

**NSW DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING**

**‘Millers Point Oral History Project’**

**INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT**

INTERVIEWEE:	<b>Teri Carter</b>
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INTERVIEWER:	Siobhán McHUGH
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RESTRICTIONS ON USE:	Nil

*Note: The opinions expressed in this oral history interview are those of the interviewee and do not necessarily represent in whole or in part the position of the Department of Housing, the Government Architect's Office, the Department of Commerce or the Oral History Consultants.*

START OF TAPE MP-SH5 SIDE A

00:04 Tape identification

*Teri, maybe you could run through for me again what your family history is here at Millers Point, where it starts.*

00:49 We moved into the area in 1961, my grandmother and her third husband William

O'Connor - my grandmother's name is Dorothy - they purchased the landlord rights to a property at 19 Lower Fort Street and they paid goodwill money and that gave them the opportunity of being landlord of that particular residential.

*What is goodwill money?*

01:20 Goodwill is when you are not actually buying the property, you are buying the goodwill of the business. It was set up as a residential property, letting out the rooms and so any money earned was theirs. The lady that was there before, she wanted to leave, so she sold the goodwill of the place, which was basically the running of the house. The house at the time was owned by the Maritime Services Board and was later handed over to the Department of Housing.

*So she started in Lower Fort Street and how many children were there in that family?*

02:02 It was just my grandmother and her husband and her son by her second marriage, John. They moved in and then she invited my mother and myself to move in with them. My mother was her daughter-in-law, so it was her other son Ken who wasn't living there - that was my father.

*So describe your mother and father then and what they did.*

02:32 My mother and father separated when I was four and we lived over at Neutral Bay and then at North Sydney, which was a family base, my great-grandmother lived at North Sydney at that time. They had come down from the country, I think before the Depression and they lived over there for along while. When my parents separated, as a baby we were at Burwood, then mum left and went to Neutral Bay. Then when they had to leave the place at North Sydney, that was being rented, because they were putting the expressway through that was leading to the Harbour Bridge, so when my great-grandma had to leave, my grandmother purchased the goodwill of 19 Lower Fort Street and when she moved in there she invited my mother and I, who were renting a very small house at North Sydney, would we like to go there because we didn't have much.

*That was fairly generous of it, it was unusual.*

03:38 She is a wonderful woman. She just saw that my mother was struggling and she cared about both of us, as my father didn't provide anything. He was an interesting character who lived a pretty exciting life and we were the contrast to that, we were stable and boring, I suppose, to a lot of people. He sort of left this world that we were in to pursue a more exciting life.

*What sort of work was he in?*

04:21 He was often involved in advertising and sales, small business ventures, things like that. He was involved at one stage with health clubs. I don't know that he ever had a stable occupation, he was just moving from one thing to another and it just depended on what mate had what going at what particular time, so he just sort of went with the flow but he mixed with some very interesting people throughout his life. People loved to have him around, he was a great story teller.

*I just thought I read he was at sea, that he worked on the ships.*

05:05 No, I didn't actually mention that he was on a yacht at one stage, he was shipwrecked, but he wasn't at sea.

*When your mother was living here with you as a young child did she work to support you?*

05:30 Yes, she worked basically from when we left dad. She had to work six days a week to provide for us because there were no benefits back then, so if you had a child you had to work. She worked as a barmaid originally over at the North Star Hotel at North Sydney. As the years went by she had various jobs but she used to stay in places for years at a time. When I was a bit older she worked down town in the theatres, cinemas rather, then after that she was at the Masonic Club, doing catering there, so she had quite a few jobs. Apparently when she was younger she was an usherette in the theatres and that was apparently equivalent to doing modelling back in those days, they had to be very beautifully groomed and quite gorgeous, actually.

*When she was working did your grandmother provide the care for you after school?*

06:32 Yes, once we moved in here I used to come home and nanna would be there all the time. I mean nanna and Bill were my stable everyday family that I interacted with, and Johnny. Johnny was there, he was working or at TAFE when he was a bit younger. He wasn't there a lot as he got older, he used to take himself off and out.

*Was Johnny your uncle and there was another uncle?*

07:01 Well Bill was my grandmother's third husband but I used to call him Uncle Bill, never called him grandfather or anything but he was my grandfather in every way.

*Was that a strange thing for your grandmother to have married three times?*

07:15 Well, it didn't seem strange to me because that was just a matter of fact that she had been married three times. She had some funny opinions, I mean their relationship was quite hilarious the way they used to interact. He'd tease her a little and she'd talk back and put him in his place all the time and he'd walk away giggling, thinking it was really funny that he'd managed to get a bit of a rise out of her. She had a fairly unhappy background with the

men that she had been involved with. I think her first husband, which was my father's father, he more or less abandoned her when my father was young and that was up in Narrabri. Then she came down to the city because her mother had already come down here so she came down with my father when they were young. Then she later married another man, Ken, and that was a very unhappy relationship, my father has very angry memories of him because he was a very difficult man to be around, he was a very cruel man.

08:28 Fortunately my grandmother eventually left him and married Bill and Bill was a jolly, terrific person. But he was very colourful too - he'd always get thrown out of the pubs around here for having one too many and picking fights, it was not unusual for him to be thrown out of a place because he was brawling. He just seemed to roll from one pub to the next to find someone to get into this fight-up with, so he was a character. I remember once coming around the corner - I borrowed his car and my first child was only young and she was in the baby seat at the back and I came around the corner and I thought there is two silly men rolling around in front of the pub and the next minute I spotted one was Bill. So I got really upset and I'm dancing around going, 'Stop it, stop it you two,' and he sort of looked at me with this drunken, stupid look and sort of threw his coat towards me. I ran up to nanna's and yelled out, 'Nanna, nanna Bill's in a fight,' and she said, 'Damned well serves him right, whatever he gets for getting involved in anything like that,' she couldn't have cared less.

*Which hotel was it?*

The Harbour View in Lower Fort Street.

*Were there a lot of fights do you think? Was that at the time of the six o'clock closing?*

10:00 It would have been. The thing about drinking back in those days - it just didn't have the same stigma attached to it and people would come out blind drunk and get in their cars. We used to go on holidays and I remember when Bill would drive, our whole trip would be punctuated by hotel stops, where nanna and I would have to stay in the car with a lemonade and he would be having a quick beer and then we'd be on our way again until the next pit stop. I remember the brawling that was involved with him because it was relative to us. I mean I was probably quite sheltered from most things and unaware. I knew that he had a temper that came out through drinking and he was one of these people who became quite angry when he was drunk, but he was never abusive to us so I never saw his bad side but I knew to stay away from him, I could see it in his eyes, so you gave him a clear berth.

*Can you describe the house at Lower Fort Street?*

11:05 Yes. I was very excited when we first went there because my experience with my mother prior to that had always been of a small room somewhere, or a small house. I was only six at the time when we moved in there and that house to me seemed huge. When we walked in there wasn't very much furniture around and I can remember running right up the top, and then running right down to the bottom to the basement and I was really struck by the bells that were lined up on the top of the wall. I think it was nanna who actually said to me that they were the servants' bells and that fascinated me because I had never been exposed to anything about servants and things like that before, so it got me thinking a bit about how fascinating that was. I explored that house upside down, inside out, it was a fascinating house.

*So were there three levels then?*

12:02 You had the ground level and then you had the basement, and the basement led straight out to the back yard. Then you had the first floor and then the top floor. I mean it is really not that high but it seemed like it to me, being six, that it was this huge house. Our rooms were upstairs right on the very top level, I can remember nanna and Bill had one room, Johnny had the other and mum and I had the back room. I did something really foolish one day. Because my mother was one of these mothers - if she is around you she doesn't take her eyes off you, that is her way of caring for children, you just don't take your eyes off them, she would have been hysterical if she known that I'd dropped her hairbrush out the window and it slid right down into the guttering, and I was terrified that I was going to get into trouble and to get out there I actually had to climb over three bars that were across the window. So I had to squeeze over the top one to get onto the roof and I sort of slid down it, and on my way back I had a bit of a panic attack and I can remember thinking I couldn't get back there. I have still got a very vivid memory of the fear of not being able to move and then eventually getting back there and thinking to myself what a dumb thing it was to do. I shouldn't have done that and why was it so important that I get the brush? I promised myself I would never get out there again, I scared myself so much. Now looking back and knowing how high that was and the potential for disaster, I just sort of think what a stupid thing to do.

*Just staying with the house for the moment, can you take me through the rooms. It sounds like there were three bedrooms on the top floor. Just maybe from the front door when you walked in.*

14:00 When you walk in you are in a hallway and there is an immediate room to the left. Then as you look ahead you'd be walking straight up the first lot of stairs, but there is also a continuing hallway to the left. It branches off, so that you have part of a hallway to the left

which leads to another room and then to the stairs that take you down to the basement. If you go up the stairs you then have to turn left, and left again because it folds back on itself to go up the next lot of stairs which leads you to the first level. As you get to that landing you have a room on your right which looks out towards the back, then you walk straight ahead to the room that leads you to what we used as our lounge room, which was a large room that had the verandah attached to it. It was from that verandah you could look out and see the Opera House. Then if you continued up the stairs that wound up again, go back up the stairs and it folded back again on itself, up to the top landing, that is when you'd be up to where the three bedrooms were.

*So what kind of families lived around you in that street?*

15:21 We actually had a Lebanese family that lived next door to us that were, and are still related to the Lebanese shopkeepers in Lower Fort Street. We never had much to do with them, we were friendly, but my family kept very much to itself. I think in a lot of ways we were newcomers and while there was a politeness, I remember my grandmother was very polite to people and would stop and have a polite chat but she was never close friends with anybody. We never had visitors come into the house other than family, despite the fact that rooms were rented out to people that weren't family there was still no closeness, there was always a distance.

*So roughly when did your grandmother move into the area?*

16:13 It was 1961, beginning of 1961 they moved in.

*You would be blow-ins compared to the people who had been there for three or four generations.*

16:23 Absolutely. I think that is something that pleased me in certain ways because I didn't feel like I fitted in terribly well with the other kids in the area. I did develop close relationships with one girl in particular, but being the outsider sort of gave me a different perspective. I could see that there was a bigger world out there than Millers Point, whereas I felt this was a very insulated area, that it seemed to fold back in on itself. People in general didn't aspire to much other than getting a job and that was a good thing that I had come from outside the area because I tended to look outside the area as I grew up and established friendships within and outside of the area.

*That is interesting though because you have chosen to stay in the area.*

17:15 I actually love the area but then I have benefited by being a part of the area in terms of being able to achieve this accommodation that I have here. It was originally Maritime Services Board and we lived in number 19. Then my mother moved with myself into

number 25. A friend of hers at the time, he purchased the goodwill of number 25, which is also a residential, and we had our own room there. Then a couple of years later my mother was given her own place in Lower Fort Street so we moved again, I think it was for something hideous like six dollars a week and we had our own place for six dollars a week. I can remember that was like a really big deal. It was the first time I actually had had what you would call a proper room which was mine. I did have my own room when mum and I moved into number 25 but it was a verandah room, which didn't really give me the privacy of having your own room, which was what I had when we moved into 34a Lower Fort Street. Mum was excited because that was our own little place. Prior to that we did just have a room in both the places, we were prior to that so it was a big deal for mum.

*Then you moved to Dalgety didn't you?*

18:46 I moved to Dalgety when my daughter was born. I did a fair amount of teenage running around, I'd been to Perth and stayed in Perth for about four months, and I'd rented out with girl friends at various places around Sydney, Annandale and Glebe, but always seemed to come back home. When I was pregnant with my daughter I was already living back at home and I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do, so I went to New Zealand to think about things and sort myself out and work out how I was going to handle what was going to take place. I was a bit of a mess emotionally, so I needed some time away, so I went to New Zealand and I was quite happy there and decided that I'd stay there for the birth. I was so happy there that I was actually considering staying there but mum came over, as she intended to, for the birth and when she got over she was really excited to tell me that she'd had the place carpeted and bought a colour TV and everything in preparation for the baby so I didn't have the heart to say I was not coming back, so I just came back with her because I figured that was what made her happy. She wanted to be a part of her granddaughter's life so we came back when my daughter was ten days old.

20:07 We lived around at 34A and then I applied immediately for my own place and shock and horror, four months later I had it. I got such a surprise that I got a place so quickly, that was Flat 3, No. 9 Dalgety Road. We were there for five years before a place in Merriman Street that was vacant sort of took my eye. Then I applied for number 30 and I remember, it was still under Maritime Services Board then and the fellow who was in charge of renting out the places took me to number 30 Merriman Street and he just couldn't believe anyone would want to live there, he said, 'I'll show you, but you are probably not going to be interested.' I was looking, going, 'Oh it is gorgeous,' and the toilet was out the back, 'Oh the

toilet is out the back, that is great.' I was so excited about it and he is going, 'It is awful,' and I'm saying, 'No, it's beautiful, you just can't see it.' He said, 'You really do want to rent this place?' and I said, 'Yes,' so I took over number 30 Merriman Street and I was there until it became considered unacceptable as far as Department of Housing requirements went. Like the toilet was outside and they wanted to renovate it.

21:32 I took the advice of a lady around here who was known as Aunty Fay, she is still here, she said, 'You want to pick the house you want while you've got the opportunity, otherwise you will be forced to do something you won't want to do, or forced to move somewhere you don't want to be. So pick your place and apply for it.' When this place, number 36, was being renovated I applied the minute I saw the workers in here.

*Was there a stigma attached to being in Millers Point at that time or was it the house itself that he was aghast at, the Maritime Services fellow?*

22:11 No, I just think it was because the living conditions were fairly primitive. Until the Department of Housing took over people supplied their own heating systems, in terms of hot water systems. They would come along and paint if you nagged them, or fix something that was wrong if you nagged them to death and waited for two or three years. But most people just fixed whatever they wanted to themselves, they'd get frustrated waiting, so they'd get things done themselves if they could afford to, otherwise you had to wait until they got to you. They weren't hell-bent on getting stuck into doing the things that needed to be done and places wore out and wore down, looked dilapidated half the time. Toilets were outside and sometimes showers and things like that. Around in Lower Fort Street both the places that we lived in, the residential, my grandmother's place had the toilet and bathroom inside but when we moved to number 25 we had to actually go out to the out shed to have a shower and also the toilet was downstairs, out the back.

*Was it covered over when you were walking out?*

No. You had to pass through the yard to get to the out shed.

*When you say residential what is the difference? Is the residential a boarding house of something?*

23:33 I just know it as being referred to as residential, as in large residences, I suppose. They are like really large terrace houses, that is my impression of them, only because they have been termed as residential.

*Having lived in different streets in Millers Point, even though it is within a very small area, have you noticed any difference in the sense of street life or community or anything in Merriman versus Dalgety versus Lower Fort Street?*

24:04 Well I do. I think part of it has to do with who I am as person and the age that I

have been at each sort of point of the street. When I was a child I was in Lower Fort Street, when I was a teenager in Lower Fort Street I used to leave the area a lot, I didn't have a lot to do with it, to me I had spent my childhood here and I wanted to get out, just wanted to be somewhere else. I have always loved the actual area but I didn't intend to be here. It was probably my good fortune that sort of kept me here, in that I got these places. I mean this is a beautiful place and I thought number thirty was beautiful and it wasn't renovated like this place but I just saw the beauty in it.

24:49 It was the first place I felt like was a home for me, I know mum felt like she'd found home in 34A and I suppose to a certain degree I shared her enthusiasm at the time but number 30 was my first home that felt like a real home for me, where I could make my family feel like this was our family home. That has sort of continued on in this place but number 30 was very relevant to my children when they were young.

This street, when my children were young had a great sense of community because I had two really close friends in this street and they still live here in this street.

*We will come back to how the streets are and were for your children growing up, just maybe going back to your childhood - what kind of games did you play? Where did you play? What did you do as a child?*

25:50 As a child I remember spending a lot of time in the park across the road, in Dawes Point Park. I was up the trees, I used to sit up the tree, and there is one tree that is near the bus stop at George Street North there, just right on the park, and I can remember being up that tree - that was my favourite tree to sit up because no-one would know I was there. I would watch people come and go and it used to amuse that I'd be up there. I had a rich fantasy life because of being an only child and there were no children who were immediately close to me that I could develop any sort of play relationships with so I spent a lot of time on my own. I'd be up the tree thinking I was in Africa somewhere, down the park. I'd try and throw the ball against the pylons but they have got a very uneven surface except there is a middle section there that if you could hit the ball into there you could play ball there, but most of the time it was a bit of a waste of time.

26:57 I remember drawing hopscotches a few times and at one stage I had a ball in stockings and used to flick it either side on the wall and lift your leg and flick it under there, so that was a game for a while. I wandered about the area a lot, I mean I used to wander up and down the laneways, I was a very curious child, all around the wharves. There were lots of sailors from different countries because all along here, the Walsh Bay Wharves,

used to be the normal stop for all the overseas shipping, so you'd get sailors from all countries.

*Your mother didn't warn you not to do that kind of thing?*

27:45 Oh, of course. No, I was warned to not do a lot of things but I guess you swear blind that you are trustworthy and won't get up to any mischief, just going to Vicky's house and off you'd go. Then you'd go to Vicky's house and she'd say, 'We are just going off to Teri's,' we had them bamboozled half the time. We'd go to each other's house, might call in five times, six times in a day, wandering back and forth just because we were bored to death and couldn't think of much else to do so we'd just wander from house to house.

*Did you have any conversations with the sailors?*

28:19 Oh no, just aware that they were around, that's all. My room at nanna's, our first room overlooked the back area where the ships came in. I am a mad window sitter, if there is a window available somewhere I sit there and watch what is going on, particularly when I was younger I used to spend a lot of time with my head out the window, just observing what was going on. It was probably my greatest form of entertainment, that is probably why I have formed such a strong impulse to do that.

29:07 END OF TAPE MP-SM5 SIDE A

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29:09 START OF TAPE MP-SH5 SIDE B

*So staying with your childhood Teri, I believe you used to climb the pylons on the Bridge.*

29:23 Oh yes. The pylon lookout was open and you could actually access it from right at the base of the pylon, there was a stairway that we would work our way up, climbing stairway after stairway to get to the top. That was something else we would do if we were bored, we would just find our way up there, or we'd walk along the Bridge, or we'd go up to where the trains came through the tunnel on this side and just wait for the trains to come through and watch them. We just tried to amuse ourselves any way we could, there wasn't a lot to do. There was actually the King George Playground but I was never comfortable where the kids from this area used to congregate en masse, I never felt comfortable to socialise to any great extent with them.

*Was that because they were a bit rough?*

30:11 Well there was a very rough element and I was a very timid child. I think if I had been a gutsier child I probably would have not thought twice about it but because I was so

timid I was scared of them so I gave them a fairly wide berth and avoided any situation where I knew that I would have to be in contact with them.

*Where did you go to school?*

30:41 I went to school over at North Sydney. A few of the kids went from here and that's where the girl that I became closest too in the area, Vicky Bradford, that is where she went to school as well. Our relationship was able to develop because we were at school together, which meant we travelled together and came home and knew what homework each one had to do, so it kept a companionship that otherwise may not have been maintained.

*Was there a reason why you didn't go to either Fort Street or St Brigid's, the local primary schools?*

31:14 Well St Brigid's only went to second class so by the time I moved here I was in first class. I was over at St Francis Xavier at Lavender Bay and I was happy there. The interesting thing was I was at Neutral Bay Public School, my mother put me in there when I was four and half years old and I think she bumped up my age and said I was five when I was actually four and a half, and I was miserable, I was so miserable there. She kept telling me that things would be better if I went to the Catholic school, that they'd be kinder and they'd be nicer and I'd have friends there and all this sort of thing, and I never had any friends at all while I was at Neutral Bay.

32:09 Quite humorously, once I started at St Francis Xavier everything she said was true, I think because the kids were indoctrinated by the nuns to be generous of spirit and they were monitored so closely about what that meant that they actually were more caring and more inclusive of me. I wasn't able to be left out of anything because there was a concerted effort made to keep Teri company, she's new here, and all this sort of thing so I developed this great love of the school and the whole thing and I was really happy there. There was no reason to move me because as I say St Brigid's would have been the only alternative and that only went to second class and Lavender Bay went up to sixth class so I stayed there.

*Did you get the ferry over?*

33:01 No we used to catch the train and I was particularly naughty, I don't remember Vicky being naughty but I was just terrible. I used to hang out of that train and pull myself back in, you know you'd be flying along at speed and you'd see the big steel beams coming up and you'd pull back in. In those days the doors didn't automatically close and you could have them open, so you were able to hang onto the rail and hang out the doors, I used to do this all the time. I mean just some of the things that I used to do I cringe and mum

would have been beside herself if she'd seen me. So we used to catch the train. We never caught the ferry because the ferry really wasn't close to the school, whereas the train station is right behind Lavender Bay, right behind the school where I was, St Francis.

*Then for high school where did you go?*

34:05 By the way, Fort Street Public - that terrified me, I mean all the kids that I was scared of went to Fort Street, the thought of going there would have sent me into a state of panic. High school, there was Fort Street High as well and that was never an option because it wasn't Catholic. The local Catholic school was at Church Hill, which is just in town there, St Patrick's, so it was just assumed that is where I would go. That is where the kids in the area that were Catholic went and that is where I was booked in to go and I absolutely hated it. Hated it most of my school life, the nuns were awful, they were horrible. I don't have very good memories of my high school, it was like being in gaol.

*But there wasn't any way you could change and go somewhere else?*

34:55 It just sort of didn't happen like that in my days, or in my family, it was just like you went with what you had and if you hated school that was like everyone hates school, it didn't mean anything was ever going to be done about it. It is not like today, everybody panics, if your child says they are unhappy everybody swoops on them, 'What's wrong? They might need counselling? Is this person treating them right? What's the teacher up to?' There was never any of that, there was just an implicit trust in nuns and you got whatever education was available and you be grateful for it, that was the attitude, so no one ever sort of thought about pulling you out, didn't matter what you went through.

*Just going back to your childhood and sitting in the tree, I think you remember seeing the Opera House being built.*

35:44 Yes. We had an ongoing view of the whole process of building the Opera House, it was quite a fascinating event. I remember when it was flat before they had any of it there, so it was quite a deal to watch that go up. It was an even bigger deal when it finally was finished, it was like, 'Oh finally!' Finally don't have the cranes and everything over there, finally this beautiful building. My eyes were on the Harbour all the time, I used to watch the *Oriana* coming in and the *Canberra* and pine to leave with them. I'd loved to have sailed off through the Heads, it always seemed such an exciting thing to go on a ship to leave the country. It always seems like such an exciting event, with all the people throwing streamers and cheering, and waving goodbye and all that. It just seemed like such a big deal and right through my childhood, right up to my teenage years, I remember sitting and watching these

boats coming and going and thinking one day I'll get out of here to go and see what is going on in the world and I still haven't been.

36:55 I have since been on a ship but I just went for a short trip around the islands but in those days they used to sail to London and places like that, so that used to fascinate me that you could go across to London. In those days it was a big deal to leave Australia, there was considered not much here, to do anything that counted you had to go overseas. During my youth Carnaby Street in London was the mod place to be. A lot of things went on in the Harbour and that was one of the things.

37:38 I had my spots for sitting, like when I was younger I was up that tree, but when I was older there were several spots that I used to sit, favoured spots. There was a spot down further, close to the water where I used to sit and I could look straight at Fort Dennison and that is where I'd been when I'd be watching the liners leave our shores.

*When you were imagining that you were in Africa..... I met one man from The Rocks who used to hear the lions roar at Taronga Zoo.*

38:10 No, I never heard the lions roar. Most of the time when I was imagining I was in Africa there was a cupboard, a wardrobe, one of those wardrobes that has the mirrors on the outside and that is the only door that is on there and it has got a big drawer at the bottom - that was sitting on our landing. I used to climb into that and close the door so it would be really black and that is when I'd really be in Africa. I just had this longing, I used to dream about Africa, I don't know what it was, I think it was the wild animals, probably. I just imagined that they weren't going to eat me, or bite me, that they knew I was okay, so I just had this whole fantasy constructed around Africa. I'd spend time either in the wardrobe or up the tree and Africa used to come into it a lot, it was just part of my fantasy world.

*It is a little bit different this sense of you being an observer, rather than seeing things from within the community, but did the family feel that there was much sense of community here?*

39:27 I think there was a large sense of community here but I don't think we were a part of it. I think I am, to an extent now, even though I am still on the outside, but that is sort of by choice. I think the fact that we were on the outside has sort of played into where we wanted to be anyway, where we are comfortable being. My grandmother came from the country so I think she had a whole different perspective to a lot of the people that were around here anyway. She did not participate in the community, even in her old age most people didn't know she was even in High Street with a husband when they moved there. They knew Bill was there but they never knew she was even there because she never left

the house and he used to do all the messages and if the doctor was required he'd call.  
*So she didn't chat over the back fence type of thing?*

40:20 She was always very polite to people who were in her immediate vicinity but no, she was not a chatterer over the back fence. She would be very pleasant and have a quick chat but she was not one to stand there and shoot the breeze for any length of time or exchange personal information, she had a distance.

*What about the different religious traditions, Catholic and Protestant, was there a sense of any kind of tribalism, maybe even sectarianism?*

40:54 There was a problem in our family from that perspective because I was going to a Catholic school. My mother was Catholic, my mother was a very dedicated Catholic. She had been raised in an orphanage by nuns and had a very positive opinion and reverence for nuns and the whole Catholic church. Particularly when I was younger she was very much involved with the church, she used to offer to clean the church up at St Brigid's and we'd be there, I'd go up there with her and muck around on the organ while she'd be there cleaning. The contrast to that was my grandmother who was a Protestant and proud to be. I remember one incident where she actually put the radio on and was listening to the Protestant church service and I was in the lounge room at the time and the radio was on in the kitchen, which was right next to it - it was not a closed off space, so I could hear everything that was being said, but I mean I was oblivious to it, probably doing something else. I remember my mother came in, in an absolute state of anger and flicked this channel off and said, 'How dare you have that on?' to my grandmother and they were very close, but religion - my mother could not tolerate the fact that I would be exposed to anything else.

*Didn't your grandmother have the name O'Connor, that sounds like an Irish-Catholic name.*

42:29 Her third husband was Catholic. So while Bill was Catholic and mum was Catholic nanna was very much Protestant. She was not a regular churchgoer but she had her faith in God and basically believed similar things to what we did, it just came via the Church of England, not via Catholic. So to mum if you weren't Catholic you weren't on the right track.  
*What about your father then - had he been a Protestant?*

43:04 He was a Protestant, but part of the agreement of having a child baptised Catholic back then was when he married mum he had to agree that all children would be raised as Catholic, he had to be schooled as in to what was to take place if they were to be a couple. I mean he just agreed to that because my mother had that Irish thing about her, that you

just don't cross her. She was a very vibrant, warm-hearted and a loving person but she had a ferocious temper. As did my father, but my father used to submit to her because she just had a fury that couldn't be matched if she got going.

*So you already have this kind of ambiguity in your own family, then out on the street, I suppose, you would have been perceived as a Catholic in the community.*

44:07 Yes I was, because we used to go to Sunday church up at St Brigid's, every Sunday, never missed. Around Christmas time, because of my schooling, I was totally indoctrinated into the Catholic faith. I mean going to Catholic school we were saying prayers before school, prayers after school, prayers before morning tea, after morning tea, before lunch and then after lunch. Then you'd have religious lessons as well, as Friday Benedictions and Stations of the Cross, before bed prayers. Then you've got the whole thing on a Sunday, totally dedicated to churchgoing and making sure your clothes were ready and all that sort of thing. So it was very much a part of my every moment.

*Did that ever translate into political attitudes? I know that most people down at Millers Point were working class and Labor but there were also divides along political lines, traditionally.*

45:03 My grandmother was a faithful Labor supporter, I mean she was the champion of the banner. She had very strong opinions, came from a working class family, so in that context that was my background both sides - my mother was always Labor, my whole family has always been Labor. The area was Labor, that was a very united force. There were very few..... I can't recall there being a Liberal element in this area, back when I was a girl. *There would have been aspects within Labor moving onto Communism, I suppose.*

45:51 The whole Communist thing was considered very ugly and no one wanted to be associated with that - you could be Labor and not considered Communist at all. I think people got very scared of being termed Communist, so there was a strong distinction drawn between Labor and anything to do with the Communists, or Communist Party. That is about all I can say about it.

*I am just wondering because so much of Millers Point is associated with the waterfront, so do you think as well the fact that your family didn't have connections with the waterfront as coal lumpers or as people who worked down there also set you apart? Or were there other families that really didn't have anything to do with the waterfront?*

46:43 I really don't know. My closest friend, Vicky Bradford, her father was in the Labor Party and he was Deputy Lord Mayor of Sydney. He was a really strong force in our area and there was always an accepted association with the water. I don't know that there was ever any different force, I mean my family was pro-union, pro-Labor, pro-the workers, so that created a common denominator, there didn't seem to be any other elements there

that were not a part of that whole. I am not aware of other families not being tied in. I felt tied in, I mean I didn't feel that we were always separate from the community, I just felt we were a bit on the outside but it wasn't a problem. We expected that because to be a true Millers Pointer you had to be born here several generations earlier and that was just a given and it didn't mean that you were treated differently, I mean I don't think we were treated any differently. I think because of the nature of my family we kept on the outside but we were still a part of it, even though we were on the outside, we were still in there.

*I am jumping around here but I am just wondering, you grew up here as a child and your children have grown up here - how different has their experience been, would you say?*

48:16 I think very different. Everything was very black and white when I was a child - you were either a boy or you were a girl, you were Catholic or you were Protestant, you were black or you were white, so everything had its little place. I rejected a lot of those segregations as I got older and I think the way I raised my children is very different to the way I was raised. I mean I spent a lot of time raising myself because I didn't have anybody to model myself on other than adults and I was expected to really behave up to the standard of adults because I was around adults all the time. They wouldn't tolerate for very long any sort of childishness so I learnt to really behave quite well and I was a good kid anyway when I was little, so my mother tells me, she says I was a bit of a tearaway when I got to fourteen, but as a child I was very compliant and I knew that in some sense my grandmother and Bill were doing some sort of favour by looking after me for mum, that is the sense she gave me that 'You must be good for them while I am not here. You know that I have to work to support us and I can't be here, so I really need you to be really good.' Given that I was a fairly good child anyway I tried to maintain this goodness for my grandparents, despite the fact that I knew how to play the game a bit, so I could get a lot of freedom by appearing to be very good but behind the scenes I was doing basically whatever I liked, as long as they didn't find out.

*I am thinking, I suppose, in terms of the activities your kids would do now, where they can play.*

50:15 I guess that is where I was leading. Back in those days I was left to my own devices and I was aware of that. When I had my children this street was a bit different because there were kids in this street where my children were growing up so there was this really strong community, just within this street. It didn't seem to exist apart from this street, it didn't dribble over into other streets, it was just this street. Particularly my daughter, when she was growing up her best friend actually lived in this house when we lived in number 30, Melanie Wilde used to live here, and they were very close. Then there was another little

girl, Vanessa lived down the street, then Rachel and Melissa. Later on Mara moved into this street and she had her two girls who my son played with. So there was always this sort of connection between the families and the children that played together as well as the parents being really close friends because Mara and Libby, who still both live in this street, are two of my closest friends.

51:22 Libby and I go back to high schools but Mara, when she moved into the street we've since become friends. So there was a community sense here that I did not have when I was around in Lower Fort Street, I didn't have that in my growing up years. There would occasionally be a child come who would move in a couple of doors down, or whatever, and I'd maybe get to play with twice and they seemed to just disappear. There was never continuity, or a glut of children, it was always adults around where I was, so it was a very different childhood. I was a very introspective child and spent a lot of time in my own head, I suppose, as opposed to my kids who were out there playing. They were both very outgoing, always down the park playing with the other kids. Very different to each other. It was an interesting contrast between my daughter Jade and Melanie, because Melanie that lived here, she was very studious, had very creative parents, but she was a very dedicated academic child, always had her nose in a book. She was shorter than my daughter and very pale skinned, whereas my daughter was taller with the dark skin and was very outgoing and didn't want to read much, she'd rather be doing rather than reading, so she'd be on skateboards and climbing on the jungle bars and all sorts of things, so she was a very active child.

52:43 They were a great contrast, these two, and you'd see them walking home from school and there is Melanie with her glasses on, nose in the book, with Jade on a skateboard beside her, it was quite interesting actually to see them still maintaining their differences while they'd spend time together. My son was very active, he always wanted to be kicking the ball around, so he sort of claimed that park as his own at one stage because he was the only boy in the street.

*Is that Dawes Park?*

No, the little Reserve, I think.

*Do you feel there was enough place for them to play, that they didn't feel hemmed in?*

53:19 My son actually hated living here because he didn't feel that there was enough for him. My daughter adapted, she is just one of those people who loved her childhood. She used to spend a lot of time with Melanie, they'd dress up, she had lots of activities to amuse

herself. She loved acting out things and I'd get dresses that I'd pick up, or keep, or buy from St Vinnie's, or whatever, so that she could play dress-ups. She had skateboards and I'd take her roller-skating and ice-skating, she was a very active child and loved to do all things like that. Same with my son, but he didn't think that this area catered to boys very well. He always wanted a football field and that was always a car drive away, which meant that it wasn't available to him readily so he used to become very frustrated with this area.

*Did he play in the Domain?*

54:18 No, I sent both my children to school outside the area predominantly because the only school on offer was Fort Street. It didn't have a very good reputation with teaching kids by the time my children were of school age. It sort of crossed my mind briefly but not for long because I really wanted my children to have the same perspective as I did, and that is there is a whole world out there, it is not just Millers Point. My daughter was sent to North Sydney Demonstration School over the Bridge and my son, who is nine and a half years younger than my daughter, he went to Paddington Public School. I sent both my children to public schools because I was very anti-Catholic. I'd had enough of Catholicism by the time I was about fourteen or fifteen and vowed that I'd never put my children through what I went through, particularly in high school.

55:18 My opinion changed because they both went to Catholic high schools, so it was interesting. I think the public schools did not live up to the philosophy that they stated that they were based on, as opposed to the Catholic schools had changed, they weren't as rigid and awful as what my high school was. Jade's high school, she went to St Vincent's at Potts Point, she loved that school, I mean it gave her everything that I could ever have hoped. The reason I sent her there is that I used to driving instruction for a while and I taught a few girls that went to school there and I was so impressed with them. They had beautiful deportment, they were worldly, they didn't look like they had been sheltered, but they had this poise about them and a nice way of relating to people and I thought that is what I want for my daughter and that is what I got. She just came out of there way that I had always hoped and she had good values. There were a lot of really wealthy kids there and it never bothered her that she didn't have that wealth. She used to see it as a positive, they don't get this, they don't know what the real world is like, they are in their insulated environments where they've got everything they need. She felt like she'd had a more rounded education by the fact that she knew about their world but they didn't understand about hers.

*This area has always been considered working class but it sounds as if you have become very middle class, how does that happen?*

57:01 Well I am only middle class in my approach to things, I think. I have got a very open mind in that I think you can attain anything if you work hard enough towards it and you make that your goal. That is a very different opinion than what my family had. I have had a lot of contact with my father in recent years and he had the same complaint, that they were very narrow in their thinking, they thought their lot in life was it, that was it, you don't aspire to be beyond your station in life and he found that very oppressive and humiliating, actually. He rejected that, so that is why he left.

*That is they meaning the family, not the community.*

57:47 He found that a problem and I did myself, growing up, I thought that whole of society's view, the religious view, everything was oppressive. I basically spent a lot of time breaking the bonds that had been placed on me by my family. They were psychological bonds, no one was saying to me, 'You can't do this,' but that is basically the message that was coming through psychologically, that you don't go beyond what you are set to do. I actually believed that you couldn't do anything if you weren't born to it, I actually thought that you couldn't go to university unless you got perfect marks, I mean that is how ignorant I was about things like university. I thought you couldn't learn to play the piano if you just weren't gifted.

58:38 I had actually been taught to play the piano but I couldn't quite get it, and it is only look back now that I realise why I couldn't learn was that I didn't have the same teacher, I had different teachers, I became terrified of the teachers. I didn't understand what practice or study meant, no one had ever explained to me that was different to reading. So out of my own ignorance I had to pull myself slowly out of that and I just realised that I had a lot of options and these options were something that I found for myself and discovered through my own growth. It was never made clear to me by my family because they just didn't know it.

59:33 END OF TAPE MP-SM5 SIDE B

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00:05 START OF TAPE MP-SH6 SIDE A

00:06 Tape identification

*So Teri, just let's talk about the changes that happened here when the Department of Housing took over and how they impinged on your family. Can you tell, for instance, the changes to the boarding house regulation that happened?*

00:38 Yes, at the time my grandmother had been told that the Department of Housing wanted to take over the landlord rights of her property. I think she was told that she would still be accommodated either there if they renovated or elsewhere, should she choose but she would no longer be the recipient of any rents of her boarding house, that they would be directly renting those rooms as Department of Housing rooms. That caused a whole lot of hoo-ha in the area, I think there were about sixty-five boarding houses that were run along the same lines as my grandmother's one, where they all had landlords and they were all taking the rents themselves. It caused an uproar amongst those people and there was a concerted group effort to fight the government's position on that, and that took years and years. The general attitude was that if you fight the government there is no way you'll win, so my grandmother didn't even bother joining the fight, she was not very close to the people who were organising it so she didn't get involved at all, and her and her husband ended up being moved to High Street.

*Did your grandmother have tenants at some point, you haven't mentioned that?*

02:17 There were consistently tenants there, there were four rooms that were rented out. There was one room on the landing on the first floor, where we had the lounge room, she used to rent that out, but eventually her and Bill took that room over. The downstairs were always rented out. There was the front room, as you'd walk in on the ground level and there was the back room on the same level and then downstairs in the basement, they were always rented out, those rooms.

*What kind of tenants were they?*

02:51 Oh varied. There was a very interesting woman who I can remember, she was an artist and her room was very artsy. I caught a glimpse in one day when she was coming out and it was a very arty room, with artworks all over the place and just had a very interesting look as opposed to our typical rooms which were quite boring, compared to hers.

*Did the tenants eat with you?*

No, no, they lived their separate lives, it is just they shared the bathroom. Cooking facilities were supplied by my grandparents, it was just a small stove and I think a fridge and I think each room had access to their own sink, or a sink that was for communal use and that was basically how they lived.

*So it was just like a small bedsit. Obviously that would have meant a huge drop in income if the*

*Department of Housing were taking over the income from these rooms, why did your grandmother not protest about that do you think?*

04:02 I think most of it was because of the age that they were, by the time all this took place they were getting into their later years and weren't interested in fighting, or even being landlords any longer. They were finding it difficult because at one stage I used to go round and do part of the vacuuming for her because she just couldn't keep up those sorts of chores any more. So I think it became more of a liability towards the end - while they weren't anxious to have it ripped out from under them I think another thought was well we've had our time and it is just time to move along and just accept this, you don't fight the government. My grandmother wasn't interested in fighting at that stage, perhaps if she had been younger she might have been more interested in taking up the fight but she'd just reached the stage where she just wanted a calm and easy latter part of her life.

*Did the rest of the community get fired up about it?*

04:58 The other boarding houses did. The rest of the community saw them as being on the other side of the fence anyway, so I don't think the community as a whole was behind them. I think their attitude was 'I don't think you'll do well' because the general attitude was that you can't fight the government and win. So they were fighting as a unit in and of themselves because they weren't going to get community support, other than maybe the people who were boarding with them, but then they may have thought that they'd get a better deal from the Department of Housing anyway. I don't know other than themselves whether they were very well supported generally.

*What about that position, that attitude, that really if you were a tenant it might be better for you in that the prices would be regulated to twenty per cent of your income so the Department could claim they were actually acting on behalf of the people who most needed it?*

05:57 There is a strong component of some of the tenants probably feeling that they would have been better off. I don't know whether they would have been necessarily, it depends on the relationship they had with each individual landlord, the tenants, so if they had a great relationship then I guess they'd be thinking I'll be better off if things stay the way they are, as opposed to people who felt like they might have been being ripped off anyway, or overlooked, their needs not really taken into account, might have felt it was a good thing.

*Just in terms of activism, how much did the Green Bans impinge on you, do you remember all that activity?*

06:42 I remember all the talk around it but I don't actually remember any of the events. I

don't know when that took place.

*In the 1970s.*

06:55 I don't know why I was oblivious to it. I was not oblivious to the outcome but I don't remember ever feeling threatened. I mean I clearly wasn't thinking much about what was going on at that time, I was probably more self-interested. In the 1970s I was probably more concerned with what was going on with my life than what was happening in the area. I am just so glad that they did what they did, looking back now. If I had understood more and been more interested I probably would have got fully involved because I was involved with various events that took place. I remember participating in the anti-war marches and things like that, I was quite active in that sort of larger sense, but in terms of the community I don't remember being involved with any of that.

*How do you feel about the proposed changes to the area now that will happen when Patricks' contract runs out next year.*

07:55 I don't know what to think about that. I became very involved with the anti-Walsh Bay movement and that was not as a part of the Resident Action Group, they mounted their own opinions and position about the Walsh Bay development and I think they were consulted in some sense. I think Shirley Ball was involved in making some discussions to get some concessions as to what was going to be put in place for the residents, et cetera. The smaller group that I was associated with were very anti the Walsh Bay development, we wanted to keep that industrial feel to the area, we didn't like the idea of it being beautified and all that sort of thing.

08:47 There was a small group of us that tried everything we could to stop that development from going ahead and we tried to get, I guess a more involved group together from a community point of view. There is a lot of apathy in this area I don't know why, there is a complacency about fighting anything that has got to do with the government and that was borne out time and time again because the people who were in our group were the same people at the beginning and at the end, we didn't manage to pick up maybe one extra person. It was just a handful of people who were just trying desperately make people in the area aware of what they were allowing to just happen.

09:36 We did have some impact, I am pleased to say. I was particularly upset with what took place in Pottinger Street and also Towns Place, I was upset with the height of the buildings that were intended to go in there. Our agitation did get us somewhere in that they did bring the heights of those buildings down. The one that is presently being built will

not be as high as it would have been otherwise, as the one on the opposite side of the road, which is being built now, for some time that was intended to go about three storeys higher. Those restrictions, they were meaningful things for us but I would have liked to have been able to put a stop to that building going ahead that is presently being built in Towns Place because to me we have lost a beautiful open vista which belonged to everybody and now it belongs to the wealthy few who happen to live in those apartments. Whereas before you could step out from where the butcher's shop was and you could see this whole beautiful open vista and anybody coming in their tour buses and things like that all got to see this beautiful open view onto the Harbour over to Blues Point Tower and things like that, so I feel that was a loss for all of us. That was something that particularly upset me at the time and I think that was one of my biggest motivating forces for being as involved with the group as what I was.

*What about the social aspects since the Walsh Bay development has happened, has there been any sense of mingling of the people who live there with the broader community?*

11:11 Millers Point has been encroached upon more by the wealthy, really. We've got the high-rise in Kent Street was probably the second stage because The Rocks was the first. This used to be a very isolated community, you'd have to walk through a very dead end of town to get here, consequently no one knew we were here. Once The Rocks was developed in any sense and people gained access to Millers Point then it became a more appealing place to be. Then we've got the high-rise coming down Kent Street, Highgate, and all those buildings around there have been redeveloped for apartments. I don't know whether people mix, I don't mix a lot in the community so I can't say whether the people from these apartments, et cetera do. I think when your children are young you join in and you'll know who is mixing in the area by the ones who have children, whether they are blending in.

12:13 Children bring you into contact with all sorts of people, whether you want to meet them or not, and you get a better sense of what is going on. I am the type of person who isolates myself because that is my nature, so I really don't have a finger on the pulse of what is going on generally.

*You must be concerned then with what is going to happen when the Patricks' lease expires next year.*

12L41 I am concerned but I am probably more accepting of that than I was of Walsh Bay because I figure that unless people are prepared to stand up and fight as a unified force you won't really be heard. Given that we tried very hard and couldn't get anybody interested,

once again it falls into the hands of the people that it most affects. I am not happy about it and I will do whatever I can with whatever community groups are opposing it, I'll always add my voice, but I am probably more accepting of an outcome as not going my way.

*What would your ideal outcome be for down there? Would it to be to maintain the working harbour?*

13:33 Oh a park - that would be the ideal. That way they'd be no shipping noise and no high-rise but that is dreamland. The ships coming in there - that is something that a lot of people in the area would hate to see go, probably because of the maritime history.

*Even though they rattle your windows?*

14:01 Well they are not something that I would necessarily want to fight to keep. The ships that come in today are not the ships of yesteryear. They are very high-powered, they are more disruptive, they are very noisy, the containers being shifted about and the equipment that they use - they've got all those reverse beeps, that beep, beep, beep business, so it is very disruptive. I wouldn't cry if the ships went but I do understand what the fight is about in terms of maintaining the maritime history but I feel we lost a lot of ground when we lost Walsh Bay.

*Would you like maybe moderate, not high-rise, development and a mix of residential and office or something like that?*

14:45 I really don't know that we've got the infrastructure to handle residential life, to have more people here, the population, I just don't how it would cope. I mean it is already difficult to park here, to drive in here, it is getting more and more difficult all the time. They are blocking off certain streets at certain times of night because of certain elements that have evolved over the last couple of years and because of the traffic flow and all that sort of thing, it is just very difficult. All our short-cuts of getting in here now have been discovered so it is not easy. I don't own a car at the moment and I am so pleased because I would be very frustrated with our parking situation, if I owned a car and couldn't park in my own street without getting booked.

*You would probably get a resident's permit.*

15:36 It doesn't matter if you can't find legal parking. It is so busy up here - sometimes you'll see all the people who live in their street park their cars straight out the front, which is actually illegal. If you can't find a parking space already and if they put apartment blocks all down here that just opens up your street, I am sure some way you'd end up connected.

*You mentioned tourists buses coming in and having their vista blocked - now how do you feel about the relationship between residents and tourism? Do you think it is working well, is it balanced or do*

*you feel they intrude a bit on your life, or would you like to see it encouraged?*

16:41 I am quite okay with how it is, I think tourism is really relevant. I think for this area it is a celebration of the origin of European culture here, I think it is a really important place for that reason and as such should be shared, I mean it is important in that sense so I don't begrudge any of the tourists being down here. Or even the increased use of the area because it has become better-known and all that type of thing, I think that is all positive, I don't see that as a problem. I think we are all entitled to know about places and points of interest and that is something that is a communal thing that I think we are all entitled to know.

*Some people that I have spoken to have very firm ideas about the difference between Millers Point and The Rocks - does that resonate with you?*

17:40 I am aware of it. I have always been aware that there was a big distinction between The Rocks and when you come up through the Cut you are in Millers Point. That is just something that has tended to be more inside and a legend that some people choose to jump on others about and for me that is unnecessary, it is all sort of incorporated into the one area. I mean I actually grew up in Dawes Point but we were never called Dawes Point, it was Millers Point.

*How would describe the community now, if you were writing to somebody overseas how would you describe the community that you live in at Millers Point now?*

18:22 As I say, I am very isolated. The community to me are the few familiar faces I remember from my childhood that I nod to and acknowledge and occasionally have a chat to as I walk by. I don't really mix in the area because I don't tend to leave my house a lot, I'm very much a homebody.

*In terms of shops and things, I don't notice a lot of shops. I saw what I thought was a butcher but it turns out it is just a preserved shopfront.*

19:00 The butcher has just recently closed, I am vegetarian, so that is no consequence to me about the butcher, but that butcher was there since I was a child. There has never really been a good grocery shopping outlet here, we've had little corner shops where you could get a potato or a tomato if you were lucky, but if you wanted proper groceries you had to leave the area to go shopping. We have never had those sorts of facilities we've only ever had a corner shop or a milkbar so there is no shopping centres in that respect, you just go into town. Woollies and Coles have always been the mainstays, I suppose, of the people in the area but I am aware that they all go shopping in different places here. They all go to different schools and if they go to school outside the area they can go anywhere in Sydney,

I mean you find that kids go south, east and west here. The same with shopping - some will go over to Birkenhead Point, others will go to the Edgecliff Centre, some people go to Broadway, some will shop in town, some will catch the community bus that takes them out to Marrickville, there is no end to where people commute to from here. There has never been our own shopping area here.

*Just in terms of your own situation, do you feel secure in your tenancy here and how do you view the Department of Housing?*

20:37 I feel very secure, I don't feel that I have any reason to feel insecure. I feel quite fortunate that through the Maritime Services Board I was placed in a position where I was able to stay here. It has been a bit of a ball and chain in some respects in that because I have loved being in the area you are sort of tied to the tenancy of these places, as much as it is a gift it is something that you can't afford to just let go of. Had I not had the ties that I have had to the houses I have been in I don't know where I would be, I can't imagine, I probably would have travelled a lot more. I have felt very rooted to the spot here and I guess because my family were here for so long we have roots in the area from that perspective. From me growing up here, from my grandparents being here, passing away in this area, for me it connects me to my mother and my grandparents, given that those three people were the most important people in my life and they were all here. They have all passed now, those three people and being in the area gives me a sense of connectedness to their memories.

*That more or less explains what I was going to ask you but maybe there is something more. I was going to ask you what it is you love about the area, you have explained the very strong emotional connection - is there a physical aspect that you love too?*

22:22 I absolutely love this area. I love the houses, I love the streets, the trees, the interesting way that this little area is set up. I love the village green up near the bus stop. I love Observatory Hill, I used to spend a lot of time at a little spot up there, one little spot where I used to sit. I love looking down Lower Fort Street, there is a tree up there you can sit under and you can see straight down Lower Fort Street. When I was a teenager I used to often go and sit up there because that was my thinking spot. I could overlook where I lived and it was in a sense overlooking my own life to get an overview because I was a very troubled teenager, so it gave me a good chance to get outside of myself and think up there. No, I am very attached to the physical nature of the area, it physically means a great deal to me. If I am ever not in Sydney and I see a picture of the Harbour Bridge I almost feel sick, it is home for me. There is something about Millers Point that will always be home for me, no

matter where I am, and I don't expect that I will necessarily be here my whole life, I don't know where I'll be but I just figure if I am not here my history is here, so there is a connectedness that I will always hold on to, I can't separate myself from that.

*I think I will stop it here unless there is something you would like to add that I haven't thought of?*

24:00 I think we have just about covered most things. Just the other things that I wanted to say - in the area in terms of events that took place here. I remember there were pub crawls, they were a big deal at one stage where all of Sydney was invited to come along and be a part of the pub crawl and I think it got to the stage where there was just too much of Sydney coming in and having too much of a pub crawl because they eventually had to stop it for unruly behaviour. The big deal about that was that the pubs would be drunk dry, so that was always a humorous point, the pub with no beer. There were lots of hotels around here at that particular time.

*Did you ever go, when you were older drinking in the hotels?*

24:52 I did, but it was a rare event. I think maybe there was one pub crawl that I actually went along to a couple of pubs but I found that a fairly monotonous thing, to be rolling along from pub to pub. It was more the event that was exciting because so many people would be attracted down here, it was tens of thousands of people would get down here.

*It didn't have a backlash the way that things can get a bit ugly sometimes?*

25:20 That is why it stopped it did. It got to the point where it was just seen as the biggest booze-up and of course the unruly behaviour that started to come towards the end of the event, that the locals started to kick up a bit of fuss by saying it was getting silly now, they were all out of hand.

*What is it like on New Year's Eve down here?*

25:40 Horrible, it can be horrible. It depends on your perspective, I mean as a young girl growing up here it would be the worst place to get trapped and try and get out of because the men were unruly and they'd take liberties with you, and touch you, and it was a pretty unsavoury experience. In terms of the age I am now it is fine, I can wander down and have a look at the fireworks and have done for the last few years.

Other things that used to take place in the area - they used to hold the old model vintage cars event down here, it was a yearly event. They used to have the cars backside to the kerb, displayed in Lower Fort Street and that was an exciting event because that was right outside of my house. It was always fun to have events that sort of just came into your own backyard or front yard, so to speak. Then when I was teenager they had a rock concert in

the park and that was a big deal because that was really relevant to the age that I was and the bands that were playing in that. There were quite a lot of events that came into the area.

26:58 The only other regular thing that used to take place were the military bands that used to practice sometimes, up and down Lower Fort Street. They used to leave from the Garrison Church, there was a building beside there where they used to congregate and march off down the street and back up. I remember very often hearing Scottish bagpipes on a Sunday, so that was a fairly regular event at one stage. Since then I don't know what has happened to them, we haven't heard them. Apart from that and all the weddings that take place in the area.... that seems to be the big deal these days.

*The weddings up at Observatory Hill?*

27:38 Yes, the Japanese, and they all get their photos taken. It is quite amusing, they will get it taken out the front of the Palisade Hotel, all these beautiful girls, all outfitted, standing in front of the Palisade Hotel.

*The Palisade Hotel looks pretty unchanged, it has still got meat trays and things, I notice, on the blackboard. It doesn't look as if it has become very gentrified.*

28:01 I think slightly. I don't go in there, I have never really spent a lot of time in the pubs here, I just wouldn't do it and I don't know why, there is something about it that I don't partake of the local pubs. The last time I was in there... I don't know that it has been changed very much. I think they have put a development application in but I don't know if it is for the main pub area, I think that may be more for the rooftop, I am not quite sure.

*One thing I did mean to ask you about was if you went swimming in the Harbour as a child?*

28:40 No, but most of the locals used to swim down here at the Met. My son has been down there swimming and half the kids in the street have been down there. I was never interested in doing it but I was aware they did it. I was always worried about sharks, I much preferred to cross the Bridge and go to the pool. That is where I used to spend most of my time, when I could get over there, there was the Olympic Pool.

*Your son having swum down at the Met, the metal loading wharf was it?*

I don't know where it comes from.

*That would be one thread of continuity for children, to do that. Frank Hyde, who is nearly ninety, he used to do that in the 1930s.*

I know they climb up on the rooftop of that little building and jump off there, it is absolutely amazing.

*They don't have street football teams and cricket teams like they used to have?*

29:43 No. I think that used to come out mainly around Christmas. There was always the Kent Street boys' cricket game that they used to play at Christmas from what I recall hearing, I remember them all talking about that. The same with the Two-Up on Anzac Day, that was always a big deal in the pubs around here, I think it still is at the Captain Cook, they still have their big Two-Up day on Anzac Day.

*Any unsavoury characters that you recall, or colourful characters?*

30:17 There were a lot of interesting people in the area. If there were unsavoury characters that was also part of the nature of the area, those people were typical of the reputation this area seemed to have. Most of those people had families in the area and very few of them were unmanageable.

*Okay I think we might end there, thank you very much Teri.*

31:06 END OF TAPE MP-SM6 SIDE A & END OF INTERVIEW WITH TERI CARTER.