.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. There's a kitchen and a room and a bedroom, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And what about bathrooms? How many bathrooms did you have?

**Respondent 1:** One bathroom.

**Interviewer:** Oh. [Laughs] All of you shared one bathroom?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Until my father installed a second bathroom in the basement. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Wow, there must have been some line-ups.

**Respondent 1:** **[0:06:30]** [Laughs] I can't remember. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** So I guess it wasn't...

**[Speech in Cantonese between the two participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh sorry. My mother says originally there was another washroom downstairs in the basement, but it was in really bad shape.

**Interviewer:** Oh. So it sounds like it was disgusting.

**Respondent 2:** Really, really bad. Window. **[0:07:00]** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Oh my dad had replaced there...

**Respondent 2:** Very cold. Very cold.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's terrible.

**Respondent 1:** ...replaced the windows.

**Respondent 2:** Oh, for all the changing. Oh, very, very, very – the house is.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** It's not very comfortable to go to a bathroom where it's freezing, and the floor is freezing.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. So one of the reasons I say they bought this house is the price was right, right?

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** So in 1973 they bought it for thirty-nine thousand **[0:07:30]** and...

**[Speech in Cantonese between the two participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. It wasn't even forty thousand. Thirty-nine thousand, five hundred. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And of course they had all the income from all the rentals, so your mother had saved...

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. My mother said that the property tax used to only be three hundred something dollars. [Laughs]

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** How many people are living here right now?

**Respondent 1:** Now it's just two.

**Interviewer:** So John...

**Respondent 1:** [0:08:00] John...

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Respondent 1:** ...and my mother.

**Interviewer:** And your mother. Yeah. And who did you guys get rid of first? The neighbours downstairs, upstairs? I mean the tenants.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Well it's hard to say. I think probably downstairs, yeah, because eventually we needed as the kids got, you know, older and bigger, and you know, we were more financially stable, I think we got rid of the basement. Yeah. It's damp down there, so it wasn't really a...

**Respondent 2:** [0:08:30] [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** My mother said she's graduated a lot of U of T students here. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** We still keep in touch with a lot of them, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese] U of T.

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes. Well your children are all well educated too.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You have smart children.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. It was mostly U of T students and their families, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Yeah. Who else lived [0:09:00] in the neighbourhood during those years? Do you – either, both of you – either of you?

**Respondent 1:** Oh yeah, I remember.

**Interviewer:** What was the population made of?

**Respondent 1:** Virtually it was a lot of immigrant families, you know? Chinese families. But then as the nature of the neighbourhood changed, I think [Speech in Cantonese].

**Respondent 2:** Rose.

**Respondent 1:** Ross's family. I can't remember what Ross's last name is. He's an editor [0:09:30] as well. He lived next door. His family owned the house next door. There's quite a few journalists that live around here.

**Interviewer:** No, thank you very much. Thank you. No, thank you. Journalists who live around here now or at that time?

**Respondent 1:** Well when I was growing up, yeah, yeah. I remember Ross. And then there's David. David – he used to write for Saturday Night Magazine. [0:10:00] David...

**Interviewer:** So it attracted a certain kind of – so it sounds to me as if you're saying there were immigrants...

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** ...and then...

**Respondent 1:** A lot of academics, you know, at the university. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. But you're saying there were a number of Chinese families around?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Actually Professor Siu that lives one, two, three doors down, his family's Chinese and he's a professor at the U of T.

- Interviewer:** Has he been here for a long time too?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah. He's been here for at least twenty years.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh. **[0:10:30]** And so when you went to school, who were your friends? What were their ethnic backgrounds?
- Respondent 1:** Mostly Chinese, yeah. Chinese and Portuguese, yeah. At Lord Lansdowne I remember it was Predominately Chinese and Portuguese.
- Interviewer:** And that would have been '73 until...
- Respondent 1:** That would have been – yeah.
- Interviewer:** '73 to '80.
- Respondent 1:** To '80. Yeah. I went to Lord Lansdowne from '74 to '87.
- Interviewer:** **[0:11:00]** Okay.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** And were your friends mainly Chinese? Or did you play with the Portuguese children?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. My closest friends were all Chinese, yeah. And they all lived in the neighbourhood. Yeah. But we mostly spoke English to each other because, you know, a lot of my friends were the first wave of Chinese that emigrated, so they're Taishanese. Mom, **[Speech in Cantonese]**. They're Taishanese from one part of Canton Province, **[0:11:30]** and I'm from Hong Kong, and so I speak Cantonese.
- Interviewer:** So you spoke different...
- Respondent 1:** So the dialects were different, right?
- Interviewer:** So you couldn't speak English. I mean you had to speak English.

**Respondent 1:** We could. I understood Taishanese. It's not that different. But, you know, we mostly spoke English, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And...

**Respondent 1:** So I did associate with some of the Portuguese students, right, but you know, they were just more like acquaintances. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And what about language with your parents? Did your father learn English?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Because my father worked outside of [0:12:00] the house, so he learned English. It wasn't perfect English, but you know, he got by. Yeah. My mom stayed home, so she didn't – and then Chinatown's close by, so she didn't really need to use English, so that's why her English is quite limited right now, although I think she knows more than she admits. Yeah. [Laughter] And I remember she tried to take some evening classes in English, but that didn't last too long. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you moved out of this house about twenty years ago, I think.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** [0:12:30] Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** I got married in 1989. Yeah. Probably '91...

**Interviewer:** And you and your wife lived here for a short time.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. For a year or two.

**Interviewer:** What are some of the biggest changes that you see? And you can ask your mother too. What are the changes that she sees in the neighbourhood?

**Respondent 1:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** [Laughs] She said it's hard to say. But what I notice is, you know, it was – when I grew [0:13:00] up here, it was, you know, predominantly immigrant families. Now a lot of...

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** So when we were growing up it was predominantly immigrant families, but then over the last two decades, more [0:13:30] of the – oh, how would I say? More of the Caucasians have moved back, and then they've renovated. Like they renovated the houses more nicely, right? You know, before the immigrant families, it was just do it yourself jobs. [Laughs] Now it's more professional jobs.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh, next door, like next door it's Betty and Bill. [0:14:00] They bought in more than ten years ago. He's a curator at the ROM.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Oh, twenty years. Yeah. He's been here twenty plus years, yeah. So the neighbourhood has changed. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you're saying more Caucasian.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And more of the – it used to be, like, you know, a lot of the shops on Harbord, you know, were more like, you know, not run-down, but now [0:14:30] they're more posh, right? [Laughs] Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Well that's a good segue because I did want to talk about the shops all over. So let's stay with the shops for a little while, and as you said, immediately they're more upscale.

**Respondent 1:** Upscale, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. What were some of the stores and businesses on Harbord when you were growing up?

**Respondent 1:** I remember there was Poretta Pizza.

**Interviewer:** Oh yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Remember at Robert and...

**Interviewer:** Yes. It's now Messis.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. That's right. **[0:15:00]** Up here on Major and Harbord was a Korean grocery store, variety store. Yeah, which is now, I think, a sushi restaurant.

**Interviewer:** Yes, it is. Right. So nothing outstanding.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Well Harbord Bakery has always been there. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** **[0:15:30]** It's been there a long time.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. It's still there.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, so.

**Interviewer:** So nothing else that's just really jumping out at you.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Any stores or businesses that you remember on College or Bloor Street?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. There was a bicycle store called Matsui's right on Major and College on the south side. It was CCM, it was a CCM bicycle shop. Matsui always had a clearance **[0:16:00]** sale sign there. [Laughter] And it was there for, like, at least a couple of decades yeah.

- Interviewer:** So he was always in clearance [laughter] for thirty years.
- Respondent 1:** Matsui. Yeah, yeah. Haber's Pharmacy was there on the north side of Major and College. Yeah. It's, like, this computer store now.
- Interviewer:** I think computer stores have taken over a lot.
- Respondent 1:** It was Haber's Pharmacy or Haberman's Pharmacy. It was just like a little local pharmacy.
- Interviewer:** Little family pharmacy. Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. And then there [0:16:30] was – at the corner of Robert and College was another pizza place that was...
- Interviewer:** Whoa.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Massimo?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Massimo's yeah.
- Interviewer:** That was there for a long time too.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Right. Very modest little place.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. [Laughter] That's right, but the pizza was really good.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, right. I liked it.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And right across from Lord Lansdowne was a little [0:17:00] sort of corner store too.
- Interviewer:** A grocery store?
- Respondent 1:** It was more like, yeah, a variety store.

- Interviewer:** Right. With nice wooden floors.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I think that was there until about ten years ago.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. What's – the son went to school. He was just a couple of years behind us. Oh, what's his name? They were there for a long time. Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Now your mother's a practicing Buddhist.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Were there any temples **[0:17:30]** close in this neighbourhood that she could go to?
- Respondent 1:** No, no.
- Interviewer:** Nothing.
- Respondent 1:** When we first came to Canada we lived on Nassau Street.  
**[Speech in Cantonese]**
- Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**
- Respondent 1:** Oh, we lived on 22 Nassau.
- Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**
- Respondent 1:** So we lived there for – we lived on Nassau for six months. I remember the land – **[0:18:00]** because back then when we first came it was just my brother, George, and my brother, Robert, and I. So three young boys and I just remember the landlord, the lady, she's also Chinese, she terrorized us. She was really mean.  
**[Laughter]** And so we put up with her for about six months before

we moved to 9 Cecil. Back then there was no Chinese newspaper, there was no – definitely no temples, right? So it was just close to Chinatown. So there was [0:18:30] some association for us, but there was no conveniences, right?

**Interviewer:** None of that.

**Respondent 1:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Oh. [Speech in Cantonese] Oh sorry.

**Interviewer:** What?

**Respondent 1:** When we first came there was still the Sing Tao newspaper. There was the Sing Tao newspaper.

[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. Chinatown was [0:19:00] here.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** This was 1970, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Interviewer:** But no temples downtown and no temples in Toronto?

[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]

**Respondent 1:** No, no.

**Interviewer:** So when did they – when did she join the temple?

[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]

**Respondent 1:** Then in 1973 Cham Shan [0:19:30] Temple...

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Finch and Bayview.

**Respondent 2:** Bayview. Bayview.

**Interviewer:** So so many Chinese people living downtown...

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** ...and she had to go all the way to Finch and Bayview.

**Respondent 1:** Actually because life was hard then, my mom wasn't practicing.

**Interviewer:** Oh, she was too busy taking care of a family and the big house.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants] [0:20:00] [Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh actually my mom says she did go occasionally in '73, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Now there's a lot of temples.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Would you ask her if she can tell me about any changes? Can you talk to me about any changes that you've seen in the last thirty years, forty years?

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants] [0:20:30] [Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

- Respondent 1:** She says she's seen some families, you know, come and go. And some...
- Respondent 2:** Die, die.
- Respondent 1:** ...older generation pass away.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:21:00] It happens.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Some families, some new families moving in. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** She said a lot of neighbours have passed away.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Do you still know some neighbours?
- Respondent 1:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Interviewer:** No, so you're not going to know them.
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese] [laughs]
- Respondent 1:** My mom says everybody knows her as Mrs. Ho, but she doesn't know too many families now.
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** [0:21:30] My mom has a loud voice, eh? Because they used to play down the street south of Ulster with the Magnolis, because my brother, Robert, is good friends with Jerry Magnoli, with Phil Magnoli, the older brother. So we used to play down there. My

mom used to just lean outside on the railing. She used to just call down the street. "You better get home." [Laughter] People would say, "Your mom's calling." [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** She didn't have to call twice.

**Respondent 1:** This is just north. **[0:22:00]** This is just north of the old Doctor's Hospital too, so it wasn't so close to Ulster. [Laughter]

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. My mom says she hasn't – because she doesn't speak English and she's so busy with the household...

**Respondent 2:** I do not want to talk.

**Respondent 1:** So she didn't have much chance to talk with the neighbours.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Talk – coming back to you said – you were playing with your friends, you heard when your mother called you. Can you talk about the kinds of games that you played and where you played – in the **[0:22:30]** front, in the back. What...

**Respondent 1:** Oh. The type of games that we played? I know that we used to play a lot – we used to take a tennis ball, right? And we used to just – I don't know what we called it. Just played against the wall.

**Interviewer:** Yes. I did that as a kid.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. [Laughs] What do you call that game? You know, you bang it off the floor, and it ricocheted off the wall.

**Interviewer:** Were you using a racquet or just your hands?

**Respondent 1:** No, just the hands.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah. We used to flip hockey cards.

**Interviewer:** [0:23:00] Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And we used to play, like, soccer with a tennis ball. Yeah. Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** And we used to play in the lane.

**Interviewer:** That's what I wanted to come to. You played in the lane.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. There was – just down Major Street there was a lane on the west side between the houses. We used to play there quite a bit, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Was it paved or not paved?

**Respondent 1:** It was paved, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Because we used to take that lane and then it would lead to a [0:23:30] north-south lane between Robert, the houses on Robert and Major.

**Interviewer:** I know that lane. It's narrow.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And then we used to sneak between houses, between that store and the house next door, to go to school. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So did you walk to school through the lane and then you went between the store and the house?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So the lane was a route to get to school.

**Respondent 1:** School. Yeah. Because otherwise we would have to walk up to the lane up there, right? Just south of the Harbord stores, and then go around Robert, which we did too because they eventually [0:24:00] closed that way. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. But you had a route before until they closed it.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Did you use the front porch at all? Did any of your families sit out there?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, a lot. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And who would sit out there?

**Respondent 1:** My father would sit out there a lot. You see in one of the pictures he built a little park bench. I think it's still there, yeah. And we used to sit out there a lot, and we used to play in the front yard a lot too. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. And what about – I don't know what you had behind your house.

**Respondent 1:** We have a – we have a – [0:24:30] my mom used to grow vegetables in the back. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh, what vegetables?

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** My mother said she used to grow everything.

**Respondent 2:** My husband, he liked it.

**Interviewer:** He liked the vegetables.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. I don't like it.

**Interviewer:** You don't like vegetables very much?

**Respondent 2:** No, no, no.

**Respondent 1:** No. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** So what vegetables did you grow in your back?

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** My father used to grow the winter melons. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [0:25:00] His father very like it.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Winter melons. I remember there was the – **[Speech in Cantonese]**.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**.

**Respondent 1:** The cucumbers, beans.

**Respondent 2:** Any kind. Any kind.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Many vegetables, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you had a serious vegetable garden back there.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, my dad. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** No, now only flower.

**Interviewer:** Now you have flowers?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Only flower. Oh no, no, no.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. We had a pear tree too in the back. We still have a pear tree I mean. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And did you play in the back at all? Or was that...

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** [0:25:30] Oh yeah, we used to play everywhere. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Because in the back there's a – you can see here there's a little bit of a paved section.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent 1:** Before the vegetable garden in the back, so yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So the kids can play.

**Respondent 1:** I remember playing in here a lot because we used to break the glass window on the second door. [Laughter] And then my father would get mad at us, and then he would fix it. [Laughter] So we're five kids, right? [0:26:00] Yeah, we used to throw the ball, the football around, the Nerf football, and I remember that. We used to break that window a lot. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** From the first child, you and your twin brother, to the last, how many years is that?

**Respondent 1:** Ten years. So George and I were born in '62 and Lily, the youngest, was born in '72.

**Interviewer:** So it's five children in ten years.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And after you and George, the next child, what's the age?

**Respondent 1:** Robert. George and I and Robert were born in Hong Kong. He was born in '66, so [0:26:30] four years. And then Tommy was conceived in Hong Kong and he was born here in 1970. Yeah. He was **[Speech in Cantonese]**...

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** So he was born in February.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** So we came in January 6.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent 1:** So my mom was really pregnant. Yeah. [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Seven-and-a-half.

[Speech in Cantonese between both participants] [0:27:00] [Speech in Cantonese between both participants]

**Respondent 1:** Oh, yeah. So actually Tommy was premature. He was born seven-and-a-half months, yeah.

[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]

**Respondent 1:** Probably because of the plane ride.

**Interviewer:** [Laughs] Oh, I see.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Oh, so twenty-eight days after we landed, my mom gave birth to Tommy. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Whoa. So then she had [0:27:30] three young children and now a fourth one.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Fourth, yeah. All boys, yeah.

**Interviewer:** In a new country, no language.

**Respondent 1:** [Laughs] **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** My mother says life was hard. There was only one Chinese doctor. Yeah. In Chinatown. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** **[0:28:00]** And he was male.

**Respondent 2:** Nobody. Nobody.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** And then there was – when Lily was born two years later, there was a female Chinese doctor. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And that's who your mother chose.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** Just for our taping, would you just say what all – the work that all five of you do, you and your siblings.

**Respondent 1:** So I'm **[0:28:30]** a chiropractor.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** My twin brother, George, he lives in Kingston. He's a hospital pharmacist. My brother, Robert, who lives in Hong Kong now, ironically went back, is an electrical engineer. My brother, Tommy, who lives here in Toronto – so it's only Tommy and I now left in

Toronto – he's a pediatrician. And my sister, Lily, the youngest, she's an RCMP officer in Ottawa.

**Interviewer:** Wow.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** [0:29:00] So you've all accomplished a lot.

**Respondent 1:** Well we had to work hard.

**Interviewer:** I'll bet.

**Respondent 1:** My mom made sure.

**Interviewer:** Is that right? She wanted you to be educated.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah. She ruled the house with a whip. With a broomstick, actually. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** Seriously?

**Respondent 1:** Seriously. Yeah. [Laughter] I remember she's chasing us in the basement with a broomstick, my brother and I. [Laughter]

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Interviewer:** [Laughter] She's agreeing.

**Respondent 1:** My mother says, yeah, life was hard. [0:29:30] Yeah. [Laughter] So she had to be tough.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. My mom said she had to be – she had to – how do you say it? She had to withstand a lot.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, she did.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

- Interviewer:** She did.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. She had to have a lot of fortitude. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** My family, no more. Go to school, go to school.
- Respondent 1:** yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you made sure things moved along.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** [0:30:00] [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. My mom says she made sure that we knew our responsibility was to do well in school and to go to university.
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Well she knew what her values were, and she succeeded.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Very tired.
- Interviewer:** You were tired.
- Respondent 2:** Tired.
- Interviewer:** Well you raised five children, that's a big family.
- Respondent 2:** Tired.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. What kind of work did your father do?

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Oh. [0:30:30] My mom said her days started really early. Yeah. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Early. Four, four o'clock. [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Start to do work, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Well you made three meals a day for seven people.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** And you cleaned for seven people.

**Respondent 2:** Oh too much work.

**Interviewer:** So you felt tired a lot of the time.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Actually when we were living on Cecil Street I remember my grandfather, my mom's dad, [0:31:00] he would make these sort of Chinese crepes for the Chinese restaurants, right? So I remember my mom used to, you know, beat the batter for him. Yeah. And they were like tubs and tubs of batter, yeah. So my dad, he's sort of a handyman. He worked for Canada Wire and Cable before it was bought out by Alcatel. And he was, like, a maintenance guy doing, you know, fixing up the [0:31:30] machinery and transport trucks, and stuff like that.

**Interviewer:** But you said that he had a problem with gambling. You said a lot of Chinese people...

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. Only the first couple of years when we first came to Toronto.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And then my mom put a stop to that. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So she had to be really firm.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And tough.

**Respondent 1:** She took George and I to Chinatown to look for him when she kind of suspected he was out late gambling, and so after we caught him a couple [0:32:00] of times, my mom forced him to hand over his paycheque every Thursday afternoon, yeah. And she would deposit it in the bank, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And he did not have access to that bank account.

**Respondent 1:** No.

**Interviewer:** Or he did?

**Respondent 1:** No.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** So my dad got by with, you know, money that he made from odd jobs on the weekend.

**Interviewer:** So if he wanted to gamble he was very limited.

**Respondent 1:** Actually he didn't – I don't remember him gambling much after that. Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So you're saying he had odd jobs working at Chinese restaurants to augment his income.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, exactly. [0:32:30] You know, doing some renovations, you know, fixing their gas stoves. I remember that because, you know, he would come home – every once in a while he would come home late at night from working at a restaurant and, you know, as part of the payment they would give him some dishes, right, of noodles and stuff.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. We would wake up and have some midnight snacks.  
[Laughter]

**Interviewer:** Oh lovely. [Laughs] Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. So that was something to look forward to. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Your home, this home itself [0:33:00] – have any changes been made?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, a lot over the years.

**Interviewer:** What kinds of things?

**Respondent 1:** Oh, the basement's been renovated a couple of times. I remember when my dad first renovated it...

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** ...he started a fire. Yeah. Because he was smoking, right, and he put his cigarette down on the joist, the wood frame, [0:33:30] and it burnt down and it fell, and underneath was a quart of glue, of contact cement. Yeah, so it just burst into flames. I remember we had to call 911 because the firemen came. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Oh my. So what was the damage?:

**Respondent 1:** It was just a lot of water damage in the basement, yeah, because the firehouse was just at College and Brunswick, right? Yeah. So they came pretty quick.

**Interviewer:** [0:34:00] Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So I guess after that your family had to improve the basement once they were...

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. That's right.

**Interviewer:** ...dealing with the water damage. Might as well make it a better basement.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Because the family that owned it before us was Portuguese. **[Speech in Cantonese]** Was Portuguese, and they had the basement. They had a kitchen built in the basement too.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. Yeah, oh that's quite common.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** So my father took that down.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** **[0:34:30] [Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** But my mom says my dad was very intelligent, was very bright. Yeah. He did a lot of things. He could do a lot of things.

**Interviewer:** It certainly sounds it. I mean he could fix that window every time you broke it. [Laughter] What about the University of Toronto? Do you or your mother have any feelings about its influence on the neighbourhood? **[0:35:00]** Past and present.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** My mom doesn't really know. She can't really say because I don't think – she's only been to the U of T a few times for a convocation.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** **[0:35:30] [Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh. She just knows that some of the professors live around the neighbourhood because there's the professor that has a little bit of a limp. **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants] [0:36:00] [Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Oh. My mom says it used to be a professor that taught my brother, Robert, who knew her and knew all of us, but she didn't know who he was until later on. [Laughs]

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Interviewer:** But he was a neighbour.

**Respondent 1:** Hm?

**Interviewer:** He was a neighbour.

**Respondent 1:** He was. **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. He was a neighbour.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** He was very unkempt, she said. [Laughter] He was a **[0:36:30]** single man.

**Respondent 2:** Single. Single. **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Well I went to U of T. There were a lot of students around the neighbourhood.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And certainly right in your home too. You rented.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, oh yeah. To a lot of the Chinese students. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What about the safety of the neighbourhood?

**[0:37:00] [Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** My mom says very good.

**Interviewer:** Safe now.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And thirty-forty years ago it was also safe.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** My mom says around this street she doesn't – she said she doesn't notice any **[0:37:30]** deterioration in, you know – yeah, like in crime or in safety.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. She says she hasn't seen, like, much drunkenness or violence.

**Interviewer:** They feel safe here.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, no. She says it's a stable neighbourhood.

**Interviewer:** Good.

**Respondent 1:** In terms of good families, and professors, and **[0:38:00]** government civil servants, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Interviewer:** It sounds like she likes the neighbourhood.

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You do like the neighbourhood.

**Respondent 2:** Not bad. It's good. It's good.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay. I feel the same way. I like it too. What about Kensington Market?

**[Speech in Cantonese between both participants]**

**Respondent 1:** We still call it Jewish Market. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** Lovely.

**Respondent 1:** The Chinese. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** So how do you say it in Chinese?

**Respondent 1:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

- Respondent 1:** [0:38:30] [Speech in Cantonese] is Jewish, [Speech in Cantonese] is Market.
- Interviewer:** Oh. I didn't know that it was called that.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. [Laughs] When we first moved here in the '70s, right...
- Respondent 2:** I go to buy food.
- Interviewer:** You buy?
- Respondent 1:** She goes shopping there. Yeah, for fruits and vegetables, yeah.
- Interviewer:** And still now you shop there.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Sometimes...
- Respondent 2:** [0:39:00] One, only one choice to buy here.
- Respondent 1:** So she doesn't shop as much as she used to now because she's single, but she will go to Kensington Market so...
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Interviewer:** And she'll walk to Chinatown or go by...
- Respondent 1:** Actually my father used to drive her a lot, but since my father passed away in '99, my sister, Lily, had to force her to buy her, like, a three-wheel tricycle.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 1:** With a big basket in the back.

- Interviewer:** Lovely.
- Respondent 1:** So she used to take that a lot.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** But recently, you know, her back's been bothering her because she has a degenerative [0:39:30] disc, and so she's had a little bit of sciatica, which I'm helping her with, and my brother, Tommy, too. So she doesn't go out so much now with the bicycle. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But she used her bike a lot.
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. Yeah. My clinic – I used to have a clinic at Yonge and Bloor on the southeast corner until 2008, yeah, end of 2007 because the tore the building down, the two-storey building on the southeast corner. My mom, after my father passed away, [0:40:00] I wanted to give my mom some income, right? Some money to spend? But she wouldn't take it. So I was thinking how could I give her some money and she'll appreciate it. So I actually hired her to do my clinic laundry.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. So that way I can give her some money and she'll feel like...
- Interviewer:** She's earning it.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. And she's helping me. So she really liked that. So she used to ride her tricycle from here [laughter] up to Yonge and Bloor to pick up the laundry, and then do it, and bring it back. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** So you were [0:40:30] working for...
- Respondent 2:** I'm still strong.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. You're still strong. I can see that. You're a strong personality.
- Respondent 2:** A little bit hurt.

- Interviewer:** Oh, that's too bad. Yeah, yeah. But your son gave you a job.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** You were earning money.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** And by bike. I love that. [Laughs]
- Respondent 1:** So yeah, she really – my mom really loved that bike because she used to be really dependent on my dad for getting around, yeah. So with a bike she got some new independence.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Do you remember Mr. Poretta was also going around on his...
- Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.
- Interviewer:** [0:41:00] ...three-wheeled bike. [Laughter] He used to use his bike in the neighbourhood. Yeah. I don't think that there's much more that I want to ask. Is there anything that you want to tell me about the neighbourhood before I leave? Any thoughts you have?
- Respondent 1:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** Not much.
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** [0:41:30] Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]
- Respondent 1:** Oh. She says, yeah. She recognizes a lot of neighbours, but she doesn't really know them in depth, right? So she'll just say, "Hello, how are you?" Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And what about going to Chinatown?

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. My mom also wasn't big in – like she didn't get too much involved in the community because she was so busy at home.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, she was.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah. But I had [0:42:00] a lot of friends whose parents, you know, were involved in the neighbourhood. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [Speech in Cantonese]

**Respondent 1:** Like, you know, a friend of mine, John Lee that I grew up with, who I grew up with, his father, David Lee, used to own a restaurant on Spadina. David Lee's Famous Chinese Food. He's just recently passed away. Yeah. Just last month or a month-and-a-half ago. A lot of my friends are still in the neighbourhood, or at least their [0:42:30] parents are still in the neighbourhood.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Just like my mom, they're still here. Yeah. So I still come down here a lot. Yeah. But I have seen the neighbourhood change because it used to be very Chinese, very immigrant ethnic, right? But now it's – you know, it's changed. There's a good mix, you know, of still some of the old immigrant families still having their homes here. And, you know, with more Caucasians and professionals coming in, [0:43:00] yeah. So they really revitalized the neighbourhood. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Well it's become so expensive that immigrants can't afford to move into this neighbourhood anymore.

**Respondent 1:** No, no. Next door, Russ – I can't remember his last name. Their family owned that house for forty years or more too and they just recently sold it for just two or three months ago, sold it for eight-hundred thousand. Seven hundred and ninety-five thousand.

**[0:43:30]** And I think some home renovators – they flipped it, right? They just – and there's an open house today actually. They're listed for 1.2 million.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent 1:** It's semi-detached. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Semi-detached?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. It's this house right here.

**Interviewer:** Oh. Okay. So somebody came in and really spruced it up.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Spruced it up. Yeah. Yeah. When Esther, Russ's wife or estranged wife, because they divorced, she kept the house and she finally had to **[0:44:00]** move out and the backyard was just like a big mess. You know, it was overgrown, you know? Yeah. She didn't have the finances to keep up the house. So when they came in they cleaned up everything, yeah. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Well it's interesting for me to listen to your perception of how it's changed.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** I do think a lot of people, when they come here as immigrants, they feel if they earn more money, the first thing they do is begin to take over the whole house.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** **[0:44:30]** And then they want to go up north to show I've really – I've made it.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. A lot of the immigrant families have moved out, have moved north, and a lot of the, you know, Caucasian, you know, professionals have moved back in. [Laughs] And Kensington Market has changed too.

**Interviewer:** In what ways?

**Respondent 1:** You know, before it was Jewish and Portuguese when – you know, back in the early '70s, but now it's a lot of more Vietnamese and [0:45:00] Jamaican – have opened up shop there. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So Vietnamese, Jamaican, and then coffee shops.

**Respondent 1:** Coffee shops. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That too is becoming a little bit more upscale.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** I don't know if the synagogue is still in operation there.

**Interviewer:** There are a few of them in the Market.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Still.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And I remember Sammy Taft used to be on Spadina, and he was – he sold hats. What do you call them?

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. [0:45:30] He was there for the longest time, and he finally moved out because my friend, John Lee, his father, David Lee, bought the place next, and he bought it for a hundred thousand dollars, and everybody said he was crazy because it was so expensive. He finally sold the restaurant maybe ten years ago for over a million dollars. [Laughter] So he was crazy all the way to the bank. [Laughs] So his place was just south of Sammy Taft. [0:46:00] The millinery, right? Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** And there were a lot of jobbers, like the fabric textile stores on Spadina when we first moved in, and that's gone. And I remember the Victory Theatre, the burlesque theatre at Dundas and Spadina.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Because we used to go to Chinese school, right? Yeah. So we used to go to...

**Interviewer:** Oh you did.

**Respondent 1:** ...Chinese school.

**Interviewer:** So on the weekend.

**Respondent 1:** No. We used to go Monday to Friday from five to seven.

**Interviewer:** And what did you learn in there?

**Respondent 1:** We learned – so we learned Chinese, right? **[0:46:30]** Cantonese. Once a week we had a one-hour, two-hour lesson in Mandarin. It was calligraphy, we learned history, science, all in Chinese.

**Interviewer:** So you were very busy.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You went to school during the day in elementary public school and then to Chinese school from five until seven.

**Respondent 1:** Five to seven. Yeah. And then my mom would come home – we would come home and then we would have to get drilled by my mom. I remember one time my mom was so sick she was lying in bed, and we still had to recite the lessons to her. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** So she wanted you to be educated.

**Respondent 1:** **[0:47:00]** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** She is a disciplinarian, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So she was a force and she ran the house.

**Respondent 1:** Oh yeah. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** She's still a very energetic person. You can feel it. [Laughs]

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. So yeah. I remember the Victory burlesque theatre was kind of like we were in all of it because they had pictures of these, you know, scantily clad women, right? Black and white [Laughter] on the wall outside, so we'd walk by and try to look in. Yeah. But then that's gone now too. [0:47:30] Yeah. It's all Chinese shops now. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's right. And what about Bloor Street? Any recollection of that?

**Respondent 1:** Bloor Street was actually – for us, it was kind of far when we were young, yeah. So we didn't venture to Bloor Street too much. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** That's right. And school was south, and Chinatown was south, and Kensington Market was south.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. So we first came to Canada because we lived on Nassau for six months, and then in three years on Cecil Street we went to Orde Street Public School.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 1:** And then in grade four we – in '73 when we moved up here to Major, we [0:48:00] went to Lord Lansdowne, then I went to Harbord Collegiate.

**Interviewer:** Oh, you did.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And then after Harbord we went to U of T.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. So it was all in this neighbourhood.

**Interviewer:** And so where did you do your training?

**Respondent 1:** When I went U of T, I went to Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College...

**Interviewer:** In Toronto.

**Respondent 1:** ...which was on Bayview, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Bayview and Eglinton.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And how many years was that?

**Respondent 1:** That was four years.

**Interviewer:** Whoa.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you had a lot of education.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And the good thing is my oldest daughter, Sarah, is in first-year chiropractic college now.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent 1:** **[0:48:30]** But that College has moved to Leslie and Steeles.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So they've gone north again.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, yeah. Because they used to rent the property from Bayview across from the CNIB, but it's been – the owner didn't renew the lease because they sold it to a developer for condominiums.  
[Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** So it's condos now there.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Well I think we'll stop for now.

**Respondent 1:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** [0:49:00] I'm going to take some more...

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, for sure.

**Interviewer:** ...pictures of your pictures.

**Respondent 1:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewer:** But I want to say to both of you thank you very much.

**Respondent 1:** [Speech in Cantonese] [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** And Paul, thank you very much.

**Respondent 1:** Oh, you're welcome.

**Interviewer:** You've organized this whole thing, and you translated, and shared a lot of your experience.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** I really appreciate it.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. It's actually, you know, by you being here – it's, you know, I finally realize it's actually been like thirty, forty years. [Laughs] You know, because sometimes I don't think back that far, right? Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Well people sometimes say...

**Respondent 1:** So it's been a long time.

**Interviewer:** [0:49:30] ..."You can come speak to me, but I don't have much to talk about."

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And once you start talking...

**Respondent 1:** Oh yeah.

**Interviewer:** ...the stories...

**Respondent 1:** There's a lot.

**Interviewer:** ...roll back into your head. [Laughter] Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So I just want to say thank you very, very much to both of you.

[00:49:41]

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

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[0:00:00]

**Interviewer:** I just want to add something about Mrs. Ho, so please.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. To help supplement the family income, my mom ran sort of an informal daycare out of her house, yeah. So she babysat a lot of the kids. In fact, my grade eight teacher at Lord Lansdowne, Bill Rose, and his wife, Nancy Rose, who was the librarian at Lord Lansdowne at one time [0:00:30] – her two kids, Copland and

Lawrence – were babysat by my mother. [Laughter] In fact, when Lawrence was born...

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** ...before Bill and Nancy brought him home, they stopped by my mom's house [laughter] to show him off to my mom. [Laughter]

**Respondent 2:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Yeah. My teacher, Mr. Rose and Mrs. Rose, they – I think they really admired my mom in how she brought us up, that's **[0:01:00]** why they insisted on her babysitting their two kids. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Because they wanted...

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** ...they wanted their children to be as nice as [laughter] Mrs. Ho's children.

**Respondent 1:** I think they just trusted her, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. I'll bet they did. You enjoyed babysitting.

**Respondent 1:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Interviewer:** You did.

**Respondent 1:** **[Speech in Cantonese]**

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, I like the children.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And you took good care of them.

**Respondent 2:** Mm.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Okay. I'm going to turn it off again. [Laughter] Thank you. I just wanted to add that.

[00:01:30]

[End of recording]