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## Renwick, Evril

Renwick, Evril. Interview: Bronx African American History Project  
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Transcriber: Colleen McCafferty

Mark Naison (MN): Hello, this is the 66<sup>th</sup> interview of the Bronx - - [Crosstalk] No, this is fine it's a very good machine - - of the Bronx African American History Project we're here with Evril Renwick who moved with her husband to the Williamsbridge section of the Bronx in 1954.

Evril Renwick (ER): '53. [Laughs]

MN: '53, ok. Now your family is of Caribbean ancestry, what island did they come from?

ER: Grenada.

MN: From Grenada; and did your parents meet in New York or did they meet - -

ER: No, no, my parents met in Grenada. As a matter of fact my father is from the little adjoining island which you must of read or seen - - called Carriacou, you see on the map you see Grenada, Carriacou, and Petit Martinique or whatever, and he's from there. And I think in the early, I don't know what year, his mother died and his father took him; he went to Brazil. Whatever work they did there, I don't know, but in the meantime my father was I think sixteen so he learned the Portugal language. And after so many years, they I guess made some money whatever they were doing, and they came back to Grenada. So instead of going to Carriacou they acquired a great amount of property in Grenada. And that's where he met my mother was a young girl and I guess they probably was a [indiscernible] each other, so that's where he met my mother. And they got married I think she was seventeen, he was nineteen and that's - - it started from there.

MN: Now what year did they come to the United States?

ER: Well she came to the United States in 1924, he on the other hand - - when she was pregnant with me he went back to Brazil and after she delivered he sent for her telling her to come to

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Brazil and how to get the transportation blah, blah, blah. At that time, the older folks you know -

- in my head I can't see where she wasn't too young to get married, but she's too young to travel alone with the babies. So she did not join him; he got angry that was the end of that.

MN: So she was left alone in New York City - -

ER: No, no, no, in Grenada.

MN: In Grenada.

ER: And then she moved back to her parents, which is my grandparents, and after I think three or four years she write him, we don't hear from him. She had an older brother who was here and she asked him to work, send for her to the United States.

MN: Ok, so this was nineteen - - you were born in Grenada?

ER: Right.

MN: And then what year did your - - you and your mother and sister, or is it brother?

ER: My sister - - my mother then left my sister and I to our grandparents and she came here.

And later on after we got through finishing school or whatever, my sister got married. Two years after she got married she had a baby and then she had surgery; she died. Which was a heartbreaking thing, so then - - and by that time my grandparents had already passed. So I was left and I said, well you know she's gone and I'm here and this cousin is my aunt's children, so I said to my mother I want to come to meet her. Before I didn't have the desire to come because I was independent, happy with my - -

MN: So, this was - - you grew up in Grenada?

ER: Right.

MN: And as - - went through childhood and adolescence there.

ER: Right, yes, yes. So then she came and it was during the war, and it was problems you know during the war. So right after the war ended I was able to join her; it was in 1946.

MN: Right, so you left Grenada and joined your mother - -

ER: In 1946.

MN: And where was your mother living at that time?

ER: She lived in Harlem.

MN: Do you remember what street?

ER: One hundred - - 116, between 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>.

MN: When you moved to Harlem did you keep close ties with your family in Grenada?

ER: Oh yes, yes. Because I had an aunt who had six children there, the oldest son was working with - - in government. In fact one of her kids was - - they had a business. And her boys - - she had four boys and two girls. The two girls was taking care of the business because their father had died also, and he left the business; so they were taking care of the business and they had a big career and whatever.

MN: This was in Grenada?

ER: In Grenada.

MN: And did you communicate with them by letter mostly?

ER: Letter, yes. And in 1948 I think, her oldest son who was working as agriculture inspector with the Grenada government came up here and went to Cornell University to get his masters. And then you know, but we always - -

MN: You were always a very close family.

ER: Right.

MN: Now did you have other relatives living in Harlem at the time?

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ER: Yes, but not my - - yes, one of my oldest uncle lived in 124 street, across the street from the Morris block.

MN: Oh, ok so you had an uncle there.

ER: Yes, and I had another uncle who lived in the Bronx but in the Prospect - -

MN: Prospect Ave area.

ER: Right.

MN: Did your family in New York belong to a Grenadian association?

ER: That's right, yes.

MN: And where was - - did it have headquarters or was it just something that people kept - -

ER: Well, they, they had their meeting at 129<sup>th</sup> Street, I think it was the Elk - -

MN: Oh, the Elks.

ER: I think at that time the building belonged to the Elk organization, yes. And after I was here two years or so, my mother took me there and I joined. But after two years or so here, I was the secretary for awhile until about - - I got married.

MN: Now what sort of activities - - did they have dances - -

ER: Yes, they had the dances once a year. At that time they had the dance in the Renaissance - -

MN: - - Ballroom.

ER: Right, and they used to have picnic bus rides, go to someplace popular - -

MN: Not Bear Mountain?

ER: And Bear Mountain sometimes and out on the island - - Heckscher State Park.

MN: Oh Heckscher State Park. So you'd rent busses.

ER: Right and they went there and sometimes they went up to Bear Mountain, not with the bus, they'd get a group together and they went on a boat that they'd ride.

MN: Oh, I remember that. Now, did the men play cricket?

ER: Yes, some of them. They went, they played cricket in - -

MN: Van Cortland?

ER: Right, yes.

MN: So there was a cohesive Grenadian community through this association? Now did you meet your husband at this organization or - -

ER: No, I didn't meet him there, but a lady who was a member of this organization knew him and that she introduced us.

MN: Is he also Grenadian?

ER: Yes.

MN: Oh, ok. What sort of work did you do when you came to the United States?

ER: Well, I was doing dressmaking when I was there, but when I came I went to Central-Needle Trade High School. And I professed my dressmaking there.

MN: Oh, so you went to high school here?

ER: Right.

MN: So how old were you when - -

ER: I was in my twenties, but I still went; I went at night.

MN: You went to night school. And so you then developed your skill and then you got a job in the garment industry.

ER: Right; I got my diploma and I got - - they referred me to some of the people that had dress - - yes. And I - - that's what I did. And in those days we were making money! [Laughs]

MN: Were you in the union? So this was the International Ladies Garment Workers Union?

ER: Right, exactly.

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MN: Now were the people working with you mostly Jewish and Italian?

ER: Mostly Jewish and Italian. In fact I went - - I didn't work in too many places because when I worked, my work was good. So everybody liked me and they didn't want me to leave, so I only work in about three places. Because one place I was working making duplicates, they bring the sample and we made duplicates that they sent out to the different - - so I stayed. I only worked in three different shops for the years that I worked.

MN: And the pay was decent and the benefits were decent?

ER: Well you see the benefits were decent and what happened - - the pay was piecework, that means as fast as you can make. [Laughs] If you can make twenty dresses for the day that means you - -

MN: And this was in a unionized shop they allowed piecework?

ER: Yes, that's right.

MN: So if you were fast and good - -

ER: - - you made money.

MN: Right, were there any - -

ER: In those weeks - - in those years 1947, '48, '49, I was making like \$90 a week, that's right.

MN: Now did you live with your mother or did you have your own apartment?

ER: I lived - - well when I came my mother lived with someone. And I came and I says I'm not used to that; I come from my house and we have two, three bedrooms and I have to come live in one bedroom with my mother. So I made friends and I got an apartment; so my mother and I lived together.

MN: Now did you join a church when you came here?

ER: Yes. I - - well I grew up in the church.

MN: In which church?

ER: In a Catholic Church.

MN: Oh you were born a Catholic, ok.

ER: So when I came, right away, where my mother lived was a couple of blocks from Saint Thomas the Apostle Church. Between eight - - 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Ave - - no Saint Nicholas and 8<sup>th</sup>, that's it Saint Nicholas and 8<sup>th</sup> and 118<sup>th</sup> Street. So I went to church there. One time I joined the choir, so in fact when I got married I was a member of the choir there.

MN: Was your husband also Catholic?

ER: Yes.

MN: So your social life was around the Grenadian Association and the church. Were there any other social networks you were part of?

ER: No, I socialized with anybody that I knew from there in; just mostly Caribbean people.

MN: Right, so your cultural-social world was mostly with Caribbean people. What sort of music did you listen to?

ER: They had - - well when I got here they'd listen to any kind of music. I do like classical but you had radio, television was just coming in and so I just listened to - - They had records, Nat King Cole and Crosby and all those kind of things, so I'd listen to - -

MN: Did you ever go to dances at places other than the Grenadian club?

ER: Yes, well I went to - - they had - - all the different islands had an organization. So when they had their dances was mostly during the winter time or in the fall. This week the Saint Lucien club would have a dance, the next week maybe Saint - - Trinidadian have - - next week the other island have, next week maybe the Jamaican have - -



MN: So people would go to each others dances? There was a Caribbean kind of solidarity that crossed island lines?

ER: Yes, yes, yes - -

MN: So you wouldn't feel uncomfortable going to a Jamaican dance or a Saint Lucien - -

ER: No I didn't, no. Then you meet other people and you've made friends, with people from other islands like Trinidad - -

MN: Was it your sense that there was - - was there as much interaction with African Americans from the South or not quite as much?

ER: There were, you know - - there were, yes, yes.

MN: Was it people lived on the same block and - -

ER: Yes.

MN: Now at your work place were there other people from the Caribbean who worked in these shops?

ER: In the shops that I work? In the shop that I work the longest - - one shop - - I worked in three shops. One shop there was one woman there but she wasn't a dressmaker, she was what you call finishing the dresses. They put the loop on for to get the belt, they put the shoulder pads on - - she was that. And I think she was from Saint Martin or some place whatever. And there was, there were two of them, and the other one came from some other island, I don't remember where.

MN: Now when - - you were communicating with your family in Grenada mostly by letter. Did you ever take trips back to visit?

ER: No, not until I was here - - about eighteen years after.

MN: And at that time phones weren't really - -

ER: No.

MN: So it was all by - -

ER: We weren't communicating by phone then, it was letter.

MN: Just a question, did you save all of those letters that you wrote?

ER: No. [Crosstalk and Laughter]

MN: Now when you met your husband, what sort of work was he doing?

ER: Well when I met him he was a welder. [Laughs] I tell you this story - - and he was a welder and we went out for about nine ten months before we got married. And after we got married we - - I was working, he was working, and then I was bringing home more money than him. And he said to himself, "Oh, no woman would make more money than me." So he left the welding and he went to work with a friend, I think it was a cousin of mine got him - - And that time they were building the second or the third Lincoln Tunnel. So he went to work there.

MN: As a sand hog?

ER: As, as yes, sand hog, but he was doing welding.

MN: Now, in those days for somebody African American or Afro-Caribbean to get a welding job those were tough.

ER: It was, yes, but he did; he was a good welder.

MN: And was he also in the union or - -

ER: He was in a union then - - I don't remember if there was a union with the welder where he was working.

MN: But he got a job on the Lincoln Tunnel as - - well that would have had to be unionized.

That's pretty hard. [Crosstalk] And there were men from the Caribbean who were working in that - -

ER: In fact - - As a matter of fact there was a cousin of mine working there but he wasn't a welder, he was one of the laborers but he got him the job.

MN: Now did he develop this skill in Grenada and then come here, or did he develop the skill here?

ER: Well what happened as a young teenager - - his mother died young, when he was seventeen. So seventeen, eighteen, some friend of his mother or whatever - - he went into Aruba. In Aruba then - - during the war there was a big oil industry thing like that in Aruba. So he went in Aruba and that's where he stayed; from Aruba he came here.

MN: So he was from Grenada to Aruba and then here?

ER: Right.

MN: So he had his education in Grenada?

ER: Right. So he developed that welding skill and all kind of skill, he developed in Aruba. But the work he was doing in Aruba with the machinery and this, that and that, it came the only place they had this thing was allowed - - because Jersey have a lot of this oil business, but black folk couldn't get job - - that kind of job. [Laughs]

MN: That kind of skilled labor was very racially exclusive, so what sort of welding did he end up doing?

ER: So he, then he - - well, he was welding - - you know those big doors that you - - fireproof door. You got to put the wood inside as though the frame, yes - -

MN: And this was work mostly in Manhattan or all over the city?

ER: Well, he worked in Queens.

MN: In Long Island and Queens, yes.

ER: Long Island City, sorry.

MN: Now did he get his - - get these jobs through family and connections or did he just - - he said, "I'm good, give me a chance?"

ER: No he went to - - he went with a friend from Jamaica was working first in I think in Brooklyn, someplace in Brooklyn with this thing when he started to weld. And then on his own, he was in the union then, he got a job on the island, yes.

MN: Right, so by, by - - what year did you get married?

ER: '53.

MN: You got married in '53, now - - Now we get to the Bronx. How did you find the Bronx? Did you know people who were living in the community you moved to?

ER: No, no. I - - We were looking for a place. And I wanted, because I grew up in a home with a big yard and plain, so I wanted if I had children to grow in a place where they have a yard to grow. Because in Harlem there was no place to - - children were playing in the streets and I didn't like that.

MN: Yes, it was very crowded.

ER: So I said we'll look for a place in the country. At that time we called it country. [Laughter] I knew someone who was living in New Rochelle at the time, had a house in New Rochelle. And we started to look through a realtor; and we went to look in New Rochelle but he said to me, "I'm not going to New Rochelle because you got to pay two car fares to get to work."

MN: Right, and he was working in the Lincoln Tunnel in Manhattan.

ER: Right, so he said, "I'm not paying two car - - " No, at that time he was still welding.

MN: He's still in Long Island City.

ER: Right, he's say "I'm not paying two car fares to go to work." So we started to look in the Northeast Bronx.

MN: Now, did you go through realtors in the northeast Bronx?

ER: Yes.

MN: Were these African American realtors or they were white?

ER: They were African American; I guess who was working with - - in the thing with the white folks.

MN: Ok, so there were black realtors who were at that time working in the north Bronx. So there was already a black population - -

ER: No, no, they had their office in the south Bronx, but they worked all over - -

MN: So this was somebody who had offices in the south Bronx but they had houses - -

ER: Yes, they have - - they work in conjunction with people, I guess realtors who - -

MN: Wow. Do you remember where they had their offices?

ER: Well at that time she had - - they had their office at their house.

MN: Wow, and so they found you the house?

ER: Well, they showed us several houses you know in the Bronx, they showed us some were around Morris Park and this, that and the other - - And I didn't - - we didn't like any of the things until we saw this one that we bought.

MN: And this was on 213<sup>th</sup> Street. And what was the cross street?

ER: Barnes between Barnes and Bronxwood.

MN: Right and how big a house was it?

ER: Well the downstairs - - we had two bedrooms, a kitchen and a bathroom. Then we had a basement which was finished, it had a bathroom and large place. And then we had, upstairs we had - - the attic was finished and they had two bedrooms in the attic with a bath. And the first - - the other floor had the living room, the kitchen, the dining room, a sunroom and - -

MN: So it was a nice sized house. And you had a backyard?

ER: Yes, the land was 75 by 100 property.

MN: Right and this was an unattached house?

ER: Right.

MN: This was - - you had grass on each side. And did you have a front porch?

ER: We didn't have grass on the side, we had the driveway.

MN: Driveways - -

ER: Driveway going out to the garage and on the other side we had the - - it was the neighbor we had a fence there. But in the backyard we had grass.

MN: Is the house still there?

ER: Yes.

MN: Oh can I - - because I want to drive by, what was the address?

ER: 819.

MN: 819 213<sup>th</sup> Street, ok, and it's off Barnes and Bronxwood.

ER: Yes, and its right across the street you see - - they can't build any house in front of it because you know what, the Tilden Towers built up the house there and they built the garage.

MN: So there's a garage across the street?

ER: Yes.

MN: Now, when you moved did you try to see if there was a church nearby, was that part of the things you looked for?

ER: Well I did ask about a church and they told me the only - - then when I went, when we got there was Immaculate Conception.

MN: Ok, and what street was Immaculate Conception on?

ER: On Gun Hill Road, East Gun Hill Road.

MN: And about how was - - could you walk to the house?

ER: Yes, yes. But when I went to Immaculate Conception at that time, oh it was heavily populated with Italian, that neighborhood. And they had different masses there, you had to go - - there's one English mass - -

MN: So it was mostly Italian masses?

ER: Right. And you had to go very early to get a seat. So then I went for a while and I went on 215<sup>th</sup> Street, before I got my washing machine, I was taking my clothes there and I was talking to a lady and she said, "Oh, there's a street across - - there's a church across the street the - - that's - - they speak English, all the masses are in English." So then I went - - it was Saint Mary's, Church of Saint Mary's which is now - - they sold it to the Korean People.

MN: Ok, so it was Saint Mary's and what street was that on?

ER: On White Plains Road.

MN: On White Plains Road.

ER: 215<sup>th</sup> Street.

MN: And that became your parish?

ER: Right.

MN: And was that at that time mostly Irish or it was - -

ER: It was mixed; it was Irish, Italians, and Polish.

MN: And Polish.

ER: Yes, because they had a Polish street - - church up on 219<sup>th</sup> Street. And a lot of the parishioners had moved away whatever but they still had this church. They still there because I understand the Polish - -

MN: There's Polish immigration still coming.

ER: Right. They still - - they come; if they don't they support it.

MN: Yes. Now when you moved to your block, were there any other black families on the block?

ER: Not for about ten, about nine years after.

MN: Right, so you were in the middle of a mostly Italian neighborhood?

ER: Not mostly, all of it was Italian. [Laughs] On my street there was one Irish family.

MN: Now what sort of reception - - Were you treated with respect?

ER: Well the - - right next door, that neighbor, which was whatever, I can't remember their name now, the male of the house were very nice. He welcomed my husband and he talked to my husband and he [Indiscernible] with my husband. He was a trade man so they used to talk - -

MN: Talk - -

ER: Right, you see. But on the other side was an Italian couple. I don't know what her husband was, but she was very friendly; but six months later - - And she had a sister who lived next to her. Six months later, because we moved she start - - she wanted to get away. So the sister told her, "You don't know these people, wait and see what kind of people they are before you get - - hurry up yourself." Well she didn't listen; she sold and she went to Yonkers. But the sister stayed you see; and she sold to a neighbor. The neighbor was - - they had no children, it was just a wife and husband. She was a nurse and the husband was an electrician, he worked with the city. And that's how it was for the six months after we moved there. And it was for about a year, quite a few years before another woman came. You know the other people sell the house, another person came. And it remained like that, the three of us on the block there for quite awhile. My children was big before a black community - -



MN: Right, now how many children did you have?

ER: Three.

MN: You had three children; and where did they end up going to school?

ER: Well, they went to Saint Mary's Catholic School. And when - - then they went to high school; I had two girls, the girls went to the Academy of Mount Saint Ursula.

MN: Right, near Fordham.

ER: Right, and my son, you know at the time you had to take the test, the co-op test, so he didn't make the co-op because you know the boys they don't listen they - - [Laughter] So he went to Evander. At that time Evander was still a nice school, they didn't have you know - -

MN: So this was in the sixties?

ER: Right.

MN: Yes. Now, what was it like bringing up your children in a neighborhood where there were very few other black people?

ER: Well, the children mingled. I taught my kids, listen, this is only the color of your skin. We all - - if you cut them all the blood is red. And this, that and the other - - Don't think of color think of character. And I said, "I don't - -" When my children went to school I said, "I don't care whether they black, Italian or what, if they're not nicely behaved kids don't be friends with them." And that's how they grew up.

MN: Right, now did you still have an active social life with the Grenadian Association?

ER: Yes, yes, but - -

MN: It was more neighborhood by then?

ER: When the children was growing up I didn't go to the meeting as frequently as I used to when I was - - And eventually some of the people who organize it die and there's - - other people

get older. People that was the age of my uncle they all die, so the younger folks was living more in Brooklyn so they moved the organization from New York to Brooklyn.

MN: Right, now do you think your children grew up thinking of themselves as Grenadian?

ER: No. [Laughter] I want to tell you that right now, no.

MN: So that's not a big part of their life?

ER: They know; they'll say, "Oh my parents come from Grenada." When my son was - - how old was he, eight I think, yes. And he celebrated his seventh or eight years, his birthday there and my daughter was four, I took them to Grenada. That was the first time I went back. We went for vacation and spent the month of July there. And after that we came back. And right after I came back I had my last daughter and you know you have to pay school fees and everything was nowhere - - since I had no real attachment there, just because my aunt's kids - - And not all of them were there; who was England, who was in England who was there and this, that and the other. So there was two cousins then and there was no need for me to run back there. I had no parents, my aunt was - - my uncles were - -

MN: So all the people you were attached to were all over the world?

ER: They were here.

MN: Oh they're here?

ER: Yes. And my aunt's children like I said they were here, there - - And just the two of them of course - - one son - - they all were working with the government. And one of the sons he's still there, he earned a lot of property. As a matter of fact he has the - - you must've heard the Grenada Waterfall? It's on his property; he's still there. So you know, as there was nothing really for me to go back - - want to - - Grenada like people here and there, no I was - - My concern was to raise my children, give them a good education.

MN: Now did you continue to work after your children were born?

ER: I tried when the first one was born and it was difficult. So my husband said to me, "You know what, it doesn't pay because people will take care of dress, so you stay home." But being an independent woman, as I was, you know making money, I want people so much so I'd stay, I would've. But then I start looking in the paper, I said there got to be some place here that sold dresses in the evening. So I looked in the paper and then I found out some dress shop that they couldn't get - - because they wasn't unionized - - They couldn't get a good dress maker to work in the day so they opened - - they had to work day and night. So they had, after the other people went at five, they had six to ten; so I worked in the shop when my kids were smaller. Did what I had to - -

MN: Was this in the Bronx?

ER: In the Bronx - -

MN: Was it in the - -

ER: In my neighborhood, in Burke Avenue.

MN: On Burke Avenue?

ER: Yes, Burke Avenue and White Plains Road.

MN: Now was this - - were the conditions unhealthy or they had - - no different then anything else you worked in?

ER: No, no it was healthy. They had - - it was downstairs of a building and they have the bathroom and the - - it was ok, it was alright, yes. And I worked there for some year, while my children was growing.

MN: And your husband continued to do welding work?

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ER: Right, and then he came home and then my mother came, she lived with me for awhile. And so I left the kids five o'clock with her, they're already fed their dinner and whatever, and I went to work, sewed dresses. [Laughs]

MN: Now did - - when did you buy your first car, the family; do you remember?

ER: Well my kids were - - my son was still small. My son was about six months old when my husband bought the first car.

MN: And did you usually have one car or more than one car?

ER: One, one; not until, until - - well, my son was in high school, no he was in college then when I bought my own car. Because at that time the dress business wasn't the dress business any more, they sent it to Korea, to Japan and all this other business. So I went to work in a hospital. I went to work with the Jacobi Hospital. And I started as a nurse's assistant; then you take exam, and you do this and do that, then I left with the title of some kind of technician, they say. But it was the same, just different - - different patients.

MN: Now did you ever go back to college for extra credits?

ER: I wanted to, I started to but because I had to raise my children I couldn't do it, I couldn't do it.

MN: And did your husband stay in the same trade all the way through or did he change careers?

ER: No, no he left after they finished that Lincoln Tunnel because in his younger age, I think when he was six - - fifteen, sixteen he learned to do carpentry work. And after he's there, tunnel had finished building and everything, he met a German there who was a carpenter. And the man said, "You could do carpentry?" And he said, "Yes." So the guy said - - He said, "Well, I can not read the plan but I can you know - -" So the man took him to join the carpenter's union and so he work as a carpenter for the rest of his life.

MN: Now was this in big like skyscrapers or mostly - -

ER: Oh, yes; he work, he work in Co-op City for over a year - -

MN: Wow!

ER: Yes, yes. But then, all those big high-rises in Riverdale, he worked in quite a few.

MN: Now these are also - - your husband got into all these unions, which were very difficult for a black person to get into - -

ER: But because he had some Irish guy were friends with him, he got in. [Laughs]

MN: So he had people helping him out - -

ER: Right, he got with friends. So they got him, and he went in, and they, they - - what's it called, they introduce him to the union and because of this - - friends, they were able to get in the union.

MN: That's great. Now do you think your children enjoy growing up in the Bronx?

ER: I think so.

MN: Do they ever talk about being proud that they're from the Bronx?

ER: I don't know, I don't know, [Laughter] I don't think so, but they enjoy my - - you see at that time the kids that were little, the children played with them. There were girls living a couple doors there from their grandparents' house - - Because at that time the Italians have a house and all of the children who live downstairs, who live over there were in the one house. So when they have the kids small, they played - -

MN: Now did they - - in those days did they have organized like little league sports programs or was it more like playing in the street? Or playing in school?

ER: No, no, no, my kids didn't play in the street; everybody had a backyard.

MN: Oh, it was a backyard culture.

ER: So either they play in the backyard or they play on the sidewalk - -

MN: On the sidewalk.

ER: - - they don't play in the street.

MN: Were there programs at the churches, youth programs?

ER: Well we had the, the, the Boy Scouts. My son was in the Boy Scouts. The girls were in Brownies and things like that, so - - And what other programs - - And when my daughter was four years old I put her in the dancing, so she took dancing lessons. So the kids they didn't have time to go play here and there.

MN: Right, so one of your daughters got into dancing. Did your son or daughters get into sports at all?

ER: My son, maybe - - I tried to get him into basketball, he say, "Oh I'm too short." And there's that - - he didn't get it. But when he was in high school he used to go play basketball, but never join a team or - - so to speak.

MN: So how long did you live in that house?

ER: There? Forty-three years.

MN: So you lived in that house for forty-three years and then moved into this house?

ER: That's right.

MN: So you basically lived in only two houses?

ER: That's right. [Laughter]

MN: And when you were living there all those years was the neighborhood always safe?

ER: Yes, until maybe two years or so because my neighbor, both neighbors died. The Italian neighbor died and her kids - - the kids sold the house. And they sold it to a Hispanic family. And my other neighbor who was a nurse and her husband, they didn't have any children but we're

very close because my kids grew up to call them aunt and uncle, and their sister sold the house.

Well, she sold it to a woman who gave it to her daughter and there was - - the daughter had just gotten married and they had just a baby. But up the block they had a - - tell you the truth I didn't let my child go playing up the block. And by that time my kids was involved in too many social-educational things so they didn't have time to go play after school anyway. So yes - -

MN: Did your kids ever feel unsafe anywhere?

ER: No.

MN: So it was - - going to school or going to the movies, it was a - -

ER: No, they didn't fear that stuff, yes, they didn't fear that. And the school - - the school that - - they grew up in the school, and then they made friends with the children from St. Mary's school. And the majority of the children from St. Mary's school lived up 225<sup>th</sup>, 230 and Carpenter Ave and all this from that part of the Bronx. So they became friends with them.

MN: Right, now did all of your children end up going to college?

ER: Yes, yes. My son, after he got his associate degree he went. And I told him to continue, he did but he drop out - - After he got his associates he went to City College for about a year or so, sixteen more credits for him to graduate, but he dropped out he got married so what can I tell you? [Laughter] So, but anyhow, for awhile he learned there; he's an engineer in some - - he work with ConEdison, he been working with ConEdison. So I know he's going to finish getting two years that he lost. [Laughs] But my other kids went - - my older daughter went to Cornell University and then she, she went to what do you call it - - the Jewish Law School - -

MN: Yeshiva, no - -

ER: It's Yeshiva but - - Cardoza.

MN: Cardoza, right.

ER: She went to their school. And the young one went to Wesleyan. She got ten on that, she did her graduate third year, that year, Harvard.

MN: And is she a professor?

ER: She's not a professor, she's a journalist. She work with Scholastic.

MN: Oh; so in looking back at all these things we've talked about is there anything that you would like to say that we didn't get a chance to say?

ER: No, not really. I think I did that - - what I had to do - - I think I did a good job. [Laughter]

MN: Yes, clearly!

ER: And I'm happy and when I came here I went to church, when in fact I asked the realtor, I said, "Where's the catholic church?" Because I tell her I said, "I like to go to church every morning if I could." So she says, "Well your parish is Well PH." So I went to Well PH the first Sunday and I introduce myself to the pastor and his name is Corell, which we're losing now because he's retiring. And from then I join different organization, this, that and the other - - you get friendly with the people.

MN: Ok, well thank you very much. This was very enjoyable and very valuable, thank you.

[END OF SESSION]