

CITY OF SYDNEY ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

OUR CITY

TRANSCRIPT

Name: Marjorie Love (ML)

Date: 9 July 2019

Place: Home, Surry Hills

Interviewer: Sue Andersen (SA)

SA This is Sue Andersen interviewing Marjorie Love on the 9th of July, 2019 for the City of Sydney's Oral History program. This interview's taking place in Marjorie's home in Surry Hills, and this interview one for this interview.

So Marjorie, thanks for doing the interview with us today. Can we begin by you saying your full name and when and where you were born.

00:31 ML Marjorie Melba Love. And I was born at Paddington hospital up near Paddington Town Hall there. Behind the Victoria Barracks, June 1923.

SA Great. 1923. So you're now a Love, that's your married name?

00:52 ML Yes, that's right. My other name was Henry when I was like born. That was my maiden name.

SA So you've been living in the Surry Hills-Darlinghurst area...

ML All my life that I can remember. Yes. I don't remember living anywhere else.

SA And you were born in – did you say Paddington.

ML Paddington hospital, yeah. It's not there anymore now. It's gone.

SA So tell me what it was like growing up in the area. You went to school in the...

01:29 ML First of all we started off at Frances Newton Kindergarten, which was two blocks up from where we lived. And from there, my elder sister and I went down to William St School, public school, which was just behind the museum. It was on the corner of Yurong St and William St. And we only did the infants there. As far as I know there was only infants classes there. There wasn't any higher ones. All I can remember anyway. And then we went to Darlinghurst school. And at Darlinghurst school we started in – not the infants, because we'd already done that at William St.

– so we started off in the primary classes, third class. And then Darlinghurst school went to eighth class. I don't know then whether there was any high schools or just that we didn't go to it. I don't know, because normally children leave school at sixth class, don't they, and then they go to high school. But we didn't go to high school, we just stayed at Darlinghurst school 'til eighth. And when I think back on it, I think yeah, that's right, we should have been at high school. Apparently there wasn't one to go to. So I don't know.

SA So you went to high school, right?

02:47 ML Well, I don't know. I just went to Darlinghurst school and finished at eighth class and then I left there and went to work.

SA Oh, right.

ML Yeah, I was 14. Once you turned 14 you could leave school.

SA Right, okay. So where did you start working?

03:02 ML Oh, I loved it. In the printers in Yurong St. I don't know whether you know Yurong St, but between Stanley St and Burton St is this little lane that goes down and there's the factory there, Shepherd & Newman and it used to be a printers. And they printed the stuff downstairs and I think it was three storeys: the printers downstairs and us women upstairs, girls doing the folding pages down into smaller size. You know, page size, so you can read them. And inserting the pages into one another, the pages, the numbers that fit in the right spot. And oh, it was great, I loved it. And then there was the very [UNCLEAR], we used to have our lunch up on the roof in the sun.

SA So did you work there for a long while?

03:52 ML Yeah, until I was 19, then I left because I was getting married and having a baby. So I left there, but I used to go back and take the children there to show them off, you know. They were gorgeous children. That was all I ever wanted to be was a mother. So I couldn't get there fast enough.

SA Is that right? That was really what you wanted?

04:16 ML That was my ambition, yeah. I never wanted to go to work. I stayed at home for the first 12 months and looked after my father. Made up to him for looking after us all the years. And then I went to work because I thought it wasn't fair to stay home and looking after me. This job was there so I went and took it. And it was really great, I really enjoyed it.

SA Wow, that's amazing. So we've skipped quite a long way, so let's go back and talk about your early years and maybe some of your family history, because it's amazing that you've worked and lived and schooled all...

04:58 ML All in the one area. Yeah, I've never wanted to be away from the city. I like to walk into the city through Hyde Park and all that sort of business. And years ago, when we were little, where St. Mary's church is now and they've got the swimming pool underneath and the skating rink on top and goodness knows what, well at the end of that porch thing, whatever it is, well that used to be a lawn bowls. Yeah, they had that. And they used to have the waratah parade in the city once a year. Oh, everyone would dress up, they'd have floats and cars and everything. And horses all dressed up an everything, you know.

SA When was that? When were they doing that?

05:40 ML That was when we were teenagers, I suppose, yeah, when that was on. And we'd sit there. Shopping days then were only Friday night and Saturday morning. Like daytime through the week, but you didn't have shops open like you do now, you know. So you had your late night Thursday night shopping. And then you had your Saturday – yeah, was it Thursday or Friday. I just can't remember now. It was one of them; I

think it was Thursday night shopping. And then they had – whenever they'd have this parade on, my sisters and I would get up there with a blanket in Hyde Park, and we'd put the blanket down and one of us would sit down and mind the spot in the front, so we'd have a spot, you know, for seeing the parade and the others would go off and do whatever shopping and then they'd come back, and they'd have it in turns of minding the spot, you know. And then we'd have a nice front spot, so when the parade come through it was really great. To see it was lovely.

SA So tell me a bit about your parents.

06:45 ML Oh, our personal life. I didn't think you was interested in the personal life. I thought you wanted to know the—

SA No, everything. What you've been through...

06:55 ML Well, I had the most wonderful father. There was never another father like him. He brought us, five children, up on his own.

SA On his own?

07:07 ML Mm, Mum walked off with another bloke. And I think – as I grow up I realise she had five children in six years. So I think maybe that's why she left, because she couldn't stand to have any more children. And she left us all with Dad. And he brought us up and he was the most wonderful father; you couldn't get anybody like him. He did everything he could to help us.

SA And what did he do?

07:30 ML Oh, he worked on the tram. Watson's Bay down to Erskine St. and it went out from Rushcutters Bay, there was a depot there in the park at the side of the Rushcutters Bay park. And he worked nights. I think he took the nightshift on. I don't know whether he worked nightshift all the time or

whether he just took it on so that he'd be home of a day for us children. Because I can't remember that far back when I was only a baby, you know. And but anyway, he looked after us and Mum lived a few streets down with her boyfriend. And in those days you couldn't get a divorce unless you were caught in the act, you know. The people, the lawyers or whatever they were would go along with cameras and snooping through windows and taking pictures of you and all that. And you couldn't get a divorce unless you had that reason. So they never divorced. And when Dad died, Mum married the other fella. But anyway, that was that.

SA Did you see your mum?

08:31 ML Oh yeah, he used to send us down to see her. 'Make sure you go down and see your mother.' He never had anybody else, ever. He just wanted Mum and us. But he ended up with us, looking after us. And he was lucky, because he had very good neighbours and they all helped him. When he'd go of a night-time all the children would be out the front playing, you know, chasing one another in the street. Because there wasn't traffic; you could run on the road and everything then, you know.

SA And what street?

09:00 ML This was down in Bourke St. Near St. Peters Church. You know the church near William St. there? Well, it was just three doors up from that. And now it's – the two houses have been joined together and I don't know what it is now. Some sort of a residence or something. Actual residence rather than a kindergarten. But anyway, at this time it was two separate houses. And all the neighbours – the women would get out the front, sit on the verandahs with their chairs and everything, and all of us kids would play in the street until about 9 o'clock of a night, depending on the weather. And Dad would have to go off to work and he'd say to the neighbour 'Maggie, will you see that when you go into bed, make sure these go in' you know. And so they sort of saw that we got to bed and that. They were really good to Dad to help. They thought the world of him.

SA So it was a real community feeling?

09:53 ML Yeah, it was really good. Anyway, and then after that, what happened? Oh, we used to go to Sunday school every Sunday. We never missed Sunday school. We always went to there, just across the road... Well, anyway, where the Horizon building is now, them big flats on the top of the paddock at the bottom of Forbes St., that used to be just an empty paddock. There was no big building there. That only been up in the last few years as far as I'm concerned. But we used to play up there in that empty paddock too. And we used to make wheelbarrows. All the car places, down this side of William St. was all car places, and the other side of the street was mostly pawn shops. People would pawn things when they were short of money. And when they got a job, then they'd go and get it out of the pawn and get, pay for it to get it bought back, you know. It was really good. And Mum worked in a restaurant down there, and we used to go down there and see her and she'd give us a cake or sandwich from the restaurant. So we did all right.

11:07 And the fish shop. It was funny, all the kids in the street used to do this – you know how they make the scallops with the batter on the fish and the potato and everything, well, we'd all go in and say to the fish shop man have you got any scraps. And he'd scoop all the empty batter that had fallen off, you know, in the fat or the dripping, whatever he was using. And he had a scooper and he'd scoop it out and he'd put it in a bit of paper and give all the kids a little handful each. Oh, dear. I don't know whether Dad knew we did that.

SA So where are you in the family?

11:39 ML I'm the second eldest. And now, there's only me – there was five of us, and I'm the second eldest, and they've all gone now, except for my younger sister and myself. So she lives at Lakemba and we used to see one another every Thursday night and she'd stay at my place. And they'd come here. This was like in these years now after everyone had gone and our families are grown up – I'm getting a bit ahead of myself there. I better go back to early times again.

SA No, it's fine.

12:14 ML Is it alright?

SA We can... and I'll just keep drawing you, coming back.

ML Yeah, we'll you'll sort it all out after. I'll just tell you what I remember.

SA And so did – I presume you would have had to have looked after the younger ones with your dad working?

12:35 ML Oh, no. I was just going to come to that. There was a Welsh family lived across the road in Bourke St. And they were living in a – it was a rented house, you know, it wasn't the whole house. They had two rooms or something. I think they used to call them boarding houses, didn't they. People used to rent rooms out, a friend of mine, she lived in a balcony room in one house. And they had the balcony. She had a bed on the balcony, and they had the stove at one end of the balcony and they'd cook there. And she'd sleep on the balcony and her parents slept in the bedroom. They had like the front room in the boarding house and they had the balcony, so they had the cooking kitchen and a little bed for her. And we were five of us, there was two bedrooms upstairs, one downstairs in the front of the house. And on top of the kitchen – the kitchen was separate from the rest of the house, it must have been put on later, I don't know – but there was an attic on top of that looked like it was a separate sort of a place, then you had down three steps and between the kitchen and the dining room, the lounge room, that's where – you'd come out of the kitchen, go down the three steps and you'd be in the rest of the house. And then there was a door with a bolt on it that you could lock to keep that locked.

13:57 And Dad used to have the attic room on top of the kitchen. And he'd sleep there of a daytime. And then of a night-time we'd have the rest of the house, you know, and he'd lock all that up.

SA So the type of people who lived in the area, was it families like your family?

14:16 ML Oh, yes.

SA Or was it itinerant people coming and going?

ML No, families would be there for years. One family's still down there now. And like one member of that family. There was eight in that family lived next door to us. There was five of us. And then as I was telling you, these Welsh people that lived across the road, well they came over to live at our place to help Dad look after us a bit and do the cooking and that sort of thing. Because Dad used to do it on the fuel stove and the what's a name, icebox thing. A man used to come round selling the ice, and you'd put the ice on the top of the icebox and you had a tray thing down that bottom that you'd catch all the water from the bottom and take it out and empty it. If you forgot to empty it, bad luck. All over the floor! You had to try and remember it.

15:16 And then what was there? Oh, that's right. There was cakes shop and butcher's shop on the other side of William St., but this one side that we were on was all cars. And we used to – the boys used to go up the back of them. Like I didn't, the boys did, my brother and his friend – they'd go up the back, and the men in the car shop, I don't know what they did there, but had these ball bearing wheels, about as big as a cup I suppose. And they'd let the boys have them and different places and they'd get wood and stuff and they'd make billycars, you know. And they'd come down Forbes St. on the hill, down St. Peters St. beside the church and into Bourke St. And there was no traffic to worry about, you know, they could do that. They can't do that now.

SA So they used to get like the ball bearing kind of...

16:09 ML Yeah, the wheel. It was a wheel. It was all smooth on the outside, but there was little – I don't know, probably something to do with cars or something, which I don't understand about, so I don't know anything about them – but they had these little tiny metal wheels, balls inside the wheel and you could hear them rattle, you know.

SA So what did that girls do when the boys were racing down the hill on these homemade billycars?

16:34 ML Oh, we were just playing in the yard playing marbles. Poor old Dad. He was up in the attic, and we'd get all the kids in our backyard, all the girls, and sometimes the boys would play too, and we had a dirt yard. And we'd make three holes, and we'd play marbles and you'd have to put the – dig hole, fire the marble into the holes. And Dad was up there one night and he yelled out – one day – and he yelled out 'Haven't you kids got a home to go to? I'm trying to get some sleep here!' Because he had to work in the night, you know. And of course, we didn't realise that. We were kids, we were just making a noise. Poor old Dad.

SA So tell me about Frances Newton Kindergarten.

17:23 ML I'll get to that, I'll just finish this little bit; you've got to hear this. And a couple of days later, you know, none of the kids had been up. They'd all scattered when he yelled out. And he said 'Where have they all gone to? I haven't seen any of your mates up here playing with you lately.' We said 'You chased them all away.' 'Oh, I was tired that day. They know me better than that. Tell them to come back.' So they came back, you know. But that's what he was like.

SA He sounds a lovely father.

17:50 ML He was. He was a lovely fella, but you know, I suppose he'd had it that day; he was trying to get to sleep and all of us down there. Now, about Frances Newton you want to know? Well, when I first went there...

SA What year was that?

18:02 ML Oh, well I was born in '23, so I suppose it was '25 – no, you go there when you're three, so it was '26, late '26. And we didn't have the cooked meals then, we had sandwiches. And that's what we'd have for things. And I'm not sure whether we had a sleep. I can't remember having the little stretcher beds and sleeping on them. Whether we had a sleep on the floor or not, I can't remember that.

SA Can you remember what it looked like?

18:37 ML Yeah, it was two storey building and it was in the same part where the reserve is now. That's where it was. And the other part – I'll get to that in a minute – but that was just a two storey building and you played in that playground there where that was, where it was built. And I know we didn't have a hot meal, but I can't remember whether we had a sleep there. I suppose we would, little three year olds, I suppose we would have had a sleep. But anyway, then after that when my boys were going there, the kindergarten was still there, it was a two storey building in that same block, on the Palmer St. block. Have you been up there at all. Because there's the Palmer Lane and there's two blocks, isn't there? Well, in the Palmer St. block, this is where it was. That's where we were. We didn't have that other block behind us. What was I saying?

SA So you were saying – you were just describing what it was like when your boys went there.

19:41 ML Oh yeah, when my boys went there, then they had the other part across the lane that they could play in you know. But they still had the building in this side, Palmer St. side.

SA So they would eat and do activities in the building and then go outside and play.

19:57 ML Yeah. And go out and have a play in the other part. And they bikes and things. But I think that was after my boys were there, because I've got pictures of them – well, I haven't now, because I gave them to the boys – but had pictures of them riding the bikes in the Palmer St. side. So I don't think the other part was open until my generation, my children's generation, finished there.

SA So how many kids went to that kindergarten when you were there, can you remember?

20:30 ML Oh, I can't remember how many children were there. There was our five. But I would have been the first, no, the second one. My elder sister Dot she wouldn't have been there. Then the others come up. And then we went to the other school.

SA And can you remember how many kindergarten teachers there were there?

ML No, I can't. But I remember – it was funny – when I was there one day taking my boys there, and they had a lady there to cook dinner. They had hot meals and that, you know. And she said to me, 'If you came to this kindergarten' she said, 'you might know a little girl by the name of Pixie, used to be called Pixie. I said 'That's my baby sister.' And she said really, and I said yeah. Betty her name was. And she said 'Oh, she was such a cute little girl, all the teachers loved her and one teacher used to take her home sometimes to spend the weekend with her because she knew that she didn't have a mother at home.' Oh, it was great. Anyway, then when my boys went there, yeah, they played in that playground, because I had photos of the boys riding the bikes in that playground, so they mustn't have been the park open until after my children left there, the other park. Like the opposite side, across the lane.

SA Did all of your five children go to that kindergarten as well?

22:03 ML Yeah. Unfortunately, I've given them all – I'm starting to do a cleanout now, because the end of my life's coming, I know that. And I'm cleaning drawers and things out, and I took all the photos of the kids at kindergarten and said 'You might as well have these.' And I gave them all to them, so I haven't got anything of that to show you, otherwise I would have had some. But anyway. Then we all went to Darlinghurst school, and we'd either walk up through the paddock, the ABC paddock, where the Horizon is now – we could go that way to school. Or we could go through the Yellow Cabs. Between William St. post office, it was up the top of William St. there, just before you turn into – with the Coca-Cola sign – that's where the post office used to be. And between there and what street was it? Liverpool St. There was a sort of a walkway through that street with flats and thigs, and then when you got nearly to the top

of Kirketon Road I think it was – you know where the school is – SCEGGS school – well, just about opposite there, there was an entrance that would take you from there through to St. John's church in Darlinghurst Rd I think it is, or Victoria St. and so we used to walk through there too. Or we could go up Liverpool St. But if you went up Liverpool St to Darlinghurst school you had that big hill from Bourke St up to Forbes St, it was a big hill went up. And then you went straight down and then you went back down to Burton St – not Burton St, Barcom Avenue, or [UNCLEAR], you know it's built on there, don't you. On that block.

SA So there was still quite a bit of empty space, paddocks around at that point, was there?

24:00 ML Oh yeah. Well, that paddock's still there. It's only the Horizon's been built on it. So I don't know what they're doing there. There's no other buildings on that paddock, so I don't know why that is or not. Of course, I haven't been down there in a long time, so.

SA And just back to Frances Newton. So did you notice a difference in the kindergarten from when you were there to when your kids went there? Or was it pretty much the same?

24:30 ML Oh, pretty much the same I'd say, because they had their rest in the little stretcher. And they still had that there now. And they had the playground to play in. There'd be the difference because they had the other playground across the lane. See, where the building was, that was cemented, but across the lane where they've made the other playground for the children now, or before they broke it up, that used to be like a tree and they could climb a tree and a sandpit and all the sort of stuff there. But my children didn't have that when they went there. So it has changed a bit, yeah. As a matter of fact, when I – Palmer Lane, the houses were just across the lane from one another, you know. And little footpaths about so wide. And that was not a flower to be seen. And the other month, whatever it was, when I was down there for opening of the reserve, I walked down there just to go and see my old friend living down the street, and I walked down and what's changed – pot plants everywhere. It was like McElhone Street up here in Surry Hills. That used to be like that, all pot plants down the footpaths.

SA So they weren't a lot of flowers or trees around.

25:51 ML There wasn't any flowers like that around, no. No one thought of putting flower plants out the front. And the policemen – there wasn't any traffic lights – and the policeman had a white glove – I can remember him being down at the bottom of Bourke St. in William St. directing the traffic stop. Let this traffic go this way, you know. I can remember him doing that. And when my youngest son was hit by a car, I was inside cooking dinner on the fuel stove, my husband, he worked for the council – he was a sweeper and then a garbage bloke and he used to get home 3 o'clock, 4 o'clock something in the afternoon. So it was really good, you know. And he was in having a shower, and the second youngest one came running in and he said 'Greg's been hit'. I said 'Well, tell him to hit back, I'm cooking dinner.' I thought he meant someone had hit him. And he said 'He's been hit by a car'. Well, Johnny got out, he didn't even dry himself, he just got his clothes on soaking wet and we went out there and took him to St. Vincent's Hospital.

SA Was he okay?

26:59 ML Yeah, he only had a broken leg. Yeah, and the policeman who was on duty that day, down at William St., he came up and put his coat under my son's head so he'd have a pillow to rest his head on while waiting for the ambulance. So that's how good people were those days, they helped everybody. And then the lady next door, not the lady of the house but one of her daughters...

SA Is this when you were still young?

27:29 ML Yeah. When my – what was I? Well, Greg was born in – oh, when was he born – '42 – '52 or something.

SA And so you were still... in that same house?

27:40 ML Still in there, yeah. And that's when Greg got hit. And the girl next door, she was in her teens, one of the girls. No, she was a married woman then, that's right, and she had a daughter of her own. That's right. Because she came – her and her daughter came up the street when the ambulance was just coming to take Greg away. And Kelly said, 'You've broken my thing for the day. This was going to be my big exciting day to tell you I've been to the dentist and had my tooth fixed.' She said 'And now you're here with a broken leg. You beat me to it.' God, we had some fun. Anyway, what she did, what her mother did, Kelly, what Val did, she went into my place and got my daughter and the eldest sons, looked after the dinner and made sure it doesn't burn and look after that and everything, take it off the stove if it's burning, you know. And she said 'I'm going up the hospital with some sandwiches for your mum and dad, and take a thermos of tea up.' So she come up and sat in the room with us and things. That's how the neighbours were then, they were really great.

SA And so what year did you get married?

29:01 ML 19- - oh, what year was it? Must have been '40, '42 or something. No, wait a minute. No, yeah, that's right... Yeah, in the '40s I was first married. I had two children. That didn't work out and I got divorced. And married a local boy, and then I had three sons after that. [UNCLEAR] years.

SA And where did your husbands?

29:50 ML My first husband, I met him – where I was working at the printers, this lady, Merle, she had a dry-cleaning business up at the Victoria St. at Kings Cross. And of a weekend we used to go up there with her and talk to her and that and sit in the thing. Me and a couple of other girls, we'd go up there and sit in the thing and see her and talk with her and everything. And my first husband, he was a Norwegian, and he was in the pub over the road and he come across to put something in to be dry-cleaned or something and that's how I met him. But anyway, that didn't last. I had two children with him. Then he went back overseas again, and he died and then I married Johnny from Woolloomooloo. He grew up in Woolloomooloo.

SA And how did you meet him?

30:46 ML I knew him from when I was little, you know. Because we used to all get together there from the suburbs, some of the boys from Paddington would come down and play with my brother, you know, or he'd go up to Paddington. And then they'd go to Woolloomooloo Police Boys' Club at the crescent down there at Riley St. Or Yurong St. I think it is, yeah, Cathedral St. and Yurong St. And Johnny and my brother, they used to go, you know, the club together and then they'd come to one another's houses and all that, you know. Because the kids, we used to go to one another's houses and all that sort of business.

SA It sounds like you really moved around the area quite a bit. You know, Woolloomooloo and...

31:31 ML We got around a bit. Because I used to get tram sick. If we went to the beach, I used to have to get out of the tram halfway home and be sick. It's funny. It was only that one time that I was sick. A few times I felt sick, you know and I had to get off the tram. When Johnny and I were courting and we went out to Double Bay or somewhere – no, we went out to Rose Bay, I think it was. Anyway, out that way. And we went on the bus, and I had to get off because I was sick. We had to walk home from there. Oh, God. Anyway, we did a lot of walking... because it was only a penny on the bus or the tram or train or whatever you got on.

SA So where was the tram running? It ran from

32:21 ML The tram that my father worked on, it was at Rushcutters Bay. You know where you get to the Cross where the sign is, it goes like that. There's two streets go off and it comes into one. Well, where it came into one, that's where it was, on your left hand side, the tram shed. And that's where he went from, Rushcutters Bay to Watson's Bay to Erskine Street down at the back of Darling Harbour there somewhere. And he used to – he was a conductor on the tram, and Cec Peoples (sounds like) was the driver. Yeah. And I must show you a funny thing about that... Where did I put it? I've lost it.

SA Marjorie's just going to get some photographs, I think.

33:26 ML I think that's it... I think that's it. I've just went and got it. Got copies made of it, because I'm making things up for the children so that they can pass it on the generations. But is that about him and his driver getting off the bus and helping the drunks?

SA Yeah, it is. That's fantastic.

33:56 ML You want one of those to take with you?

SA Is that okay?

ML Yeah, you can take one off, because I only got five children. Not a whole page, wait 'til I get scissors.

SA No, no, no. We can do that after the...

ML Yeah, we'll do that after.

SA So, we were talking about the way people moved around the area. It seems like you moved around a lot.

34:20 ML Yeah, well there was trams and there was the trolley buses then after that. The trolley bus had a wire or something going up. I don't know how they worked. They had wires up there and they had a thing going up from the roof of the bus up to the thing to go along. I don't know how they worked that out, but anyway that was that. And then there was the ordinary buses came after that. Anyway, we got to Frances Newton.

SA But you would walk to Frances Newton?

34:50 ML Yeah. I was born at Paddington and we went to Paddington. And my sister was born at 160 Bourke Street. And that's the house I remember living in. And then we moved into 156, because apparently 160 didn't have enough bedrooms for us all, so we moved two doors down because it was a bigger house.

SA And when you were with your husband you stayed in that house.

35:16 ML Yeah. He was a seaman, the Norwegian bloke, so I stayed at home with Dad.

SA Was John, did you say? And John...

ML Yeah, John, he stayed there with us too. Because we just stayed and looked after Dad there, we just stayed there. And when the house came up for sale, it was \$600 or something, the people were selling. And Johnny wanted to buy it. And I said no, I'm not going to buy a house with stairs. I want – when I buy a house I want to buy a house that's straight, you know, cottage. So that put finish to that. And then he wanted to go and live in a flat and I said no, I'm not living in a flat. All right, well we won't by that then. Okay. And then there was a house – the Housing Commission, when we had to move out because the house was sold, you know, in the 1980s – no, not 1980s, it was earlier than that because we went somewhere else. I forget when it was we moved out of there now. But we'd been there a long time... Our children were teenagers, that's right, they'd all left school. And they went to Cleveland St. school.

SA So they grew up in that house as well?

36:38 ML Yeah, the children grew up there. And Dad died there. We stayed on there, and then the Housing Commission when they wanted to send us up to the suburbs, have a cottage, and neither John or I wanted to move out of the city, so that put the kibosh on that. So that finished that. So it was my fault that we never, ever bought a house, because every one he

wanted to buy I put a stop to it. Anyway... That's right, we ended up going to Elger St, Glebe and I believe that's all been pulled down now. My son took me round there, I didn't even know we were going there. When he came in at the weekend he took me driving round there. And I didn't even know where I was. It was a different place altogether.

SA I know, it's changed.

37:36 ML Yeah, I said there was a park down there at the bottom of our street, and he said yeah, there's the park there. I said, but the park we had a bridge going over it and arches like that. And so we went a little bit further down and there it was. I said there you are, that's it. I remember that bridge. That thing going over it, I think it was a bridge for, you know, industry and stuff. There was all like near the water and everything and I think big ships pulled in and that bridge was sort of for that. And then under the park. And it went across the park, and then underneath was arches and the kids could play there in the grass and everything out of the weather.

SA So how long were you in Glebe for?

38:23 ML We weren't there very long because – oh, we were there about – must have been there about five or six years, yeah.

SA And what was it like moving out of a suburb that you had lived, the play, the schools...

38:45 ML Well, it wasn't too bad, because it wasn't that far back, you know, you could walk down to the markets same as we could from Bourke St, you know. So that wasn't too bad... [phone ringing]... Just leave that; they'll leave a message if it's urgent. We could still walk within walking distance and then you had the swimming pool over in Victoria Park. It was on the side of the university, you know. And Victoria Park was there and the swimming pool was there. Is that there still?

SA Still there, yeah.

39:29 ML Opposite Grace Bros. Like Grace Bros used to be two shops, didn't it, and the thing went down to – Bay Street went down the middle.

SA And what years were you in Glebe? Can you remember?

39:35 ML Oh...

SA Just a decade. What decade were you there?

ML Well, we were here in the '80s, so I'd say we would have been there in the '90s. In the '70s, I mean. Because we wanted to get out of there and get into a house. And we went into a house – you know where Davies St, it's a little laneway between Crown St and Bourke St there's a little lane down there somewhere near Devonshire St. And it's a little cul de sac or some sort of thing. It goes around like that. And we got a house in there and it was – and even that was an upstairs one. I never ever got to my – never mind, when they cart me out in a coffin I'll be on one level, won't I?

SA Yeah, that's funny, isn't it?

ML All the time I've lived in stairs. God, I don't know.

SA So what was it like moving back to the area again?

40:45 ML Oh, wonderful. Wouldn't move from here for quids now. Nothing would move me from here. Unless I got a house with no stairs, but I can't see that happening in the next few years when I'll be six feet under.

SA So did you have a choice about where you moved to? They were Department of Housing houses, is that right?

41:10 ML Yeah, we had a choice of a house in the suburbs or a flat in the city. So we was show us the flat in the city. That's right, that was a ground floor flat, we were on ground level there.

SA And that was in Glebe?

ML All the one level, yeah. So that was it.

SA And then you transferred...

41:25 ML Then my son said to me, 'If I pay half the rent' he said 'would you rather be in a house, or are you happy in the flat?' And I said 'I'd rather be in a house. And he said 'Well, I'll pay half the rent with you. And we'll move into a house.' And then we even got a house with stairs.

SA Keeps you fit, Marj, going up and down those stairs.

41:52 ML I was going to tell you about when we used to play in the paddock. I was telling you about the post office was there, and then this road went through to St. John's church. And that Yellow Cabs we used to go through there. And now that's all been built over they tell me. There's flats been built and you can't go through there anymore. It used to be the depot for the Yellow Cabs, because that was the brand of taxis that was in the city at that time. And that was their base. Anyway, and then there was Burton St, Liverpool St, you had a great big hill. Oh, big rock underneath that. Have you ever been up Bourke St and Liverpool Street, just down from Oxford St where the police station was there. That's not there anymore. But there was a big rockface like as if the houses on that side of it had all been built out of that rock. They left this part on the – and then there was a house built on top of it. And then you'd walk up the hill. And I suppose they got tired of chopping through the rock so they built a house up on top of it. And then just left that and they left the hill, so we had to walk up the hill then to get to school. So we didn't go that

way very often. We mostly went through the Yellow Cabs or around William St.

SA And what kind of things did you get up to when you were at school? When you were going to Darlinghurst school.

43:21 ML I hated it. Couldn't leave fast enough.

SA Really? What...

ML We used to come to Bourke St school to do cooking. I believe they've got a cooking room there now, they teach cooking there. but they didn't at that time. they had - we had to march all girls, I think it was every week we had a cooking class – we had to come to Bourke St school to have that lesson. And we used to have sewing classes. You didn't learn with a sewing machine, you learnt with a needle and thread. And we used to make bloomers with elastic in the leg, and come down to your knee to hold your stockings up. Oh, God. Now they hardly wear any bloomers at all. I don't think anyone would know what bloomers were now if you said that.

SA And why didn't you like going to school?

44:22 ML I just didn't like learning. Just liked to be playing. It was all right I suppose because we used to go to Rushcutters Bay once a week for swimming lessons. The swimming baths down there, I don't know if they're still there anymore now. Past the yacht club. I don't think they're there. And Frances Newton was nice, I enjoyed that, and the boys enjoyed that. And they had the cooked meal, so that was nice. That was only 25 cents, two and sixpence, that's right. Two and sixpence I had to pay a week for the meal, so that was fair.

SA And was the kindergarten...

45:07 ML Nice hot meal, yeah.

SA Was the kindergarten free?

ML Nice meal, yeah... The kindergarten was free, yeah, I'm sure it was. We never paid anything for the kindergarten. And what else was there? There was something else I was going to tell you about. I can't remember now what it was. Wait 'til I get my little list and see if I can pick it out. Where did I put my list. Oh, here it is. I noted some things down in case I forgot what I wanted to talk about.

SA Oh, that's great.

45:50 ML Now, what was it?

SA Can I have a look at some of these photographs?

ML Sure. My eyes are going, my ears are going. Oh God, I don't know. The sooner I go the better now.

SA Sorry, my math isn't that good. How old are you now?

46:13 ML Winn steps , that's right. In Oxford St there used to be a shop called Winns and it was like a general shop, you know, sold everything, furniture and clothing and materials and all that. And I don't know whether you heard about it, it's been gone a long time now, because in Oxford St there's – Oxford St and Burton St – they meet together, don't they. There's a hotel or something on the corner. Well, just between that hotel in Oxford St and the AGI [sic: IGA] I think it is, the grocer's shop opposite Oxford St, well, if you go opposite there, there used to be steps going – there's a big building there now, I think, of flats. It's round about that area, just about there where that is. And there's a coffee shop underneath. But I think that's where it was. There's steps going down into Burton St and that's where Winns, their dock was there, you know,

for the truck to come in and deliver things and put things in. And we used to – the stairs were double and they had an oval railing, you know, a railing that went round so you could hang on to whatever side of the steps you went on, you could hang on to the railing.

47:41 And we kids used to get up there and straddle the railing – you know, it was like that and the steps were going down and this railing was there for people to hang on to, to go down. And we used to get on here and put a leg on there and a leg on there and slide down to the bottom. And my sister and I were just talking about it the other day and we were saying what a thing that was, you know. There must have been pretty good men around in them times, because the men now they'd have been standing at the bottom watching you come down and see your big bloomers, you know. Because your dress would – you didn't wear slacks in them days – and your dress would be floating down and everyone could see your bloomers down over your knees. Maybe the men weren't interested in long bloomers, who knows.

SA So it sounds like the whole of...

48:36 ML So anyway, it was fun. That was that . But that's not there now. So it's been built over, so whether they took the steps away or whether they built over the top of them and around them and covered them in or what, I just don't know. They might have pulled it all down and put another foundation down there, or they might have used that as a foundation. I just don't know.

SA So was that where your family and you when you were older, is that where you did your shopping?

49:02 ML Yeah, along Oxford St. Oh, that's right, Friday night was late shopping night. Every Friday night we'd walk along Oxford St. There was dress shops, shoe shops, just about anything along there. And McIlwrath's, the big grocer's shop, that was there in Oxford St near Taylor Square. And we'd walk from there down to Liverpool St. And there was shoe shops, dress shops, everything. And where the movies – what's that big flats on Wentworth Avenue corner of Oxford St? Opposite the park, that big high thing, that used to be a movie theatre. The Tatler. That was the Tatler movies, we used to go there. Yeah. And then the West Pictures, you

know, Oxford St behind up from St. Vincent's hospital there, that corner there. And what's – Flinders St isn't it, goes up towards Anzac Parade from Oxford St and you go down.

SA Yes, I think it is.

50:08 ML I think that's Flinders St. well there, there used to be the West Pictures. We used to have Saturday matinee, we'd go there.

SA What about dances? Did you ever...

ML Oh, not me. I wasn't into dancing. That's right, that's what the – behind the museum, in Yurong St, nowadays they've got a brick wall with all like beautiful carvings. Have you seen that? It's lovely, isn't it? Well, that wasn't there. You just walk back a little bit up Yurong St and there was a – the buildings are still there I notice, so whether there's still steps behind that wall or not I don't know, but there was a lot of steps you up, and they had a roller-skating rink in there. And we used to get there to be first in, because you'd hire your skates, you know. And if you got in there first you got the best skates, otherwise you got the ones with the wobbly wheels and all this sort of business. So we'd get up there and stand at the top of the steps waiting for the doors to open. And the mob of kids all lined up down the steps, you know, waiting to get it, it was marvellous.

51:28 And I'll never forget one day, Verlene (sounds like) was right up the top – one of my sisters – and Dad came down the street. 'Verlene!' And she said 'What's wrong?' He said 'You didn't do your chores. Get home and get those dishes done. Come on.' And oh boy, was she mad. She was right there at the top and she had to come down. He was a good father, buy by gee, he made sure that we did the right thing, if we didn't do what we were told to do, you know. He said all the kids they could come in and play in the yard and everything, only for that one time, you know.

SA And so what else did you do in terms of your social life?

52:11 ML Lawn bowls. I told you about the lawn bowls opposite the park.

SA Did you play lawn bowls there?

ML No. It was mostly only old men who play it now. And my sister, younger sister, she plays indoor bowls now out at Lakemba, or Roselands, I think. They take it up there. What else was I going to do?

SA You got Blind Institute?

52:37 ML Watson's Bay, that's what I was going to show you. Do you know what that is at Watson's Bay? It's got on there just Watson's Bay.

SA Betty, Audrey, Noel Evans, Dottie and Henry Isaacs, Marj. Watson's Bay 1938.

ML Is that still there that opening? Or do you know anything about it? I don't. What we think it might have been, it was a gun- maybe- we didn't see any guns there but it might have been where they had the guns to keep the harbour from ships from coming in, do you think? I don't know.

SA So was this down on near the beach?

ML Right at the end of the harbour.

SA I'm not sure.

53:25 ML Yeah, well see I don't know either what it is. There wasn't any guns there when we were there, because you can see, there would have been one, wouldn't there.

SA Is that all your...

ML That's my friends and family. And some of them is family and some of them is friends. We used to get out there.

SA So was that a big trip, to Watson's Bay?

53:44 ML Oh yeah. Yeah, of course.

SA Like a big outing.

ML It was a big outing, yeah. And the trams used to stop not right down where that is, it'd be about a block or two blocks up. And then it'd be a single line then, and there was a little post box thing there and the driver had to get – or the conductor would get out and put a key in this box to let the next tram coming not to go down because there's a tram already there. And when they come back they take the key out so that tram comes they can see if there's a key in there or not whether there's a tram down the bottom.

SA And when you were on the trams, did – your father was obviously the...

54:30 ML He was on night work, he was never on it. But I think we might have gone for a free ride. Oh, dear.

SA So you used to go roller-skating and...

54:48 ML Yeah, roller-skating, I didn't go dancing. I wasn't keen on that.

SA And was there any – did some of your friends go dancing?

ML Oh yeah, some of them. They'd go to the Trocadero. My sister Betty, she used to go to the Trocadero. That was down near, in George St near Harris St, somewhere in that area. I'm not sure where it was, but it was down there.

SA But it wasn't what you and your family did very much.

55:12 ML Only my young sister, she did that. And my elder sister, she married one of the instructors from the – they had fellas down there, you know, if you fell over they'd pick you up and all that, down at the rolling ring. And she married one of the fellas. Oh yeah, they had a wonderful wedding. What else was I going to tell you about?

SA I'm just wondering...

ML Watson's Bay. Bebarfalds that's where Woolworth's is now. Bebarfalds was a big furniture shop opposite the Town Hall. And everybody would say I'll meet you at Bebarfalds, you know.

SA Town Hall as in the city.

55:55 ML City Town Hall, yeah.

SA Did you used to go into the city a lot?

55:59 ML Every Friday night. That was our place, Friday night. And there was a hamburger shop at the top of Bourke St, at Taylor Square. I'm not sure, there was the Second Bite and the Hasty Tasty. One of them was a Taylor Square and one of them was at Kings Cross. I'm not sure which was which, but we used to get these hamburgers, and they had beautiful

sauce running down our arm. We'd do our shopping and then we'd come back down along – go one side of Oxford St and then back up and then down. And eat these hamburgers coming down the street. And the sauce was running – you know, they weren't dry, they had plenty of sauce in them. All the sauce is running down the street.

SA So how did – it sounds like you had a lot to do around Kings Cross area as well. Was it dangerous for you kids to be walking around?

56:54 ML No. My sister and I were saying that it's more dangerous in the streets now than what it was then. There was a lot of gangs and gang fights, but they stuck to themselves. They never interfered with anybody else going in the street. You know, you could walk down the street and they could be having a gunfight over the road, but you wouldn't worry about it, because you know they're not going to touch you. But nowadays they'd just shoot anyone they want to.

SA So you've seen some big changes in that respect.

57:25 ML And Tilly Devine, she had the prostitutes down there opposite the Frances Newton Kindergarten, see. But of course nowadays they're not allowed to have prostitutes near schools, are they. But in those days, I think with a kindergarten, it didn't matter, because kids three and four, they wouldn't know what the people were doing there or anything.

SA So where was that?

57:45 ML Palmer St. In the lane behind Palmer St there was the kindergarten and then going towards the city there was a lane. Berwick Lane. Not, I think Berwick was the one beside the kindergarten. But the next lane between Palmer St and Crown St there was the lane, and that's where the prostitutes – they'd sit on the front step waiting for the fellas. We were on the front one day, Dad and I, and every Sunday morning, all the people in Bourke St, but all in our little group, we used to sit out on the steps waiting for the ice cream man to come around. He'd come around on his bicycle with an ice thing on the back, and he'd be paddling and it

had ice cream in it and you'd buy an ice cream from him. And we're all sitting there one day, and Dad was with us, and of course there's all – having four daughters and they all had a friend with them too, so he had a lot of girls around him. And we weren't far up; we were about three blocks up from the wharfs. And the American sailors were walking up from the wharf and they took it slowly coming past us, and Dad said to them 'You're in the wrong street, mate. Down there.' They must have thought Dad was the boss of all the girls. Oh, God. We had some fun.

SA And did you – you didn't have an awareness that that was going...

59:11 ML No. Well, we didn't know what it involved or anything about that. But we knew that that girls took men in there and they weren't allowed to or something. But Dad would say keep away from that street. And we'd do that. What else was I going to tell you about?

SA So that was an exciting moment when the ice cream truck came?

59:32 ML Oh yeah. The ice cream bike come down, yeah. Oh God, we all loved the ice cream cart.

SA And did you have any – were there any other carts that came?

ML Oh, the ice man come, you know, and put the ice in the icebox. The coal man come and dumped the coal in the backyard for the fire, for the fuel stove. Yeah, I grew up cooking on a fuel stove. One day after we were married, and Johnny and Dad come home for dinner, 'What burnt offering have we got tonight?' my husband said, because I only know one level, up high. Once it's burnt put it on the plate. I'm not a cook, I can tell you that. And Johnny said 'What burnt offerings have we got tonight?' and I said 'Whatever you want to cook. It's there, I couldn't light the fire. I've been trying all day to get it going and it won't go. If you can get the fire going, you can cook it yourself.' Oh, God.

SA Can you remember the first time you got a non-fire stove?

1:00:44 ML Yeah, we got a gas stove, oh, after Dad had died. And we decided to change to the gas. So we got the gas connected. And we went into town and I bought this beautiful stove. You had the oven there and then the jets were beside it, so you just set it on a stand and you had everything on the one level. You didn't have to bend down to get the oven. And my idea was to take the fuel stove out and set it in that place, see. And of course it was too big in there.

SA Which place?

1:01:23 ML Take the fuel stove out of the – it was set into the wall, you know. It doesn't stick out, the fuel stove. Yeah, they're set in, aren't they? And I thought we'll put it in there. And of course then we couldn't get the fuel stove out. I said to Johnny you'll have to chop the brick away, you know, so we can get the stove out. He said 'No, you picked that big stove, you chop the...' Oh dear. I said 'Oh well, we'll leave it where it is, so we just got a cupboard and stood it on top of the cupboard. But it was hard work trying to get them fuel stoves alight, I tell you. We used to get – it's a wonder we never burnt the house down. If I was left to do it I used to get kerosene and spray it on the -- put it on the paper, you know, and put it in there and light it and put wood in. And then when the wood got going I'd put the coal in. But this day I just couldn't get it going. It took me all day. So I said the men can...

SA It must have been a bit of relief.

1:02:27 ML So I think we went over the shop and bought fish and chips that night.

SA That must have been a relief to get...

1:02:35 ML Oh yeah, it was. It was lovely. But even now I don't know how to use the gas stove. I just put it on one level and leave it there. If I see it's getting bubbling, if I see the water bubbling, then I turn the jets so it's down. But the oven just stays as it is. I've never touched the oven since – I just turn

the knob. And if a dish comes from the shop that's what I do. What else was I going to tell you? Oh, the blind institution.

SA Oh yes, tell me about that.

1:03:03 ML Did you know the blind institution was down – you know Boomerang St and where the police club is at Boomerang St and Yurong St. It goes like that, doesn't it? Well, the police station was here and then a something or other there, I don't know. But up here on the corner of William St was the blind institution where they used to make baskets, they weave baskets. And we used to stand there, it had a wire fence around it. And we kids used to go in there and look at the – look through the fence and watch the men and the women, they were blind and they could plait all the stick marvellous. We were amazed at them. You know, how they could do all that.

SA So was it like a – was it the blind institution or...

1:04:00 ML Yes, it was the blind institution. That's where they were at that time. That's when we were children so that would have been in the 1930s and '40s I suppose.

SA And you used to go inside?

1:04:13 ML Oh no, just – we couldn't go inside the building, but we used to just see them in – I don't know, if it was a sunny day they'd be out in the yard, otherwise they'd be inside. But if they were out in the yard we could stand at the fence and watch them. It was really good. Really intrigued with them we were. That was big thing for us.

SA To see people weaving and the fact that they were blind.

1:04:37 ML To find that they were blind and they could do that. We couldn't even do it and we could see what we're doing.

SA So when did the – how long was that there for?

ML I don't know how long it was there for, no. Must be – because my boys don't remember it, so by the time I'd grown up it'd moved I'd say.

SA Well, there's been a lot of development in that area.

1:05:06 ML Yeah, so that'd be between the '20 and the '40s. Like I was born in the '20s and then by the '40s that's when my family started to arrive, so it would be in between that part.

SA And anything else on that list of yours?

ML What else have I got? William St school.

SA Oh yes, tell me about that.

1:05:28 ML At the bottom of the museum, when you're going up William St, driving up it, on your left hand side you can see this building. And it's a two storey – where the fence is, you know, that wall we were talking about – well, just there you'll see this gate doorway to get in. And I don't remember it being a two storey, but it must have been, but I was too little to realise that. And because I've read things lately in the paper that people have been into the school there. They went to that school too. You know I've often seen – if I'm reading something in the paper and it'll say he went to William St school or something. And I thought oh. But they were older people, you know, so I can only remember the two – I remember going in – I'll just draw this for you... We went in the door there.

SA This is William St?

1:06:32 ML Yeah, this is William St school. And that was just a passageway. Here was a fence, a little verandah. There was the fence like that. And then behind the fence that's the verandah where you get into the classroom. And then these were rooms. One room there, one room there. And then there was a door there. So this is the only part I ever went into, the front of it. From William St into there, a passageway, a verandah on each side and a room on each side. And we played on that middle part. I don't know what the verandah did, it was just there. And then there was a door here. So maybe the principal and the primary school was in behind that door.

SA You think this front part was more for older students?

1:07:20 ML No, this is for the infants. Like we were infants classes there. You went from kindergarten to infants class.

SA So you went here, right?

ML Yes. Me and Dot. We're the only two I can remember going there. So Dottie and I went to the infants there. Only two classes: one class and one class. And then we went up to Darlinghurst school. So that building's still there. I don't know why we went there. Maybe it was easier for Mum – the other little children to send us down there rather than take us up the big hill and get up to Darlinghurst school. Something, I don't know. But anyway, Dot and I remember that school, that's the only one. Now what's the other one?

SA And so were there many kids at the school?

1:08:13 ML The night trams, well I told you about that, didn't I? And then when that stopped, the trams, that tram shed became a bowling alley, ten pin bowling. You know, indoor bowls, yeah. And now it's flats, I believe.

SA And that's on William St, right?

ML Yeah. At the edge of old Rushcutters Bay park. And the street, because the thing was there.

SA And what's your memory of when the trams stopped?

1:08:49 ML Well, I didn't travel on them too much, because as I said, I used to get tram sick. But they used to have Christmas party there every year. And the parents would take the kids down to the concerts. And there was this fella there that used to be on the con- -- Patti Nolan, she's a singer now, that's his daughter – but his name was Nolan, and he used to get on and do these funny acts on the stage. He was a sort of a comedian, you know. And I can remember him having this big canon on the stage. And he'd say 'Banging them in, banging them out'. And he's push something in through the front of the canon and it'd come out like a bowl of sausages at the other end. And he'd sing this song, 'Banging them in, banging them out'. And we used to be there clapping and laughing.

SA Sounds like you had such an amazing childhood in that area.

1:09:47 ML We did. We played marbles and we played skippings and we catching them and kissing them and all that sort of business, you know.

SA Catching them and kissing them?

1:09:55 ML Chasings with the boys. The boys would chase the girls and kiss them if they'd catch them. Sometimes you'd let them, sometimes you wouldn't. If you liked the boy you'd let him. Oh yeah. We had a lot of fun.

SA It sounds like the whole area was really your playground.

1:10:13 ML Yeah. Like now you can't let the kids hardly out the front, because cars some that close to the gutters, don't they. You got to hold your children's hands all the time.

SA It's definitely changed. So when did you move into this house here, in Surry Hills?

1:10:30 ML In the '80s. '82 or '83. Just can't remember when.

SA So you still get around a lot though, don't you? Around the area.

1:10:39 ML Yeah. I went round to the library. My sister, Betty at Lakemba, she's in the community thing and they take them on outings and everything, you know. And she goes everywhere. And if she wants them to take her somewhere she just rings them up and they get a cab and everything. And get the truck to come and get her. Anyway, when I went round to the library there and asked about their facilities and things that they have for aged people, you can go on a trip with them but you got to take somebody with you, a carer, to look after you, in case you faint or something on the bus. They don't want to be responsible for you. What's the point in that? I can get on and off the train, I go into town on the bus if I want to go into town. Or if I want to go to Wollongong I get on the train and go down. So I don't know. So I can't go out with them because I can't anyone – all my family's working or got little babies or something like that or living away from home or something. Like living away from this area.

SA So that's the community...

1:11:47 ML I got family in Queensland and Melbourne, Hawaii. All the way down the eastern side of Australia, we have, we got family, yeah.

SA And were you just have to say...

ML Well, some of them live around here in Waterloo and Mascot and everything, but they're all working or they've got young children.

SA And Marjorie's, where we're sitting here it's in the lounge room of Marjorie's home, and there's just so many photographs of children. So tell me how many – you've got how many kids?

1:12:34 ML I got five children. What have I got? Four boys and one girl. There they are there. That's the girl's wedding up the top, see. Oh, and see those two boys there with the three boys in front, well the one on that end, he's the eldest of them three. They're the three from Johnny's wedding and they're the two eldest ones from the other wedding. And anyway, Graham, he wanted a new suit to wear to his sister's wedding. I said I can't afford to buy you, you can wear your school uniform, the same as the other boys are doing. That's Darlinghurst school's uniform, and he had Cleveland St school. He was at the high school. And he said, 'I'm not going to go to the wedding then.' I said well you'll have to stay home on your own because all the rest of us are going to the wedding. Anyway, the day of the wedding, he sat at home and undid every stitch on his badge to take it off. See, he hasn't got a badge on. The boys, they've got their Darlinghurst school badge on and he hasn't got his Cleveland St badge on. He took it off. He refused to go with it [UNCLEAR]. And we all went to the – he was still undoing it when we all went up to St. John's church there. And what's a name, my brother in law, Verlene's husband, he saw Graham peeping through the door with the thing. So he went outside and said 'Come on inside, come on.' So he took him inside. He wore the suit but he didn't have his badge on it. He spent the day undoing it. He was determined he wasn't going to.

SA So you've got five kids. How many grandkids?

1:14:08 ML Twenty. No, nine. Nine grandchildren.

SA How many...

ML And 20 great grandchildren. And two great great grandchildren. So as you said, the younger ones are starting to come back now. She's in her 20s, so she's had two children.

SA What a huge family you have.

1:14:32 ML Yeah. It's 36 just descendants, without any in laws or anything like that. Just counting the children... So every month there's a birthday coming up. Oh no, not another birthday.

SA Do you have big family gatherings?

ML Yes. Actually we do have – my younger sister, Betty, her daughter used to have a family – they bought a house at Matraville. And every Christmas, not on Christmas Day, but on the first week in Christmas – the first week in December I should say, she'd have a family gathering, and anyone in the family, if you live up in the country or interstate or wherever you lived, if you were in town that day, turn up at her house and you're there for the, you know. And we'd all bring a plate with us. Naturally, you couldn't expect to know how many people would turn up and prepare meals for them. But she'd make something too, and everyone else would bring something. And we'd all go out there at the beginning of December. And sometimes we'd have a crowd out there, sometimes we'd only have a few people there. It depends who can make it on that day. But they know that that day's an open day for anyone in the family, you know, not just anyone. Strewth, it'd be hard if everyone turned up.

SA And it sounds like that's been a tradition...

1:16:04 ML Yeah, that's been a tradition. My sister, her daughter started it. And then she died. And now her daughter's taken it over and she carries it on. And now we're starting to get the little ones back again. Because you can see, we've got two little ones. And my sister's got a few little great grandchildren now, you know. So it's starting to get nice again now, all

the oldies are going out and the littlies are coming in, you know. We're not going out, but we're close enough.

SA And it seems like that's how your father and mother...

1:16:38 ML Yeah, that's how – we keep in touch with one another. Like we live a long way from one another, so my sister's family they moved up to Byron Bay and they live up there. So but we still keep in touch with one another. We send one another cards at Christmas time.

SA And that's the way you were brought up in your family... [UNCLEAR] in Yurong St.

1:17:01 ML That's right. Dad used to have all the family over at his place, yeah. That's right.

SA So that tradition's...

ML That's right, we carry it on. Now it all goes out to my younger sister's family, because she's got a big yard and she can have – she's got room for swings and that for the kids. The littlies.

SA Now I also wanted to ask you – because I actually met you when...

1:17:28 ML Oh, down at Clover.

SA Yeah. So what was it like going back there and seeing the park...

1:17:35 ML Oh, I loved it. It's certainly changed. Betty and I had been back there before, because we saw in the paper where they were moving up to the stop (sounds like). So we went up there and they took us upstairs and

showed us the upstairs part. So we'd been back before so I knew what it was like, what it was changing to, but I didn't see what they'd actually done to the pull the house down. It was a shame they pulled that down. Why would they pull that down and put the kids upstairs in a big building when they had the big building down there that they could have a sleep and have their dinner on and they still had the playground to play on. But they've still got the other half of the lane, the other half – the Bourke St part – they've got a playground there and they've got a bridge or something that brings them from where they've made the nursery upstairs, the kindergarten's up three flights or something. And they've got a bridge going over the lane down into the – I mean why would they do all that when they had the beautiful building there and they just had to get across the lane. It's ridiculous.

SA And what was it like to meet the Lord Mayor? Was that a great experience for you?

1:18:57 ML Oh, yeah. You just think oh yeah, I remember doing that, I remember. But you think no, where's what's a name gone, there's nothing there. Because we didn't go up – we knew that [UNCLEAR] you had the kitchen and you had your playgroup and then little tables and everything. And you'd go upstairs to have a sleep and all that business and read a book. But it was nice to go back and see it, but it was a shame to see the end of it, you know. That was the sad part, to think after all those years, you know, and now they're gone. And it might have been you said you'd give me a lift home. Was it you? Because a lady down there said to me 'How are you getting home from here? There's no bus takes you up to Surry Hills from here is there?' I said 'No, I can walk up to Oxford St and get a bus down for two stops if I want.' And she said 'I'll drive you home.' And I said 'Oh no, I'm not going home now. I'm going to go back down to where I used to live and see some of the neighbours' or one of the neighbours that I know that I still keep in touch with. I said 'I'm going to go down and visit her.' So I went down there.

SA You're amazing the way you get around.

1:20:18 ML That's what I was going to tell you about. When I applied at the library to go out on outings with them and everything, they said we can't take you on our outings unless you've got a carer on the bus with you. And I said,

'But I go on the bus into town by myself with no carer.' I said 'I walk into town or I can get the bus into town'. No, you've got to have a carer if you come with us. So I don't go on their outings, I just go and do my own thing.

SA Maybe you need to ask them whether there are any other places that offer services...

1:20:26 ML That's what we're looking into now, we're trying to find something like that... Because where my sister at Lakemba, she's got a good thing service up there. She belongs to this community thing, community centre. And she joins that and they take them on day trips out to Wollongong or down to – no, they didn't go to Warragamba Dam, that's where Betty thought they was going, but they went somewhere else. I forget where it was now, but she goes on outings and she carries a walker with her and she doesn't – they have someone on the bus that looks after the walkers and puts them on and off the bus. It's not a bus, it's one of them vans.

SA Maybe you need to do a bit...

1:21:44 ML Yeah, the family's looking into it now trying to find out about it.

SA So Marjorie, I think that we've had an amazing journey.

ML We've had a little talk haven't we. Think we've done everything?

SA Is there more on that list of yours that we need to...

1:21:56 ML Oh, the bowling [UNCLEAR], I told you that.

SA Yeah, you did. That's great. Look it's been wonderful. Thank you so much for sharing all those memories and the history of growing up in this area. It sounds like you had a really wonderful time.

ML We really did have a time. We did. And at that time everybody was like more or less on a low wage, you know. And all the children had the same thing, you didn't have all these extra things. Nowadays everybody wants a thing costs you a fortune, you know, all that stuff. And nowadays people didn't want for that. We just used to hang our stocking up and we'd get a bit of fruit in the bottom of it and a storybook to read and a string of pearls or something like that – the girls. The boy, I forget what he got now. And the boy, he slept on the balcony and all the girls slept on a double bed two each end in the main bedroom.

SA Four people?

1:23:06 **ML** Yeah, four children in one bed. And two at each end and the boy would be on the balcony – I started to tell you, didn't I, the Welsh people from over the road to help Dad with the cooking, so they had to have the other two bedrooms. Because there was a family of them too. And they had to squash in.

SA Right. So you were very...

1:23:30 **ML** Yeah, really crowded in. Yeah.

SA How many people in the house was there?

ML Just as well Dad wasn't around to hear us going on in the bed of a night-time. He was at work; he didn't hear us kicking one another and tickling one another sleeping. If you thought someone was going to sleep and we couldn't get to sleep, we'd tickle their feet and wake them up... We really had fun.

SA Yeah, sounds like you had an amazing life.

1:23:57 ML We didn't have a lot of everything we wanted.

SA But it sounds like you made your own fun.

ML Yeah. That's right.

SA Okay, Marjorie. Look, I'll formally thank you for doing the interview today and your time...

ML It was a pleasure. It was fun just talking, wasn't it.

Interview ends 1:24:20