

NM: This is Natalie Malka, I'm 14 years and old and we're at the Vaughan Public Library. Would you like to say your age?

IS: I am Isabelle Sniezek, I'm 85 and I live in Vaughan.

NM: Okay, so how long have you lived in Vaughan?

IS: I was born in Vaughan, on Dufferin St. north of Major Mackenzie.

And do you think it's changed over the years?

IS: Oh, it's changed a great deal. It was a farming community pretty well when I was young. There were 500 people in Maple and 2000 in Richmond Hill. So it's changed a great deal.

NM: How do you think it's changed besides farming, were there any new bus lines or shopping centres opening or anything?

IS: Well it's changed in the occupations mostly. The children that stayed on the farm when I was young are all in business or have professions. Very few people went on to university when I was young. I maybe knew three or four people that had university degrees.

NM: What was your occupation? Like, what job did you have?

IS: I was a teacher, a public school teacher.

NM: And what did you teach?

IS: I taught grades kindergarten to 3 and music, junior music.

NM: Growing up in Vaughan, did you have any responsibilities as a child to do?

IS: We had chores to do and we had to do our homework and things like that. And when I was 12 I was through public school and I stayed home for two years. So, I looked after children – my younger brothers and sisters and did some farm work not a great deal. I was mostly in the house, I was the dishwasher.

NM: So how was your childhood? Was it enjoyable?

IS: Yes, as far as we were concerned we had a good time.

NM: Did you have any favourite relatives?

IS: Yes, I had an aunt that I was very fond of. And in fact, I had several aunts that were very good too us. But we had one aunt that lived in Toronto we used to stay with and she had no children. So that was a special aunt that we all...Even when we grew up, even my children went and stayed with her. So, she was a great person.

NM: What are some activities you've done? When you were younger...

IS: Well, we went to Junior Farmers. We took courses, I took a course on dressmaking and we took cooking courses. There were 4H club type activities and then we had an accomplishment day where everybody went. Usually it was held in Richmond Hill in the United Church down in the basement. And it

was lots of fun, we did a lot of dancing. Friday nights was square dance night and we went to Maple or we went to King or we went to the Lawr (?). Those places are now in the middle of Toronto practically.

NM: Is there anything that you've learned throughout living in the farm to how Vaughan has changed? Is there anything you've learned?

IS: Well I guess we've all learned a lot. But, it amuses me when people don't know how far apart the roads are for instance. Because when I was young, all the concessions were a mile and a quarter part with 500 farms on each side and the frontage on each farm was a quarter of a mile. But city people nowadays, nobody seems to know that. So, there are..and of course we learned about farming, I can still tell the crops when I'm driving by. Whether its wheat or oats or barley or things like that. So I guess that's the kind of thing I learned.

(4:22)

NM: Is there anything you enjoyed a lot, while working on the farm? Anything? Is there something you really enjoyed doing?

IS: I think we enjoyed when it was over more than we enjoyed doing it. But, we usually had rewards if we worked hard in the morning my mother let us play in the afternoon. And, when we were older, we picked potatoes and apples and we'd always get to go to Woodbridge Fair or Markham Fair if we worked really hard. So that was kind of the carrot and the stick kind of thing.

NM: So did you enjoy teaching?

IS: Yes I did. I taught the junior grades and they were always lots of fun.

NM: Did you always think you would be a teacher?

IS: Yes

NM: And since there were no.. Was there a lot of options for you?

IS: Mostly it was to be either a teacher, or a nurse or a secretary. And I always played teacher and I was the oldest in the family so I was the teacher.

NM: As the oldest in the family did you have different responsibilities since you were the oldest? Or was it all the same?

IS: Well, I did a lot of the babysitting but then when I was 14 I went to high school. And then my next sister got the job and she never did go to high school. The third sister went to high school but my second sister she just had grade 8. But she made a good fist of her life, she did all kinds of...actually she was probably more accomplished than the rest of us.

NM: Did you enjoy high school?

IS: Yes, I loved high school.

NM: Do you have any memorable moments from when you were there?

IS: Oh, I liked the teachers and I had one English teacher that took me downtown for dinner. I don't think I'd ever been out for dinner before and she took me to a play at the Royal Alex. So, she was very good to me, she was our English teacher, her name was Mrs. Ard (?). She was a favourite of a lot of us, one of my other friends she kept in touch with her until she died. But when I got married I lost touch with her.

NM: If you could do anything now, anything, what would you do and why?

IS: Do you mean lifestyle? What do you think?

NM: Probably lifestyle, like if you could do anything you wanted to do.

IS: Right now I do anything I want to do. So long as you have enough money and enough time you can do anything you want to. Right now, yesterday I went to pick raspberries and made jam and then I went downtown and had dinner with my grandson. He barbequed for us, and so...right now if I want to go somewhere I can go. I can do anything I like, that's a great part about getting old.

NM: Would you say you and your family are very close?

IS: Yes, we're very close.

NM: Have you experienced any miracles in life?

IS: (laughter) The fact that I am still here perhaps. Well, we're very lucky, one of my cousins – there's only one left in a family of 6. And so far, we're all here. I am the oldest at 85, I have a sister who's 83, one that's 81. I have a sister who's 75, I have a sister who is 64 and a brother who's ten years younger than me so he's 75 too.

NM: Do you have any regrets growing up?

IS: Not really no.

NM: That's good. How would you like to be remembered?

IS: Well I suppose I'd like my children to think I did the best I could with them. And, that's about as far as you go with being remembered. Once you get older, your circle of friends gets smaller and there isn't really that much to leave behind really. My husband was an engineer and was very active – was the president of a worldwide company and he's gone...there's probably very few people who remember him. So I'm not expecting to be remembered, except by my grandchildren and my children.

NM: Do you still keep in touch with your friends from high school?

IS: Just one. And she keeps track of whatever there is left. We had a reunion from normal school until about four years ago. When we hit our sixtieth anniversary we stopped, so she keeps track of the few people that are left. There were several hundred of us graduated but I think there's only about 18 that we know where they are now. The rest of either just disappeared or have died.

NM: So, how would you say your childhood was like? Was it hard?

IS: It was all that we knew. So whether it was...it wasn't really hard we lived on a farm, we had lots to eat, we didn't have hydro but we had lamps, gas lamps and oil lamps. And eventually my mother got a gas iron and a gas washing machine. Before that it was arm power to wash the clothes; we either

scrubbed them on the board or we used a washing machine just pumped back and forth and turned the clothes by your own arm power. But, we thought it was great – we made maple syrup in the spring and picked apples in the fall. And, it was...it was what we knew.

NM: Do you miss working on the farm, or being on the farm?

IS: No and none of us stayed on the farm. Not one, and even in our extended family the last cousin sold his farm a couple of years ago. So there's really nobody in the family no the farm; most of them work for the government...which is not something but...anyway they're always sure of a pension and their pay coming in. I think everybody's worried on the farm, you never know whether the crops will be good, if it will be too hot, too wet...one year we had a terrible hailstorm and it ruined all of the crops. And my mother and dad really had absolutely nothing left. So, farming has its ups and downs.

NM: Like you said Vaughan has changed over the years, do you think it's changed in a good way? Or not that great?

IS: Well some of its good.

NM: Do you enjoy being a citizen in Vaughan

IS: Of course.

NM: So did you enjoy high school? Did I ask you that...Yeah...Were you a generally good student?

IS: I was a very good student.

NM: Do you have any...wait...do you have any bad memories from high school?

IS: No, not really.

NM: Things were enjoyable?

IS: Yeah.

NM: Any favourite subjects?

IS: I think I always liked English and History. I wasn't very good at Languages but I worked hard at them. I liked Math...And we didn't have any choices when I went to school. In grade 9 you took all the English and History and things like that, and you also had Penmanship and Art.

And then, we had Latin and French. I took Latin until grade 11 I think, then French right through to grade 12. But, you took it that was it. And the sciences, you had to take both sciences all the way through.

NM: So you grew up here in Vaughan you said, and...where were your parents, where did your parents grow up?

IS: They grew up in Vaughan too.

NM: Did your siblings also grow up in Vaughan?

IS: Yes.

NM: Yes, so everyone's pretty much in Vaughan.

IS: We all...I'm the only one that's back in Vaughan. The others are other places, but they're all in Southern Ontario.

(14:05)

NM: Do you like living in Vaughan? Do you think it's a good community?

IS: Oh, yes.

NM: Do you have any best memories of childhood? Or...

IS: Well we did have some treats along the way. My uncle worked for the CNR so once or twice a year he took us on the ship that went to Niagara-on-the-Lake. And, so each of us got a turn on a Sunday cruise. So, that was always exciting. And we had the school fair every year, and I showed you the plate, the silver plate that I won before. And, we learned to darn a hole and sew on a button...then when we went to the fair we had to show our expertise. So, there were all kinds of interesting things. And I had a calf, I was in one of the agricultural groups, I had a calf, her name was Blossom. And, we...all of us we could go to the fence and rattle a pail, she would come....And when I went to the fair, she was the biggest calf and I was the smallest girl and every time she decided to go out of line she would drag me around the circle. So I didn't get first prize for her because you had to have the calf under control to get first prize and she was the boss.

NM: Did you have any nicknames that people gave you?

IS: No, one of my aunts and my cousins still call me Belle but other than that I got the whole thing.

NM: How were your friends back in high school? Were they...they were good friends right? Good times with them.

IS: Well we only got together at school because we all lived so far apart on the farms. We really didn't see each other socially except if you went to church you saw some of them. But in the main, you didn't have friends like you have nowadays. My sisters were my friends mostly.

NM: How many siblings did you have?

IS: I had 5, four sisters and one brother.

NM: What did you think your life would be throughout the years?

IS: Well it certainly was different than I expected, I just expected to stay on the farm. Maybe get married to a farmer and raise a family the same as my mother and father did. But I didn't do that, I met somebody when I was teaching in the north and got married and moved to a logging camp. And he did very well and started his own business and we moved to Richmond Hill. And he had an international company eventually so my life was very different from anything I expected.

NM: Growing up, was everything enjoyable?

IS: Oh yes.. and nobody was sick in the family. I think if you have somebody that's crippled or has a health problem that makes a big difference in a family and we were all more or less healthy. The only problems we had was we had poor teeth mostly because we ate too much sugar but anyway that was another story...I think my mother's money mostly went to the dentist but nobody was sick or beyond...I don't ever remember going to a doctor.

NM: Was it bad if someone was sick?

IS: Well, I think it still is. A family...one of my children has a retarded boy and they look after him and that. But it's a very difficult life if you have somebody in the family that is not well for some reason or another. So we were lucky that way.

NM: You didn't go into the military did you?

IS: No (laugh).

NM: Sorry that was a weird question. Did you travel anywhere, have you gone to any places?

IS: Yes, I have.

NM: Did you like travelling?

IS: Oh I liked travelling, yes. We went...when my husband retired we went to Fiji and Hawaii and Australia and New Zealand and we were gone for three months so that was nice. And he had an international company, and we spent once summer in Italy – in Milan with three of the kids. And my oldest boy, he was at university so he did come but then he married an Italian girl and he went later. But, no we had a good time – we travelled a lot, drove a lot through the states. We didn't go down in the winter but we used to go on trips, we went to San Diego and Houston and all kinds of other places.

NM: What would you say is your favourite place that you've went to?

IS: I think we liked Italy the best, yeah - it was easy to get around. Transportation was easy and the people were easy and the food is good. My kids really enjoyed it, they all had a good time when we were there.

NM: Do you have any stories that someone in your family would tell you and you would have carried down, or an object...

IS: Not really, I don't even know where my great-grandparents came from. I just know that my parents and my grandparents were born and raised in Vaughan. But somehow or other I have never traced back to where my great-grandparents came from. Both my great-grandmother, on both sides of the family were alive, on my mother's side of the family. But, and my dad's parents came from Ireland, and that grandmother used to tell me how she worked in the linen factory and that's where she met her husband, he worked in the linen factory too and that's why they came to Canada. And, I forget what he was, but he got a job in a foundry in Toronto and they moved to Toronto. So, but then they had a large family and diphtheria struck and they had two children die with diphtheria. So he thought it would be healthier if they moved to a farm. So they moved to a farm and they worked on a farm as just hired help until they got

enough money put together to buy a farm. So, it was...this is the problem with illnesses. Diphtheria in those days, if children got it they died.

NM: Really? There were doctors though?

IS: Oh Yeah

NM: So nothing that the doctor's could do?

IS: But there were no inoculations to prevent it. It's not like now where you get a shot, that hadn't been developed yet for diphtheria.

NM: So healthcare has really changed from then to now?

IS: Oh it's changed greatly. And doctors years ago, they came...like my mother had everybody at home. So the doctor came and slept on the couch until she was ready to deliver, it was a different life. And my grandmother or one of my aunts would be the nurse and they'd be boiling water and the whole thing just like the movies.

NM: Wow...Things really change.

IS: It was tough, anyway that's the way it was. The only shots we got I think were for smallpox. I think vaccination for smallpox was the really common and then we were all inoculated for diphtheria but when my father's family were young there wasn't inoculations.

NM: Wow, so healthcare has changed a lot. What else do you think has changed greatly and you think is important?

IS: Well transportation and heating and look at the computers. Well we had a telephone I think our number was two shorts and two longs and there were twelve people on the line. And an operator in Maple answered it and put the plug in to send your call to Toronto or wherever you wanted to call. Have you ever seen the pictures of the girls working for Bell with the great big

banks of things on front of them and pushing at those buttons and then putting them in the wrong place and causing all kinds of trouble in the old movies.

But, I think those are the biggest changes, I'm still not computer literate; I can barely run the T.V.

NM: Music has also changed throughout the years. Do you enjoy the music now or like it back then?

IS: No, I really don't like modern music. No, I'm too old fashioned. I watched a program last night about the people that were in Mamma Mia – the original cast, that's the latest I want to get in to.

NM: Do you have any hobbies that you do today?

IS: I quilt and I used to make my own clothes and clothes for the children, but I don't do that anymore. And, I've had trouble with my hands so I can't quilt by hand anymore but I quilted by hand a lot. I made quilts by hand, I just took a quilt to my great-granddaughter last weekend. But it was machine sewn and machine quilted but anyway, it's gone on her bed. She' , I think.

(25:32)

NM: Is there anything you miss from back then, you know how it's changed from then to now. Is there anything you miss, and wish that it had stayed like that?

IS: Not really, no. Cars had flat tires all of the time. I mean, things are amazing now if you think about it. Nobody, hardly anybody gets a flat tire anymore. One of my uncles was late for his wedding because

he had three flat tires coming from Toronto. And they used to, it was really something, my dad used to have a tub of water and they had inner tubes in those days so he had to find the hole. So he'd blow it up and stick it in the water and when the bubbles came up he knew that's where the hole was. So then he'd dry it off, and he had a patching pad with a rough part, roughen it, put the glue on it, put the patch on it and then hope that it would hold and put it back in. And our bicycles had tubes too. Half the time we used to have to walk home with the bike because you'd get a flat tire and couldn't ride it anymore. So between the car and our bicycles it kept my dad busy fixing tires. That you wouldn't want to go back to.

NM: No, things are definitely easier today.

IS: Oh yes, well the thing is there are so many labour saving devices there aren't the jobs there used to be for young people. When I first was married and we lived in a bush camp, my husband's company hired 500 students to cut road and do different chores now they don't hire anybody because it's all mechanized. And there were always summer jobs at Eaton's and summer jobs for the government and summer jobs everywhere. Most students came out of school and went right to work but now there's very few jobs. Don't you find that among your friends?

NM: Yeah, I do.

IS: I mean you can go work at McDonald's or somewhere else not easy to find. But we all could get...Well the thing is they are bringing in people now to do the jobs that we did. Picking berries and picking fruit and things...I mean they bring in people from Jamaica or Mexico where we did all those jobs. Even my nieces and nephews picked tobacco and picked fruit but not anymore. I don't think any Canadians are doing those jobs unless they are part of the family. So, we've let those jobs go and I don't know why. There's no reason that young people in Canada don't pick fruit that I can think of.

NM: Yeah, we're getting pretty lazy.

IS: Well, it's just hard to figure out why those jobs disappeared.

IS: Do you want to look at my pictures?

NM: Sure.

IS: We might as well do...I didn't know whether you wanted to look at the anymore but I thought since we're doing this interview we might as well look at my pictures.

NM: I like looking through them, I thought they were nice. Because I admire how you have such a close family, it was nice.

IS: Of course I have to talk about my sister, she was the star of the family. And, she went to the States because she was so outstanding. She was 21 years old, she went to Virginia to teach recreation. She still, until recently, was a square dance caller and she picked that up because she worked for the Department of Agriculture and Recreation. I don't think that branch exists anymore, of the Department of Agriculture. Here's a picture of her pumping water with my little sister, giving water to the cows, and there's our farm. Now that farm is covered with houses, you wouldn't believe what it looks like now. Anyway, and that's Orfie supposedly painting, I don't think she ever painted and there she is making



something with my mother and my youngest sister looking on. It says that she's mixing pastry, doesn't look like she's mixing pastry to me but that's something else and here's a picture out of another magazine. June of 1947 she went for five or six weeks lecturing to a 4H club and about 5 years ago we all went to

Kentucky, four of us to a seniors study and we went to see the camp where she went. So, that was kind of exciting.

NM: Yeah

IS: And they made marbles in that town she that was in. We were gonna buy a bag of marbles for old times sake but there were no marbles. And there she is at a Junior Farmer's Association – the Federation of Agriculture. And here she is...well that's not her. Anyway, they're cheering their baseball game. And there's my grandfather and he was a stone mason. A lot of the fences and stone work years ago, and he dug wells and of course now they're all mechanically done. And when I was doing math he knew, even though he had never gone to school I don't think very much, I couldn't figure out the circumference of something and he knew the Pi whatever,  $2r$  or something,  $d - 2r$  I think. And there's my mother who took the Liberal for 60 years, she lived in Richmond Hill, well she lived in Vaughan all her life, she never went anywhere else. So that's that bunch, and there is my calf Blossom with Orfie, Nora and Me. She's standing very nicely there but she didn't always do that. And that's my class when I was teaching, and that's my kindergarten class.

NM: That's a lot of students.

IS: That's a lot of kids to take the to bathroom and in the winter get their jackets off.

NM: Were they hard to take care of? Or was it...

IS: No, no trouble.

NM: That's good.

IS: And there's my first school picture. There I am at the end with my pants showing.

NM: Wow.

IS: And here was when I got a bit older. By then my sister Orfie is there and my cousin Connie and another cousin Norma. Where did I get into the picture? Somewhere in there, there I am. Oh wait, they had us in a row, Connie and I were the same age and Orfie was younger and Norma was older. They moved from Toronto out to Temperanceville, which is in King.

NM: Was this a class picture? So you had classes even though you're different ages...so you learned different things...

IS: All in one room, yeah. And when we were in teaching, when I was in normal school you had to, you taught in the country schools. I remember the spelling book, you had your fingers in where each class was taking. Because there weren't that many books, you didn't have a spelling book for every class, you had one spelling book with different sections in for each class. So you just stuck your fingers in, you gave dictation to the whole class all at once. And we doubled up on the classes too. The reason I got out of public school so early was I was the only one in grade eight, so they, grade seven I guess...so they put me

in with the grade eights because the teacher didn't want to teach one person in a class so I got out a year earlier than I should have. But anyway, that's kind of the story here...but it was a long time ago.

NM: Things really changed from school to health care..

IS: Yeah and look at Pa now smoking his pipe. Now, I mean, you don't want to show anybody having a smoke. Its like the old movies, you ever watch those old movies in 46, everybody is puffing away. And all my children smoked when they were young and they've all quit, fortunately. But, I mean it was the thing to do, they went to the arena and they smoked. I think these pictures are falling apart. Anyway, well back to your questions, I just thought we'll have a break and look at all this stuff since I dragged it again.

NM: I liked it, I liked looking through them.

IS: Well I think sometimes, especially the picture of the farm, you don't realize how desolate it is in the way. There's really nothing there.

NM: But now houses are on top...

IS: Now housing is everywhere. But, the best part of now is that all the roads are paved, we used to have unpaved roads and they were terribly hard on cars. Maybe that's why there were so many flat tires. Anyway...

NM: Did you enjoy any sports or anything?

IS: I tried but I wasn't any good. My sisters were the baseball players and I watched. And there were lots of sports for boys but baseball was the main thing for girls. There were great baseball teams everywhere, Maple had a really good baseball team. Two sisters, they were kind of stout, and one pitched and the other one was the catcher and they won all over. And when they had special days like the Woodbridge Fair and the Markham Fair, then they'd have a baseball tournament like they have hockey tournaments now. I don't know, do they still have baseball tournaments?

NM: I don't know much about baseball but I think so yeah, I'm not sure though but yeah I think...

(37:07)

IS: Well I know softball teams, especially for the men, have done well. But, I don't know. I've never been where they're playing baseball, they're usually playing soccer or football.

NM: Any other sports that you play?

IS: No, I went into the sports day and I tried high jumping and broad jumping but I wasn't any good at it. My dad even dug me a pit to practice but he gave up in despair. My dad was a runner and he didn't get one runner out of the whole thing....

NM: Did you like taking care of the animals on the farm, like the calf? And...

Oh yes, well they were pets. But, like horses I never really had anything to do with the horses. My next sister, she used to drive the horses but I didn't. And she scuffled, which was a machine that went between the rows of the potatoes and covered the weeds, she used the harrows which were a bunch of teeth that made the land smooth. So she drove horses but I didn't. I used to go and get the cows with the dog and the dog used to go looking for groundhogs and leave me looking after the cows. But anyway,

we had lots of trouble with that dog. My mother and dad would take her and say “sic’em” and she would bring all the cows right in. But, we’d go and off she’d go looking in groundhog holes and sniffing around the fence post but she wouldn’t work.

NM: Were they hard to take care of or was it...

IS: The cows?

NM: Yeah

IS: Well cows are kind of dumb, you know...They’re not like a horse.

NM: Horses are harder?

IS: Yeah, horses have minds of their own....but cows they just kind of...

NM: Stand there...

IS: Yeah, we had lots of pigs. My dad raised pigs...the little pigs are cute...you’ve seen little pigs?

NM: Yeah

IS: You know they’re pink and they’re so cute. And then I had rabbits, I used to make cages for the rabbits but then I got too many rabbits so my dad sold them all. He said they ate as much as a cow did because I had so many rabbits. And of course, when you’ve got a lot of rabbits you just keep getting more and more. Anyway, he wasn’t thrilled with my rabbits...

NM: I think it’s so cool to live on a farm, it’s all city now pretty much

IS: Everywhere is city, there really isn’t much farmland. It’s kind of nice, I drove out Steeles to pick berries yesterday and you have to get past Markham Road before the farms start now. That’s a long way and you wonder how much longer the farms will be there. And going north, you have to get past Aurora and Newmarket pretty well because the farms are nearly all gone. It was a good thing to put houses on our farm because it was a very poor farm but it seems a shame to cover up all the good farmland with houses. I don’t know what we’re going to do for food but the thing is we’re buying all our food from the States. It’s pretty hard to get Ontario food, they advertise Ontario food but you go to the grocery stores, there’s not much Ontario food. Right now I think there’s Ontario blueberries and Ontario corn but as a rule we don’t get anything from Ontario, apples or...it seems a shame.

NM: Yeah, I don’t like how they’re putting too many houses on just good farms...

(40:58)

IS: And I don’t like the tomatoes nowadays, we used to get big tomatoes. One slice would cover a slice of bread and they were so good and you’d...they don’t grow them anymore. They grow those plum tomatoes pretty well, and they’re hard and they don’t taste very good. But, anyway...there’s still lots of peaches, I wonder who they get to pick them? I think they’re all Jamaicans that come in to pick them. But all that soft fruit has to be picked by hand so they have to have somebody to do it. Oh, I went blueberry picking on Saturday up at Barrie. I went to pick raspberries but they closed the raspberry patch so we picked blueberries. So I got a pail of blueberries on Saturday, I still like to pick berries. Then I picked

raspberries yesterday and made jam for one of my daughters who can't live without raspberry jam. But, that's just about it.

NM: I went strawberry picking once...

IS: Did you?

NM: Yeah...

IS: I made strawberry jam too. I had a carton from last year, I thought I better make some jam out of that. But strawberry jam takes too much sugar, I couldn't believe how much sugar it took. So I had to take a jar of strawberry jam to Adam and a jar of raspberry jam to his girlfriend, and I took them some of my blueberries. So...

NM: Wow..

IS: My grandson lived with me for a year, he's a chef in Toronto. So now he has me for dinner on Sundays when he has time to cook. So we had steak and chicken and corn and tarts; one with blueberries and one with raspberries. And my other grandson's coming up tonight, he stayed with me for a year. So, he's coming up tonight, he's got a dentist appointment.

NM: I really like how you're close with everyone, I think it's really good. How many grandchildren do you have?

IS: I have seven grandchildren; two girls and five boys.

NM: That's good, so it's like a big family that's really close...

IS: Kirsten is in her last year of university at Hamilton and she wants to be a writer or...oh she's into advertising and things like that but she wants to be involved in that. And, Todd is a teacher outside of St. Catherines. He's the one with my great-granddaughter and the others are in Toronto. So....doing various things.

NM: That's all good...yeah...So, you're retired now, yeah? do you enjoy it?

IS: Mhmm...

NM: It's nice, so now you just get to do whatever you like?

IS: Do whatever you like, get up when you want, go to bed when you want. It's great (laughter). Too bad you have to get old to do it.

NM: Yeah, but it's fine. What are some of the things you do for fun?

IS: I play bridge on Mondays, and I play bridge tonight in our building. I play bridge with the seniors at our church on Mondays. And I go to the movies, I go to the library. I sew and I go downtown...

NM: Everything's so enjoyable huh?

IS: Yeah, I house-sat for my daughter who was away. They went to the Czech Republic and in September I am going to housesit in Sault Ste. Marie for my son and his wife who are going to Europe. Last

weekend, I spent with one of my sisters in St. Catherines. We went to play, and played cards and went to the gardens in Niagara Falls. So, there's always lots to do....

NM: Yeah...

IS: And when I go up to Sault Ste. Marie I'll stop and see my brother. He lives somewhere around Orillia in one of those seniors' parks. So I'll go and see him...So we keep track pretty well of everybody...

NM: It really seems like you're living your life to the fullest.

IS: Yeah, as much, as well as I can.

NM: Yeah, like you've travelled all around.

IS: Did I tell you I broke both of my arms last fall? I had both arms in a cast. But Nick was living with me so he got to do everything. He cooked and he cleaned and he...because I couldn't open anything, I couldn't even open the door. I couldn't do the laundry, he did everything...I was coming with two bags of groceries and I tripped and fell on the sidewalk and broke both arms. But, my daughter who is a nurse was staying with me and I went and kicked the door, and she said "why are you kicking the door?" and I said "I can't open it, I just fell." Then she was out there and had me down to emergency.

NM: Oh my goodness...

IS: So, anyway...that's not a good thing to do. And then of course Nick was mad because he wanted to go for me and I said "I like to do my own shopping," You know, I like to look around...and he kept saying to me "I told you I should go and do the shopping." So, anyway, he was stuck with me until I got the casts off. So he took me to all my appointments and...If he

forgot to put my cereal out the night before I'd have to go wake up him up and say "come here, would you put some cereal in a bowl for me?" Oh dear, it's not a good thing to fall.

NM: No, careful...

IS: I look a lot...I don't rush and I was flying right along - I really took off, I went right up in the air. And a carload of young people were going by and they pulled into the parking lot at the gas station and came back and got me up, got me into the building. I don't know how they got out because the gate was

locked. I don't know what he did, the young fella that got me into the building. But, that...and an older man came along. I had a half dozen people helping me, so don't ever think that people aren't kind.

NM: Wow..

IS: Yeah, anyway. Do you think that we've done enough? Probably eh..

NM: Yeah, I really enjoyed talking to you Isabelle for the second time...I think I forgot to mention this, but this is August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Thank you so much Isabelle.

IS: Thank You..