

GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION
SOUTH VILLAGE
ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Oral History Interview
GLORIA MCDARRAH

By Liza Zapol
New York, NY
February 27, 2014

Oral History Interview with Gloria McDarrah, February 27, 2014

Narrator	Gloria S. McDarrah
Birthdate	6/22/1932
Birthplace	Bronx, NYC
Narrator Age	79
Interviewer	Liza Zapol
Place of Interview	505 LaGuardia Place
Date of Interview	Feb 27, 2014, 2pm
Duration of Interview	2 hours, 6 minutes
Number of Sessions	1
Waiver Signed/copy given	y
Photograph	y
Format Recorded	.Wav 98 khz, 24 bit
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Background/ Notes:

At the same time of the interview, the Steven Kasher Gallery was holding a show of Fred McDarrah's Village photography. 1-2 of these images are referenced in the interview.



Gloria McDarrah at her home, February 27, 2014. Photograph by Liza Zapol.

Quotes from Oral History Interview with Gloria McDarrah

“[Who was] at The Club? Oh, gosh. All the stalwarts were like Ad [Adolph] Reinhardt. He liked to talk a lot, so he was always on panels talking very esoteric topics. Who else? Irving Sandler went. He was a critic. And Lucy [Freeman Sandler], who would become his wife, often went also. Let me see who else. Milton Resnick also was a big talker. His wife or significant other—or both—was Pat [Patricia] Passlov. She's a painter. Sam [Samuel] Francis. Every name that you see in a museum now passed through there. Some like Reinhardt were, they would come every week. But others would come once in a while, just to be seen. Like [Willem] de Kooning came rarely. But Franz Kline was there often. And who else? I'm looking at the books here. I remember when those youngsters came, Andy Warhol. Like nobody would talk to them. Pop Art, you know. Not that they weren't welcome, but their work was so different. Alex Katz came. The second generation people. Michael Goldberg. I could go on and on.”
(McDarrah p. 20)

“NYU always owned the land under us, which was always a source of anger, controversy. But the feeling was that the city gave away the land, and in exchange they got this building. And NYU should never have been given the land. We were at their mercy, basically.”
(McDarrah p.26) [0:25:01.3]

“The kids went to P.S. 41. After St. Luke's Patrick went to 41 also. They would say, “Oh, there are drug dealers in the park”. And that was part of life. They went to school after second grade or so by themselves. And now I don't think anyone does that until they're like fifteen or something. It's quite different.”
(McDarrah p.34)

“SoHo has certainly changed drastically. When Tim was little, the rag dealers would have these great big railroad cars filled with rags. And nobody lived in that neighborhood. And then gradually artists move in, and then gradually galleries moved in. And then it became a real art center. And then the galleries started to move out. Now Chelsea is really where the art galleries are. And SoHo is like a shopping mall.”
(McDarrah p.34) [00:55:45.4]

“I hope that NYU will fold its tent and go away and leave us alone. I hope that the Greenwich Village Historic District gets enlarged. And I hope that the Village remains an entity; that it doesn't just fade away.”
(McDarrah p.36) [1:02:06.5]

Summary of Oral History Interview with Gloria McDarrah

Early Years

- Family emigrates to U.S. from Ukraine (before WWI)
- Born in Bronx
 - Age 6, moves from Bronx to 108 E. 4th St.(resides 6 months)
- Lebanon, Pennsylvania
 - Family moves to Pa. / father works in garment industry
- NYC visit once a year
 - 108 E. 4th St. - stays with family
 - Jewish neighborhood
 - Uncle a local butcher
 - Jewish delis on 2nd Ave.
 - Ageloff Towers, building on the block
 - Russ & Daughters, appetizing store
 - Movie theaters
 - Sara Delano Park
 - Synagogue
- Education
 - Penn State University, French major
 - NYU Master's in Education (after marriage)

After College

- 1953 move to NYC
- Work
 - Metropolitan Sunday Newspapers; secretary
 - 260 Madison, leaves in 1956
 - Publishing
 - Harper, Children's Department
 - Collier's, Encyclopedia Department
- Home
 - 15th st, rooming house in the Village, relatives nearby
 - 53 W. 11th St. (3-4 years)
 - 56 W. 12th St.

Marriage to Fred McDarrah

- Fred
 - Soldier in WWII, stationed in Japan
 - Worked at The Village Voice, sold advertising
 - The Club / William Littlefield
 - Photographer
 - 1960 *The Beat Scene* book project
- Children: Tim and Patrick
 - Education
 - St. Luke's School
 - P.S. 41
- Work [Gloria McDarrah]
 - Sports Illustrated (1 year)

- Europe (6 months)
 - Interest in buildings and architecture begins during this period
- NYC; Time, Inc.
- NYU Master's in Education
 - Teaches at Williamsburg Junior High School 50
 - Teaches at St. Luke's School (son's school)
- Fairchild Publications
- Landmarks Preservation Commission (5 years) [00:35:17.3]
 - 350 Broadway
 - Lenore Norman; Executive Director
- Publishing
 - Freelance copy editor for St. Martin's
 - Freelance copy editor for Grossett and Dunlap [00:40:27.7]
 - Frommer's
- Home
 - 64 Thompson
 - Between Spring and Broome St.
 - Tenement apartment, third floor walk-up
 - Italian community
 - Neighborhood
 - 505 Laguardia Place (1967 to present)
 - New York City teachers' strike of 1968
 - Notable tenants
 - Mary Nichols; worked for The Village Voice
 - Clark Bolton; worked for The Village Voice
 - AIR Program - Artists in Residence
 - Tenant's Advisory Committee; Fred participated
 - Minimal building diversity
 - NYU landowners; controversial

Notable Village locations

- San Remo
 - literary circles / Bill Manville (writer)
- Brevoort
- Sutters
- The Club
- OK Harris Gallery / Ivan Karp
- Washington Square Park
- The Jefferson Branch Library
- Patchin Place
- The Cable Building
- Chaim Gross Studio
- The Homestead, steakhouse with tenement above restaurant
- Chock Full o' Nuts

Notable Village People

- Robert Delford Brown / Meat Packing District artist / lived in The Homestead
- George Preston / poet / studio E. 3rd St. / poetry readings / Jack Kerouac attends

- Buddy Wertschafter / filmmaker
- Edna St. Vincent Millay / poet and playwright
- John Reed / journalist, poet, and socialist activist
- Jack Kerouac

Iconic images of Greenwich Village

- Fred McDarrah's images
 - Save the Village
 - Sutter's Bakery
 - Rhinelanders Mansions

Current Day

- Grandmother
- Member of GVSHP
- Community Board meetings
- Washington Square Village
 - Shift / predominantly now NYU

General Interview Notes:

This is a transcription of an oral history that was conducted by the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation.

GVSHP began the Greenwich Village Oral History Project in 2013. The GVSHP Greenwich Village Oral History Project includes a collection of interviews with individuals involved in local businesses, culture, and preservation, to gather stories, observations, and insights concerning the changing Village. These interviews elucidate the personal resonances of the neighborhood within the biographies of key individuals, and illustrate the evolving neighborhood.

Oral history is a method of collecting memories and histories through recorded interviews between a narrator with firsthand knowledge of historically significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of adding to the historical record.

The recording is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. Oral history is not intended to present the absolute or complete narrative of events. Oral history is a spoken account by the interviewee in response to questioning. Whenever possible, we encourage readers to listen to the audio recordings to get a greater sense of this meaningful exchange.

The views expressed by the contributor(s) are solely those of the contributor(s) and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or endorsement of our organization.

Oral History Interview Transcript

Zapol: This is the Oral History Project for the Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation, the South Village Oral History Project. It's Liza Zapol, and I'm here at 505 LaGuardia Place on February 27, 2014. We have a meeting at two o'clock. And can I ask you to introduce yourself, please?

McDarrah: Yes. Okay. I'm Gloria Schoffel McDarrah, and I'm a resident of 505 since 1967, and a Villager.

Zapol: Perfect. So I'm going to take us back earlier, as I mentioned before. And if I can ask you to tell me where and when you were born?

McDarrah: Yes. I was born in the Bronx in June 22, 1932, in Mt. Eden Hospital. And my family lived in the Bronx until I was six. At that time, my father found a job in Pennsylvania. It's the end of Depression days, and it was very difficult for him to find work. He was in the garment industry in New York City. So my family decided that my father would go to Pennsylvania and try the job for six months. And while he was away, my mother, my sister and I would move back to the family —how should I say it? Not 'mansion'—homestead, which was 108 East 4th Street. And my uncle had a kosher butcher shop in that building, and his family and one of my mother's sisters also lived there. So we stayed there for six months, and it looked as though the job was going to last. So we moved to Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

Zapol: What are your memories of 108 East 4th Street, and how did that contrast with where you had been living before?

McDarrah: Oh, I loved it. I just loved it. I was with a lot of family. And I enjoyed seeing my cousins. It just seemed like a wonderful place to live. And after school, I could get an egg cream in a candy store across the street. And we moved to a place where they'd never heard of egg creams in Pennsylvania. It was like going to the Wild West, or another planet. I hated it. I just hated it. And continued to do that until I got out of college, when I immediately turned around and came back.

Zapol: So what was your family [Jewish], or what was the kosher butcher? Where was your family from before that?

McDarrah: They were from what is now the Ukraine. Then it was part of Poland. My mother was born in 1900, and my father in 1893. And they came from the same shtetl, a little village near Lvov [Lviv]. And my mother's family all emigrated eventually, before and after World War I. But my father's family mostly did not. And I'm sorry to say none of them survived the Holocaust. So I went to Russia recently, about six months, a year ago, but I didn't go to the Ukraine. I still would like to, but right now, due to the political situation, it doesn't seem like a good idea. Maybe things will settle down.

Zapol: So your father emigrated alone to the United States?

McDarrah: Yes. He had a cousin who lived here, and the cousin paid for his voyage.

Zapol: And where did he settle when he first moved here?

McDarrah: Actually he lived in Harlem. At that time, either it was a Jewish neighborhood, or somehow he stayed with a Jewish family there. And he found work, and he knew members of my mother's family that had come earlier. And so he was friendly with them. And actually—I'm not sure if this is true or if it's a family tradition—he worked at the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. And they fired him. It was his first job, and if he was seventeen then, let me see, what year would that have been? About 1910, maybe? Something like that.

Zapol: The fire? [00:05:00]

McDarrah: No, when he worked there. He was seventeen when he came to the U.S.

Zapol: And you said he was born in 18—

McDarrah: [18]93.

Zapol: [18]93, yeah.

McDarrah: Anyway, he said it, so I assume it's true. It just seemed strange.

Zapol: Yes. And then your mother, did she grow up on the East Side?

McDarrah: She came, I think, in 1911. And she was eleven. And she came with her sister who was thirteen. And the two of them came alone, which to this day blows my mind. Anyway, they came, and they had an older sister who was married. And lived here, so they stayed with her. Then eventually their father came. And anyway, he had been an estate manager in Poland. And

apparently it was a job that Jews weren't supposed to have. And when it was found out that he was running this estate, the police came after him. And he ran away. And he came here and opened a butcher shop.

Zapol: And was that the butcher shop on the East Side?

McDarrah: I'm not sure. That was the store, but whether that was always the store I don't know. I know the family lived on Chrystie Street, but I don't know the number. And that may have been the store, on the Lower East Side.

Zapol: And what was that apartment like on East 4th Street?

McDarrah: Oh, I can tell you exactly. You walked into a little foyer, and my bedroom was to the right. And then to the left was a living room. And my sister slept in the living room. And then was my parents' bedroom, except my father wasn't there most of the time, so I got to sleep with my mother. And I was pissed whenever he would come back, because they sent me back to my bedroom.

Zapol: And were you close to your mother then? Can you tell me a story about your mother?

McDarrah: Gee, that's a tough one. My mother was my mother.

Zapol: Or maybe at that time?

McDarrah: I haven't separated, apparently.

Zapol: Maybe at that time of living, a story about your family?

McDarrah: Yeah. No, I think I've said pretty much what I remember.

Zapol: Okay. So then you moved to Pennsylvania.

McDarrah: Yes.

Zapol: And that was a big contrast for you.

McDarrah: Huge. Lebanon, Pennsylvania. It was—maybe still is—very much populated with Pennsylvania Dutch people. There were some Amish in my classes. And I was in first grade. And it was just very strange to me. And there we lived.

Zapol: Do you have a story about the contrast between living in New York and—

McDarrah: It just was so different. We lived in a fifteen-room house. An old Victorian house. It just, it was so strange. Like we would all congregate in the same room, unaccustomed as we were to that kind of life. But we had a yard. I liked that. And immediately there was a synagogue visiting committee, and it was like the welcome wagon or something. And they came to visit, and I remember my mother was crying when the woman was there. I guess it was shortly after we moved there. And I guess, like all of us, she felt terrible. But had not showed it so much before. So anyway, so we went to the synagogue. I went to Hebrew school. And there it was. There it was.

Zapol: So you went through school. And you had one sister?

McDarrah: Yes. Older sister. She lives in Patchogue, Long Island.

Zapol: And then did you come back and visit New York during that time?

McDarrah: Once a year, once a year. My father did not drive for many years, so he had to get someone to drive us. Someone he worked with had a car, and we would come before Rosh Hashanah, because that's when you go to the cemetery to visit your relatives. So my mother was visiting her parents. And it was just such a delight, you know. I loved it. It was just such a wonderful weekend. [00:10:04]

Zapol: Where were your grandparents buried?

McDarrah: I don't even know. Probably I did not keep up the—my parents are in Pennsylvania, and I have gone to visit them. The old habits die hard.

Zapol: So those would be your yearly visits.

McDarrah: The yearly visit. And I remember when I was sixteen, by then I had become very interested in French, in language and everything. I loved France. And there was a French movie playing at the Art Theater [on East 8th Street]. And I told my parents I wanted to go. They thought I was nuts, but they agreed that I could do that, but my father would take me. I guess they thought something would happen from, we stayed at 108 East 4th Street on the visits. While I went, I don't know if you remember the Art. It's between University Place and, I don't know what the next street up is. I think it's an NYU [New York University] facility of some sort now. And I just loved the movie. It was an André Gide, from a Gide novel. Something like *Diary of a*

Country Priest. I don't know if that was the exact name, but I still—images from the movie are still in my head. I just loved it.

Zapol: And so you came back then. What was your impression of the changing New York then? Did you feel like it was changing from your childhood?

McDarrah: We pretty much stayed exactly where that little neighborhood. And it's not so different. I was there this past weekend, I think. Showing my grandson where the butcher shop had been, and the building, and showing him where Aunt Netty's apartment was, and Uncle Joe's apartment. And the school that I went to for the few months, that was right across the street.

Zapol: Tell me about that school, the experience of being in that school right there.

McDarrah: Again, I didn't know anybody. I was only there for a short time. I remember the struggle I had, because I could write my name in cursive handwriting, but I couldn't spell 'Schoffel' in cursive. I could print it. And it was apparently a terrible thing. I guess the school in the Bronx hadn't gotten that far yet.

Zapol: Well, who were the other kids in your class then? Do you remember—

McDarrah: Oh, nothing. No, no.

Zapol: Or even in the neighborhood, what ethnicities of people were living in the neighborhood then?

McDarrah: Oh, everybody was Jewish. My cousins were there. So one cousin is six months older than I, and we were good friends. We still are friends. And I don't really remember, I remember there was a building at the end of the street called Ageloff Towers, and one of the women in this building had lived there as a child. So we were both amused by that. And it was different. There was more Yiddishkeit everywhere. Like you've heard of the Second Avenue Deli. There were three delicatessens when I was little, and you had your choice. And there were several appetizing stores. Now Russ & Daughters on Houston is the only one. I forgot the names of the other two, but it was different. It was quite different. And there was a Yiddish theater right around the corner from 108 East 4th Street on Second Avenue. I looked there and I wasn't sure even which was the building. And then there also used to be a Yiddish theater at the end of Second Avenue. I remember they were building Sara Delano [Roosevelt] Park. It wasn't a park

when I was little. It was just, you know, when we saw there was a park one time we came, and, “Oh, look, how different.”

Zapol: What were some of the places where you played then? Or did your parents go to the Yiddish theater?

McDarrah: My father was not there a lot of the time. The kids would go to movies. That's all I remember. And I remember Saturday mornings we went to something—I don't know if it was a synagogue or something. I think it was on either 5th or 6th Street. And there was some kind of classes or Sunday school, but on Saturday. But that's about all I can remember. [00:15:05]

Zapol: Yeah. And where was the movie theater where you guys would go to?

McDarrah: There were two of them. There was one on 14th Street, where I saw my first movie—*Jesse James*. I loved it. Tyrone Power was in it. To this day I have a soft spot. You've probably never heard of him. And the other one, I think it's where the Phoenix is. I'm not even sure. Or maybe, I'm trying to remember where the Fillmore was. They were movie theaters on Second Avenue. And I don't think I ever went to the Second Avenue Deli as a child. The other two, I don't know, were closer to the house.

Zapol: So it seems that the butcher did pretty well, too—

McDarrah: He did okay, yeah.

Zapol: —in the family business. And then your father—what exactly was his work that he was doing?

McDarrah: He was in the garment industry. And the job he got in Pennsylvania was as a foreman in a dress factory. And that's where he worked for the rest of his life.

Zapol: So then you're in Pennsylvania. There was this rough transition. And then what happened, tell me?

McDarrah: Well, after the rough transition, I guess we must have grown accustomed. And we finally moved from the fifteen-room house to an apartment. And right next door to us was the woman who had been on the welcoming committee, the synagogue committee. And we were around the corner from the synagogue. And that's where we hung out after school. But it's very funny when you think about it, how limited one's social life is when you're Jewish in Lebanon,

PA [Pennsylvania], in the 1940s. You know, it was just, I had friends at school, but I never went to their house, and they never went to mine. My friends' friends were all Jewish. I don't know if it's reverse discrimination or forward discrimination, that's how it was.

Zapol: And who were the other people who lived there, the other Jewish people? What brought them there? Were they also involved in the garment industry?

McDarrah: They were in small businesses. I had one friend whose family owned a junkyard. Another friend whose family, they were small business people mainly. Her family owned a soda factory, a plant. And their big thing was Juicy Orange. That was very well known. And they had birch beer and all these different sodas. I was just trying to think of what some of my other friends did. Several of them had stores. Like there was one fur store on the main street. And one had a dress shop, also on the main street. And that was it.

Zapol: And then your experience in school, about how many kids were Jewish, how many non-Jewish? What was the mix in that school?

McDarrah: I would say that in my class I think there were two Jewish girls. I think the whole town of Lebanon had about 100 Jewish families. So there were not many kids my age. They were a couple years older who I became friendly with. And that was really about it. It was small. Harrisburg had a much larger Jewish population, and it was interplay, inter-communication and so on. Like it was a big thing when Lebanon got a kosher butcher, because before then we had to go to Harrisburg to get chickens. In fact one Thanksgiving—I'll never forget—my mother bought a turkey, and the live turkey was in our bathtub. And then I guess the shohet—I don't know what it is in English—the guy that's allowed to chop the head off came around. It was not easy being Jewish. [00:20:30]

Zapol: And you talked about the reverse discrimination or whatever it was that you experienced, but did you also experience discrimination, in being one of very few Jewish families in school?

McDarrah: I don't remember that at all. I was good in school, and I felt I was accomplishing something. And I had some friends who were also nerds like me. And if there was—you know, I guess I was never invited to a party. There's a good one. A birthday party, like kids have? Gee, I feel bad for myself. But I guess it was nothing where people yelled 'dirty kike' or like in books. Nothing like that, but I guess it was more subtle.

Zapol: But you said you were a nerd. So what were you enjoying studying at that time?

McDarrah: I liked to read. And I remember the day I learned how to read. My sister was quite good in school. And she would win books for prizes. I could parse out a sentence in the first grade, but I wasn't really enjoying it. It was like, 'What's this? What's this?' But she had a book called *Janet Hardy In Radio City*. And I started to look at it because I was bored. And all of a sudden I was zipping through it. And then she had another book of short stories. Biographies of various people like Francis Marion, the Swamp Fox, and Clara Barton. You know, American heroes and heroines. And it was a tiny book, and I loved that. And it was a short distance from joining the library, where I'm still a—now Jefferson Market [Branch of the New York Public Library]. And I still find great pleasure, enormous pleasure, from reading.

Zapol: Well, you said you went to college. Had your parents gone to college?

McDarrah: What, are you kidding? My mother never went to any school, ever. She could read. In fact she used to buy *Modern Screen*, which I give her a lot of credit. And my father in Europe had gone to cheder, but that was just for the bar mitzvah. Otherwise he never went to school either. And you know, it was quite an uneducated group altogether. My older cousin, my oldest cousin was the first person in the mishpocha who ever went. She went to Hunter [College of the City University of New York]. And we were all amazed. And when it came my sister's time to go to college, she wanted to go. And my parents, who didn't have a lot of money, were hemming and hawing. They didn't say no, but then my father's boss spoke the immortal words: "Why does a girl need to go to college? She can come work with her father in the factory. She can be a secretary in the office." And my sister, I give her credit. She went to college. I had it much easier, because she broke the ice. But she worked, and I think it was like \$100 for a semester. Even Penn State [Pennsylvania State University] is more than that now. But she went for only two years, and then my parents said that they just couldn't help her any more, and then she started working. And she later went to college after she was married, and library school, and became a school librarian. But not a word was said to me about—I got a scholarship. So the \$100 was paid for. Or maybe it was \$200. I think it was \$100. [00:25:00]

And then I also worked, but not as assiduously. I mean I didn't work like my sister worked after school. I worked in the summers. And I realized that after two years my time might be up. So I started taking extra courses. Languages are my thing, so I would take like a six-week course in

Spanish, and then take the final. And I could do it because, you know. And so I got out in three years, by just taking a couple of extra courses.

Zapol: Where were you in school at that time?

McDarrah: Penn State, at State College, PA.

Zapol: And were you living at home then?

McDarrah: No, I lived there. And I enjoyed it. The first year, I was kind of miserable, because it was, again, very different. And apparently I'm not good at adjusting to new situations. But then I met more people who had very similar interests, other French majors. I met a Latin major. And some friends that I still have, as one does.

Zapol: So you talked about being interested in the French film when you were sixteen. Had you studied French in school, when you were in high school?

McDarrah: In high school I always had Latin. That was my best favorite. And then I took Spanish, because they didn't offer French right away. And then I took French as soon as I could. And I continued with the Latin all the way through. And I took Greek, which I hated—it's hard—and German, French, Spanish, and Italian. And it was just because it was easy for me. I had no goals in the sense of wanting to be a teacher or anything. I don't know what I wanted.

Zapol: What languages did you speak as a child?

McDarrah: Yiddish. My parents, I knew it, and yet when they met Fred [Frederick McDarrah] and he came to Lebanon to meet them, he said at one point, “You know, they're not speaking English.” [laughs] I mean they didn't *not* speak English, but they would lapse into Yiddish. My Yiddish is just about gone at this point. But I could parse out like a newspaper, and I can hear it very well. But to speak it, it's hard.

Zapol: And so where do you think that facility for languages came from for you?

McDarrah: I have no idea. Maybe from studying Latin? Maybe not. Just liking to read and wanting to read things in their original, as opposed to the translation.

Zapol: So after three years in college, what happened next?

McDarrah: I came back home to Lebanon, and I didn't know what I wanted to do. I had no clue. I wasn't working. I just was hanging out, was seeing some of the girls I had been friendly with. Phyllis Krim and Faye Krim, cousins. The Krimms owned a soda bottling manufacturing plant. And I was very good friends with Phyllis. And Faye at that time had a boyfriend who lived in New York. She said she would like to go see him, because her parents didn't like him. You know, the usual Romeo and Juliet scenario. She did not kill herself, luckily, nor did he. So anyway, to make a long story short, Faye and I came to New York to look for work and to live. And I think my parents thought I was going into prostitution. They were not happy.

Zapol: How did they react?

McDarrah: They said, "Don't do it." And so I don't know how I did it. I had my \$100 from the last year, so I had money. So Faye and I came here. And we lived in the Barbizon Hotel for Women on 63rd and Lex [Lexington Avenue]. Couldn't stay there too long—it was expensive. So then we moved down to Gramercy Park, it was the Parkside [Evangeline] Hotel. For a while it became an Evangeline house, like for girls in the city. At that time it was just a hotel. And it was a nice place to live. But by then Faye was losing interest, she and her boyfriend. So she decided to go back. And I stayed. And here I am. [00:30:34]

Zapol: So where did you live next?

McDarrah: I moved up to the Upper West Side, because it was cheap. But I was very uncomfortable there. It was not like you think of it now. It's really a swell place to live. It was slummy. I lived in a rooming house. And most of those lovely brownstones at that time were rooming houses, and I was not happy about going out in the evening. By then I had started working. I got a job through a college friend. Her brother worked at Metropolitan Sunday Newspapers at 260 Madison [Avenue]. So they needed a secretary for the promotion manager. I got the job immediately thanks to the Lipskys. Anyway, so I worked there.

And then after they hired me, they hired a boy to carry the grips. Because they would put on like films or slide shows for advertisers, so they would advertise in this group of Sunday newspapers. So that was Fred, obviously. And so after Faye left I hated where I lived, and by then Fred and I were friends. And he was really the only person I was friendly with outside of work. And my aunts were around.

So I moved down to the Village. I moved to 15th Street. And again it was a rooming house. And stayed there for, I don't know, something like six months or so. And then a college friend, Michelle Weiller, she was a French major, had just got back from getting her master's in Paris from Middlebury [Language Schools]. And she wanted to go to NYU to get her PhD. So we got together. She called and I was very amenable to moving. So we moved in together. We lived at 53 West 11th, and lived there for about three, four years. And it was great.

Zapol: What was that apartment like?

McDarrah: It was about the size of this living room. It had two little bedrooms, a living room, a kitchen and bath. And it was on the third floor, and it faced the rear. It was the time of that Jimmy Stewart movie, *Rear Window*. That was our apartment. It was really all those lovely little bitty gardens that we could see, and you could see other people's lives. It was nice. It was a lot of fun. Then Michelle wanted to go back to France. I forgot whether she got some kind of grant or she was going to be teaching English to French kids for a year. So I couldn't afford the \$100. I found myself a studio around the corner, at 56 West 12th, also rear-facing. And I stayed there until I was married. And then Michelle came back, and I didn't want to leave. I liked living by myself. So she got an apartment on West 11th, between Sixth and Seventh [Avenue]. The building was owned by this sculptor, [Albino Manca]. He did the Battery Park Memorial. And Mrs. Manka was very nice. And they had a son, Enzo. He used to live down the street. I don't know where he is now, Vincent. And she stayed with the Mancas in their building.

Zapol: And where did Fred live during this time? [00:34:48]

McDarrah: When I first met him, he lived above The Homestead on Ninth Avenue and 14th Street. I think the entrance was on 14th. It was about the size of my kitchen, which is meager. It was the tiniest apartment I'd ever seen in my life. Then he moved to 304 West 14th, which was like a regular tenement apartment. And there he started, he was more active with his camera. He would develop negatives in the bathroom, and a way of life that continued. And we lived there until we got married. Then for various reasons, which we can—Fred had a very spotty job history. [laughs] And at the time we got married, I think, he had left *The [Village] Voice*, because he had a big fight with Dan about something. So he was at 304 West 14th, but he couldn't pay his rent. So they let him stay for about six months, and then finally the landlord said that,

“You know, the time has come.” So they said that if he moved—it was rent controlled—they wouldn't hit him up for the back rent. So we moved to 64 Thompson.

Zapol: So I'm interested in a couple of things. First, you said that he was the guy that was hired at the Metropolitan.

McDarrah: Yes, yes.

Zapol: But what was your first impression of him? What was that first kind of meeting like?

McDarrah: He was cute. He was very cute looking. And, I don't know, he seemed wise in the ways of the world compared to me. And then we had some things in common. We talked a lot about the angry young men in England. You know, John Osborne and I forget who else.

Zapol: The playwrights.

McDarrah: Right. There were a couple, there were some novels—I can't think of—there were about three or four of them. And he admired literary people. He was not a great reader at all. But he had a great respect for like Delmore Schwartz, or just all kinds of people who were either successful or were working, were striving, to create. And I forgot how I started this.

Zapol: I was asking about when you first met.

McDarrah: When I first met him. Our first date was at the San Remo [Café]—the real, as opposed to being just strictly friends. We went to San Remo. I was totally out of my depth. He would talk to people and I was just standing there. It was so strange. Then after we left, we walked out onto MacDougal Street and he kissed me. And that was the first time he ever kissed me. Or I kissed him.

Zapol: That's a very sweet story. When you say you were out of your depth, what do you mean?

McDarrah: I just didn't know what to say. Everyone seemed so—so with it. So intelligent, like they were all part of a circle. I loved being there—at least I think I did. But it was just totally foreign to me.

Zapol: So by that time you said he had been working at *The Voice* already?

McDarrah: No, no. He worked at *Metro*, and he left before I did. And then he worked some kind of a menswear catalog, where he was a salesman. And then, he had been friendly with Dan

Wolf. They lived in the same apartment on the Upper West Side. It was a railroad flat. And each group had their own place. And Dan lived with his mother. And Fred was there, and then I don't know who else. I didn't know Fred at that time. But anyway, when Dan [Daniel] Wolf and Ed [Edward] Fancher decided to start a paper, Dan knew that Fred liked to take pictures. But Fred had a job, and he didn't think they would be going anywhere. So he didn't work for *The Voice* for about a year or two. And then he, as usual, left a job or got fired for whatever reason. Authority was not his strong point. [00:40:18]

Then he started to work at *The Voice* selling advertising. By then he was more involved with the artists also, with his friend Bill [William] Littlefield, who was more like his father than his father would have been. He was an older guy, gay, who had a house in Falmouth. He lived on East 13th Street in the winter in a cold water flat, and no bathroom. I was always amazed. I liked him a lot. He was a good guy. He sort of brought Fred into the art world.

Zapol: So were those some of the people then that you saw later at the San Remo, is that the art world that he had started to become part of?

McDarrah: They were more literary at the Remo. The ones, the people that Fred—I don't know. Bill [William] Manville was there. I forget who else. But I guess, it was somebody else, not Delmore Schwartz, another poet who hung out there. And it just was a swinging place.

Zapol: Had you already started to get a sense of the Village being this artistic literary place? Obviously it was a different place than where you had been when you were six on East 4th Street. So when did you become aware of this thriving cultural scene in the Village?

McDarrah: I don't know at what point. I guess the first night we came to New York, Faye and I, her boyfriend, Dick, took us to the Brevoort. It was being closed the next day or something.

Zapol: Where was the Brevoort?

McDarrah: The original, where there's an apartment house called The Brevoort, the original Brevoort was sort of in literary history. I forget whether Mark Twain slept there or, you know, it was something. It just had such glamour for me. I can still picture sitting at the table with Faye and Dick, and this is where life was. I don't know why else. It just must have crept up on me. I guess partly it was where Fred lived. He was very interested in the literary world, the art world. Music, too. Or you know, like people like Morty [Morton] Feldman and so on. I mean I didn't

quite revere them, but I certainly admired them. But did not feel like—I don't know, I'm not a musical person. Illiterate in music, I would say.

Zapol: So it was a part of Fred's world, was this artistic culture in the Village?

McDarrah: Yes, definitely.

Zapol: Just to clarify, around what year did you move to New York?

McDarrah: 1953.

Zapol: And then you said he lived over on West 14th.

McDarrah: Right, all the way over.

Zapol: Far over. What was that neighborhood like then?

McDarrah: It was crummy. It was pretty crummy. It's quite different from the Meatpacking District.

Zapol: But were there meat packers then at that time?

McDarrah: Oh, yes, absolutely. In fact I remember there was an artist, probably in the Seventies, Robert Delford Brown, who once had an opening in a meatpacking place. And there would be carcasses. He was quite batty. [00:45:06]

Zapol: The carcasses were in the actual space when he had the opening?

McDarrah: Yes, yes. He and his wife, Rhett [Cone], later bought the Jackson Square branch of the library and lived there. It's a cute little building. It's still there. I don't know what's there now. I think it had originally been a firehouse. Very nice little building.

Zapol: So there were meatpackers there. You said he lived in a small apartment in The Homestead. So what was The Homestead?

McDarrah: It was a steak joint, a steak restaurant. But above it was just a tenement. You know, it was not a great neighborhood. I guess the reason The Homestead was there was that it was a meat district and they got good steaks, and uptown, people would come. But we could never have afforded it. It was not for people that lived in the neighborhood.

Zapol: What else was around him at that time?

McDarrah: I don't even remember.

Zapol: Yeah, not much?

McDarrah: No. The building at 304 is still there, as is the building where he lived, the little building. It was a crummy neighborhood. I remember there was a White Castle on one corner. It has become enormously gentrified. I don't even know if it would be correct to say it was an Irish neighborhood. Maybe to some extent.

Zapol: So then you both moved in together, and remind me of that address.

McDarrah: He lived at 304 West 14th, and I was living at my studio apartment at 56 West 12th. And we dated, and not exclusively either. I just never considered marrying someone who wasn't Jewish. It never occurred to me. I guess about in 1960 we went to California. *The Beat Scene* had come out. We went sort of, not a book tour, but just showing the books to various bookstores. Then when we came back, I guess my friend Michelle, who by then was living in France, had married a Frenchman. Then another friend Jane had gotten married. I pointed out to Fred that both Jane and Michelle had gotten married. So another immortal phrase, he said, "Do you want to get married?" This was romance. [laughs] So we did. We got married. And we had our wedding breakfast in Chock full [o'Nuts Café].

Zapol: In Chock full?

McDarrah: Chock full o'Nuts. Right.

Zapol: Where was that?

McDarrah: I don't even remember where it was. It was not in the neighborhood. [laughs]

Zapol: And what was your wedding like?

McDarrah: Actually I was married in my sister's house in Patchogue, and it was she and her husband and children, and Fred's father and his brother and sister in law. My parents were upset. They didn't think that was a good thing to do. So anyway, that was the wedding. I remember I got a cake at Sutter's. It was fine. Then we went back to the city and the next morning we went to Chock full. [laughs]

Zapol: And where was Fred's family from? Where did he grow up? [00:49:30]

McDarrah: He was born in Brooklyn, but the McDarrahs were from Chicago. And there are still McDarrahs there. He lived in Chicago for a while. He had a brother, Dave, two years older. I don't know that much about it. He would say that his father never worked a day in his life, which was probably close to the truth. Because the kids, there are some photographs. His mother took photographs in a camera which we still have—a Brownie box camera. So how'd she buy it? The two kids are like ragamuffins. Truly. Fred remembers going out and begging, what it was like to be on welfare in the Thirties, and they'd give you a pail of milk. Or else they would go on street corners. It was a terrible life, just terrible.

They would move every year because you'd get free rent every time you'd move into a new apartment. It's Bushwick mainly now, Kosciuszko Street. We went by and looked. Then I think he started working when he was eight or nine. He got a newspaper delivery along Bushwick Avenue, which was really high class. And he won a trip to Boston for selling the most newspapers or something. So he was very proud of himself for that. He lived in Brooklyn with his family. Then when he was sixteen, he was asked to leave school. I'm never altogether clear why. He may have thrown an eraser at a teacher. He did not do well in school before then. But apparently the eraser did the trick. He went to work in a war plant, and he worked there for two years. And then when he was eighteen he was drafted. He was in the Army. He would say that when he was in camp, in an Army camp, people thought he was Jewish because he was from New York. And he never told them he wasn't. He was just curious to see how they would treat him. Apparently not well.

Then he was sent to Japan immediately at the end of WWII, 1945. And by then he noticed that paratroopers made \$50 more a month than just regular Army pay. So guess who went to jump school and became a paratrooper? He reenlisted and stayed another two years.

Then when he got out he had the GI Bill, and was going to NYU while living in the Upper West Side. And he met—trying to think how this went. He met a woman, Ellen Donovan, and she took Fred up to Bill Littlefield's house to stay, and that's how he met Bill. And it was, they sprung up an incredible friendship.

Zapol: He became like a mentor to him?

McDarrah: Yes, very much so. Very much so.

Zapol: And when did he start photography?

McDarrah: He took photographs all his life. When he was in Japan he took wonderful pictures, which we've never done anything with. We had talked about doing a book. It would be called 'Occupation Diary,' Because he would go on weekends to all different areas. He was stationed in Sendai, which was where the typhoon was, or that tidal wave? And it looked like it's from the Sixteenth Century. You know, there are beasts like beasts of burden pulling wheels around? It's just so different. It's hard to reconcile that with the Japan that we think of. And he loved being in Japan.

Zapol: So he took photographs always?

McDarrah: As far as I remember he always took photographs.

Zapol: And when you were on dates on so on, would he also have his camera with him?
[00:54:50]

McDarrah: It would depend. I think that he probably always did. He wore it around his waist, like a gun. And he used to have a bigger camera, a Rolleiflex, and then when he got a Nikon it was heaven. That was actually, I think, in the early Seventies that he could afford to buy a camera like that. A 35mm camera. A lot of change—his early photographs are all square. They're square negatives. And the Nikon is different.

Zapol: So when you said you went out to California, you were showing some of the books. Had you already started collaborating?

McDarrah: Yes, I went with him. *The Beat Scene* was the first book, and it was an anthology of beat poetry, with the photographs of the poets. And we went to all kinds of poetry readings. It was a lot of fun. And met a lot of poets. We just bopped around a lot.

Zapol: Can you tell me a story about one of those particular nights or personalities?

McDarrah: Oh, gosh, I can't think of one. Where did we go? We would go to poetry readings, or George Preston was sort of a half and half. He was a poet, but he had a job. In fact, he became an English professor. I'm not sure whether it was at City College [of New York], as it then was called. He had a studio on East 3rd Street, and he would have poetry readings—not his own work necessarily, but a lot of other people. I think that was the first time I ever saw Jack Kerouac. By then he was fairly well known. I'm trying to think—there were some other people there. I don't

remember if [Allen] Ginsberg was there. I don't think so. I liked George Preston. His heart was in his poetry. It was good. He was Black. I don't know anything about his background, probably should Google him, maybe find out something. I don't even remember if we went at night or we went on weekends, because I was working. That never stopped Fred. He always was working. He was consumed, really, with his work.

Even with a family, he would take one of the kids with him if he had an assignment or if he wanted to go somewhere and I was working. He automatically became the babysitter in that. And that was fine. The kids, sometimes they were bored, sometimes they liked it.

Zapol: I'm interested in that and how that worked as a family, but I'm also, so the East Side, is that where a lot of the Beats were?

McDarrah: Well the rents were cheaper certainly. Ginsberg was on East 6th Street, I think, and Preston. The West Village—by 'west' I mean west of Fifth [Avenue]—was much more sedate. I'm not sure why. I can't think of anybody who lived in the West Village, what I could call the West Village, at that time. Maybe on Seventh Avenue. I'm trying to remember. Robert Cordier, I think he had an apartment on 7th and Seventh Avenue. I'd have to think about that. [01:00:00]

Zapol: So that was your first book that you collaborated on?

McDarrah: Yes.

Zapol: And was that what you brought with you to California?

McDarrah: Yes.

Zapol: And at this time, were you still working for the Metropolitan?

McDarrah: No. I left there around 1956. I went to work at Harper [HarperCollins]. I worked in the Children's Department. And it was fun. I liked it a lot. The editor was off her rocker but brilliant, an absolutely brilliant woman, Ursula Nordstrom. One of the young women—there were five young women, who were in that little office—one of them used to go out with Maurice Sendak, Faith Aleshire. She was very pretty. Very black hair. And Tomi Ungerer—there were a lot of people who got very well known Ursula found, or she recognized, I should say. I only worked there for a year. And I think I got mono [infectious mononucleosis]. That's what people got in those days. And I don't know, I took the summer off or something. I'm trying to remember

what I did after that. I must have done something. I think I started to work for *Collier's*. Not the magazine. They had an encyclopedia. Maybe they still do. And they were starting a reference book section. And because of my vast—

[END OF FIRST AUDIO FILE; BEGINNING OF SECOND]

McDarrah: —knowledge of children's literature gained after one year at Harper's, I started to work on that. I knew a lot of the authors, and so I could write to them. Not that I knew them. Not that we went to the movies together or anything. But at least I knew their names. And I worked there until we got married. Then I had this huge fight with my boss, which is exactly the same time that Fred has his fight with Dan Wolf. I think the idea of getting married perturbed us both. But that was okay.

Zapol: When did you start working for the Landmarks Preservation Commission?

McDarrah: I would say—I don't remember when—it's in the mid Seventies, I guess.

Zapol: So you had another job in between then?

McDarrah: Yes, after *Collier's*, I worked at *Sports Illustrated*—another misbegotten idea—for a year. Then I left *Sports Illustrated*, because Fred and I went to Europe in [19]61. We stayed for about six months, and had just the time of our lives—certainly the time of my life. I was just in seventh heaven the whole trip. On our return I was pregnant, and we were broke. So he sold magazine subscriptions. I went back to *Time, Inc.*, and they took me on as a floater. I floated from office to office. It was very nice. I was very nice to them, and I enjoyed it. You know, just answer the phone, and nice peaceful job. Fred was a failure at the magazine subscriptions. Terrible. And after that he went back to *The Voice* and stayed.

Zapol: And by then was he doing photography for *The Voice*?

McDarrah: At the beginning it was strictly selling ads. He did start to give them photographs of, I think it was artists generally. Because he was the doorman at The Club and so on.

Zapol: Yeah, so we didn't talk about that on the record. So tell me about that—how and when he started working at The Club.

McDarrah: Well Bill Littlefield was the administrator, and I remember going to a Club New Year's Party. I don't remember, I think it was before we were married. Yeah, I guess I went up

with Fred to see Bill. And he invited us to come. It was really nice. I enjoyed it. I think the first panel I went to was something like Jackson Pollock had died recently, and it was either about Grace Hartigan or about Pollock. I was just fascinated by all these people. And they were very open, I felt. It was not like when I went to the San Remo. Or maybe everybody was drunk there also.

Zapol: Drunk where?

McDarrah: At the Remo. They weren't so sober at The Club either. But it was a different atmosphere.

Zapol: Who was there?

McDarrah: At The Club? Oh, gosh. All the stalwarts were like Ad [Adolph] Reinhardt. He liked to talk a lot, so he was always on panels talking very esoteric topics. Who else? Irving Sandler went. He was a critic. And Lucy [Freeman Sandler], who would become his wife, often went also. Let me see who else. Milton Resnick also was a big talker. His wife or significant other—or both—was Pat [Patricia] Passlov. She's a painter. Sam [Samuel] Francis. Every name that you see in a museum now passed through there. Some like Reinhardt were, they would come every week. But others would come once in a while, just to be seen. Like [Willem] de Kooning came rarely. But Franz Kline was there often. And who else? I'm looking at the books here. I remember when those youngsters came, Andy Warhol. Like nobody would talk to them. Pop Art, you know. Not that they weren't welcome, but their work was so different. Alex Katz came. The second generation people. Michael Goldberg. I could go on and on. [00:05:35]

Zapol: So what was Fred's responsibilities with The Club?

McDarrah: He would send out the postcards. I guess Bill would let him know what the topic would be and who were the speakers. And he'd send out the postcards. He kept a club list. There were club dues, but that was given to Bill. Fred didn't handle that. It was major. Then he would stand at the door. It was, I remember, just like being a loft upstairs on 10th Street. There were a couple of places while I used to go.

Zapol: It moved locations?

McDarrah: It moved, yeah. He would just say hello. And if it was someone he didn't know, he

would ask—I don't know. He would get to know them and let them in.

Zapol: At that time, was that when the book about the art scene started to develop?

McDarrah: Probably, probably.

Zapol: And what was your involvement in that?

McDarrah: Well, we talked about it. First, he thought—and I agreed—that Bill Littlefield should write the text. But he was, it was too—it was not for the general reader. He was a very brilliant guy. He'd gone to Harvard and had a wonderful life. He never worked. His family was wealthy, Littlefield. And he'd been in Paris in the Twenties, and the south of France. He was friendly with a lot of people, the whole gay crowd from MoMA [Museum of Modern Art]. I forgot their names.

And okay, why did I get here? I'm talking about Fred's responsibilities at The Club?

Zapol: What was your responsibility in writing the book?

McDarrah: Oh, in writing the book. Well, after we saw what Bill had done, then Fred said that I should do it. Then it was like, I often think that it was like Willy [Henry Gauthiers-Villars] and Colette [Sidonie Gabrielle Colette]. I was so uninterested in—I was so thrilled about the book, but unlike Fred, working from night and day, it was not my cup of tea. I liked to read, and read to no purpose. I don't like to read for a purpose.

So I did it. I wrote the text. But it was under duress. I was glad to be able to do it. And I think that the book should have been different. The pictures should have been bigger. But anyway that was my involvement, was the text. He selected the pictures certainly. I did not have a lot to do with the photographs, ever. Fred would say that he could remember every picture he ever took. I couldn't remember from the next day what I had seen the day before. Truly. My mind doesn't go in that direction. I could say it in Latin. [laughs]

Zapol: So you were saying that you worked at *Time Life*. And—

McDarrah: Yes, first at *Sports Illustrated*, when we first got married. And then when we came back from Europe.

Zapol: And then what was your job after that? *Collier's*, you said. [00:09:30]

McDarrah: *Collier's* was before then. Then *Sports Illustrated*. Oh, I know what—another ill-conceived idea. I decided to go back to school and get a master's in education, so I could become a teacher. So this would be a good thing for a mother to do, since I already had a child. We needed the money. So I went to NYU, and from after Tim was born, Fred eventually got back to *The Voice*. And I was just at home. I went to classes. I got the degree, but I hated it. So it did not last long. The degree was in teaching French in the elementary school. Because after I realized that I couldn't stand the education credits, I started taking more French. And somehow or other there was this course that you could get a degree with. So I did. I worked as a substitute teacher, and I made \$30 a day, which was appreciable. Fred would baby sit. He would drive me there and pick me up. I don't know, I guess I couldn't take the subway.

Zapol: At whatever school—

McDarrah: Oh, I bopped around a little, but then I started to work in Williamsburg Junior High School 50. And I got to know the secretary and it got to be the place where I would go. Whenever they needed someone I almost always would go. And then after a while—oh, Patrick started going to nursery school at St. Luke's.

Zapol: That's your second?

McDarrah: Yes. And they said if I would like to work there, that that would decrease the tuition appreciably. So that's what we did. But I didn't like it any better there. I mean the kids were more amenable. They didn't throw things and just, you know, stayed in their seats and respected authority.

Zapol: Where was St. Luke's nursery school?

McDarrah: It was where the church is on Hudson Street—Hudson and Christopher. It's very pretty there. It's like an old-fashioned English little enclave. Little garden and everything; it's nice.

Zapol: And where were you living at that time?

McDarrah: We lived on Thompson Street until—no, wait a second. Did we live on Thompson Street? If Patrick was in nursery school—no, we were here. We were here. We moved here in [19]67 and Patrick was born in [19]66. So Tim was five or six when we moved here. And the big

school strike happened. The New York City school system shut down for a long time.

Zapol: And how did that effect this neighborhood? How did you see that in this neighborhood?

McDarrah: Generally speaking, I'm always on the side of the union, although it was a little inconvenient. But we set up a school in the building, so that there was no pressure, like some people may have had. You know, the kids had some place to go. And I think one of the teachers actually came here. It was in the community room. That's all I remember, downstairs. That was the school strike.

Zapol: So let's talk about Thompson Street and how you ended up here.

McDarrah: Okay.

Zapol: So what was that apartment like on Thompson Street?

McDarrah: It was a tenement apartment on the third floor. The whole building was Italian, except for us. And it had originally three small bedrooms, and one of them became the darkroom. It had a bathtub in the kitchen. So we took that out and put in a sink and cupboard, and put a bathtub and a sink in one of the bedrooms. It had a separate water closet, which is nice. I recommend it highly. And we stayed there I guess for, I don't know, five years or six years.

Zapol: So the apartment was all Italian. [00:15:00]

McDarrah: Yes. That was Little Italy, between Spring and Broome, on Thompson.

Zapol: So what was your relationship like with the neighbors?

McDarrah: They were very friendly. The guy in the apartment next door was a longshoreman. And he was always bringing things home that fell off the truck or something. [laughs]

Zapol: What kinds of things?

McDarrah: Oh, like fruit. You know, that would have to be used up. I guess all I remember is fruit. I don't even remember his name anymore.

Zapol: Who else was in the building?

McDarrah: It was all Italian families, very old people down on the lower floors. I remember the agent, whose name was Charlie Keith. I forgot the company he worked for. Then next door there

was a grocery store that was owned by a Jewish family that had come over here after the war. I've forgotten their name. And their daughter became my babysitter. I don't even think it's a grocery anymore. Then next to the grocery store was a social club. I don't know if it was [John] Gotti's [The Ravenite Social Club]. I don't think so. But it was the kind of place where in the summer the men would sit outside and play cards. It was an old neighborhood. There was nobody else below Houston Street, except us. Then on Greene Street, Anneli Arms and her husband, John Arms, moved in. She was a painter. I think she's in Bridgehampton now. They had a little boy. And so we got friendly, because it was nobody else for miles around that went up to Washington Square Park from this neighborhood.

Then a filmmaker moved around the corner on Spring Street, Buddy Wirschafter. And he was friendly with Andy [Warhol]. And his wife Zelda, we speak occasionally. They had a little girl. She was between Tim and Patrick. I forgot her name [Jenny]. Anyway, that was the beginning of the—and then eventually more artists started to move there. And then they had that AIR Program—Artists in Residence, that you were allowed to live there if you could get that license from the city.

Zapol: And did you start to see that shift? More artists coming down while you were living there? Or was it a little bit after you had left?

McDarrah: We were here already when Ivan Karp opened up OK Harris. In fact, he lived in this building, and his wife Marilynn. Their son runs the gallery now. They moved away from the building. I don't know where they moved to. I think that they ended up something like Chautauqua, or Chappaqua, something that begins with a 'Ch.'

Zapol: So then tell me about moving here. How did you find out about this building?

McDarrah: An ad in *The Voice*. And nobody wanted to move in. It's so funny to think now that there's a waiting list for like 20,000—I'm exaggerating. But it was not a desirable neighborhood. It was below the park, which was Never Never Land in real estate circles. They were giving priority if you could apply, but you had to show that your income was in a certain range. And we had a terrible time, because we couldn't prove it. We had to go to a lot of different places that had used a photograph to give us a statement. I don't know. You had to make \$12,000 a year, and we didn't make it.

Zapol: What do you mean? All the places that had licensed Fred's photography? [00:20:00]

McDarrah: Right, yeah. Fred had a friend at *Newsweek*, Jim [James] Kenney, and he had used pictures of artists from time to time in *Newsweek*. So that paid well. By then he'd had pictures in *The Voice*. So somehow or other we managed to pull that together. They were giving priorities to people, first of all, who had been displaced from these very blocks, and secondly to residents of the neighborhood. So we had that priority. So we were shown several apartments that were available, that had never been occupied. And this one I guess it was a three-bedroom, and I think it was the biggest apartment.

Zapol: And what was your impression of the building at that time?

McDarrah: My impression was I wanted to live there. And as I told Fred, "Either we're moving, or I'm leaving." Because it was tough down there on Thompson Street.

Zapol: It was cramped?

McDarrah: It was cramped. It was awful. It isn't that I was dying from it but the idea of having something like this, I wasn't going to let that go. So somehow I convinced him. Then he went and he asked for a raise. Because he was making \$60 a week, and the rent here was something like \$125 or \$150 a month. Dan doubled his salary. He was nice in his own cheapskate way. And so we moved.

Zapol: And what was moving in here like? What was that day like? What do you remember about coming here?

McDarrah: I remember taking things. I don't think we brought anything from Thompson Street except our clothes. Most of the furniture then, and a lot of it now, is from the street. And from the East Hampton dump. [laughs] So we brought mainly whatever art that we had, and our clothing. I'm looking around. Nothing here is from Thompson Street. Of course, it's a long time. That's funny. But we never got a mover. I remember Ray [Raymond] Parker, a painter, and his wife Denise, were good friends. We had bought a house in East Hampton, and we gave them a lot of our furniture—dining table and chairs, and a nice kind of cupboard thing. I don't know what else, whether we just left it.

Zapol: So you moved. And what was the initial community of people who lived in this building?

How did you meet people? What were those first days like?

McDarrah: There were a number of people with children, my children's age, so just playing downstairs. There used to be an open field where the NYU gym is, and the kids would play around there, or go up to Washington Square Park. Mary Nichols, who worked for *The Voice*, lived—her family is still on the 30th floor, I think. So actually Clark Whelton lives here now also. He's a writer and had worked for *The Voice*, among other positions. I think he worked for Ed [Edward] Koch for a while.

Zapol: So you got to know some of the different people, or you already knew some people who moved in here?

McDarrah: Some of them. Mostly they were new. Instead of a board that we have now, there was a tenants' advisory committee, and Fred was on that. So I would go to the building meetings, and met people that way. [00:25:00]

Zapol: What were some of the issues early on around the building? Do you remember any kind of conflict?

McDarrah: I don't even remember anything offhand. NYU always owned the land under us, which was always a source of anger, controversy. But the feeling was that the city gave away the land, and in exchange they got this building. And NYU should never have been given the land. We were at their mercy, basically. For example, NYU, with the recent construction that they wanted to do, our land lease was coming up. So therefore, in the negotiations, the board of our building felt it was a good thing to do, they promised not to join the lawsuit against NYU, which the faculty—and individual people, like I personally—but 505 agreed not to sue NYU. Which I guess still it rankles, doesn't it? And then they had a nursery school—I'm bringing up all these old resentments—they had a nursery school and we weren't allowed to have our kids go there.

Zapol: In the other buildings?

McDarrah: It was for NYU only. And the playground, in Washington Square Village, anyone from around here with NYU credentials could take their kids into the playground. And then, after this construction controversy, all of a sudden there was a letter under our door saying that all we had to do was fill out this form and we would be permitted. And the form would have like 'how many grandchildren do you have,' and 'what are their ages.' And I was so infuriated I threw it

away. And there it is, NYU, making itself loved. Not!

Zapol: So it's been this ongoing thing through the history of the building it sounds like.

McDarrah: Yes.

Zapol: And you went to NYU. Did you feel a cross-allegiance?

McDarrah: I hated them. I hated them with a hate that was more than hate in this kingdom by the sea. I swear to god, I will never forget. I had three credits from Penn State in a course of Émile Zola, and I needed three credits to graduate in my masters program. And that blankety-blank advisor that I had said she was not going to accept my Penn State credentials. So I took another course in Zola here. It cost me, it was \$37 a point. And at least I used every one of the term papers that I had done at Penn State. That's my satisfaction. I'm sick, I'm sick! Anyway, don't tell anybody that.

Zapol: Well, I'm sure you'll still get the credit. I'm sure it will be okay. Yeah, so I'm interested in the character of this building. So how would you characterize the residents of this building, if there is a character?

McDarrah: It's hard. Actually there's a former dean from NYU, Goren. The Gorens are on the 15th floor. And they didn't live in the neighborhood. So I can't imagine how many NYU people got slipped in. That's not what you asked. Well, it's changing and it stays the same. There are some older people my age, and older. There are families with young children. And single people. I think that it's pretty much as it had been. I don't think it's any more diverse than it had been. It was never very diverse. I don't think there are ten Black families here. I don't know why that is. I can't say. But it doesn't seem appropriate in this day and age. I think that there may be a few more Asian families, maybe. There are a couple of Indian families—India Indian. It seems like the mix that it always had been. [00:31:00]

Zapol: It's not reflective of New York now?

McDarrah: I don't think so. I really don't think so.

Zapol: That's interesting. So I want to talk about when and how you started working for the Landmarks Preservation Commission, and what that work was that you did.

McDarrah: Yeah. I was working at Fairchild Publications after I gave up teaching. And it was okay. I liked my boss a lot. But it was dumb-dumb work. I had a friend named Luella Boddewyn, and she had worked at the Municipal Arts Society for Kent Barwick. I don't know if it was at that time, but she moved on to the Landmarks Commission. And later Kent became the Chairman. So anyway, Louella originally had worked as a publicity person there, at Landmarks. Then she became a Landmarks Preservation Specialist is what it's called. At that time, I being at Fairchild and not happy, she said, "You could do that job. You don't need any credentials, special. You have to be interested. But what you do really is you do writing, write publicity releases, or you give presentations."

So I got the job. It was a small office, the one I worked in. It was the Community Survey. And what we were doing was driving throughout the city. Either looking for buildings that deserved landmarking, or neighborhoods that could become historic districts, or even we would think about enlarging already designated districts. The survey had done Manhattan before I came, and was in Brooklyn. It was one of the top jobs of my life, because I could drive. And none of them liked to drive or knew how to drive, so I became the driver. I would go to the Municipal Garage in Brooklyn and get the car, and they would meet me. And there would be about three other people. Andrew Dolkart was a grad student then. He was cute as pie—still is. And Louella. And a third guy who was from Queens. He was from outer space but very knowledgeable. He knew his architecture and he knew his preservation. And we would drive. Andrew was a church specialist. Then the thing is after they would identify a building, or possible enlargement of a district, then the bad part would be I would have to give a presentation, a slide show, about landmarks. I had like cards that I could use, and then I also had to operate the thing. It was hell.

Zapol: You had to operate the carousel.

McDarrah: Yeah, the carousel, exactly. So I mean I never fainted or anything or threw up.

Zapol: You were on the spot.

McDarrah: I was on the spot. And you know the people had mixed feelings, as they still do, about landmarking. You know, "I won't be able to change my windows," or whatever. But I tried to soften the blow and think of the increased real estate value. Also, you know, the historic value to the city, and to the country, and to the world. I don't know what I said. But anyway I stayed

there for about five years. I really liked it.

Zapol: How big was the office at that time? How was it run? [00:34:50]

McDarrah: We were at 350 Broadway. And the Chairman was here, and then the survey. Then there was the Executive Director, who was Lenore Norman. Then there were the Landmarks Preservation Specialists. Dibble, Jim [James] Dibble was one. And there were a couple of women—there was a lawyer, a woman, who was very knowledgeable. That was the whole office. I don't even know how to describe it. It didn't take up a whole floor of 350 Broadway. It maybe took up maybe half, maybe a third.

Zapol: And while you were working there what were some of the big issues that you were dealing with at the office?

McDarrah: I'm just trying to remember. It was outside my purview, you know. But I was aware of them. Nothing is coming to mind, whether it was any of those big things, like Grand Central. But I think that pre-dated me. What else? Penn Station, I don't remember when that was.

Zapol: That would have been before—

McDarrah: It was before, because I opened my remarks by saying how the Landmarks Commission came to be. It was based on Penn Station.

What else? Nothing comes to mind. We would go to [New York] City Council meetings sometimes, or [New York City] Board of Estimate meetings. But what the occasions were, I don't remember.

Zapol: That's okay. Had you had an interest in preservation before? Or was that something that sort of happened out of this?

McDarrah: I think it happened out of this to a great degree. I was traveling in Europe. I was very much taken by the buildings and the architecture, and the history of the buildings. But somehow around in New York, not necessarily. But I took to it. It's just a fascinating topic.

Zapol: Are there particular buildings you remember finding, or neighborhoods, when you were driving around Brooklyn?

McDarrah: I remember Greenpoint. I liked Greenpoint a lot. Do you live there? No.

Zapol: No, I live in Brooklyn. I live in Park Slope. But Greenpoint, yes.

McDarrah: Ah, yes. I loved Greenpoint. There were so many things there. That pencil factory. And every block was interesting. Plus they had these nice Polish restaurants where we would have lunch. That was an integral part. I'm trying to think where else. Clinton Hill was gorgeous, absolutely gorgeous. I think it's Clinton Avenue, or the main street, just lined with—

Zapol: Vanderbilt or one of them.

McDarrah: Yeah, just beautiful. They're old mansions. I don't remember lots of others.

Zapol: And then what did you do after that work?

McDarrah: Good question. What did I do after that work? Oh, I know. I was really getting sick of those presentations, and a friend who lived in the Village—Doug Brenner, Douglas Brenner—he lived on Morton Street. He said, why didn't I look for some other kind of job? Like since I was such a reader, why didn't I work in book publishing? So I said, “Oh, you know, I have no experience really, except one year at Harper's.” He had a friend who—always with friends—who worked at St. Martin's [Press]. And she was either a copy editor or the copy chief. He told her that he had a friend. So she sent me a very sweet note saying she would be glad— She sent me a test and it was a piece of cake for me. You know, grammar. My middle name is 'punctuation.' So anyway, she started to give me freelance work. [0:40:00]

I realized I could make enough so that I wasn't—I was bringing in some money and embarking on a new career. So then one of the places that I had freelanced for was Grossett & Dunlap. And they didn't offer me a job, but they said would I consider being 'in house,' but freelance. No benefits. So I said yes. So I worked there, and David Frost, he lived on Fort Greene. And a good soul, a good soul. So I worked for him and was, and that was fine. Then I guess I heard about an opening at Frommer's. So I applied and I got that job, and worked there until I stopped working.

Zapol: I see. So you continued in the publishing world?

McDarrah: Yes.

Zapol: Actually, I wanted to talk to you a little bit more about preservation. In what way have you been involved in any activism, or any work around NYU and the neighborhood here?

McDarrah: Well, I've gone to some of the hearings just to be a body. Well, I belong to the

GVSHP [Greenwich Village Society for Historic Preservation]. I think Andrew Berman is amazing. He's right there all the time. I admire him. Aside from that I have not really been involved in—

Zapol: You said you were on the lawsuit about 505 LaGuardia.

McDarrah: I actually did not join the lawsuit individually. So a lot of good all my mouthing off does.

Zapol: I thought you said you did, but you didn't?

McDarrah: No.

Zapol: All right, so I just wanted to clarify that, to hear about your involvement. On the phone we talked a bit about the way that Greenwich Village is perceived photographically. And I just wanted to hear any thoughts that you had about that. What are some of the iconic images of Greenwich Village? Perhaps the ones that Fred took? What comes to mind when I say that?

McDarrah: Well, I don't know. I always am fond of the blocks between Fifth and Sixth [Avenues], and Fifth and University [Place]. It's so peaceful. It's like from another time. There are some West Village areas like that—streets, part of Bedford Street—just so peaceful that I really relate to them. There are some buildings, some brownstone buildings, the larger apartment buildings. There's one on West 12th Street that's very handsome. I don't know how old it is or anything. It has a massive presence on the street. It's nice. And I like the churches. I think they're lovely, both 11th Street and 12th Street. Protestant. One of them is Episcopal, and the other one I've forgotten. But they're really beautiful.

Zapol: So this is the architecture of this place.

McDarrah: Yes.

Zapol: But in terms of photography of the neighborhood or of the apartments, do you feel that there are quintessential Village shots that Fred took that come to mind?

McDarrah: Well the 'Save The Village,' certainly.

Zapol: Can you describe that image to me, and some of the circumstances around that image?

[00:45:00]

McDarrah: It was shot on the corner of Greenwich Avenue and West 10th Street. It was Artists Studio's low buildings and Sutter's Bakery was across the street, where Rosemary's is now. And there's a building that's a white brick apartment house. Probably living there was fine. But to look at it is nothing major.

Zapol: That's what replaced—

McDarrah: Yeah. I don't know if Fred ever photographed it, but when I first came to the Village, the Rhinelander Mansions were just so beautiful on the south side of West 11th Street between Sixth and Seventh—closer to Sixth. In fact they were torn down to make P.S. [Public School] 41, which is a rotten tradeoff.

Zapol: And what are your memories of those buildings?

McDarrah: Oh, the gardens in the front. And it was New Orleans style ironwork. The stoop, and I guess they had porches. But the porches were iron. Wrought iron, I guess. But it was just such a lovely site.

The library is a big one. I love the library.

Zapol: The Jefferson Branch?

McDarrah: Yes, indeed. And I remember going to Community Board meetings, and Margot Gale, and Ruth Wittenberg. Her brother was an architect, Louis [00:46:40] something. I forgot his name. He was very well-known.

Zapol: What are there other images that Fred took that you feel like became iconic Village images?

McDarrah: I don't know. Probably the corner where the San Remo is. He has a number of shots there that are very nice. And well they're like Patchin Place, and all those little—there's one further west, I forgot the name of it—that is also like a muse. Those stand out for me, I guess. There's a picture of Washington Square North with all the sculptures, decorations, on the pillar of the stoop. I like that.

Zapol: I'm just curious, because you have those images in mind. I mean how do you think the Village is perceived outside of the Village? How do others see the Village? That's a kind of hard question. You're a Villager.

McDarrah: I think it depends on the person's age, and how much the memory—I mean someone my age, the Village is the 1920s. It's Edna St. Vincent Millay and John Reed. And people like that. So, I don't know, maybe to three or four generations down it's Jack Kerouac. Who were the romantic figures?

Zapol: That preceded in a sense. That's interesting.

McDarrah: Eleanor Roosevelt was another one. She lived on Washington Square West. And I think there's another house that has a plaque with her name on it, between Fifth and University. I don't remember.

Zapol: I think so, too. So those are some of the nostalgic past of the Village. What about some of the images or scandalous controversial images of the Village? Do any images—Fred's images—come to mind? [00:49:00]

McDarrah: Well, I don't know. Some of the happenings were pretty bizarre. I'm thinking of one where the guy killed the chicken. In Judson [Memorial Church], I think it was. Ralph Garcia—Raphael Garcia [phonetic] [00:50:00]. It's one funny one. Not so funny—bizarre.

About scandals, I don't know. I don't know if it's a scandal, like when these folk singers were arrested in Washington Square Park because they weren't allowed to sing in the park.

Zapol: Because of curfews? Or sound?

McDarrah: They were making noise and the neighbors didn't like it, so the cops came. There was a big riot. Insane.

Zapol: Around when was that?

McDarrah: I'd have to look it up. It was a while ago. I mean now there's a piano, which I think is lovely, right in the center there. How that poor guy stays warm, I don't know. I don't even know if it's the same person.

Zapol: But not the same rules around music?

McDarrah: Not at all. What a difference.

Zapol: What are your memories around the folk scene right there?

McDarrah: Not so much. I was never really, never part of it. I remember Susan Reed. I think

she had a store on Greenwich Avenue. And [Bob] Dylan, who will go down in history—because he has a cousin who lives in the building. I once got in the elevator wearing not a lot. I was going to the laundry or something. And Jesus, who's in the elevator but Bob Dylan. I'm probably blushing now. [laughs] What he was doing in the elevator, I don't know what time it was—Anyway.

Zapol: And Fred took a lot of photographs of Dylan, too.

McDarrah: Yeah, a fair number of them.

Zapol: Did they develop a relationship? Or—

McDarrah: Fred was very much the observer. He was documenting what he saw, that he thought was important or interesting or admired.

Zapol: We've covered a lot of these questions. So if you can talk to me about what it was like raising children in the Village here?

McDarrah: Well, I wish they were here. It was what was. I hate that.

Zapol: You said that Fred used to take your sons along to work with him.

McDarrah: Yes, absolutely. The kids went to P.S. 41. After St. Luke's Patrick went to 41 also. They would say, “Oh, there are drug dealers in the park”. And that was part of life. They went to school after second grade or so by themselves. And now I don't think anyone does that until they're like fifteen or something. It's quite different. But I don't know. They both seemed to flourish to a degree. Went to school, and managed to get through whatever.

Zapol: Talk to me about neighborhood change. So we talked a little bit about NYU, but not so much about the other ways in which the neighborhood has changed. [00:54:30]

McDarrah: Well, SoHo has certainly changed drastically. When Tim was little, the rag dealers would have these great big railroad cars filled with rags. And nobody lived in that neighborhood. And then gradually artists move in, and then gradually galleries moved in. And then it became a real art center. And then the galleries started to move out. Now Chelsea is really where the art galleries are. And SoHo is like a shopping mall. You know, with Banana Republic and Armani, just every chain that you can think of. And the nice buildings are still there, the cast iron. It's certainly very handsome, I guess because it's landmarked. They're well kept. But it's just

different. It's just so different. There are crowds of people on the weekend—it's incredible—day and night. It's something else. But I guess it's good for the economy or something.

Zapol: I mean you talked about the kids talking about there being drug dealers.

McDarrah: In Washington Square.

Zapol: In Washington Square Park. Since then the city has changed quite a bit. When would that have been? In the Seventies, when they were saying that?

McDarrah: Yeah. And I would expect that they're still there, but maybe not quite as obvious?

Zapol: Exactly. Right. So I wonder, what about other ways in which the area has changed, in terms of who's actually living here? What would have been some of your observations? Or what's a story about someone who lives here now versus someone who lived here when you first moved here? Maybe not in this building, but in the area?

McDarrah: Well I think it's got a lot of NYU people, either their dormitories, or people that somehow associated with NYU. I don't really know that much. Like Washington Square Village is only NYU, as are these two buildings. We're surrounded. [doorbell] Oh, there's Tim.

Zapol: Okay. Here, Let me pause.

[interruption]

Zapol: Okay, so we were talking about stories about change.

McDarrah: Alice Brown, a painter who had a studio in the Cable Building, she's moved up to Westchester where she can get more space for cheaper. So she does nice work. She does front porches of houses. It's very nice. I wish I had one here to show. I don't even know if Alex Katz still lives in the neighborhood. He's still there.

Trying to think who else—the old Chaim Gross Studio. [laughs] I've never been there. I mean to go one day. You ever been? I understand it's open to the public. You'd have to make an appointment.

Zapol: Yes. So maybe some of the artists that you know that have lived in the neighborhood are still living, or may still have some of their places here. Is that the case?

McDarrah: I guess so. A lot of them have left the city at some point, moved somewhere else

altogether. I guess as you get older you want to have a different kind of existence.

Zapol: Did you ever think about leaving the Village? [01:00:00]

McDarrah: We used to have a cottage in Easthampton. There were a lot of people from the Village there. That changed drastically. And eventually sold it. If I lived anywhere else—I don't know. Maybe in France. But in the U.S., New York is—not so much the Village, but just New York. But this is my preferred, below 14th Street, definitely. “It's a state of mind”—someone said that.

I was looking at that [John] Strausbaugh book [*The Village*]. Are you going to go to his talk this evening? At the library?

Zapol: I didn't know about it.

McDarrah: I got an email from Alexandra Kelly, who, I don't know who that is, but I think she works in some position at the GVSHP.

Zapol: No, but it sounds great. And that's such a great book. I wanted to ask you just what your hopes are for the future of this building, of the Village. What you think about—

McDarrah: I hope that NYU will fold its tent and go away and leave us alone. I hope that the Greenwich Village Historic District gets enlarged. And I hope that the Village remains an entity; that it doesn't just fade away.

[END OF SECOND AUDIO FILE; BEGINNING OF THIRD]

Zapol: What does that mean, the Village to be an ‘entity?’

McDarrah: To retain that openness to creativity and to not have a 9-to-5 mentality, but to be open to people who are not necessarily on the straight and narrow, in any way that you want to take that.

Zapol: And we've talked a lot about your stories from the Village from six on. So what are some of your favorite Village moments?

McDarrah: Favorite Village moments?

Zapol: Maybe when you walk down a particular street, something comes to mind. You were talking about walking with your grandson.

McDarrah: Gosh, favorite Village moments? I guess going down to the Hudson River, I like a lot. And I find that very pleasant. I like to walk, as I do, about maybe seven times a week, if not more, though Washington Square Park. I never get tired of it. It's always on my route somehow. It's just such a pleasure.

Zapol: What is that place? What is it about that place for you?

McDarrah: It's the Village. It's the center to my mind. There are probably other centers, but to my mind that's the center of the world. Not that I'm provincial or anything, but there it is. There it is.

Zapol: So I think those are my questions for you. You've been very obliging in your answers. Is there anything I haven't asked you about that you would have liked to have shared in talking about the Village?

McDarrah: I don't think so. I think we covered a lot. And I can't believe I'm still talking. It just goes to show you.

Zapol: Thank you very much, Gloria.

McDarrah: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]