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Interviewer: Dr. Mark Naison

Interviewee: Olga Johnson

Dr. Mark Naison (MN): This is the 61st interview the Bronx African American History Project, and we are here with Olga Johnson. A long resident of the Bronx one of whose very famous children is the Bronx District Attorney Robert Johnson. The first question I want to ask you is when-----one of the things we are really interested in is how families got to the Bronx, when did your family move from Harlem to the Bronx, do you remember what year it was?

Olga Johnson (OJ): We move from Manhattan, we lived in Manhattan, and then we moved----I am not sure if we moved from Manhattan to the Bronx overnight, I don't think----I can't really recall, anyhow let me think a minute. We lived on west 61st street that's on Western Avenue in the projects the Amsterdam houses.

MN: Okay sure that's right near where Fordham's downtown campus.

OJ: Right, absolutely, I am trying to think if we then moved up to 153rd street that like in Washington Heights, 153rd street, and I think, I am not sure if we moved elsewhere before we moved to the Bronx.

MN: Now where-----when you moved to the Bronx what street did the family move to?

OJ: We moved to----Jackson Avenue I believe, Jackson Avenue in the Bronx. I am pretty sure that's the Bronx, 905 Jackson Avenue. We lived there.

MN: Now was this in public housing or was it a?

OJ: That was a private home. <Inaudible> got married at that time.

MN: Okay was that right near Morris High school?

OJ: No, Morris' High school is in the Bronx.

MN: Yeah.

OJ: I was still in Manhattan <inaudible> I know that, I think Morris High school. Where is Morris High school exactly, what street?

MN: It is on Jackson Avenue near Boston Road.

OJ: It was in the Bronx, you see I don't know the Bronx that well. I think there was Morris High school, it must be near there.

MN: Now your family-----when you moved to the Bronx, to Jackson Avenue, it was a private house your family bought?

OJ: Yeah.

MN: Now what sort of work did your father do?

OJ: So far as I can remember, he was an elevator operator.

MN: Was in office building or in your apartment building?

OJ: In office building. He worked in the office building.

Anonymous voice: And what did your mom do?

OJ: My mom was a seamstress in the garment industry.

MN: And was she a member of the union?

OJ: Yes.

MN: Which Union?

OJ: ILGWU.

MN: She was ILGWU.

OJ: Yes.

MN: And when you graduated from high school, did you go to work in the garment industry?

OJ: I certainly did, yes, yes.

MN: You got the job from-----

OJ: From my father, he was an elevator operator in that building.

MN: In the same building.

OJ: Well he didn't let breathe, he didn't think about college. I didn't have a choice though; I was the first to graduate. There were seven of us, seven children; I was the third, but the first to graduate from high school because I skipped a couple of times. So when I graduated, on Friday I went to work on Monday in the building were my father was still the elevator operator.

MN: What was the name of the company to go to work for?

OJ: I think that was <inaudible> company.

MN: And were you-----what kind of garments did they manufacture?

OJ: They manufactured ladies girdles.

MN: Ladies girdles. And what was the composition racially ethnically was this very mixed group?

OJ: No, I think I was the only Afro-American women there.

MN: And mostly Jewish women or Italians.

OJ: I would say yes. I don't even know if there were any Hispanics at that time.

Anonymous voice: And what year was this that you graduated high school?

OJ: I graduated in 39.

Anonymous voice: Okay, and at that time when you were in high school, you were-----
when you were in high school you were still living in Harlem?

OJ: What did I say, you see I don't want to-----what did I say when I moved to the
Bronx, or did I say when I moved to the Bronx?

Anonymous voice: You never said-----you were never gave us the specifics.

MN: You never gave us the specific date.

OJ: I am trying to get my facts straight, not easy. I am trying to think where did I live
when I graduated from high school because I only reference is I started riding-----I am
trying to think what subway station did I take at that time. Maybe I was living on 400
West <inaudible> street that was an 8th avenue subway, I don't I was living there. I think
possibly I was living 239 at some point in Manhattan, I think I was living in Manhattan, I
believe so.

MN: Now was, when you started working were you married yet?

OJ: No, I was 16 years old.

MN: You graduated high school at 16.

OJ: Yes.

MN: And was this a job you had to train for or-----

OJ: No indeed, no training needed, just <inaudible> for 25cents an hour, that was the
only requirement.

MN: Now what-----did your family belong to a church when you were in Manhattan?

OJ: No I can't really recall my mother <inaudible> I think we mostly attended Saint
Phillips in Manhattan.

MN: Saint Phillips Episcopal.

OJ: Right.

Anonymous voice: That was on 137th, 135th, 134th an <inaudible>

OJ: But my parents did not go to church regularly, there were so many children there, I guess they couldn't get in all at once at the same time.

MN: Now do you remember the name of the minister there?

OJ: No, no I don't think I would have, not inkling.

MN: Now when-----did your family participate in any activities of like you know social groups that the family went to?

OJ: No, I don't think so. There wasn't any such thing really that anybody would remember now, I don't think so, can't think of anything. I know-----one thing I do remember my <inaudible> get on Sunday morning to watch me play what, cricket it was one of those things that are what the West Indians played.

Anonymous voice: Yeah Cricket.

OJ: You see <inaudible> trying to get up on Sunday morning to go-----

MN: Now where was the cricket matches held, do you remember were they held in Manhattan or held somewhere else?

OJ: I don't have inkling.

MN: So there was a whole west-----there was a whole cricket culture.

OJ: That's right, absolutely.

MN: Some of the people have been <inaudible>. Were most of your family friends from Barbados?

OJ: From the West Indies, we are part of the West Indies. Yes.

Anonymous voice: And did you find out-----was that-----I guess was that community that involved in kind of bringing you and your brothers and sisters up in some ways you know the <inaudible>.

OJ: Yes, I guess if you lived in tenements you know actually everybody knew, everybody, and did things together. So that respect you know would be responsible for if anything or anything, who you belong or why you were at certain place, you will never dare go any place where you shouldn't be because everybody would know right away.

Anonymous voice: Right.

MN: And this was the case when you were growing up, everybody looked out for everybody else.

OJ: Yes.

Anonymous voice: And did you find that-----did your parents correspond a lot with the people in Barbados that they left behind?

OJ: No, they didn't even call them like <inaudible> I didn't know what the situation was, but I don't think I ever saw them correspond with anyone. My grandmother also lived in the city by then.

Anonymous voice: When did she-----where did she move to do her move to the area were-----

OJ: I can't really recall when she passed away, I can't say but we usually at one time lived in the same apartment with her <inaudible> maybe two bedroom apartment, and my mother had like 4 or 5 children at that time <inaudible> move in with them you know it was during the depression so we all lived together in that apartment, so my grandmother--

-----I think she passed away when she was living in 142nd street in Lennox Avenue. But we were young when she passed away.

Anonymous voice: And even that-----in the apartment were she passed away 142nd and Lennox was that where you all were living at that time.

OJ: Yes.

Anonymous voice: Okay.

OJ: Eventually we had our own apartment in the same building, and may have even moved from there and come back another time, but always some place in <inaudible>.

Anonymous voice: Okay, so you did a lot of moving around within the Bronx?

OJ: Yes.

MN: That is another <inaudible>

OJ: That was from the good old days in case anybody wants to know.

MN: There were a lot of vacant apartment so you know, you moved from place to place.

OJ: Yes.

Anonymous voice: Yes.

MN: Now when your family ended up----when they moved to the Bronx it was to buy a house or did they go into an apartment first?

OJ: We moved to the Bronx, let me see, I said we moved to Jackson Avenue at that time, and I think we moved to the Bronx-----when my parents bought a house but I can't really recall how old when or how old I was or anything like that.

MN: But this was after you graduated high school?

OJ: Yes.

MN: And you were still living with them at the time they bought the house?

OJ: Yes.

MN: Do you remember much about the neighborhood you moved to?

OJ: I thought it was a very nice neighborhood, I remember there was a playground on the corner, it would make it very interesting, very acceptable there was a playground on the corner, I only had one brother, and he was able to go there that kept him off the streets so he was able to play basketball.

MN: Do you remember what subway you used to take to work from there?

OJ: Now where were we now in the Bronx or Manhattan?

MN: In the Bronx, 905 Jackson Avenue.

OJ: 905 Jackson Avenue, I was surely working by then, and I don't know, I think we were independent was <inaudible> when was the independent, do you remember?

MN: I am not sure.

OJ: Well you are supposed to answer these questions.

MN: Well I am not a <inaudible>

OJ: Not that you can't recall, independent was fairly known and I think that was the subway I used to take down to 23rd street where my father worked as an <inaudible>

MN: Now do you remember what the nearest like cross street of Jackson was it?

OJ: 160, I am prompted to say 160 there the largest, the largest <inaudible>.

MN: A 163rd street.

OJ: Right.

MN: Because eventually they built the forest houses there, but were the forest houses there when you moved there or it hadn't been built yet?

OJ: I don't think it would have built yet.

MN: So near 163rd street.

OJ: Right. Wait now if you think again I maybe wrong, like when I-----in fact, in fact like the extension between <inaudible> 151st and then 53rd and I am trying to try and remember which of those was in the Bronx or Manhattan depending on what the cross were and the avenues, and I am <inaudible> is it not?

MN and Anonymous voice: No, that's Manhattan.

OJ: Manhattan. Right, so when we lived in-----what was your question, do you remember?

MN: No, Jackson Avenue.

OJ: Jackson Avenue in the Bronx, and another thing I could recall is we could walk to the subway which was the 7th avenue line, could that be-----

MN: It could be there was a 163rd street in Prospect Avenue.

OJ: In Prospect Avenue.

MN: And Westchester Avenue.

Anonymous voice: Or were the 2 and 5 runs.

OJ: Yes.

Anonymous voice: Okay.

OJ: Yes because we were not able to ride the subways.

MN: Do you remember the names of any of the movie theatres in the Bronx?

OJ: Not hardly; I don't think I-----maybe if you mentioned it, I would recall, but I don't really remember myself.

Anonymous voice: Did you go to movies though like what was your amusement in the area besides <inaudible>?

OJ: I guess we went to <inaudible> occasionally you know it was only like 10cents or something I guess.

MN: Yeah.

OJ: So we may have gone occasionally, I know my mother <inaudible> maybe once or twice a month they would get <inaudible> movie in the evening and we were old enough to stay by ourselves I guess, so I don't really recall. Like I said if I heard the names, I think I might recall.

MN: Now did your family-----did you start attending a new church when you moved to the Bronx or did you still go to Saint Phillips?

OJ: No, I did not go to Saint Phillips I am sure of that, I am sure I didn't go to Saint Phillips.

MN: Did you stay in the Episcopal church though, okay because there were a couple of Episcopal churches let see if any. There is Saint Margaret's Episcopal or Trinity Episcopal?

OJ: No, I don't think I went to either of that.

MN: Either of that.

OJ: I think at that time probably I went to church were my friends went, so I can't really recall which church where they were, wherever they went I usually would go also. Like I said my memory is really, really bad let me tell you and that's my only complaints have aches or pains, I feel grateful for that.

MN: Now did most of you-----you had a whole group of friends were they mostly people who worked in the garment industry with you or they were neighborhood friends?

OJ: My friends.

MN: Yeah.

OJ: My friends, no I don't ever worked with anyone who were my friends, no because after I had my first job was in the garment industry, and then after that I started taking my tests for civil service, so most of my jobs weren't civil service.

MN: Okay, so what did you do-----what was your first civil service job?

OJ: I can't of any <inaudible> I don't think state insurance fund, I don't think it was state insurance fund, lets see what else, what else did I work, but before that I know I worked at Empire Mutual, I can't recall. I am trying to think of any other kind of information that would-----I didn't use my car today so that's not so.

MN: Right.

OJ: .I can't recall where did I first work? Actually, I first had worked in the factory alright in the building were my father works as an elevator operator, then I took the civil service exams, but now I can't recall which was the first appointment I had from the civil service exams, and I really can't say, I don't think that <inaudible> serious when I went to River Avenue there was a big building there, I think I worked for internal revenue, but I don't think that was really the first job, I can't recall.

MN: Now when did you meet your husband?

OJ: When was married first. I was married in 47 I think right.

Anonymous voice: I think 1947.

OJ: I must have known him; I think 2 or 3 years I guess.

MN: Now when you met your husband you were living in the Bronx?

OJ: I think so and we determined that 905 Jackson Avenue was the Bronx right?

MN: Yeah.

Anonymous voice: So you were still living there when you met your husband?

OJ: Yes I think so.

Anonymous voice: And when you got married did you, you and your husband move in together?

OJ: We stayed there for at least several months.

Anonymous voice: You stayed in your family's house before moving to your own apartment.

OJ: Right and we moved right after my first son Robert was born, and then we moved down to the Amsterdam houses which were in Manhattan.

MN: Okay, so you started at Jackson Avenue then you got an apartment in the Amsterdam houses.

OJ: Absolutely, yes that part I remember pretty well I think.

MN: And what sort of work did your husband do?

OJ: What was he doing at that time; he worked in the post office I believe.

MN: Okay, so you were----were you in the civil service at that time or were you still working in the factory when you met your husband?

OJ: When did I start in the civil service, I think I was-----I started at the taxes internal revenue right?

MN and Anonymous voice: Yes.

OJ: I wasn't married at that time, no. That was your question right?

MN and Anonymous voice: Yes.

MN: Now did-----was your husband from the West Indies or was he African American?

OJ: He was African American his parents were from some place south of the United States, I don't remember exactly where.

MN: Now did he live in Manhattan at that time or was he also from the Bronx?

OJ: He lived in Manhattan.

MN: How did you meet him?

OJ: You see that's a good question. Well I had a lot of friends that <inaudible> area where I was born in that area were he lived, and a lot friends there so I guess we were all in touch, and so till now he is who I ended up marrying.

MN: When you were young, and had a lot of friends.

OJ: And I was young.

Anonymous voice: I mean he is still your man, let say young girl.

MN: Young girl. What sort of music did you like when you know?

OJ: I don't think I had any especial kind of music that I liked at that time. Whatever my friends liked, I would guess just went along with the program because they were good at dancing so the main thing was I was not good at dancing.

MN: Or so you weren't a dancer?

OJ: No, definitely not.

Anonymous voice: You are not a dancer.

OJ: No.

MN: Were you a singer?

OJ: No, I had no talent. I used to go on to the dramatic club. Thank God I did.

MN: Did your friends use to ever take you to places like the Rockland Palace or the Cotton Club or <inaudible>?

OJ: I may have been there, but I don't think it's when they are there everything there is sometimes and they are not. The Rockland Palace, I remember the Rockland Palace.

MN: They had bands then.

OJ: They had basketball games then, I used to go to the basketball games.

MN: Or you used to go-----okay they had basketball games at the Rockland Palace, the Renaissance Ballroom, and-----

OJ: In the Renaissance I probably went to a few dances there, but I remember going to the basketball games, and it was probably the Rockland Palace.

Anonymous voice: Did you know people who played on teams there; were some of your friends on the team when they played?

OJ: Yes, my husband was a basketball player; he played in a basketball game several times there.

Anonymous voice: And what team did he play?

OJ: What were they called if could remember, I don't think I could remember.

MN: Was he on a professional basketball team?

OJ: It was not professional.

Anonymous voice: It was just a local league.

MN: He wasn't in the globetrotters or whatever sons <inaudible> or anything like that.

OJ: No, nothing like that.

Anonymous voice: Okay. And so when you were in the Amsterdam houses that were you had Robert your first child, well you had Robert-----

OJ: He was born in Jackson Avenue.

Anonymous voice: And then you moved with him.

OJ: Right, to Amsterdam houses.

Anonymous voice: Okay. So now did you have your second son in the Amsterdam houses? Gary did you have Gary there too?

OJ: Yeah, it must have been in the Amsterdam houses I pretty sure he used to <inaudible> he was 51 and Robert was 48 that is three years apart, and I think we were <inaudible>

MN: Now how long did you live in the Amsterdam houses, did you stay there a long time?

OJ: I think I moved to the Bronx from there, and I said; when I said I moved to the Bronx, now see all this is on you. I moved there, when I said I moved to the Bronx 60 something, 63.

MN: Now did you move directly into the building you are living now or did you move to a different one?

OJ: Where do I live in now?

Anonymous voice: 1825 Morrison, right.

OJ: And I move from-----or I was still living with my parents at Jackson Avenue. Remember Jackson was before Morrison Avenue that I was married when I was still in Jackson Avenue.

MN: Right from Jackson to Amsterdam.

Anonymous voice: And then from the Amsterdam houses you went to the-----

OJ: To Morrison Avenue, you were right. Morrison is where I live now.

Anonymous voice: And that's where you lived pretty much since.

OJ: Yeah right.

Anonymous voice: Since you moved from Amsterdam houses. I am trying to figure out the timeline on this because you graduated high school, you told I in '39 then you went--- ---then your parents moved sometime after that when they were in Harlem to Jackson Avenue.

OJ: Jackson Avenue is in the Bronx.

Anonymous voice: Yeah, and then you spent-----

OJ: I got married when I was in Jackson Avenue, yes?

Anonymous voice: Yes and how long were you married that what I was wondering, you know how many years you were married?

OJ: 47.

Anonymous voice: 47 years.

MN: 47 Years.

OJ: 47 is the year.

Anonymous voice: 1947 was the year you got married.

OJ: Yeah.

Anonymous voice: Okay.

MN: Is your husband still alive?

OJ: Yeah.

MN: Wow, okay.

Anonymous voice: If you got married in '47 I guess, I am trying to think so-----

OJ: So that would mean Robert was born in '48, and Gary was born in '51.

Anonymous voice: Okay.

OJ: And what else.

MN: Anymore so you got two children, two sons, and then is the building in Morrison Avenue this is a co-op?

OJ: No, this is a rental. That's where I am now. It is a rental.

MN: And it is a big building?

OJ: It is an 8 to 19 story building.

Anonymous voice: They are a group of them.

MN: Now is this south of the Buckner expressway?

Anonymous voice and OJ: Yeah, it is like were the Buckner apartment <inaudible> and in front <inaudible>

MN: Because I am going to begin working at the junior high school just north of the Buckner right there.

Anonymous voice: Okay.

OJ: Most high schools are doing-----

MN: <Inaudible> this is an all-----when I drive you home it will take 12 to 6 minutes. It is a very convenient-----So how did your two families meet in church?

Anonymous voice: Yes in church, well-----my family came over to that part of the Bronx and you know Saint Andrews was <inaudible> choice.

OJ: You were the only reason why I got there.

Anonymous voice: Because you-----when did you start at Saint Andrews, maybe?

OJ: When did I start Saint Andrews, I don't have no anywhere remembering really.

Anonymous voice: But I would put it in about maybe-----

OJ: When both of my sons were married, I guess.

Anonymous voice: Yeah, I would say that.

OJ: I am trying to think were did I go before Saint Andrews, I don't know.

Anonymous voice: Did you go to-----well what I know, might you have gone to some place around, some other peaceful church around the area like Saint Simons-----

OJ: I probably was not attending church regularly anyhow, and crucifixion was in Manhattan I think. So I don't know whether it was sometime I wasn't going to church or what happened. How did I start going to Saint Andrews just because it was a convenient location and a Episcopal church, and a Episcopal church but I really can't recall how long it has being.

Anonymous voice: But I was going to ask you when you and your husband had gotten----
---had moved to the Amsterdam houses and by this time you had both Robert and Gary, what prompted your decision, what made you come to move to an 1825 Morrison Avenue?

OJ: I think it was because my mother and father lived in that area. They lived on <inaudible> in the Bronx. They lived on <inaudible> avenue so we saw when the buildings were going up, and such a nice location, and when we acquired it, I guess we could afford to move there, so that's what we did, and I am so happy there, it is beautiful.

MN: You got a nice view?

OJ: Yes it is so scenic, and we can look in on the sound.

MN: So you have a south view scene so you can see the water in Manhattan.

OJ: Absolutely, yes. I could see this at night, I have the skyline at Empire State building, and it is really beautiful there I love it.

Anonymous voice: And when you first moved there were there a lot of families, were there a lot black families moving to Morrison Avenue at the time?

OJ: Well I don't know, I guess there might be-----there may have been a majority of white families, I don't know maybe one-third, there is 4 buildings in the complex, and then maybe like one-third of us were blacks.

Anonymous voice: And how did you feel about the neighborhood when you first got there, did you feel comfortable there?

OJ: Yes, very comfortable.

Anonymous voice: And you felt happy raising your kids there and everything.

OJ: Very good, very nice, and Robert was gone to <inaudible> memorial at that time, I think.

MN: So he was going to Powell memorial when you first moved to Morrison Avenue.

OJ: Yes, right. Then he decided he didn't want make-----commute everyday to Powell memorial, so he transferred to Monroe. He graduated from Monroe, and I don't remember which college he went to, was it City College. I don't know.

Anonymous voice: And did you find----did you find they had a good experience too your kids, that they were happy been in that neighborhood as opposed to <inaudible>?

OJ: They had a lot of friends from the same neighborhood now, but they were teenagers though.

MN: Were there good sports facilities in that neighborhood places to play you know play ball or parks near by?

OJ: I am trying to think, there was a park still there now but Robert, Robert always found someplace to play ball. Gary was not so much interested in sports, as he was in academics you know, but Robert could always find some place to ball, he enjoyed it.

MN: Now was-----when you were growing up was there much political discussion in your household was your father or did somebody like to talk politics?

OJ: My dad yes he did that's when I was born, but as I say I was concerned at that time, so-----

MN: So he talked, but you didn't necessarily listen?

OJ: Absolutely.

MN: Now you were obviously an amazing student was this something that with academics encouraged in your household or was this something you picked on your own?

OJ: I don't know <inaudible> I know I got ahead of my brothers and sisters somehow like I said I skipped several times in elementary school, but after that I think I became more relaxed about studying, so I managed to pass but I could have done a lot better, I am sure. I could have, but I didn't so, its water under the bridge.

Anonymous voice: I thought you were smiling, always smiling when you are giving yourself props.

MN: Right, right.

OJ: I had a very good life I can't complain about anything.

MN: Now what kind of things did your family do when you and your husband and your two sons were together, what did you do for family recreation and entertainment?

OJ: Yeah the family would go to a lot of basketball games, and a lot of baseball games.

MN: You mean like professional games, you went to Yankee games.

OJ: Yes we went to Yankee games, and we go dancing. The basketball game downtown was a stadium?

MN: Madison Square Garden.

OJ: Madison Square Garden, yeah.

MN: So your husband was a basketball fan?

OJ: He played basketball, yes, but not professionally.

MN: So you used to go to the Knick games the college games?

OJ: Yeah.

MN: So sports was a big thing in the household?

OJ: Yes.

MN: Now was music a big thing in the house?

OJ: Music and reading, everybody like to read, I just read, a very selective reading
<inaudible>.

MN: What sort of music was the people in your household listening to?

OJ: Well I guess just the current thing-----whatever was current or whatever came out, I think before television there were radios, and I think they probably seven records, so I don't remember exactly which records we had. Everybody likes music.

MN: Did anybody in your family like all the live music to hear bands or you know?

OJ: I don't know, I think maybe we may have attended some park, something in the park when they have <inaudible>, and that's about it, I probably couldn't afford anything more than that, so that's were we went.

MN: Do you remember any of the clubs along Prospect and Morris, you know Boston Road?

OJ: You mean bars.

MN: Bars like Club 845 or <inaudible> or any of those, <inaudible>?

OJ: I remember the names I think, <inaudible> and I don't know, I don't think I recall any of the other names, so I don't know where else we went, we didn't do much, we didn't have much money, we didn't have much money.

MN: Now did your family ever go on vacation back to the West Indies?

OJ: Yes, we did. We had a reunion in the West Indies, yes maybe 10 years ago, we had a reunion in Barbados.

Anonymous voice: Are there a lot of family members there still that you don't remember connections to-----well I never really got the lastname of your maiden name?

OJ: My maiden name was <inaudible>.

Anonymous voice: Okay.

OJ: My mothers maiden name was Springer.

Anonymous voice: Springer, and those families both descended from Barbados the <inaudible> and the Springer's?

OJ: Yes.

MN: The <inaudible> and the Springer's.

OJ: Yes.

MN: And did you husband have a big family in the south, did he ever go visit?

OJ: In the south, I never visited any of his family in the south, and I don't recall him speaking of anybody in the south.

Anonymous voice: And he worked at the Post Office pretty much the whole time you guys were married, until he retired?

OJ: Yeah.

Anonymous voice: Well did he worked at the post office in the Bronx or did he work in Manhattan?

OJ: That's a very good question, now what is the answer, I don't recall which station he was in, I really don't.

MN: And did you work in civil service until you retired?

OJ: I worked in civil service, yes.

MN: So you both kept working until retirement age, so you both had nice pensions?

OJ: Retirement age, wait a minute, you got me. I understand your point now, but I went back to work after the children were born, I kind of recall that I did go back to <inaudible> insurance fund.

MN: Did your family ever do anything like going cross country trips by car, you know go like Yellowstone Park or anything like?

OJ: My immediate family now?

MN: No, you and your husband and you know your two sons. Did you get in the car and like-----?

OJ: Let me see which road trips did we take?

MN: Did you go to Disney land or Disney world or anything like that?

OJ: By car I don't think, not by car. I think the only place we went, I think one place that we did go was <inaudible> port in Pennsylvania, it was <inaudible> port plus he had a aunt that lived there, and so we would go there for a couple of days, a weekend or something, but I don't know that we went any place else.

MN: Of your sons-----you know, your-----the families who your children grew up with did most of them end up becoming successful professionals like your children did, was that the power?

OJ: What is a successful profession, you mean like teachers?

MN: Yeah, anybody who has a job, and you know with a college degree.

OJ: So you are referring to the friends of the family, referring now to friends and family.

Anonymous voice: Well your sons friends really what are they up to now, the ones that are from the Morrison Avenue areas?

OJ: Morrison Avenue well his best friend works with him now, and who else were his friends, I can't really recall who his friends were at this moment.

MN: Now did most of them go to college, do you think?

OJ: I think at that time, yes I guess everyone was going to college.

MN: Now did your husband go to college?

OJ: He did not go to college.

MN: Because was interesting is obviously the two of you if you had been born later would have gone to college?

OJ: Probably, I might have had that opportunity.

Anonymous voice: Right, you been born, and coming of age during the depression that wasn't really <inaudible>.

MN: Yeah. Now are there any things that you want to say about like sort of-----you said you say you have a really good life?

OJ: I can't complain at all, I have a very good life and I haven't had any problems raising my sons, and I haven't had any you know physical difficulties <inaudible> that I can complain about.

Anonymous voice: So did you ever feel like at any point did you lose the neighborhood where you lived at around 825 Morrison Avenue, did you notice changing at any point, did you-----were you happy or sad about those changes?

OJ: I am very happy where I am living now, very, very happy.

Anonymous voice: You don't think the neighborhood changed for-----

OJ: I don't think so, no I haven't noticed anything like you know those gang <inaudible> I don't know if there is such a thing like gangs anymore, and I guess there is, but not-----
-----.

MN: So you don't feel unsafe going out, going to the store, going to the church?

OJ: No, not at all.

MN: Well that's good.

OJ: Well I guess the difference, well I do drive now most of the time, but even so I don't think I have any problems, sometime I could go for a walk because I feel like I should walk rather than use the car, sometimes it is uncalled for getting into the car. No, so I would just walk instead of taking the car. I am very happy where I am, so and I have a beautiful view.

MN: You have a terrace?

OJ: Yeah.

MN: Well that's nice.

OJ: And I am on the 18th floor, so that is really, really nice.

MN: Do you barbecue in the terrace at all?

OJ: No, I don't think that is even allowed. I have never done that. I think that was a trick question.

MN: I just wanted to know a little more of the housing. Did you ever <inaudible> Atlantic City or stuff like that?

OJ: Well in the days, I have done that, yes.

MN: Foxwoods.

OJ: Yeah, all that kind of stuff. I have done it.

MN: Now do the buses leave from the church or from your neighborhood?

OJ: I think when I was going at that time, usually I go with my sister who lives with in Bay side, and we probably had some place to randevouz and I am not even sure.

MN: Okay, did you go by car?

OJ: No, not by car by bus.

MN: Do you ever go on cruises?

OJ: Yeah, I love cruises that's my favorite vacation.

MN: When did you go on your first cruise, do you remember what it was like 30 years ago, 20 years ago?

OJ: I will admit by at least 15 years ago seems to me, seems that way, seems quite a while, so my <inaudible> partner does not like cruises so that prohibits me from going more often.

Anonymous voice: But that's something you like?

OJ: I like, but she gets sick so I can't expect her to go.

MN: Do you ever go on cruises with you know, your sons?

OJ: I think we had our family reunion on cruise, we had a family reunion on a cruise which was very nice of course, that's was a very nice trip. Story of my life, and I really feel great, so I have no complains at all.

Anonymous voice: What do you mean?

OJ: The memories that is the only thing, bad, very bad, very bad.

MN: Do you have any more questions?

Anonymous voice: Well, its funny I don't think I have too many-----I don't have anymore questions, its just if you have any other kind of thoughts or you know on where you like to live the most, you know like were you are right now. Did you see-----so you saw when you were moving to the Bronx as kind of a move on up for your family, that's what I was visualize.

OJ: We were in the projects you know, which was not a bad price for the Amsterdam houses very nice, only on the second floor it was when the children became teenagers you really realize it's a time for a move because no matter how you raise your children, and they still have that friends so.

MN: So you were worried about the peer influences at the Amsterdam houses?

OJ: Yes. I lived in the projects, and you can't criticize it because we all have to start some place, but some people just stayed-----some people weren't interested in what their children were doing so they had to had friends.

MN: And this was in the late 50's and the early 60's?

OJ: 60's, early 60's.

MN: Now did you see a difference between the Amsterdam houses when you first moved in and then in the 60's, do you think that you know the family-----were there a lot of families like yours of the first group who were looking to move up and out, do you think?

OJ: If there a lot of people moving out at that time is that the question?

MN: Yes.

OJ: Well I can't say-----we left a lot of people there still that we were friendly with, but they are still there or not or I do think some maybe, whether they passed on, or whether they are just-----their siblings are still there or what, I don't know. I think there are still some maybe still living there, and it is not a bad place, it is a very lovely location <inaudible> on 61st street.

MN: I know it very well because-----

OJ: When you are walking on 59th street Columbus Circle.

MN: And your right near Lincoln Center.

OJ: Absolutely, it was a nice location, after awhile the projects become you know-----the parents move out or the parents don't take care of their children or tell them what they should or shouldn't do, something good. It changes that you don't really what to put with if you don't have to.

MN: And once you got to Morrison, it was a whole different thing there, everybody cared for their kids, and looked out-----

OJ: I am not going to say anything, I never said that. No it was different all together. First of all there is a building-----there are 4 buildings were I am and they are not that close to each other, not that there kids can't go from one place to the other because there is playgrounds between each building. Playgrounds that are accessible to the children, that's

the only place you see them playing, they do not play outside, and the parents can see what they are doing from the windows, and everything really is a nice to be, and I have no intentions of leaving until the day comes when they take me. Yes, I really like it a lot.

MN: That's great.

OJ: The view is magnificent, it is a really a great place to be, now they have the cultivated the park which I am on that side of park.

MN: They are building up that park.

OJ: They are cultivating that park, and the playground there is very, very nice. I like being there a lot. The transportation is not bad, it is very good.

MN: Now where is the nearest subway?

OJ: The subway, well you could walk to the subway, you just have to walk over the over pass, you cross <inaudible> boulevard. It is easy enough to walk across, but you don't have to, take a bus to the subway, and so its nice, I like it very much.

MN: Anything else you what to tell us?

OJ: I can't think of anything, its very dull, but what can I tell you.

MN: That's okay, dull is good.

Anonymous voice: No, yeah, no.

OJ: I am very happy where I am, and I am very happy to have lived this long, so I don't think I can do another 80 years, but up to <inaudible>.

MN and Anonymous voice: Well, okay thank you so much.

OJ: Okay, thank you.

[END OF TAPE]

