Corbin Lillian

A: [00:00] The [Dilaway?] house that’s near the Timilty. That was one of that they had here. The William Lloyd Garrison is one of the (inaudible - rattling noises) the sites. There’s a school named after him on Hutchins Street. It’s now a senior citizens home.

As you know, we had the Orange line, the overhead line. We had a lot of street cars. They used to have -- some of the streets have the marks still on the streets but we don’t have street cars running, except like on Huntington Avenue, which Dean [Gillick?] called street cars with the things overhead.

In terms of (inaudible) about living, we didn’t have any violence, so we were not exposed to what we are exposed to now, to the extent, mostly because (inaudible) not familiar with violence, [01:00] we’re scared. I’ll give you an example.

If I get on the silver line and go to Dudley and wait for the 44 -- in the first place, I don’t ride the T during the wintertime because I will not sit outside in the cold to
wait for the bus, but I take a cab all the time. So when spring comes and I don’t want to take a cab and I go on the Silver line and I sit in Dudley Station, I let the 44 go by (inaudible). Finally, a lady came over to me and she said, “Miss,” and I said, “yes,” she says, “Are you all right,” and I says “Yes.” She says, “What bus do you want?” I said, “I want the 44.” I says, “I’m watching the sights.” It’s just like going to movies, the sights that goes on, as you know in Dudley Station. However, [02:00] if I’m sitting on the bench and it’s during school time, school let-out time, and the kids come get off the bus, they start arguing or getting restless around me, I will get up and change my seat because I figure bullets come out, I’d be in the wrong place at the wrong -- (inaudible) say well how did she get shot, because I happen to be, so I do get up when I see a bunch of kids. You all make me nervous, so I will get up and change my seat. I have gotten on the bus, particularly in the wintertime when these people wear these down coats and whatever, and they get on like storm troopers, I turn around and get off the bus. I’m not going to ride the bus with those kids because they’re acting rough. Bullets come through the window and everything else, I don’t want to be there.
Now, this is a new fear that we didn’t have in our time, and I don’t think I’m saying anything that you’re not you’re not familiar with [03:00] or have not heard before or you’ve not even seen it happen, right? That’s what -- the older people are afraid of younger people in that respect, and I’m also ashamed to say it. But, this is a fact. Does that answer your question?

F: (inaudible) before, do you think at all like history is repeating itself in any type of way?

A: In a sense. The attitude that the schools (inaudible) taking towards the education in schools, they want to enforce more education. There was a time when they -- kids just about ran to school and did what they wanted to do, did their homework or didn’t do their homework. Now, everyone is concerned [04:00] about the quality of education. What the kids are getting doesn’t measure up to what we used to get, and that could be for many reasons, because of the indifference that the parents have in the home, they don’t follow through. I used to have my children recite their homework to me while I was getting dinner, and they were surprised, particularly if they had poems that I knew when they missed a word and stuff, because we had the same things in school and so forth. But the parents don’t have time. They’re tired or they work
and going off to a second job, so they’re on their own, which isn’t doing justice to you. I think you’ll find that education is very important. It’s the source of getting ahead in life. If you don’t have the education, you’re not going to make it. You’re going to be in competition with those who have private education [05:00] or better education and that’s sad.

The other thing about the education also is that if we didn’t know a particular job, they used to train you on your job. That’s no longer possible either. You either have to know it when you get there, or you have to go to school to learn it, but they will not train you on your job. And if you find a job, because you can’t get a job elsewhere, one of the things -- a tool you can use if you have good education to catch on quick, start in at the bottom and when they get to know how good you are, they’ll put you in a position. They’ll promote you, and you could find yourself at the top and be able to say, “Well, when I came here, this is what I did and look where I am today.” The ambition has to be something that no one can give you; [06:00] you have to want to do it yourself.
One of the things I thought about that I didn’t tell you was during the war, the economic conditions, we had what they called rations. We were all given -- families were given ration books. You heard about that? You could only get a certain amount of meat, depending on the size of your family. You couldn’t get your stockings, nylon stockings, because they were used for the parachutes. I’m trying to think of all the things we couldn’t have. When speaking about cooking, [07:00] I had to learn how to cook simple dishes -- we had to improvise because of things we couldn’t get. (inaudible) we still had a family, my mother was raising us and everything. But that was some of the inconveniences that we experienced because of the war.

Now, (inaudible) changed that much because what you’re experiencing now, the same -- you don’t have ration books, that’s true, but you’re experiencing another war.

Now World War I -- I wasn’t alive then, but World War I was supposed to be the war to end all wars, and we’ve had several wars since then, including World War II. But the thing about World War I is when we had Armistice Day, November 11th, as a result of that, to honor the men who were killed in the war, and because we’ve had so many wars
since then, we no longer have Armistice Day, which is a truce, we have Veterans Day [08:00] to honor all the veterans, Korea, whatever, Iraq, and that’s why we have Veterans Day now instead of Armistice Day. But November 11th is celebrated -- it’s one of the holidays that’s not celebrated on a Monday. November 11th is celebrated on November 11th, no matter what day of the week it happens because the veterans fought for that to stay as it is. That’s why it’s called Veterans Day.

F: So are you saying that education is repeating itself and the wars?

A: From what I’m reading in the paper about the school systems, as a matter of fact, they even offer incentives to the teachers because they have a lot of deadwood -- deadwood means someone has a job and because they’ve had it over a period of time, they think they’ve got it made, but they don’t put their heart into it. [09:00] Before they had -- I’m trying to think of the word, it will come to me -- where you could have -- equal rights, for example -- we didn’t have as many people of color in the teaching system and most of the teachers we had were from Ireland. They came to this country. They had a potato famine in Ireland and they, like the Caribbeans, came to America for a better way of life. Most of them went into teaching, and so what
happened when I was working for this insurance company, everyone there was Irish. So when St. Patrick’s Day came, they wanted to go out to celebrate, so we went to this place that had happy time, you know, after work, they go have happy time, you have a drink, whatever, and that particular day, [10:00] all they played was Irish songs, and everybody was singing the Irish songs and so was I. They turned and looked at me. I knew all the words, I knew everything, and they says, “Corbin, how come you can... because (inaudible) Irish, and they didn’t teach us American songs and they didn’t teach Negro songs. They didn’t teach us whatever. They taught us what they knew and I knew all the Irish songs.

F: What were some of them? Do you remember what some of the songs were?

A: That we sang?

F: Mm-hmm.

A: My long Bonnie (inaudible), those songs, you know. That’s what they were singing, and that’s what they were playing, that’s what I sang. (inaudible) me because now I have improved. I know my own songs, which I’m proud to say. But I’m not knocking it, either.

We had quality [11:00] education because in those days, the
teachers were dedicated. Number one, they couldn’t marry, if they got married, they couldn’t teach, and I think the complication, now, is that they have too much on their lives and on their plate and they have families, also, and they don’t give the attention to teaching that they should.

Number two, they didn’t have disciplinary problems because we behaved. A lot of times, But getting back to the school system, the teachers come and they (inaudible) there’s no point in trying. It disrupts their class to have to take 20 minutes to try to straighten out a problem when you could be learning. So you get cheated in your learning. Then they say, well, you have to stay after school or detention, as you call it now, to learn a little more and the pupil doesn’t want to stay, and your (inaudible) ain’t going to stay, I’m going home.

F: They don’t even teach us in that little bit of time. They make us clean something or sit there, [12:00] making me write “I will not do this..."

M: Like 40 times, but you can use the time...

A: The other thing is someone will say to us older people, “What beautiful handwriting you have.” Before school -- you heard push pulls and ovals? Never heard of it. We had to do push pulls, (inaudible), and then ovals, circles,
every day before school. And what it did for us was the Ls went up, the Bs went up, we did a D the loop went up, and then at the end of the course, you got a certificate to show that you had studied the Palmer method. The kids today, they print. You can almost tell what school they went to, they all -- they don’t write, they do box language, I call it. [13:00] Have you ever seen your handwriting? Do you like it?

F: No.

A: They don’t take the time in school to do that anymore, but they want to get back to it because what they see. I go in the bank and I’ve written a check and she turns it over to see if I signed it, “Oh,” she says, “What beautiful handwriting.” I (inaudible) all my life, but anyone who went to school in my era has beautiful handwriting. I’m not knocking it, but you asked me a question and I’m trying to answer it.

I don’t want to sound like I’m bragging about those days, there were a lot of things that could have been corrected, but the school system was the best. The teacher didn’t get paid the kind of money they’re getting now, but that was a good salary for them because that was all that they had. [14:00] Now, the teachers are counting the days that
they’re going to retire. They can’t wait to get out of the system. There’s a lack of interest. There’s a lack of dedication only because the pupils make it difficult for them to teach the way they would like to teach. What was that word you said the other day, the DSS or whatever?

F: Yeah, DSS.

A: They used to have rattans. You put your hand out if you did something, particularly the boys, get the rattan. You heard about that? Teachers can’t do that today. It would go a long way in discipline if they could. I know, I saw your eyes.

F: What I want to ask you about is I see your pin there.

A: My boyfriend?

Q: Who is that on your pin?

A: Our potential president, we think.

F: Mr. Barack Obama?

A: Mm-hmm.

Q: I just want to ask you...

A: How I feel about it?

F: Yes, especially in light of the time you grew up when maybe you couldn’t do certain things.

A: To me, when he and Hillary were having their little battle, it didn’t matter to me so much who won that particular
battle, as it was, what it was doing through young people. We had never had a woman aspire to be president who stayed in the running that long. We’ve had females running for president, but they never made it that long. [16:00] We had never -- the closest we came to having a black person, black male aspire to be president was Colin Powell, but he wasn’t running; he pulled out of it in a hurry because he saw what was going on with his buddy. Any how, to me, this is history in the making. Somebody calls it the two candidates that were aspiring to for the presidency. I think that when Hillary put her hat in the ring, I don’t think she thought -- I think she thought she had it made, being female. We would love to have had the first woman president and the eagle, the female, but then when he came into the picture, the response that the country gave him was something that she hadn’t expected and made the campaign run longer.

What I am saying is that he [17:00] may or may not (inaudible) because now, he’s fighting against McClean [sic] who is a Republican, he’s a Democrat. But what it is doing for the young males today, you can see now. See I can (inaudible) the president, because you knew someone who did try and almost made it. So it gives you inspiration --
give you inspiration but not so much as a male, and that’s how I feel. May the best man win. But it was a good campaign. I was getting tired of it. I mean, you know, there are other things in life, but it was a money-maker for the newspapers because everybody wanted to know what’s the latest, what’s the latest, and it’s history in the making that we’ve never known before. Did I answer your question? Oh, your question, sorry. [18:00]

F: What kind of music did you guys listen to? Like what was the style? Now, we have R&B and pop.

A: Duke Ellington.

F: Duke Ellington?


M: I know jazz.

M: Where did you go to listen to those?

A: On the radio.

M: Did you catch any playing in Roxbury or in Boston?

A: Oh yeah, the RKO Downtown, they would come for personal appearances, and we would go down -- oh, that’s the beautiful part about the movies. See, you could go down and you could stay all day on the one fare, and then it got to the point when they would empty the theaters now, you have to get up and leave. When we would go down, [19:00] all of us from Roxbury, and we would go to the RKO and
(inaudible) we would go and they usually came during the school vacations. We would go every day. It didn’t cost much, a quarter, and we would stay all day.

And Duke Ellington is still popular. Count Basie, (inaudible). I’ve got records by them, loads of records, but they’re not they’re not so good anymore because the CDs came into being and they tell you that you can get these copies on CDs but if my record player would play, then I wouldn’t need the CD, but I keep them because they’re collectors’ items.

F: One thing you may not know about Mrs. Corbin is she’s technologically savvy. She has Gmail. She knows her way around the computer which is... [20:00]

A: I have a cell phone.

F: So what’s your favorite modern technology right now?

A: What is my favorite?

Q: Like the computer, like the Apple (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

A: I don’t have a laptop, but when I went to a workshop for the laptop, which was beginning to come into being, there was a way of introducing it to people in case you wanted to buy a laptop, and the thing I didn’t like -- just like what she’s doing -- the thing was in the middle (overlapping
dialogue; inaudible). I couldn’t get used to it, so I wasn’t interested. Now, I understand that’s the thing. This is lightweight. The one that my daughter, when she died, she left was heavy, but I think that’s -- so I gave it away. I couldn’t [21:00] carry it. It was too heavy for me.

F: I have some music from the 40s, so I’m just going to play a couple of songs here, if I can get all my technology to cooperate. I plug it into the headphone jack or the -- yeah, the headphone jack. So let’s see, you said Duke Ellington?

A: Mm-hmm, Count Basie, Lionel Hampton.

(playing songs for some time, some places for long periods of time without conversation but voices speaking are not always heard during this period.)

A: I used to belong to a group and we raised money to send kids to camp. They have a different word for it now; we called it underprivileged at that time. So that was one of the numbers (inaudible), [22:00] that’s one of the numbers I danced to. I danced.

F: So let’s see, what about this one?

A: Begin the Beguine. I had to stop and think about it. It’s
been a long time since I heard it.

F: (inaudible, music too loud).

A: That’s Armstrong. Louis Armstrong.

F: (inaudible).

A: (inaudible) I know it’s Louis Armstrong. Jeepers Creepers, [23:00] where’d you get that smile.

F: (inaudible).

A: We had that tune. We went to dances. I don’t recognize the voice.

F: (inaudible).

F: (inaudible).

A: (inaudible). [24:00]

F: To the affirmative. Don’t mess...

A: With Mr. In-Between. I can’t recognize the voice.

F: (inaudible) person who did it. (inaudible).

F: Did you guys have it.

A: Did you know Elma Lewis? [25:00] (inaudible). She’s my sister-in-law. So I’ve been exposed -- she used to teach (inaudible) that’s why I bought that -- she used to teach ballet. That’s -- picked it up and put it in her pocket. I can’t think of who it is. I know.

F: Ella.

A: Ella Fitzgerald. I’ve got records by her, too. I refuse to buy the CDs because -- I do have some CDs, but they’re
like (inaudible) had diabetes Luther Van...

F: (inaudible).

A: Yeah. This is the first CD that I bought and I got that by accident because I went out to Foxwoods when he was appearing [26:00] and this girl kept raving about him and I said, who is this that’s going to come? And I went out and heard him, came home and bought a couple of CDs by him and that’s when he had the stroke a couple of months later, so I was so glad. Up until them, I didn’t know who was the man because he’s your generation.

F: (inaudible).

A: I like music.

F: (inaudible).

A: Yeah. The only music I’m not too fond of is cowboy music. I like all kinds of music. I like classical music. I go and see the Pops.

F: What activities do you do now that -- like you still do the same activities that you did when you were younger, like listening to the radio, stuff like that?

A: Oh, I don’t listen to the radio. I watch television. I mean, the radio, to me, has a lot of [27:00] talk shows, and they’re all debatable and people calling in with negative attitudes and stuff so I don’t want to hear that because sometimes, it’s not complimentary to what they’re
talking about anyhow. But I watch the news in the morning, the news again at night. But I like the live theater. I like to go to see plays and things like that.

F: And you were in a play recently, right?
A: Yeah. It came out good.
F: what was the name of it?
A: A Mad Breakfast.
F: A Mad Breakfast.
A: Yeah. It was a one-act. Our group -- we used to be in plays over the years, and we used to be in three-act plays with no problem. And then, we used to do two one-act plays with no problem. But this one-act play we were supposed to have done last spring, and we’re all in the same age (inaudible), we don’t have Alzheimer’s quite, [28:00] but we couldn’t learn our lines as fast as we set the day for the play. We still didn’t know our lines. We set the date up again, and well finally, we said we’ll make it June 1st and sink or swim, we’re going to do the play, so we did, and we did it at the charter school. Any other questions?
F: You know, I always have questions but it’s not my time.
A: (inaudible).
F: I said, you know I always have questions, but it’s not my time.
A: There are people who lived in Roxbury who are famous, like
Melnea Cass. I knew Mrs. Cass. She lived up there on Harold Street. Do you know where Harold Street is?

Malcolm X’s family grew up around Harold Street, Washington Park and all around there. He grew up there.

The people who founded Freedom House, Otto and Muriel Snowden, I knew them. So, they’re in my era. Of course, most of them are dead now. But these are people who grew up or lived in Roxbury.

Michael Haynes, for example, who is now -- who was the minister of 12th Baptist, now he grew up on Haston Street, just one block over from where we lived, and I know his mother and father, and he has a brother who plays the drums, Roy Haynes, you probably heard of him. That’s his brother. Reverend Haynes is the baby in the family, and Roy is the only one left now. All his other brothers are dead. These are people, they grew up in Roxbury.

Donna Summer, you all know Donna Summer, while her grandfather used to go to church here and they grew up on Ruggles Street, across the street -- well not she, but her
mother, she’s a younger generation. We all grew up around here.

The bank that’s at Grove Hall one...

F: One United.

A: One United, right, and they have a building dedicated to Mrs. Guscott, well, that’s Kenneth’s mother, and they lived diagonally across the street from us on Ruggles Street.

F: You heard of the Guscotts, They’re someone you should definitely look up.

A: Oh, they’re famous. [31:00] He has a business -- it’s not really real estate, it’s like construction called [Long Bay?] on Mass Avenue. He owns half of Mass Avenue, going up to Huntington. He owns Hartwell Street, which is over in Grove Hall. You know where Georgia Street is?

F: Yeah.

A: OK, there’s a street going that way called Hartwell. He owns about five or six houses on that street. It’s got big (inaudible), #4, #6, #8, and his brother and his mother live in those houses, also. Also (inaudible) Milton, but he’s been very influential in things that he has done in Roxbury. At one time, I had heard that he owned Ferdinand’s, but I’m not sure, it’s under reconstruction now. Either they couldn’t agree on what they wanted to do
with it and then they said they were going to put
government offices in there, [32:00] and I don’t know what
they’re going to do now. It might even be condos at this
point.

F: The city’s taking the building by eminent domain and
they’re rebuilding it. You know that construction that’s
going on at Dudley?

A: It’s been boarded up for so long and nothing’s happening in
there. We’re so tickle pink, now.

F: And you know, if you know that Kenneth Guscott grew up here
in the neighborhood, remember I was telling you about how
the young men sold newspapers, shined shoes, delivered
groceries, he was one of the ones doing that as a child
here in the neighborhood. We should let you finish your
lunch because (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

A: I’d rather talk and I couldn’t talk with food in my mouth
(inaudible). That’s all right.

I think you asked me if I liked living in Roxbury, or was
it you?

F: It was me.

A: My answer, [33:00] and still is, Roxbury has so much
history (inaudible) burial ground right there at Eustis
Street was named after one of the people who fought in the
Civil War. But all around here, it was just water (inaudible). When they have the Midnight Ride of Paul Revere, and they talk about that, and they talk about William Dawes, that’s First Church in Roxbury that’s up there near with the Timilty School is, is the first church in Roxbury, but that was almost the end of where Roxbury -- all of this was all water down in this area, and they used to pull in here, and he came there to warn the people that the British were coming so Paul Revere went out -- was it Charlestown, [34:00] and William Dawes went up Highland Street, and that’s why it’s called Highland, because the land was high. That was not where the water was, and that’s a very historic area along in there, if you ever get a chance to look into it.

F: What do you miss the most?
A: What do I miss? My husband and my daughter. My daughter died four years ago. There’s not much that you say you can miss, except to say the peace and solitude that we used to have, but at the same time, so much improvement and new technology, when people talk about the good old days, well, I wouldn’t really call them [35:00] good old days. I mean, I lived in a house that wasn’t steam heat. We had a coal stove and a wood stove, old that old-fashioned stuff that you don’t have now. I don’t miss it either, don’t miss it.
F: You don’t miss a cold-water flat? You don’t miss once-a-week bath?

A: You have to get the oil stove and carry it into the bathroom to heat the bathroom so you can take it. I still have my mother’s scrub board. We didn’t have washing machines so you scrubbed it on the scrub board. We sent our sheets and pillowcases and things like that out to the laundry. And then, we had a pot-bellied stove in the living-room that when we washed our clothes, we used to hang our blouses on the ledge of the mantle piece so they would dry, and it was cold. [36:00] The houses were cold.

We used to have irons that were not electric irons so you put them on the stove. When they got hot, you put a towel around them and put them in the bed to warm up the bed.

The good part about the coal stove was that you could do your baked beans all night, put it in there, and you could put your turkey in and let it cook.

We didn’t have a refrigerator, so when you bought your turkey -- winters were colder than they are now, colder, you could make Jell-O and put them on the window sill and it would jell. When we put the turkey out the window, we
used to hang it out the window to keep it cold. However, we had turns emptying the pan under the icebox. The man used to deliver the ice and I was no bigger than (inaudible) so my water used to always spill on the floor and create havoc and my sisters used to fuss. So I devised a way, when it was my turn, to take a pot with a handle and tip out the water so that I could lift up the pan. Now, those were the things I don’t miss. Otherwise, I like what’s been happening. I like the new inventions and all like that, the comfort. I like all of that, I do.

F: I have a picture of a coal stove. I’m trying to find it so I can show it to them.

A: I was surprised when I went to Barbados and went to the museums down there and they had a coal stove down there. A coal stove is -- when you wanted to cook, you had to make a fire. So you put the newspapers in first, put the wood in afterwards, and you used to have these little pieces of coal...

F: Briquettes.

A: Briquettes, yeah, that you put in and you light it. And then when it all caught fire -- similar to the barbecue things, when it all caught fire, you could put your food on the stove and it would cook. You also had to have the same stove in the summer, so it was cooking in the winter and
cooking in the summer, but hotter in the summer because how would you eat if you have (inaudible).

F: How did you keep things in the summer, like how did you keep them cold?

A: Oh, you buy a piece of ice. The man would come around with the team and you would tell them you want a ten-cent piece or a 25-cent and he would put it on his shoulder and bring it up to your house and put it in your icebox.

F: I am going to show them this photo...

A: Boy is that old.

F: I’m going to show them this photo right here. This was taken across the street before -- Lenox Street before they tore down the houses to make the Lenox [39:00] -- so this is a --

A: A kitchen.

F: -- kitchen with one of those kind of stoves.

A: Show them that. That’s where you got your hot water out of there and went to the stove. The sink over here -- this is what the sinks look like, and that’s the stove.

F: Is that how a normal kitchen looked or was it smaller?

A: Was that a big kitchen?

F: This seems like it was fairly big.

A: The kitchens aren’t like they are now. Let me see. I’m trying to see what else in here I can tell them. This
floor doesn’t even have linoleum on it.

F: Right, because that was when they were going to -- they called them tenements and they were tearing them down to make the projects, so this would have been one of the worst, you know, because this is the city, proving that they have a good reason to tear down what were really beautiful brick buildings that were structurally sound but the insides were raggedy, so they took pictures of the insides and claimed it was a tenement and then tore it down [40:00] to build the Lenox development.

A: the other thing about those days was no matter how large your apartment was, the rent was one flat rent. The thing that happens today is they count rooms, say two-bedroom, three-bedroom, who’s to say how many bedrooms you’re supposed to have, and that’s how they charge your rent, and I think it’s ridiculous. Of course, rent wasn’t expensive.

F: How did the Great Depression, like did it affect Roxbury a lot?

A: It affected the world. The Great Depression was the whole country, like they’re talking about now. Well, I can only relate to my parents. My father hadn’t been in this country that long, but only citizens could get a job. You had to be a citizen to get a job. That’s how they discriminated because there were a lot of people here from
the Islands, but he worked on a boat and he worked on the
boat where he came from so until World War II,
there weren’t that many jobs for minorities, anyone, and it
wasn’t until the men who went into the war that the women
began working and, I said, they came out of the kitchen and
we haven’t gone back ever since.

F: Just one more thing I want to show. Do you see that
washing machine on the back porch there, that’s right here?
A: Ahh, yeah.

F: So there’s a...

A: And you don’t see people hanging out their clothes anymore,
either. Everybody’s got a dryer. (overlapping dialogue;
inaudible).

F: There are still some people hanging out their clothes.

A: Well, a lot of them have back porches, too, now. They have
lines on their back porches. (overlapping dialogue;
inaudible). When I lived on [Wanbacks?] on the third
floor, and I’d never been that high before, and so
when I first went out to hang out my diapers, I used to
hang with my back to the street because I was nervous. I
had to get used to being that high up. Now, I have a
dryer.

F: Remember I told you about Madison Park? This was taken in
the ‘70s, but remember, I told you there was a bandstand in
the middle and paths leading all into the park. So, this is an aerial shot, I think, in the mid 70s, of Madison Park, before all the land was cleared to make way for the Madison Park housing.

A: I was telling them that I used to cut through the park to get to Tremont Street, the Sherwin School. We could see Madison park from my window on Ruggles Street. And Madison Park, here, [43:00] is only called Madison Park, taking the name from the original Madison Park that was there. It’s not where it was.

F: That’s a lot of green space. You can imagine, even though you’re living in maybe a small apartment, not the best, right outside your door is this beautiful park with huge trees that was a place where everybody...

A: It was beautiful. We used to go over there and sit in the park.

F: And then, some people tell me that when it was hot in the summertime, they would bring their victrolas into the park and play records.

A: We had fun. Having those pictures is good because it gives them gives them (inaudible). I mean, everything is so modern now. It’s just like when -- if you rode along Washington Street from Dudley, even as far up as where Eggleston is now, [44:00] all those homes are new. They
were built in the past -- they have no idea what it looked like before. Yeah, they’re all new, and that’s because the Orange line came down and moved over to Columbus Avenue and exposed to people who -- then you saw how bad the house looked all the way to Forest Hills, and everybody on that route began fixing up their houses. Mayor Menino, of course, every time he saw a vacant spot, he built another house, and that’s why all Washington Street is beautiful, because of that.

F: It’s later than I thought. You know Catherine Frederick, Cathy Watson?

A: Yeah, she’s still alive, you know.

F: I’m going to talk to her right now.

A: She’s at the Bostonian.

F: I’m on my way there.

A: Tell her I said hello. I used to work for her at the Shaw House.

F: I will.

A: Tell her Lillian, Christopher Corbin. [45:00] I had a friend who was in the Bostonian who told me that she was there about two years ago and I went to see her and I figured well, she’s not going to remember me, yet, she did. She’s a beautiful woman; she is beautiful, I mean, not just in personality, facially speaking, she is still beautiful.
I couldn’t get over it.

F: I went to see her -- I mean, this sounds weird, but she doesn’t look a day over 62, and she’s 97. You know, she maybe has a few more little like creases than I do, and she’s 97 years old.

A: She lived on [Harishaw?] Street but she was Miss Shaw House. She was the secretary there, and after high school, I used to go there and work as a receptionist to relieve her when she went to lunch at the switchboard.

M: Well, [46:00] I’ll let you go and get back to your...

A: Well, that’s all right. As I said, I enjoy talking -- I like telling you about the things that I knew and what happened. As a matter of fact, I was lying in bed last night thinking about (inaudible) memories to recall, and you will do the same thing later in life (inaudible), but I used to see people, older people, do that and wondered they’re just talking about the old days, but you know, it gives us a little pleasures. Yes, I’m glad about the things that’s happened now and all that, but we had some good times, and see, I remembered the songs.

F: Yes.

END OF AUDIO FILE