

125 Fatima Ferreira & her father Benny Pimental

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

**Interviewer:** The date today is the 4th of August, 2013, and I'm sitting and speaking with Benny Pimental and his daughter, Fatima Ferreira. They live at 156 Robert Street, and I live beside them at 158 Robert Street for about twelve years. And I just want to tell you before we go on with the interview, of course Fatima, you remember when [0:00:30] you got married...

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** ...and I drove some of your guests to the wedding. And then Benny, when your first grandchild was born and I was living right next door, you came and you banged on my door, [laughter] and you – and I opened the door and you were just so excited. "I have a grandson. [Laughter] And I call him Jordan, and you pronounce it "Jordan."

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Anyway, what I'm saying – and we used to sit out on the porch, including your husband.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** We used to [0:01:00] sit outside on the porch late at night and early in the day, so I want to say for the purpose of this interview and the tape that you are very special people. Very close friends of mine. I love you dearly. [Laughs] So we're going to do this interview, but this one is very unique for me because we live beside each other for about twelve years.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And I have lots of other stories, but I won't go into them now. [Laughs]

**Respondent 1:** Well the feeling is mutual for us.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. Fatima, what you said was –  
[0:01:30] well, Benny, you bought the house in the 29th of October, 1965.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You were thirty-five.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Fatima, you were born in 1966, which means, Benny, you're talking about being an adult on Robert Street, and Fatima, you're talking about living there your entire life because you are now married with your husband and two beautiful children, and a dog. [Laughs]

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And you all live there. So you are going to talk about a [0:02:00] childhood into an adulthood, and being married with children of your own. So I have a big picture that's about to unfold.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** Thank you, Benny, for coming.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Thank you, Fatima, for coming.

**Respondent 1:** Thank you.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So Benny, when you bought the house in 1965, how did you choose Robert Street?

**Respondent 2:** Pardon me?

**Interviewer:** You bought the house on Robert Street.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** How did you find Robert Street? Why Robert **[0:02:30]** Street?

**Respondent 2:** Well I find I go around, and I go around for other houses, but I don't like so much. I like better that one.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 2:** And that's why I decide to buy that one, because I like the homes, I like the place, you know? And the – and that time, I pay eleven-hundred and nine.

**Interviewer:** Eleven thousand **[0:03:00]** dollars?

**Respondent 2:** Eleven nine hundred.

**Interviewer:** Eleven thousand, nine hundred. [Laughter]

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. I remember that.

**Interviewer:** Oh my god. Now, right now you're a rich man. [Laughs]

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** So, and Benny, when you bought that house in 1965, did you know anybody on the street? Did you know anybody before you bought that house?

**Respondent 2:** No, not quite. No. But when I bought the house, my neighbour, Mrs. Summer, and – **[0:03:30]** she so happy I bought because she likes Portuguese people. She says, "Oh, I'm glad because you're a young guy and Portuguese," and because that street is the most quiet around, you know.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. It is a quiet street.

**Respondent 1:** In the neighbourhood. Yes.

**Respondent 2:** It's very quiet, especially on weekend. You could sit outside. You're [0:04:00] going to – it's so quiet. No noise, nothing.

**Respondent 1:** Just the birds chirping.

**Respondent 2:** And that's true. And that's true.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. So is that the person who lived at 158, this woman who welcomed you? Who was the person who said, "I like Portuguese people"?

**Respondent 2:** Oh, that's the owner of the house, Mrs. Summer. And Elana, and...

**Respondent 1:** That was the Jewish family that...

**Respondent 2:** And Evelyn and lives with the mother.

**Interviewer:** So that's the house that I was [0:04:30] renting.

**Respondent 1:** That's correct.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So I moved there twenty-five years ago and lived there for twelve years, and then I bought this house on Borden.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So Mrs. Summer was the Jewish woman who was so friendly and...

**Respondent 1:** She was my bubbe. Do you remember I told you that story? She helped raise me because my mom was sick for many years, and in the mornings when my dad went – there was a period of time my mom was hospitalized, and my dad would drop me off next door, [0:05:00] and I would sleep next door because he had to go to work early in the morning, and she would take care of me. I would come home, and she would feed me lunch. And she was a beautiful person.

**Interviewer:** And did you call her bubbe? Is that what you called her?

- Respondent 1:** I did. I did.
- Interviewer:** Oh. So that – so you felt like family with her.
- Respondent 1:** Definitely.
- Respondent 2:** She's like a family to us.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** We go there, she come here, my house. And we...
- Respondent 1:** We helped each other. My dad did a lot.
- Respondent 2:** We went to the weddings, [0:05:30] Hirschel, and Sirkey.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Say that again. You what?
- Respondent 2:** Hirschel and Sirkey.
- Respondent 1:** Rosalind Stein and Hirschel Stein were the...
- Respondent 2:** That's grandson and granddaughter.
- Interviewer:** Oh, those are her family members.
- Respondent 1:** Yes, yes, yes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. The daughter lives with her.
- Respondent 1:** They lived next door for many years. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And they have Hirschel and...
- Respondent 1:** Hirschel and her – we called her Sirkey, but her correct – her name is really Rosalind, but we called her Sirkey for short.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, Rosalind. [0:06:00] Yeah, yeah.

- Respondent 1:** Rosalind. Yeah. That was...
- Interviewer:** I had a friend like that too. Called her Sirkey. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So you were very close. They were like family.
- Respondent 1:** They were. They were.
- Interviewer:** And then?
- Respondent 1:** And we helped. My dad used to do a lot of things for her around the house. Even cutting her grass, things like that. And then she would help...
- Respondent 2:** One – I'm the one cut the grass, I'm the one who paint the house.
- Respondent 1:** Yes, he would.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** We basically helped each other out.
- Respondent 2:** She – [0:06:30] because the son-in-law, he worked for the tailor's, she always make me pants, pair of pants when I do the job like paint the house, buy me a sweater in the winter. Always do – buy me something when – yeah. Very, very friendly. [0:07:00] If she need something, call my wife to sometimes open a jar, or open a...
- Interviewer:** So both of you helped each other a lot.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** You were helpful and kind to her.
- Respondent 1:** Very much.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.

- Interviewer:** And she was helpful and kind to you.
- Respondent 2:** Even in Christmas, for Christmas they come in my house, eat, drink. We go there too. Yeah. Was very friendly. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So then after that...
- Respondent 1:** And I remember growing up and making [0:07:30] – what's the soup that the – matzo ball soup. [Laughter] I would make it with her, and I would sit sometimes – they would invite me to their Seders, and I loved it. I absolutely – to this day. And the sponge cake was my favourite. [Laughter] So yes, that's what – I grew up having matzo ball soup, and you know, and...
- Interviewer:** So there's a piece of you that's Jewish. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** There is. There is, definitely.
- Interviewer:** What fond memories you have.
- Respondent 1:** Oh, [0:08:00] definitely.
- Interviewer:** Without her there, you could have had some hard times if your mother was in the hospital, your dad had to go to work, and she – you felt like a family member of hers.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Yeah. And they even used to help me out with schoolwork sometimes, like with homework, because my dad couldn't understand – he had – you know, there was a language barrier there, so sometimes they would help me. So it was amazing. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** So you had that family. And then the Fuda's had it, and they [0:08:30] rented it out to students, I think...
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** ...when Johnny Fuda bought it. And then I moved in.
- Respondent 1:** Correct.

- Interviewer:** So we've had some good neighbours. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** See, that school make – the schoolyard at Lord Lansdowne?
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** He make after when I bought that house.
- Interviewer:** Oh, they put up the new one.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And it was an old one.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Very old.
- Interviewer:** And they put up the new one.
- Respondent 2:** And they make a new school in there. Yeah. There after I live on Robert Street.
- Interviewer:** So that was in the [0:09:00] '60s then, because that was a very old school and they took it down.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** So sometime after you moved to Robert Street.
- Respondent 2:** And after, he wanted to take for French.
- Respondent 1:** They wanted to make it a French immersion school.
- Respondent 2:** And the people – we fight. We have demonstrations there and we win because it was already very close to take away that school for French. Yeah?
- Respondent 1:** They wanted to make it French-exclusive.
- Interviewer:** So [0:09:30] you mean, like, part of a Catholic school system?

- Respondent 1:** No.
- Interviewer:** Or just a French immersion?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Just they wanted to make it exclusively French immersion.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** And there was so many kids in the neighbourhood, so they – you know, they still needed that school, so...
- Respondent 2:** Because in that time – you know one thing, when I went up north [indiscernible 0:09:51]...
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** ...people coming from Montreal, we have the same problem because to speak [0:10:00] English. You have the same problem like I have. I say, "My god. You live in Canada and you have a big problem to..."
- Respondent 1:** To communicate.
- Respondent 2:** ..."you know, to talk with each other," and that's why now – at that time they don't make school, French school thing. But now...
- Respondent 1:** There is.
- Respondent 2:** ...every school have French.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** You know?
- Interviewer:** But I think you wanted Fatima to learn English. She wasn't going to learn English at home, so you [0:10:30] wanted to make sure that she learned English properly at school.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And then she could learn French in addition.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. Exactly.

**Respondent 2:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** So the neighbours were strong, a very strong neighbour association to fight that.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm. Yes.

**Interviewer:** I know we have a strong Residents' Association now, but I didn't know that in the '60s and '70s, that when you wanted something even that far back, you fought for it.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** They had a big demonstration, like he said, and they won. Like I don't know that much [0:11:00] of the – I was very young at the time, but yeah.

**Interviewer:** But you wanted your daughter, Fatima, to get to learn English properly.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And French could come after that.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Well, because you want to take just for French. You don't want for – to be just for French, and we...

**Respondent 1:** Of course they didn't agree with that.

**Respondent 2:** ...don't give them. Yeah?

**Interviewer:** And you made it happen, so it's an English school.

**Respondent 2:** But now, [0:11:30] schools have French, and they have English together.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because they have some hours in French too.

**Respondent 1:** Well actually that school now has some French immersion exclusive so it's...

**Respondent 2:** You learn another language.

**Respondent 1:** They also teach Spanish.

**Respondent 2:** Spanish.

**Interviewer:** Oh.

**Respondent 1:** And Mandarin or Cantonese.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** That's international languages. Yes. They have an international languages [0:12:00] program.

**Respondent 2:** I put her in Portuguese school.

**Interviewer:** On the weekend, you mean?

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Respondent 2:** No, after...

**Respondent 1:** After school.

**Respondent 2:** ...finish the school, she go there. I pay fifty dollars a month for – to be there.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

- Interviewer:** Well, you wanted her to know your culture, the culture that you came from.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. But she could write Portuguese, a letter in Portuguese. She talked Portuguese. See? She talk all [0:12:30] Portuguese and yeah. More than Jordan and Elia. She talk better Portuguese. Jordan start – Jordan okay, but Elia I think is going to lose a little bit.
- Interviewer:** Yes. That's what happens from one generation to the next....
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Yes, exactly.
- Interviewer:** ...into the next generation.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But the thing – I was babysit. I talk in Portuguese all the time. That's why bring him in [0:13:00] our language.
- Interviewer:** I think that's wonderful. So as their babysitter, they learn Portuguese from you. That's wonderful. Absolutely fantastic. But do they answer in English now? Do you still speak Portuguese with them, Benny? Or do you speak English to them now?
- Respondent 2:** To who?
- Interviewer:** To your grandchildren.
- Respondent 2:** Oh. Pretty close all the time in Portuguese.
- Interviewer:** Good, good. But do they answer in Portuguese? Or?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. He knows. He knows.
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's fantastic.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But sometime, [0:13:30] [indiscernible 0:13:30].
- Respondent 1:** So it's a little bit of slang.
- Respondent 2:** Like it's Portuguese, you know?

- Respondent 1:** They're losing a little bit of the proper.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. Things like that.
- Interviewer:** No, but it's because of you that they speak Portuguese at all.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Even if it's a little bit different or slangy...
- Respondent 1:** And my mom too because she couldn't speak English, so they had no choice but to learn.
- Respondent 2:** She don't speak much because she never work, and when you don't work...
- Interviewer:** [0:14:00] Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...if you don't go in school, you can't learn.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. You either have to go and learn or be in the street.
- Respondent 2:** I never go to school. I don't speak English perfect because, you know, but I never go in the school. I learn from work...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...because when you go to work, like factory and things, we have to learn, otherwise bad.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And at that time, right now they have classes. I don't think that so many years ago they had classes to teach [0:14:30] you English.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** You didn't go to school, Benny.
- Respondent 2:** I want to take my wife to school. She don't want to go. [Laughs]

**Respondent 1:** How did you learn now to speak English?

**Respondent 2:** Where I learn?

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Respondent 2:** Well, I learn in the school.

**Respondent 1:** Oh okay.

**Respondent 2:** In the job.

**Interviewer:** In the job.

**Respondent 2:** In the job.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah?

**Interviewer:** Well Benny, you learned it just fine because I've been speaking to you now for twenty-five years, only in English, [0:15:00] and you speak just fine.

**Respondent 2:** Well that – for us, we – like in school, I never have the pronounce – like the way it's supposed to be. You know what I mean?

**Interviewer:** I understand. So you don't pronounce it properly, but that's fine. So the way I look at it is if somebody speaks with an accent, it shows that they know another language, and I think that's something to be proud of. That's the way I look at it, because you speak [0:15:30] Portuguese fluently. I don't know a word of Portuguese [laughter], so it shows that you know another language, and I hope you feel good about that.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, sometimes it's – it's worth to speak our language too, like Portuguese. The English, I told my daughter, is going to learn anyway because going to school, but Portuguese – is better we talk Portuguese because, [0:16:00] you know...

- Interviewer:** I agree completely. Now when you bought that house, you had this Jewish family that you shared a wall with. Who else lived in the neighbourhood? From what other countries and what languages?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. I have – the next door, after Mrs. Summer is Italian.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Mrs. Agostino.
- Interviewer:** I remember that.
- Respondent 1:** Agostino. Yes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. After that, Portuguese.
- Interviewer:** **[0:16:30]** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** Across the...
- Respondent 1:** It's the Cabral family.
- Respondent 2:** Across the hall is the Italian. And right down is Mrs. Summer.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** There is the old lady too, maybe seventy-five.
- Interviewer:** Oh, very old eh, Benny? [Laughter] I'm older. [Laughter] I'm just saying because you're eighty-three now, nearly eighty-three, so that's why I'm laughing. [Laughter] Yeah. **[0:17:00]** So you're saying Portuguese, Italian, and Jewish.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.
- Interviewer:** Anything else? Fatima, maybe you can add to this too, if you remember. Because of course, you spent your whole life at 156 Robert.

- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** So Italian, Portuguese, Jewish. Any other groups of people that you recall?
- Respondent 1:** Wasn't there Yugoslavian too?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. And English. English people too.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 1:** Yes, English and Yugoslavian, I think.
- Respondent 2:** Across, that house, that big house, the two sister and brother [0:17:30] live in there, but the sister pass away. The brother want to give me – you know Joe, the son-in-law of Mrs. Summer? My neighbour? He's my neighbour.
- Respondent 1:** So the house that you – the same house, 158...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. The one you talk about.
- Respondent 1:** They were going to join forces and buy the house across the street, so they were going to go – and I guess my dad decided not to.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. That house.
- Respondent 1:** It was a risky venture, so.
- Respondent 2:** Maybe two million [0:18:00] dollars. Two million because he have big backyard, it's a big house, and take back from the – Mario...
- Interviewer:** I remember where Mario lives.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** He take another half backyard too.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 2:** I don't know why it happened that thing. He take half the backyard.

**Interviewer:** So they took half of Mario's backyard.

**Respondent 2:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So they have a huge backyard then.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. He take – [0:18:30] and he have that laneway, you can make a street. Can make houses there.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's behind that house.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because it's big lot. Our side, the lot is more smaller.

**Respondent 1:** In the back, but on the other side it's...

**Respondent 2:** But even driveway, everything is bigger.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. That's very...

**Interviewer:** Did the different groups of people go [0:19:00] into each other's homes? Were they friendly?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did they get along? I mean the Italian people, Portuguese, Jewish, did they mix and were they friends? Or did they each stick with their own group?

**Respondent 2:** Was very – I never have problem all neighbourhood. All neighbourhood. Portuguese, Italian, even today.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Even today. I never have problems because, you know, my mother – my parents, [0:19:30] when they alive, when they back home, he says, "Better have one bad year in production than can have one

bad neighbour," because the neighbour we see every day, and the production one bad year, next year it could repair.

**Interviewer:** Oh, what an interesting and beautiful message.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Benny, you live your life that way. I mean you are such a friendly person, and I [0:20:00] know you still help people on Robert Street, and you come here and you help me too. [Laughter] You do.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. One thing, I do for Jake, the one who's bought the house – Italian family.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 2:** But he's Russian. He's Russian.

**Interviewer:** From Russia.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. From Russia. Yeah. And I do the backyard, you know, the garden from in the back, and I do for you. [0:20:30] I do for me. And the family adopted in the...

**Interviewer:** They adopted a child?

**Respondent 1:** Yes. I think you know her. Yes, you know her too.

**Respondent 2:** Next week, I'm going to start to do for her too because you go – he asked me, "Benny," last week.

**Respondent 1:** So he's the backup when people go on vacation. [Laughter] He fills in and helps out.

**Respondent 2:** I said even my age I like to help people because...

**Interviewer:** I know.

**Respondent 2:** You know.

**Interviewer:** But you got that message [0:21:00] from your parents as a child – to be a good neighbour is very important. And you live that way every day.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You do.

**Respondent 2:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** Everybody knows you as very friendly.

**Respondent 2:** I think that's the best way to live.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Because you know, my neighbour, the daughter doesn't want – they separated now because he makes – and he bought the house. [0:21:30] He – I am not sure the street. He bought the house, and he fight with the neighbour. Another two months later they bought the house, he have to sell the house because he can't...

**Interviewer:** He can't get along.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. See? That's...

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** No, that's not my style.

**Interviewer:** No, it isn't. I know that. [Laughter] I've known you now for twenty-five years. I know your style, and how friendly and how [0:22:00] helpful you are. Fatima, what I want to talk to you a little bit about is you grew up on this street.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

- Interviewer:** You have your family there. What do you remember about playing with other kids in the neighbourhood? Where did you play? What kinds of games did you play?
- Respondent 1:** Well in the summertime, we didn't have – there was a neighbourhood camp which was at the Knox Church, and it was free, but mostly the boys went there, [0:22:30] not the girls because in my case, I have a disabled sister, so I helped take care of her. And I was at home, and we would do things on the verandah, so we would draw and colour, and...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And her cousins come and play with you.
- Respondent 1:** And play, and I would have my cousins come over, and my dad would take us out sometimes to the park, and we would do different things. But in the neighbourhood, what I most remember [0:23:00] was there was lots of children and we would just get together and play on the street, whether it would be, you know, just with a soccer ball, or it was just an amazing – I had so much fun. It was very carefree, and just a lot of fun. And even though I wasn't in any scheduled, you know, camp, it was an amazing environment to be in because the kids – we would just – I didn't even want to go home to eat. [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Aw.
- Respondent 1:** It was just play. [0:23:30] Play on the street.
- Interviewer:** Just right on the street.
- Respondent 1:** Right on the street.
- Interviewer:** And when you say on the street, the sidewalk, the road, the verandahs, the back lane? Where? Back gardens? Where did you play?
- Respondent 1:** Usually in the front because I guess the parents wanted to see us, but on the – you know, and if a car came by we would stop playing, or sometimes, you know, during the day we would play on the verandahs, different verandahs, and I remember my dad would give

me a dollar or, you know, I would [0:24:00] get together with my neighbour, and we were growing up together at the same time, so her father would – one day, her father would give her money, one day it would be mine. And one dollar back then went a long way, so we would pool our money together and go to the corner store and buy, you know, ice cream, candy, and it was just the best. The best times. Just a lot of fun.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Just we...

**Respondent 2:** But you play – you know the boys from that... [0:24:30] she bought the – close to Mario house.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** The boys, the sons? He play hockey.

**Respondent 1:** Hockey.

**Interviewer:** Oh, they played on the street.

**Respondent 2:** In the street.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. On the street.

**Respondent 2:** Nets everywhere.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Respondent 2:** Because in that time, no traffic.

**Respondent 1:** No. Not as much traffic.

**Respondent 2:** One – and one for a long time no cars.

**Interviewer:** So they could just put the nets right on the road.

- Respondent 2:** [0:25:00] Yeah. Yeah. Play one on one. That there, and the boys play hockey. Yeah, could play lots in the front.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh. So the children played right on the sidewalks on the road.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But now it's different because, you know, more traffic.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Her days they were more different.
- Respondent 1:** But I think back then it was a lot of immigrant families, and you know, it was just basically they were raising their kids and their – and everybody just kind of [0:25:30] – you know, families helped each other out, and the kids got together and played, and that's just the way it was. It was a lot different.
- Respondent 2:** Forty years ago, forty years ago is a bit different than now. Now it's more traffic, more cars, more people, more, you know.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So the kids couldn't play on the road because they'd be dragging these nets off the road every ten seconds or forty seconds. Uh-huh. But you said, Fatima, that when you played with your sister, you were taking care of your sister, [0:26:00] you were on the front verandah sometimes.
- Respondent 1:** Well I mean she went to school, but in the summer, you know, sometimes she would sit outside, or sometimes, you know, my mom, she would be inside with my mom, but I also helped take care of her. And we – through my sister, we met amazing people. The taxi driver that would take my sister to school used to come and [0:26:30] bring us ice cream and sit with us on the verandah, and just the most amazing people we met. And then we used to have renters that – we rented upstairs, and they used to sit with me and play Scrabble on the front part, the front porch.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** So just met the most amazing people growing up. I mean I would play with people who are studying to be lawyers, but they were just

so down-to-earth, and doctors, and you know? [0:27:00] And they would sit with me on the verandah and play Scrabble. To this day, I love playing Scrabble. [Laughter] So.

**Interviewer:** So but – well I remember spending hours on the weekends and in the evenings sitting on the verandah on your side, or sometimes you come to my side, and you certainly when you had Jordan he would – but a lot of verandah-sitting...

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** ...and being friendly with the neighbours.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, yes.

**Interviewer:** So you remember that from your childhood.

**Respondent 1:** I do. And just very...

**Interviewer:** Casual.

**Respondent 1:** ...casual, and the [0:27:30] kids would play together, and we would just – you know, everybody would go outside, and before you know it, you have a game of something, you know, that we would just...

**Interviewer:** Are people using the verandahs now as much?

**Respondent 1:** Somewhat. I mean I think people now are more busy. You know, and – but yes, on the weekends, I think, and maybe in the evenings people still do sit outside.

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

**Respondent 1:** So.

**Interviewer:** I remember hours sitting outside. [0:28:00] And sometimes you would go in and I'd be with your husband outside until eleven o'clock, twelve o'clock, twelve-thirty in the morning just sitting outside. It was – yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Well my husband yesterday just – he went out to take the dog and he ended up talking with a few of the neighbours for a, you know, little while. So I mean we still do that, converse, you know, every so often.

**Interviewer:** And you know, I have the most happy memories and loving memories of doing that on Robert Street. **[0:28:30]** I don't see as much happening on Borden. I mean I like Borden, I'm very happy here, but we don't do it as much here as I did it with you guys when we were all there.

**Respondent 2:** Mm.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. What about the back lane? Did you use it at all?

**Respondent 1:** Sometimes. Sorry, I'm just – we used to play in the backyard sometimes.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Sometimes.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** I remember more the front for some reason, I don't know why. I think it was just more **[0:29:00]** – as my dad said, I don't think the cars were as busy, and it was just usually where we played. So.

**Interviewer:** Well and easier to find each other because it's right out in the front.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. Exactly. Exactly. I mean sometimes we would play in the back, but I think it was mostly in the front because it wasn't as much...

**Respondent 2:** We have a big peach tree in the backyard.

**Interviewer:** What kind?

**Respondent 1:** Peach.

**Interviewer:** Oh. And you still have it?

- Respondent 2:** No, no.
- Respondent 1:** It was actually on our neighbour's side.
- Respondent 2:** That's years ago, maybe thirty-five years ago.
- Interviewer:** [0:29:30] Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** We have a – that's the fence.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** The big tree, peach tree. And I always put the water in the tomatoes, and in my garden. My wife come, and they have the steps, come on the stairs, we have a squirrel in the peach tree.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And I put water. You know what the squirrel do? My wife come and it was – he jumped on the top of my wife. [0:30:00] [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Jumped onto her shoulder?
- Respondent 2:** Oh. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** That's my dad. Was always joking. Always up to no good.
- Interviewer:** It jumped on her shoulder.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** And then he put...
- Respondent 2:** But sometime jump in there and go...
- Interviewer:** Oh, I bet she got scared. Was she angry at you?

- Respondent 1:** Of course. [Laughter] Because he's the one that put water. He was being playful, and he was the one that put water on the squirrel. He was just being playful.
- Respondent 2:** [0:30:30] And one time I see her look in my eye and my mouth full of water, look in my eye. She look and...
- Interviewer:** Oh, you squirted your wife.
- Respondent 2:** [Laughs] I have to go into the dryer because she blew me with water. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** She was funny. So you found it funnier than your wife did.
- Respondent 1:** Of course. [Laughter] He was always the practical joker.
- Interviewer:** Benny, would you talk about where you were working? [0:31:00] All those years beginning when you moved to Robert Street.
- Respondent 2:** Oh, I work – that's the time when I come in Canada, I worked two years in Canadian Railway up north. Saskatchewan...
- Interviewer:** Saskatchewan.
- Respondent 2:** ...Winnipeg.
- Interviewer:** You lived in Saskatchewan?
- Respondent 2:** Calgary. All around that bush.
- Interviewer:** Wait a minute, wait a minute.
- Respondent 2:** The lines.
- Interviewer:** Were you already [0:31:30] living in Toronto but they sent you there? Or did you live in those places?
- Respondent 2:** No, no, no. At that time – that's when I come in Canada.

**Interviewer:** Oh. Yeah, but when you came to Toronto, I mean when you finally moved to Robert Street, where did you work after that?

**Respondent 2:** After?

**Respondent 1:** When you were already living – after you were in Toronto.

**Respondent 2:** Oh. I worked thirty-two years at Nielsen's.

**Interviewer:** Nielsen's chocolate.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ah.

**Respondent 2:** Thirty-two years. [0:32:00] I retired there. That's my twenty-second year I retired. In January, it's twenty-two years already I retire, and when I – because the company give me a package if I want it four years early.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. So you retired at sixty-one?

**Respondent 2:** Huh?

**Interviewer:** You retired at sixty-one years old?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. That's right. Four years before my retire [0:32:30] time. And the company give three months to think about because I don't have to go if I don't want to because we have a union. Supervisors, bosses, when he says, "You go, you have to go," you know what I mean? He can – no protection. But we have protection. And after the last week before three months finish, I sign [0:33:00] to...

**Interviewer:** To retire early.

**Respondent 2:** That was the best, was the best thing I do. After that, you know, I work three years as the landscaper.

**Interviewer:** Oh really?

**Respondent 2:** Work in the hot. I was strong like twenty-five years old in that time.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You're still strong.

**Respondent 2:** And I worked three years in landscaper with my nephew.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 2:** My nephew had that...

**Interviewer:** He had a business.

**Respondent 1:** [0:33:30] Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you worked for your nephew.

**Respondent 2:** I say, "Okay." I don't pay tax, I don't pay money for stamps, I don't need that. And after you give me eight dollars clear for an hour. Was good money, you know?

**Interviewer:** But you worked hard for that clear dollars.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Eight dollars at that time.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** I got an hour of that money clear. [0:34:00] No make contact to the government.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. And after that...

**Interviewer:** Yeah?

**Respondent 2:** ...I quit for – I have to take Jordan to babysitter, Elia, you know? Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So just for the tape I want to say that what you're referring to now is when you became a grandfather, and your daughter and son-in-law were working, you raised your grandchildren while they [0:34:30] were at work.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** A big job.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** But you know, in the wintertime, that roofs, you know, put it in flat roofs...

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** ...because you have to cut other roofs out, put for – work for the [indiscernible 0:34:46], one company put in new roofs.

**Interviewer:** So you worked for a roofing company for a little while?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, I worked for one year for a roof company, but before go in the factory.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** But [0:35:00] you know what happened. We cut the roof, we don't have protection for the eyes. When he cut, the wind bring up – I have to wash my eyes with tea. Make tea with...

**Interviewer:** So you injured your eyes in some way?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Have an injury?

**Respondent 2:** Because it's go – the black pinch...

- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** The right one? When you cut by shovels, take the old one out...
- Respondent 1:** They didn't even [0:35:30] wear any protection.
- Respondent 2:** ...things come in our eye. Oh boy. Yeah. And in the night-time, I can't sleep. When I sleep, after things come out...
- Interviewer:** Oh, that's horrible.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Benny.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But now, now everything – you have protection, you have glasses, you have everything, but at that time, no.
- Interviewer:** So that was after you left Nielsen's?
- Respondent 2:** No, no. That's before Nielsen's.
- Interviewer:** [0:36:00] Oh, before Nielsen's.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Before. I'm fifty-eight years going to make in Canada.  
[Laughs]
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Long time.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. I work. Yeah. A couple of companies.
- Interviewer:** I want to talk about you've lived on Robert Street for so many years. How has Robert Street changed? The people, in what ways – what changes have you seen? Either of you.
- Respondent 1:** I would say the [0:36:30] changes are that it's because of the value of the houses, it's more professionals that have bought the homes because young families that are just starting out, I don't think can afford the homes around this area. So that's why you don't have as

many families and as many children in the neighbourhood like we did back then.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 1:** So I would say that's the biggest change. It's more professionals, [0:37:00] and you know, there still are children, and just not as many because most families, I believe, are unfortunately – can only afford to go in the outskirts of, you know, of Toronto. More like maybe Etobicoke, or Mississauga, or – so I would say financially they cannot afford the, you know...

**Interviewer:** So it's a more affluent group of people that are buying the homes now.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, yes.

**Interviewer:** And fewer children.

**Respondent 1:** I would say yes. [0:37:30] I'd say that's probably one of the biggest changes. I mean even the school board has acknowledged that, that there's not as many – you know, the school. Like they wanted to close Lord Lansdowne, and my children have gone there. Both my children have gone. Elia's still there. And they wanted to close it, and so what happened was it's now part an alternative school there as well, and it's becoming French immersion because otherwise, if they didn't evolve and change, because of the [0:38:00] low registration of kids, they – it might have closed, so that's how they...

**Interviewer:** So that's how they saved the school from closing.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. Yes.

**Interviewer:** That was...

**Respondent 1:** Because they have to bring up the numbers.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So that was creative thinking to use the school and not lose it.

- Respondent 1:** Yes. Exactly.
- Respondent 2:** You don't want your family – Tim – you know Tim? Tim gives a little bit...
- Interviewer:** The Jewish family that lived closer to the school?
- Respondent 2:** Tim. You know the driveway of the...
- Respondent 1:** [0:38:30] Tim Grant.
- Interviewer:** Oh Tim. Yeah. Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** It's a Jewish family lives in that house. He bought that house from the...
- Interviewer:** Really?
- Respondent 2:** And then he have cancer. The Jewish lady. And the husband – she passed away, and the husband stayed alone there for a while, but after have to go in a home.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** And he says [0:39:00] when he wanted to buy my house, I say I have one – you know? I say okay. But he says, "Don't sell your house because that house is – won't be too long. It's going to be worth for a hundred thousand dollars.
- Interviewer:** He was right.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Interviewer:** That person was right.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. He's go for – you know. I say, "No, I don't. I don't sell because I like the way, you know, the way [0:39:30] I was.

- Interviewer:** So that's the person that Tim Grant bought the house from. This person you're talking about.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But he sell him house because he have one son. The son is married, and the – he sell at that time maybe, I don't know, it's maybe already for thirty thousand, something like that. Yeah. That's the same big house – he want to sell to me for thirty thousand.  
**[0:40:00]** A salesman bought the house for thirty thousand dollars. He keep him for one year, the rest of the year, and he sells for a hundred and eighty thousand.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Now which house is that? Across the street from you?
- Respondent 1:** Across. Yes.
- Respondent 2:** Across the street today.
- Interviewer:** Mm.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. They're just on another side.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** That's the one we talk about, he have a...
- Interviewer:** So huge that house.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...backyard, and...
- Interviewer:** But your home must be worth **[0:40:30]** a lot now. I mean you did beautiful renovations.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Well we had no choice. It was either we renovate or we move because it was becoming too small because my children were

growing, and really those houses are – I mean nowadays more single families.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 1:** But in our case, because my parents are living with us, you know, and aging, we just decided to stay together and renovate, and they didn't want – my parents didn't want to move. [0:41:00] So...

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** ...we decided...

**Interviewer:** And you're three generations there now.

**Respondent 1:** Exactly.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** That street too expensive. The house is too expensive. I don't know. Because if you will open – if you opened the mouth for a million dollars for that, how you going to give? You going to take...

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. But then you have to buy something somewhere else.

**Respondent 2:** I know, but...

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** ...we make big renovation, but no. Not for [0:41:30] sale.

**Respondent 1:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** But as Fatima just said, you needed a bigger house.

**Respondent 2:** One day when I pass away, she have a house for the rest of her life.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. And a beautiful home, and a great location.

- Respondent 2:** Yeah. That's – it costs quite a money, but it's worth.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** It's worth it because if you want to do that, what we do before five years ago, and it costs more, much more money.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. You did a beautiful job.
- Respondent 2:** And a lot of people do **[0:42:00]** spend money in the houses, spend but they don't do the right way because the first thing, we have heat in the basement in the floor. We have waterproof all around.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Don't want drop coming. I see some drop were to come in, it's going in the tank. We have one tank.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So your house is really well protected.
- Respondent 2:** When the water comes – when the water touch in the pump, come out. And some people have – how many thousand people have...
- Respondent 1:** **[0:42:30]** This land.
- Interviewer:** Right.
- Respondent 2:** Across the road I see the mother and the daughter – here stick water.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** And they give one million, four hundred and fifty.
- Interviewer:** They bought it for a million and a half?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.

- Interviewer:** And they're taking pails of water out in the storm.
- Respondent 2:** Two, three months ago...
- Interviewer:** Oh my god.
- Respondent 2:** ...he bought.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Cost a million and a half. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Not funny, but it's a...
- Respondent 2:** And he don't [0:43:00] do the right way because when you spend money, you should...
- Respondent 1:** Make sure the foundation and everything is good. That's what he's saying. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I know that they've changed the traffic going this way, going north, south. When you first moved there, which way did the traffic go? Between Harbord and College, which ways did the cars go? Or did they go both ways?
- Respondent 2:** Oh, change so much. [0:43:30] No, you can come in from College.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** You could come up.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. But it don't give both ways because when they have school, even one-way. We have school in that....

**Respondent 1:** Because there's a school in the neighbourhood, so they have to restrict.

**Interviewer:** So that part was restricted a long time ago.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, yes.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** But we found that because it's such a – it is – what was happening as the [0:44:00] traffic increased, some of the younger drivers would just race down Robert Street, so they actually had – I don't know if it was the Ministry of Transportation, you know, they put something there so they could monitor the traffic, and then that's when they started changing...

**Interviewer:** Oh. So they calculated how many cars were using it.

**Respondent 1:** I think so, yeah.

**Interviewer:** And also high speed.

**Respondent 1:** Probably. Yeah. I'm not sure if it calculates speed or just how many [0:44:30] cars were going through.

**Respondent 2:** No. That's not many cars. That's for slow-down.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. They were speeding.

**Respondent 2:** For slow-down.

**Respondent 1:** That's right. So then they started changing a lot of the streets...

**Respondent 2:** More safety. More safety.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Did you like those changes, when they made those changes?

- Respondent 2:** Well the change, you know, is not so good. It's better for this because that's around that street – Brunswick, Major, Robert – all of that, the streets change.
- Respondent 1:** [0:45:00] Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** You think it's better?
- Respondent 2:** Well, better. Could be more safe.
- Interviewer:** This way.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because from Harbord to College, halfway go down.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Halfway come up. You know what I mean?
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Especially when you have school.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And we coming up to Robert when we have to go to Spadina.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Spadina you have to go up, and through – [0:45:30] if you want to come on Robert, you have to go up and you have to turn mostly over there to come – you know, some people the first time, make a really bit confusing.
- Interviewer:** Oh, for sure.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** A lot of people make confused to the right way have to drive there, you know?

**Respondent 1:** So I think for safety reasons it was very good, but it didn't – turned almost maze-like. Like it turned into a maze and a lot of people would get [0:46:00] lost, or – but people are used to it now, but at the beginning it was a little confusing.

**Respondent 2:** See, when you're coming from the College, come up.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** But when you finish the school, you have another small street. You have to go there.

**Interviewer:** It takes you back to Spadina, right?

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Exactly. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Because from halfway...

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** ...someone's coming down – the cars coming down. And if you want to go up in that, it's going up. You know what I mean? It's – we have [0:46:30] three ways there. It's so short.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. But I remember when I was living beside you on Robert Street...

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** ...all the cars that would go the wrong way, and we would all yell at them and give them the finger, and they'd give it back to us. [Laughter] Right? They did it a lot.

**Respondent 1:** You still get the occasional, but it's much more rare.

- Interviewer:** Yeah. But it does slow the traffic down.
- Respondent 1:** Yes, it does.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** But of course, your family lived without a car until you bought one.
- Respondent 1:** That's correct.
- Interviewer:** Your parents never had a car.
- Respondent 1:** No. My dad never had the [0:47:00] desire to drive.
- Respondent 2:** I never. She want to buy a car. When is home, I say, "No. I don't know to drive." And you go – "I'm going to buy a car." And you go out in the car. "No, no. I don't."
- Interviewer:** You didn't want to have to worry. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** But she have a car.
- Interviewer:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** The time she bought, she have a little touch.
- Interviewer:** Uh-huh.
- Respondent 2:** [0:47:30] A little touch...
- Interviewer:** Oh, a scratch.
- Respondent 2:** Little bit accident, but not much.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 2:** She get scared. Don't drive much.
- Interviewer:** So is Fernando the main driver now?

- Respondent 1:** Yes, he is.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Fernando's good driver. Very good.
- Respondent 1:** I mean I still drive when I have to, but it's – it's not a big – I prefer to walk everywhere, that's why I love living where I do and take transit, and...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. Well you know what? Let's come to that...
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** **[0:48:00]** ...because I think that's an important part of...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...living in this neighbourhood.
- Respondent 1:** Pardon?
- Respondent 2:** Hey?
- Respondent 1:** What's that?
- Respondent 2:** **[Speaks in Portuguese 0:48:08].**
- Respondent 1:** No. **[Speaks in Portuguese 0:48:10].** Sorry.
- Interviewer:** Okay. But Fatima, you were saying that – I feel the same way about living in this neighbourhood, and Benny, you're the same. We like to walk.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And when you live in this neighbourhood, it's so easy to walk to get so much that you want.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. So you use public transportation and you walk.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And that's your...

**Respondent 1:** **[0:48:30]** And we have the car too now. I mean you do need it, because we are six people in the house, and we need it even just to do our groceries and things like that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah.

**Respondent 1:** So. But...

**Respondent 2:** Some days I walk too much.

**Interviewer:** You do walk a lot. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. I get tired. My god.

**Respondent 1:** It's good for you.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. Tell me about the stores in your neighbourhood. What they were like all those years ago. What were the stores? And what do you have there now? **[0:49:00]** The stores in your neighbourhood.

**Respondent 1:** Where did you shop when you first – at Robert Street?

**Respondent 2:** Oh, to do shopping.

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent 2:** You know Augusta, the Market?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

- Respondent 2:** That Jewish guys, he likes Portuguese people.
- Interviewer:** Jewish guys? They like Portuguese people?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. They like Portuguese people. I have a watch, I have plates, I have a blanket because he give stamps.
- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** **[0:49:30]** We fill up the books. How many books you need for that and that? Oh, I have things because there – I shop in there. Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And people in the marketplace had those stamps?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** I remember those from when I was a child.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. He give the stamps. Sometimes the son-in-law – is young. He have to be. The father-in-law is the one who's in the cash, you know? **[0:50:00]** And he know me. Sometimes he give me quite a little more, you know? [Laughs]
- Interviewer:** A few extra stamps. [Laughter] So you'd get your gifts faster. [Laughter] So what were some of the gifts you got? Blankets, you said? And dishes?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Give dishes, give cup. I got the blanket from that stamp.
- Respondent 1:** The watch.
- Respondent 2:** I have a nice watch in the wall, you know?
- Interviewer:** A clock.
- Respondent 1:** **[0:50:30]** A clock. Yeah. A clock. Sorry.
- Interviewer:** So they had good gifts when you collected enough bits of stamps.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. When he have four, five books, he have that. Some – like a blanket, maybe. I think ten books or something like that.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Because it's more...

**Interviewer:** But it really gets you to go back to that store.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. And that way, the...

**Respondent 1:** Customers.

**Respondent 2:** ...people go to there, could go back tomorrow. [Laughs]

**Interviewer:** Yes, exactly. Did you do most of your food shopping **[0:51:00]** at Kensington Market, or the small stores?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. Even boots, clothes. Now it's more down, more quiet, but my book – for a couple of years ago, two years ago, maybe three, he went buy a pair of boots...

**Interviewer:** He bought boots...

**Respondent 2:** ...on Augusta.

**Interviewer:** On Augusta. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** And winter boots.

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** And he says, "How much you pay?" "Oh, fifty-some." You know? Ah. **[0:51:30]** "Okay. I like what – I'm going to see," but I don't pay like fifty dollars. No.

**Respondent 1:** So back then...

**Respondent 2:** He pay fifty dollars with tax and everything, and oh, fifty dollars. No. I don't pay tax. [Laughter] If you want, I pay forty dollars and that's that. [Laughter] Because I...

**Respondent 1:** What I remember...

**Respondent 2:** ...go another place to...

**Respondent 1:** What I remember growing up...

**Respondent 2:** I start to walk. [0:52:00] I say, she's "Okay, okay. Take them."

**Interviewer:** So you could bargain with them. [Laughter]

**Respondent 1:** Back – I remember growing up and my dad would haggle with the store owners. That's what I was going to say. I remember him haggling and saying, "Oh, no, no. Come on. You've got to reduce the price," and that was a common thing back then. Haggling and trying to get – you know, "Okay, I'll get this and this for this amount of money." And so I remember that, and that was common back then.

**Respondent 2:** But you know what you want [0:52:30] in the Queen Street when I bought my furnish – and he says, "Oh, you're a good man to pay, but hard to make business with you."

**Interviewer:** Oh, so you're tough. You're tough. [Laughter] Oh, good for you, Benny. [Laughter] Better for your pocket. [Laughter]

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** He's a good negotiator. [Laughter]

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. I don't know. She bought the furniture for...

**Interviewer:** [0:53:00] Furniture for her floor, you mean. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** No, when get married.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** My bedroom furniture.

**Respondent 2:** And even though I have two big lamps because given free, I buy that. He says, "Oh, that's like a present. You have to give something." Then he give. But she never say nothing. Eh. "What's the matter?" And she have to go back. [Laughs] We get two lamps. [Laughter]

**Interviewer:** So you have to **[0:53:30]** learn from your father. That's good. [Laughter] So Benny...

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** ...is that what you did in Portugal in the Azores, that you would bargain? You would go to the Market and you would bargain?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Yeah, you have to do that too.

**Interviewer:** That's what everybody did.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** In Portugal.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Sure.

**Respondent 1:** But it was common here too. Other people did it.

**Interviewer:** So the Market was a place for bargaining. You wouldn't go to Eaton's and bargain maybe.

**Respondent 1:** I don't think so. No.

**Interviewer:** But to the Market you would.

**Respondent 1:** Yes, yes, yes.

- Respondent 2:** Even clothes for her and everything. Yeah. I don't [0:54:00] give right away for the price they want.
- Interviewer:** [Laughs] Oh these are good stories. [Laughter]
- Respondent 1:** And sometimes it was embarrassing because we would start to walk out of the store and I'd say, "Dad, I really want that coat." [Laughs] And then eventually...
- Respondent 2:** Sometimes you have to try to go to walk to – "Hey, come on. Come on." [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** So it worked. Did you ever not get what you wanted because they were too [0:54:30] tough? Or did you usually pretty much get what you wanted because of your family?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. I was – I have to say my dad was pretty good that way. I was spoiled big.
- Interviewer:** But he bargained them down.
- Respondent 1:** Yes, yes.
- Interviewer:** And you got what you wanted.
- Respondent 1:** Yes, yes.
- Interviewer:** Benny, you're tough. [Laughs]
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. [Laughter]
- Interviewer:** Oh, these are great stories. Your backyard...
- Respondent 1:** Oh, I just want to say...
- Interviewer:** Yes?
- Respondent 1:** ...Honest Ed's as well [0:55:00] was a great – they used to have amazing – my dad used to shop there a lot, Honest Ed's, because it was – they had pretty good things there, and good quality things.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** Years ago, yeah. Have quite – it's good. Now it's very...

**Interviewer:** Not as good.

**Respondent 2:** It's for sale. It's for sale.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I know.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. So.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** But you're saying – I know I bought a lot of stuff for my kitchen at Honest Ed's.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm. Yeah. **[0:55:30]** And we still have.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** We still have dishes that my dad bought there.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** I have good dishes I buy years ago.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What about Harbord Street? Would you just talk about what you remember about Harbord? What it was like thirty and forty years ago, and what it's like now. Harbord Street.

**Respondent 2:** Harbord?

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

- Respondent 2:** Oh. It's big difference because it's very, very [0:56:00] busy. You know Harbord Street, on that – that's the best street to drive.
- Interviewer:** Harbord Street?
- Respondent 2:** And especially in the wintertime because no rails. It's nice to – people drive.
- Respondent 1:** So it doesn't have streetcar tracks and not as much traffic, I guess.
- Interviewer:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. It's very, very good. People – before, years ago, not so busy, but now...
- Interviewer:** It's busy.
- Respondent 2:** ...that street is very [0:56:30] busy.
- Interviewer:** Oh yeah.
- Respondent 2:** And the cars.
- Interviewer:** And bikes.
- Respondent 2:** Big, big thing.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I see that.
- Respondent 2:** Lots and lots of cars the year by year in Canada. Get...
- Respondent 1:** Increasing.
- Respondent 2:** ...too much. Too much. Some – says already, is pile them up, so many cars.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.

- Interviewer:** I've seen – I mean you've been here much longer than I have, Benny, and in the twenty-five years that I'm here, I've seen Harbord Street [0:57:00] increase, especially in the morning. The cars are going east, and in the evening they're going back west, and hundreds of bikes also.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, but no. Hey, you know – you want to make a lane just for the bikes?
- Interviewer:** Oh, a bike lane.
- Respondent 2:** That Harbord Street, my god. In the morning, seven, eight o'clock...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...believe me, sometimes they have thirty, fifty bikes coming in the lines [0:57:30] to the...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I know. I see it.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Lots. And in the news already, they want to make one lane just for the bikes to – because so many bikes today.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. I hear that. That's a whole discussion.
- Respondent 2:** More safe.
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** To be more safe.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. When you first moved to your house, how did you heat the house at that time? Heating the house. Warming it up.
- Respondent 2:** What do you mean?
- Respondent 1:** [0:58:00] Heat the house. How did you heat? You had oil, right?

**Respondent 2:** Oh, I have oil, but you know one thing? When I bought the house, was oil in my – I have a big furnace in the middle of the basement, pipe there, pipe there, and then the gas company at that time, he go around when he know people have oil, thing like – **[0:58:30]** to put it in for gas, change for gas. And I have that – the gas company – you know how much I pay for my furnace? Two hundred and fifty dollars. Five hundred dollars, because company give two hundred and fifty, and I give two hundred and fifty, and I pay and my bill, when it come in, he put in so much amount, you know what I mean?

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** Pay my **[0:59:00]** furnace.

**Respondent 1:** So it was prorated probably. Maybe for a whole year or something like that.

**Respondent 2:** And that's the way in that time we have a chance to – who have the oil to change for gas. Company pay half.

**Interviewer:** Good. Oh, that makes sense. Go ahead. And...

**Respondent 1:** Because they want your business too, right?

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** So they have to meet you halfway.

**Respondent 2:** They make money off there. You know now that renovation we make?

**Interviewer:** Yes.

**Respondent 2:** We have insulation **[0:59:30]** all walls in there. Even the attached walls I make for the noise and everything. But you know one thing? I used to pay two hundred and seventy, two hundred – now I pay one hundred dollars in the wintertime.

**Interviewer:** Because it's well insulated.

- Respondent 2:** Very, very economic.
- Respondent 1:** And we got a better furnace too.
- Respondent 2:** But my furnace is new.
- Interviewer:** An economic furnace.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** It's good. Very. [1:00:00] I save more thousand dollars a year...
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...just for the gas.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Respondent 2:** Because I see big, big difference.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. What about air conditioning? Do you have air conditioning?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** And when did you put that in?
- Respondent 2:** I put it five years before the renovation, or two years before the renovation.
- Respondent 1:** No. When did you first put in the house?
- Respondent 2:** Oh, you know what? I'm going to tell you one thing. Inspector...
- Interviewer:** [1:00:30] Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** ...I have a furnace for twenty years. I have that furnace. But that's – put seven, eight years ago the new one. You remember when you

go to the front that there was too much – so hot? We go in the front. There.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm. Okay. Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** The furnace get stopped.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** [1:01:00] I have for twenty years that furnace, that air conditioner, I mean.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so you put it in twenty years ago.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. Twenty years the air conditioner. And he stops. Remember?

**Respondent 1:** It stopped working, so we had to get a new one.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. [Speaks in Portuguese 1:01:15].

**Respondent 1:** Yeah, I remember.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** When did you put the air condition? Do you remember when? When did you put...

**Respondent 2:** Oh, that was twenty years old. [1:01:30] We put it seven years. Seven years ago.

**Respondent 1:** No. When did you first put the air conditioner in the house? Do you remember? First.

**Respondent 2:** The first one? That's twenty-seven years. Twenty...

**Interviewer:** So by the time I was living there, you had an air conditioner.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So about twenty-seven years ago maybe.

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Respondent 2:** Twenty-seven years ago.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 2:** [1:02:00] I put in. Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Now do – the JCC at Bloor and Spadina, has your family used that in any way?

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** How?

**Respondent 1:** Jordan went to the daycare there.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. And I remember the lady who took care of it. She was just the nicest lady.

**Interviewer:** Elaine Colmay.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. She...

**Interviewer:** Oh, so that was the school. That was the nursery school.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. Yes. So – [1:02:30] and we were looking to integrate Jordan somewhere in the neighbourhood, and I was looking at a couple of different daycares. It was only half-day because now the schools are full-day, but I was looking to get him – starting to be with other kids before he went to junior kindergarten, because I wanted him to have that. I had my parents looking after him, so it was my choice to put him in a daycare just for him to get some exposure.

- Interviewer:** A gradual change.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. Yes. So [1:03:00] we put him there for, I think, about a year or so. Yeah. And Elia went there as well.
- Interviewer:** So they both went to Elaine Colmay's nursery school.
- Respondent 1:** Yes. And then – yes.
- Interviewer:** And what was that like for them?
- Respondent 1:** Oh, amazing. It was a – yeah. It was a very good experience. And I actually worked out at the JCC for a while for a year or two. I was a member. And then I ended up going closer to my work because it was easier for me. I [1:03:30] go on my lunch hour.
- Interviewer:** Oh, fabulous.
- Respondent 1:** So that – I had to – so obviously for me it was easier just to get a fitness somewhere closer to my work, so.
- Respondent 2:** That's when Jordan go for CC?
- Respondent 1:** Yeah. Do you remember? The daycare.
- Respondent 2:** Oh.
- Respondent 1:** My dad said it was actually more work for him because...
- Respondent 2:** At one time I am up, that's around there. Around outside, higher, he's looking for me. Jordan looking for me.
- Interviewer:** So it was a big [1:04:00] adjustment for him.
- Respondent 2:** Oh.
- Respondent 1:** He was very attached to my dad.
- Respondent 2:** My god. When he see me, he go grab me.

- Interviewer:** Oh.
- Respondent 2:** Sometimes I'm sitting there in the...
- Respondent 1:** He had to sit there, and because...
- Respondent 2:** For a while.
- Respondent 1:** He would cry because he was...
- Respondent 2:** That's nice lady...
- Respondent 1:** Elaine.
- Interviewer:** Elaine Colmay.
- Respondent 1:** Yes.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. And says, "Oh, stay for a while. After go."
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Respondent 2:** After I...
- Respondent 1:** Once he started playing and then...
- Respondent 2:** And I go and I phone back to see if he's okay.
- Interviewer:** [1:04:30] So I guess it was hard for Jordan. It was also hard...
- Respondent 1:** Yeah.
- Interviewer:** ...it was also hard for you to leave Jordan there.
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, yeah. Oh boy. [Laughter] He's very close to me, you know? My god.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. How old is Jordan now?

**Respondent 2:** Seventeen.

**Interviewer:** Oh my. And what school is he going to?

**Respondent 1:** He's in Central Tech right now.

**Interviewer:** Uh-huh. And is he studying anything in particular? Or straight high school?

**Respondent 1:** Well he likes the – he's in the law program, and he [1:05:00] likes – right now, he likes the – he's thinking of going into the police foundation, so I don't know if he wants – he may become a – he's thinking of a police officer position, so, which I'm not crazy about, but...

**Interviewer:** Oh, as a mother I understand.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. But that's what he's interested in. Something – and that's why he's taking the law program because it, you know, involves...

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah. Gives him some familiarity.

**Respondent 1:** Exactly.

**Interviewer:** So he went to Lansdowne and now he's at Central Tech.

**Respondent 1:** Yes. [1:05:30] He took – as well, he learned how to...

**Interviewer:** Self-defence?

**Respondent 1:** No, no, no. Not self- – sorry. He learned – he was interested first in mechanical – like with cars, but then he decided that wasn't for him. So – but it was good for him to try.

**Interviewer:** Sure. Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** And Elia, what will she do?

- Respondent 1:** Right now she's thinking of veterinarian, or she loves animals or something. So I don't know. [1:06:00] It could change. I mean she's still very young.
- Interviewer:** And what grade is she in?
- Respondent 1:** She's going into grade seven in September.
- Interviewer:** And what's the last year of Lansdowne?
- Respondent 1:** Eight. So two more years and then she goes to high school.
- Interviewer:** And has she thought about what school? Or have you thought about that?
- Respondent 1:** I think she wants to go to Harbord Collegiate, so.
- Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah.
- Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.
- Interviewer:** What do you feel about this neighbourhood in terms of safety? The way it is now, the way it was [1:06:30] twenty years ago? The way it was forty years ago? Was it safe, is it safe? What are your thoughts about that?
- Respondent 2:** What?
- Respondent 1:** The neighbourhood. Is it safe? Safety back then? Very...
- Respondent 2:** Yeah. Because if you safe in there or in another...
- Respondent 1:** The safety in the neighbourhood. Back when you first moved in, was it a very safe neighbourhood?
- Respondent 2:** Oh yeah. Very quiet, very safe [1:07:00] because population is less too.
- Respondent 1:** Less population.

- Respondent 2:** And today, more people come in from some countries because the time I come, I have to come, and people be no problems, no nothing because even if you have a little bit of [1:07:30] nervous, it was nervous, you don't pass. You know what I mean?
- Respondent 1:** Immigration? Are you talking about immigration?
- Respondent 2:** Immigration.
- Respondent 1:** So he's talking the rules were much more stricter to Canada.
- Respondent 2:** The people come in that time it's okay. People more friendly, more – but today, from some countries, coming people – you make more – you have more problems.
- Interviewer:** So you worry about our neighbourhood, [1:08:00] that there are people who are not as...
- Respondent 2:** Well, for us there still okay. Still good. Still good. But some places...
- Interviewer:** Yeah. So you think in Toronto there's some places that are less dangerous, but our neighbourhood – is it a safe place now?
- Respondent 2:** Yeah, it's good. Very good.
- Interviewer:** It is still good.
- Respondent 2:** So far, it's good.
- Interviewer:** Yeah. And what do you think, Fatima? You think it's a safe place?
- Respondent 1:** It is, but the world – I think it's becoming increasingly, you know, more, [1:08:30] more violent unfortunately, so it could happen anywhere.
- Interviewer:** Yeah.
- Respondent 1:** So that's my concern, especially with my children. So basically, you know, just you could be at the wrong place at the wrong time, you know? There's random – as you hear in the news, random acts of

violence, you know, things happening. Like the other day on the streetcar, that gentleman that pulled a knife, [1:09:00] and – so things like that. But I would say overall, our neighbourhood is pretty safe. I think we have a really good neighbourhood safety, like a Neighbourhood Watch. Even the other day, there was a wire that was on fire right – like very close to the tree, like beside our neighbours'. And one of our neighbours knocked on our door and said, "You know, I just want to let you know that we called the fire department, and it's on its way, and [1:09:30] – so that was wonderful of her to just let us know. So even that, like I think we have a very good Neighbourhood Watch. And back then as well, very much.

**Respondent 2:** Our neighbours is good.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah. I think...

**Respondent 2:** Everyone wants to be safe.

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

**Respondent 2:** It's good. I like to be safe. That one – want the same to be safe. I know all around it's good. It's good.

**Respondent 1:** The only thing that I find now is sometimes the noise, like on the weekends we have a lot of U [1:10:00] of T students, and that's a bit of a concern with the noise, you know, with them partying and the noise levels going up a bit. And in that area – in the area as well.

**Interviewer:** That's so funny, because I was just going to ask you about University of Toronto just close, so close.

**Respondent 1:** Yeah.

**Respondent 2:** That happens sometimes like that because once in a while you have a party. Once a year or something like that, it's okay. It's normal. It's normal.

**Respondent 1:** No, but there is a lot of...

**Respondent 2:** [1:10:30] Yeah.

**Respondent 1:** That's a lot of – he doesn't understand. What I'm saying is there's a lot of, you know, fraternity houses and things...

**Interviewer:** But...

**Respondent 1:** I think they're on Harbord, some of them, and then there's a few homes in and around that rent out to students, and sometimes they party. You know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** So that's what I mean. And I think most of the neighbourhood is aware of that. Unfortunately, that comes with – you know?

**Interviewer:** Yeah. They're not respectful...

**Respondent 1:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** ...of their neighbourhood.

**Respondent 1:** Exactly. Because they live there [1:11:00] maybe a few years, and then they leave, right? So – or maybe one or two years while they're in – you know? Because usually they live, I think, on campus for the first year, and then they – after the first year, they have to go and find other living quarters, right?

**Interviewer:** Mm-hm. So you're saying they're noisy and not respectful.

**Respondent 1:** They can be. Yes.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Respondent 1:** So – and the other thing I would say about the neighbourhood is sometimes with, you know, like [1:11:30] I think CAMH is in the area, so sometimes we'll get, you know, some different activity around that, but otherwise, it's a pretty good neighbourhood.

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

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. We have a good neighbourhood.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Respondent 2:** Yeah. It's good.

**Interviewer:** Well, I think we've been speaking for about an hour...

**Respondent 1:** Wow.

**Interviewer:** ...and I think I'm going to [laughs] call it quits, but I just want to say, Benny Pimental [1:12:00] and Fatima Ferreira – of course, you're my friends [laughter], and we all feel very close to each other. I want to thank you very much for coming and speaking to me because we're collecting all this information, and you've been here for so many years – Fatima, your entire life.

**Respondent 1:** Mm-hm.

**Interviewer:** And 1965 gives us a good picture since you bought your house on Robert Street. So thank you both very, very much.

**Respondent 1:** Oh, thank you for having us.

[1:12:27]

[End of recording]