

CITY OF SYDNEY

COMMERCE AND WORK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Interviewees: Adam and Morris Perkal, Part 1

Date: 5 June 2009

Place: Crown St, East Sydney

Interviewer: Roslyn Burge

TRANSCRIPT

0.00 **RB:** This is an interview with Adam [Isaac] and Morris [Moshe] Perkal, bootmakers, at their shop in Crown Street.

AP: Sorry, you can make it on Adam, make it on Adam.

RB: All right.

AP: Yes, because everybody knows me in the last sixty years [as] Adam. No, because it's the official, you know, the passport is Isaac.

RB: And when were you born?

AP: 20/7/21.

RB: '21?

AP: Yes.

RB: And whereabouts were you born?

AP: In Poland.

RB: Whereabouts in Poland?

AP: In Mszczonow, M-S-Z-C-R-O-N-O-W

RB: And was your father a bootmaker?

AP: No, oh, no. He had a very big store something like K-Mart, Yes, everything for births and for funerals or for everything; for weddings, a haberdashery store.

RB: And that was in that town you mentioned where you were born?

AP: Yes

RB: And what was your father's name?

AP: Israel, Israel.

RB: And your mother?

AP: Esther.

RB: And how did you come to be in Australia?

AP: How come? My uncle, my mother's youngest brother came to Australia in 1912.

RB: 12?

AP: 1912.

RB: What brought him here?

AP: Well, he came from England because my grandfather sent away my mother's oldest son to England in 1905 because the Russian army used to take fourteen year old boys for twenty five years to the army.

2.01 So, my grandfather sent him over to England; he escaped from Poland because it belonged to Russia, Poland, in that time. So, he escaped, he sent him over to England in 1905 and afterwards he became the president from the Esperanto [constructed language] Society in the world. He was a very good friend of Ludovic Zamenhof. He had a bookstore with all the manuscripts from the world.

RB: In London?

AP: In Liverpool, and then in Manchester also.

RB: And what made him come out to Australia?

AP: He didn't come out to Australia, he stayed in England but he took over the whole family, my mother's side family to England, the brothers and sisters. So, the younger brother came over here to Australia – he sent him over to Australia in 1912 before WWI. He lived in Wollongong and he was a very successful man in Wollongong. He had properties there; half of Wollongong belonged to him.

RB: What was his name?

AP: Applebaum, Morris Applebaum.

RB: Are the Applebaums still in Wollongong?

3.41 AP: No, no, all the children died already. His son, he introduced the Ansett and the Swissair to Australia. He was a squadron leader during the war in England from the RAAF and then it was about twenty years ago when he introduced Swissair to Australia.

MP: He was director of the Swissair.

AP: So he was the director with the Swissair and then from Swissair the chief from Switzerland came over to Australia. So, my uncle entertained him in Huskisson because he had a summer residence in Huskisson and during the barbeque my cousin just collapsed and died – he was fifty two years old.

RB: Oh, dear.

MP: He was very famous – Alex Applebaum.

RB: You're very famous in your own right, the pair of you as well.

MP: My ego does go up.

RB: How did you come to be in Australia?

AP: I survived WWII, I survived concentration camps, three concentration camps, then I came to Italy. In Italy I was working there in the film industries; I portrayed a German officer in the war films in Italy.

RB: How did you feel portraying a German?

AP: Because I was in Germany during the war.

RB: Which camps were you in?

AP: I was in Mauthausen, Melk, Ebensee. I was liberated from the Americans in Ebensee.

6.00 MP: Radio a she or he?

RB: Neuter.

MP: So, it's off.

RB: Thank you very much.

AP: And I was two and a half years in Italy. I was working also for the United Nations, for UNRWA, the United Nations for Relief [and Works] Organisation, and we were in a band. We used to give concerts all over Italy to all the displaced persons' camps.

RB: What instrument did you play?

AP: Trombone.

MP: Do you play that?

RB: No.

AP: And then that was in 1945 I came to Italy. In 1947 I got married in Italy with also a Polish girl and we had a choice. We had a choice to go to America, we had a choice to come to Australia but our uncle - my mother's youngest sister came here in 1929; the one from Wollongong brought them over here to Australia in 1929. We also were supposed to come in 1929 but - - -

MP: A little brother.

AP: - - - our little brother was born and so - - -

MP: You couldn't.

AP: And we were very successful, my father was a very successful businessman there in Poland so he was waiting there until - and then the war broke out so we couldn't come to Australia at that time.

MP: But do you mention Harold Lasky?

AP: No, I don't.

MP: Oh, in a minute, Yes.

7.55 AP: So, I came in 1947. When I got married I choose Australia because I had two uncles from the family and we still had the uncle in London. So, he found out that I'm alive in 1945 through the Red Cross.

RB: Did you know your brother was alive then?

AP: No, I didn't know. From my brother and my oldest brother I didn't know who was alive but afterwards I found out my uncle from England wrote me, said two brothers are still alive. But I came to Australia in 1947.

RB: Where did you come to?

MP: Sydney.

AP: To Sydney, oh.

MP: 'Sydenay' [reference to the pronunciation of 'Sydney' by Juan-Antonio Samaranch when Sydney won bid for Olympics in 1993].

AP: No, I came to Wollongong to my uncle but after a month I didn't stay in Wollongong; I wanted to go to Sydney to be in my trade.

RB: And what is your trade?

AP: When I was thirteen years old I used to go to school in the morning and from eight o'clock till one o'clock. Afterwards, we came home; we had lunch because in Europe we used to have the main meal during the day, lunchtime. So, I had lunch and then I went – my father was a very wise man and he said, "Look, children, you won't get lost in your life if you will have a trade". So, I went to a man what he used to design shoes and I went over to learn the trade and my father had to pay. It's not like in Australia, that in Australia that straightaway you get the wages for apprentice; the first two years he had to pay - - -

10.08 **RB: Two years.**

AP: - - - , to teach us a trade. The only benefit what we had from the boss was a pair of shoes for Christmas and a pair of shoes for Easter.

RB: Did you choose to be a bootmaker or did your father say that was - - -

AP: It's not a bootmaker. We choose the designing, shoe design.

RB: Excuse me. But did you pick that trade or would you like to have done something else at that point?

AP: No, we learned that trade because that trade was just - you know, I like designing because I'm a painter also, or artist.

RB: Are you?

AP: I've got here to show you in the hall there.

RB: All right, I'll have a look.

AP: And so we learned that trade and that's the war broke out. When the war broke out, so two weeks after the war broke with the first bombardment of our city was our whole house, our three storey house with the store, everything was bombed to the ground and my mother and my youngest brother were burned alive in that time, in 1939, just two weeks after the war broke out. Then we, during the war in the first month, so we were in Warsaw - - -

MP: Warsaw Ghetto.

AP: - - - until the Germans came in to conquer Poland. And we went back to the city, to our city from Warsaw and we came there and everything was bombed.

12.04 So, my father and my sisters and brothers went over to my oldest sister – she was about forty five kilometres from our city. And so we walked – because it was no communications in that time – we walked the forty five kilometres there and then we decided – the Germans started to take, you know, to “arbeits” [work/concentration] camps to, you know – so we decided to go to Russia, away from Poland, and away from the Germans.

MP: Russian occupied Poland.

AP: The Russians occupied Poland - - -

MP: Myself and him.

AP: One second – you will be interviewed afterwards because of your own thing.

MP: I know.

RB: I'm just going to pause it. [break in recording]

AP: After the war, the war broke out.

RB: , .

AP: And then we went over there. So, we tried to go to Russia and we couldn't because the Germans were on one side and the Russians on

the other side from the River Bug [or 'Buh'] so we couldn't go through. So, I decided the next morning so my brother I told him, "You go to Russia and I will go back to Warsaw" because my parents were already from Warsaw in that time because they took over from all the little cities around Warsaw and they put them into Warsaw Ghetto. I had papers there not as a Jew, I had papers as a Volk Deutsche - that means "German born" in Poland.

14.03 I had the papers from our caretaker - he was a Volk Deutsche, he was a German born in Poland - and his son went to school together with me and he gave me his papers when he got killed during the bombardment in Warsaw so he gave me his papers and I was as a son to him. And I lived outside the Ghetto and I looked after - because I was smuggling in provisions from outside the Ghetto to the Ghetto; I bribed the police and the gendarmes every morning. We went through the street, through a tramway went through the Ghetto, I used to throw down the sackful of coal and meat, you know, sugar and oil - different - potatoes and from that my father and my brothers and sisters could live in Ghetto - that was from 1940 until 1941. I lived outside the Ghetto as a Christian and outside the Ghetto in 1941 so I took off from my - well, one sister and my brother and my father, I took them over to Petrika, to Southern Poland where my oldest brother's wife's whole family was there, so I took them over, I bribed and I paid there quite a big sum of money to the gendarmes so I took them over to Petrika.

16.04 In Petrika in 1941, so they started, the Germans started to take to the concentration camps from Petrika so my father said, "Look, you can save your life instead to stay here with us" because I gave him some money because I was working there also.

RB: Working in your boot trade?

AP: No, no, no, I was working for - I smuggled some around the towns.

MP: foods.

AP: So, I used to buy some food to bring it into the - it was an open Ghetto, not a closed down like in Warsaw - and then they wanted to close it so my father said, "Look, you save your live. You go". So, I went over. [break in recording]

RB: We're back in business.

AP: Where did I stop? Yes.

RB: You were telling me smuggling.

AP: I went over to Germany and I was working in Germany in Henschel-Werke, a munitions factory, they used to make the Junker planes and they used to make the locomotives - - -

MP: Tell her about the false papers.

AP: - - - and the Panzers and I was staying there until '44 in Germany, I was working there. In '44 in the nighttime the Gestapo came over to our place where I was there and they took away from the whole block to an arbeits camp.

18.04 **RB: Including you?**

AP: No, they didn't know that I am a Jew.

RB: You didn't know?

MP: They didn't.

AP: They didn't know.

RB: They didn't know, no.

AP: No, they didn't know.

RB: Were you worried during this time?

AP: All the time, you know. But it came to the time that I was already dreaming in German because I was, since 1941 to '44, I was in Germany and I spoke only German.

MP: He spoke only German.

AP: And, you see, I didn't mix with the Poles, I didn't mix with the other ones, so.

RB: Was your German accented?

AP: No, I speak perfect German.

RB: Do you speak German today?

AP: Yes, oh, yes, yes. It's also even with accented so I was a German born Poland because I had the papers there.

MP: German born Pole.

AP: They used to call it Volk Deutsche.

MP: Volk Deutsche.

AP: So, they took everyone to an arbeits camp and from the arbeits camp because it was somewhere from the MI5 [British Intelligence Agency] was a girl in that block, she lives there, and they came to arrest her but she disappeared. So, for thirty days, every day and night they were asking us questions. In the middle of the night they woke us up, ask us question about the girl, and I knew her, she lived there in the same block. And so they took, they still took us to the concentration camp. The concentration camp to Mauthausen, so after to Melk and to Ebensee, and I was liberated there, and after I was working in Italy and in 1947 instead to go to America I went through America, and we came to Australia.

20.11 **RB: By ship?**

AP: By ship. We arrived here - - -

RB: Sorry, was there anybody else you knew on the boat or you were on your own?

AP: Oh, no, I didn't know anybody, you see, because it was about a dozen people that came from America also, you know, from the displaced persons' camps. They went through America because they didn't have in that time the aeroplanes to Australia.

RB: And you left from London?

AP: No, I left from Palermo, Italy.

RB: Straight from Italy, right.

AP: From Palermo to New York, and in New York I was staying there in New York with my wife's auntie just for a little while.

RB: Your wife was with you on the boat?

AP: No, no, no, no. My wife, because we got married three days before we left Italy, and the honeymoon we went to Australia on the boat. So, we arrived here, so the uncle took us over to Wollongong, we stayed in Wollongong, but I wanted to start working. My uncle wanted me to settle in Wollongong, he wanted to buy me a store and he wanted to buy me a place, you know, a cottage but I wanted to be on my own. So, we came to Australia - - -

MP: Sydney.

AP: - - - and to Sydney and three months, not quite three months, I was working in Park Lane handbags factory; that's from Stocks and Holdings, [Albert?] Sheinberg.

22.09 **RB: Where was that located?**

MP: Broadway. Do you remember it?

RB: I don't, I don't.

AP: No.

MP: You were not born.

RB: Not quite then, no.

AP: So, I was working there on a machine and then I didn't like it and after three months I said to him "I want to go back to my shoe designing".

RB: Why didn't you like handbags?

AP: I didn't like it because it wasn't my, you know – because I had the designing, I liked it, so I wanted to go back to design. So, I ask around here doing that because Christmas time it was two weeks' holidays there so I ask around here. It was five or six shoemakers here in Sydney that used to make handmade shoes.

RB: Only five or six?

AP: Yes.

MP: What? More.

AP: No. Some of them they were for about fifty years. The Joneses were about fifty years.

MP: My boss, his father come with the First Fleet.

RB: Who was that came with the First Fleet?

MP: My boss and his boss.

RB: And who was that?

AP: Yes, the Jones, Jones.

MP: Thomas Jones and Wesley Jones.

AP: Thomas Jones and Wesley Jones.

MP: In the King Street, 75 King Street.

RB: In the city?

AP: In the city, Yes.

MP: Of course, in the city. were there.

AP: So, I used to go around and I worked at Wesley Jones until about - - -

24.00 MP: Till we started together and that's it.

AP: Yes. And then in '53 I went back to America and I stayed only ten months – I didn't like it there.

RB: You went there to live, thinking you'd live there?

AP: Because I had the permits, you know, to live in America.

RB: Why did you want to leave Sydney?

AP: My wife wanted to leave Sydney.

MP: Her sister was there.

AP: Her sister brought her up. She was twelve years old when she went to concentration camp and her sister looked after her, she gave her her piece of bread every morning; she said, "You are young, you have to survive". So, it was for her like a mother and she married us off ... she wanted to go back to the sister. She felt secure to be with her sister where her sister is. So, I stayed there for ten months and I left my wife with my daughter in America and I came back, we started together and since then we are working.

MP: We are together, voila.

RB: Voila. You say that with such panache.

MP:

RB: And when did you come to Australia, Morris?

AP: A year later.

MP: I come '48.

RB: And did you know the other was here?

AP: No.

MP: My story is different.

AP: Different.

MP: When I arrived in Russia I start to work in a shoe factory in Rostov von Dom until the Germans started the war 22 June 1941. The Germans went past so fast towards Rostov and I said "I'm not going to meet them again".

26.00 I took a train and I went to the Russian Middle East, Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Uzbekistan and Tashkent, there was so many refugees that people slept in the street; there was nowhere, so many from Russia escape. And I went to a city called Bukhara – that is in Tajikistan – and in Bukhara I worked my trade until the war ended and they repatriated all the Polish citizen back to Poland.

RB: And your trade, I'm guessing, is the trade you have now?

MP: I lived like a king for six years in Russia with my trade.

RB: When you say you lived like a king, how did you live?

MP: People lived on four hundred grams bread. I had plenty, made plenty of money, you know, in my trade and I could buy everything. I lived, I didn't know even a war was on far away.

RB: So even though there were people living in poverty people could still afford shoes?

MP: No. We worked for the government for the army, making boots for the army. So, everybody helped themselves and made only one pair of shoes to sell on the market so I could live six months.

RB: And you saw "we". Were you in a factory at that point or in your own business?

MP: No, in Russia it did not exist, your own business, that was cartel, you know, a cartel.

RB: .

AP: A government enterprise.

27.57 MP: The government owns small ones. So, when the war finished they said "Everybody who wants to go back to Poland, go back to Poland". They supplied trains, cost you nothing, everything.

RB: Did you ever think of staying put?

MP: In Russia, no. I thought, "My parents are still alive, my brothers are still" – I didn't know, I didn't have contact with them for six years.

RB: You must have known about the concentration camps and those sorts of things.

MP: I knew about it, but - - -

AP: Not as much.

MP: - - - not as much. The Russians had their own concentration camps.

RB: So you went back to Poland.

MP: Went back to Poland, went back to my city – nobody. Not a father, not a mother, not a brother, not a sister, nothing, the house is ruined, bombarded. So, in the meantime I wrote a letter to Australia, “Mr Applebaum, Australia”. I didn’t know where and when, and he got it!

RB: That was all you had on the envelope?

MP: That’s all.

AP: That’s the Wollongong, uncle from Wollongong.

MP: He got it. So, I got in touch with him and on the way somewhere to one city was talking with one fella and I said “I’m an Orphan Annie”, you know, the ‘Orphan Annie’, “got nobody”. I didn’t receive the uncle’s reply yet. So, he said “You’ve got a brother in Italy”. Well. You see during the war you took a train, didn’t pay anything, you know. We went there to Innsbruck; it’s near the border, the Italian border.

30.07 AP: Austria.

MP: In Austria. Some people killed an American soldier and the border was closed, so couldn’t go through, so we went back. We went back, I met another fella. You know, we were talking, all the refugees. I said, “Can’t go to my brother, you know”. “No, you got a brother in Munich”. Oldest brother, he was in Auschwitz, Sachsenhausen, Oranienburg, Dachau, had a wife and two children and survived.

AP: He survived it.

MP: So, I went over to Munich. “Where does he live in Munich?” Munich is a big city. The first Jewish man I met I said, “Maybe, you know, Paul Perkal?” “Paul? He’s my neighbour”.

RB: No.

AP: It’s coincidence.

RB: It is extraordinary.

MP: Yes. So, Munich has got the Dachaustrasse that's called, the famous Dachaustrasse, not far from Dachau. [doorbell chimes] Oldest brother was liberated in Dachau. I come to that address, nobody there. Waiting, waiting, waiting for two hours - you can imagine - and he arrived. So, he arrived, we stayed in Munich until 1948, we got the papers to come to Australia because we had mother's brother and mother's sister here, Yes. So, we went to Paris, waiting for a aeroplane.

32.09 **RB: A plane?**

MP: We come by plane, Yes, my oldest brother and I. My uncle paid for our fare to come to Australia by plane with the Sabena, you know, the Belgium Airlines.

RB: ...

MP: Anyhow, we waited in Karachi for one propeller, you know, the one propeller. We waited in Indonesia for another propeller, broke down. Anyhow, we arrived in Australia. In the meantime I met my wife in Paris, the 14th of July; the 20th of July we got married.

RB: That was a long courtship.

MP: And oldest brother and I, we arrived in Sydney, Australia. We made a permit straight away. She is a French citizen so you could not come to Australia with me.

RB: She couldn't?

MP: No, because I got married the 20th. In the time I will get the papers and, you know, the permission, so she came seven months later and we are married for sixty one years. That's it: that's the history of my life.

RB: Could I ask you what date you were born?

MP: 15th of May, 1919.

AP: Just last week he's ninety.

MP: I'm ninety years old.

RB: You're very busy. You're pacing as we're sitting here.

AP:

RB: As I'm talking to your brother you want to get on with things.

MP: That's it. Work is the best recipe - - -

AP: Medicine.

MP: - - - the best medicine in your life. If you stop working either you get Youngheimer's disease or Old Timers' disease.

34.08 **RB: So, how do you work together?**

MP: For sixty one years.

AP: For sixty one - - -

RB: No, no, how.

MP: What you mean, coordination?

AP: Yes, Yes.

MP: I do this, he does that, I do that and we both do the same thing.

RB: And do you get on?

AP: Of course we get - - -

MP: Otherwise we would have divorced each other. We would have had to have a divorce lawyer.

RB: Is your wife still with you?

MP: Yes. My wife nine years ago had been to Gold Coast International [Hotel] and Christmas eve four o'clock in the morning she went to the bathroom, fell down, hit her hip and broke her hip. We waited in Southport in the hospital three weeks till we come back. Two weeks later she had to have four bypasses. So, my daughter came and [is] looking after us, living with us, and looking after my wife and my son and myself.

RB: Do you live nearby?

MP: We live in Dover Heights.

RB: In -?

AP: Dover Heights.

RB: Dover Heights. When I came to see you last week I asked if you lived above the shop.

MP: No, no.

AP: No, what you want? Two minutes apart.

MP: I couldn't live there where you working.

RB: Sometimes people do.

AP: Yes.

MP: But, listen, I got a family; he's got a family and, thanks God we could afford to buy our own property.

RB: So, Adam, your wife came back from America?

AP: After one and a half years we came back because in the meantime I built the house in Maroubra. It cost me only four thousand, nine hundred and fifty dollars [pounds?], a three bedroom house with a big garage and a big backyard and everything.

36.06 **RB: So, how do you come into the office here?**

MP: We've been for forty - - -

AP: Two years.

MP: - - - the Hay Street next to the Capitol Theatre.

AP: See the photos there from the Hay Street. [indicates visually]

MP: 126 Hay Street.

RB: 126 Hay Street.

MP: Next to the Capitol Theatre.

AP: That belonged to the City Council.

RB: Did it?

MP: That's the City Council. Then they sold it to Ipoh Gardens, you know, to the Japanese [Ipoh Gardens is a Malaysian company], and when they made Miss Saigon [stage show] they gave everybody notice. That building was occupied by the best rag [trade] industry in Australia, the most beautiful things they made: evening gowns - - -

AP: Everything.

MP: - - - men's vests, everything it was craftsmen, jewellers and bootmakers. And so they gave notice to everybody. So, the City Council gave us - - -

AP: Two shops in Wentworth Avenue.

MP: - - - two shops in Wentworth Avenue there by the hotel. 'The Vibe' [Hotel] is [there] now.

RB: .

MP: Didn't even charge us anything.

AP: They did, they did.

MP: They did.

AP: Only the last month - - -

MP: Only the last month. Anyhow, doesn't matter.

AP: - - - before we moved in here.

MP: So, we wanted to buy the building; the Council sold it to the hotel; they offered more money. So, we came over here, we bought that property and we are now - - -

AP: Eighteen years.

MP: - - - members [located within] of the City [of Sydney] Council.

AP: Now. It was South Sydney, now we are in the City Council.

38.02 **RB: That's right. So, I'm looking around here. There must be hundreds of rolls of leather.**

MP: You come in now – I'll show you something. Do you ever see shoe lasts in your life?

RB: I have.

AP: Thousands.

MP: How many?

RB: I've seen one or two.

MP: Come in.

AP: We've got thousands.

MP: Millions of them. That's my section.

RB: So you have your separate sections?

MP: Oh. I mean, we can't work, you know, that's not big enough. But here we've got another two storeys.

RB: Do you climb those stairs every day?

MP: Climb every mountain. Like these, that's last for - - -

RB: Look at these wonderful - they're wooden lasts.

MP: That is for dressage and you see in polo boots like that, that's what we are making.

RB: They're beautiful.

MP: We're the only ones in Australia who makes.

RB: Beautiful shoes.

MP: That's another, that's a kitchen and more machinery.

RB: Well, once was a kitchen. Look at all your boxes.

MP: It once a kitchen. We've got a little - - -

RB: And you've got a whole lot of shoeboxes with people's names.

MP: No, every customer got their own lasts.

RB: Oh, look at these.

MP: And look at that, look at that, look at that, look at that, look at that, look at that, look at that, go on.

RB: Isn't this fantastic?

MP: Go on, go on, go on, go on, go on. Nobody in Australia to have that kind of

RB: My God, how many have you got? This is fantastic. And you've got your lasts in with your car. Now, whose car is this, yours or your brother's?

MP: It's together. I've got my own car, my brother's got - - -

RB: So, you drive in?

AP: We drive in together every morning.

RB: Who picks who up?

40.00 MP: I pick him up, he picks me up.

RB: So, you go from Dover Heights to Maroubra to pick him up?

MP: He lives also in Dover Heights.

RB: Okay.

MP: He lives in Portland Street, you know the famous Portland Street where, you know, the view there of the Gap.

RB: I'm not familiar with the area.

MP: No?

RB: No.

MP: And I live in the Wallangra Road.

RB: Has the fridge got lasts in it as well?

MP: No.

RB: It's packed.

MP: We've got one Russian man, a fella. He hasn't got a fridge at home so we gave him the use of our fridge.

RB: And he lives nearby?

MP: In the Housing Commission place.

RB: May I take a photo of these later?

AP: Of course, that's what you are here for, that's what you are paid for. We haven't got the other one. Leave that, I've got another half.

RB: Is that a drawer full of zips?

MP: Yes, zippers and envelopes. Everything is under control.

RB: I can see it's under control.

MP: Even we are under control.

RB: But I'm thinking when you moved from the Haymarket in 1995 how on earth did you pack up the shop?

AP: It cost us twelve thousand dollars to move.

MP: It cost us twelve thousand dollars to move.

AP: And we didn't get the compensation from the City Council. Twice we had to move: from there to Wentworth Avenue and from Wentworth Avenue here.

RB: How did you control all of this then?

AP: Oh, we had a man - - -

MP: Who wake us up at four o'clock in the morning and we will know every skin colour and make.

42.06 AP: You see, we bought that when they told us that they're going to take away our shop; that was about eighteen months before they took away our shop so we bought that here and we had man - - -

MP: That's right.

AP: - - - to make all the shelves and all the things.

MP: And bring us over.

RB: Of course, of course.

AP: Yes. They used to have five lodgers.

MP: Took us months.

RB: They used to have what?

AP: Five lodgers, the woman what had that property, so we bought that property.

RB: But I'd love to know more about your store – do you call it a store? – back in the Haymarket.

AP: Yes.

RB: Did you call it a shop or a -?

MP: Not a stall. We had a bigger shop like - - -

AP: A shop.

MP: - - - from here to here, [indicates visually] you know, even longer.

RB: Across the street?

AP: Yes.

MP: All the shops were so big.

AP: From one street to the other.

RB: Very long. From Hay Street through to - - -

AP: Hay Street to Campbell Street.

RB: - - - Campbell Street.

MP: To Campbell Street, Yes.

RB: So, which end would people come to when they were coming with their shoes to you?

MP: Hay Street.

AP: To Hay Street.

MP: 120 – here, have a look.

RB: Behind me, okay.

MP: 126 Hay Street.

AP: That's at the back from the Capitol [theatre]. Capitol is in Campbell Street and we went to Hay Street.

RB: You mentioned other craftspeople there who did other businesses. What were their names?

MP: The names.

AP: Oh, who remembers the names?

MP: They are all dead, Yes, and gone to the - - -

AP: They used to the lampshades. A woman used to make the most beautiful lampshades, Yes.

MP: Lady, the most beautiful, oh.

RB: Do you remember her name?

AP: No.

MP: No, but I've got paintings which she painted.

AP: And the other ones are already dead, you know.

RB: .

AP: There was a jeweller, he died.

MP: Mr Kolosky, he made the most beautiful evening frocks what now in the - - -

44.01 AP: The son, the son is doing it somewhere else.

MP: Now, the other one what is making - in the paper it's mentioned there he is one of the biggest evening frock manufacturers in Australia, he does all – Yes, what's his name? He changed his name, the son.

AP: Same with the

MP: Son went with my son together to school, Yes.

RB: So, what hours would you work down in Hay Street?

MP: In the Hay Street long hours.

AP: When I started I worked from about six o'clock in the morning till twelve o'clock in the night time. [Break in recording]

RB: I think, Adam, when we stopped we were talking about your hours. Do you work different hours here now that you're older?

AP: Oh, here?

RB: .

MP: He's not older than me, he's younger.

AP: I'm younger.

RB: I know you're younger, but you're older than when you first started.

AP: Oh.

RB: So now that you are older people -?

AP: No, we are working only now from half past seven till three.

RB: Till three?

AP: Yes.

MP: 'Enoof' is 'enoof'. 'Enoof' is too 'mooch'.

AP: Three o'clock closing now.

RB: And you never take your business home?

AP: No.

MP: Business, no, not even the gossip.

RB: Is there any gossip?

MP: Plenty. Tell me a place in the world where there is no gossip.

RB: Exactly.

MP: Gossip is politics - - - way of life, way of women's life, way of man's life, gossip.

RB: So, during those hours that you're here do you take time off and go to the cafes for lunch?

AP: Yes.

MP: Café for lunch, no.

AP: Oh, here, no. We bring our own lunches.

MP: We bring our own. The women make the - take the sandwich.

46.03 AP: If we are taking out sometimes so we go.

MP: We don't take off, you know, morning tea or afternoon tea.

AP: Because the phones - - -

MP: We live a clean life. Breakfast, a small lunch and dinner and voila and that's it.

RB: What is lunch?

MP: Lunch? One bread roll with a piece of ham or a piece of sausage and a cuppa tea and three pieces of fruit.

AP: Three pieces of fruit.

RB: You say that as though it's a mantra.

AP: Every day, every day, Yes.

MP: It saves your life – come and look. That is - go for coffee, what can they give you?

RB: You've got like a little freezer bag here.

MP: Yes. That's my fruit, that's my fruit and that's my fruit and that's my fruit.

RB: So, you've got four pieces.

MP: If you eat that a day you don't have to go to a doctor.

AP: Unfortunately.

RB: Four pieces of fruit.

MP: Yes.

RB: You don't say the same thing.

AP: Yes, it cost me a lot of money, my doctors now.

RB: So you've got your fridge out the back that's stuffed with food that's not yours.

MP: Yes.

AP: No, it's not ours.

MP: And there's my lunch.

RB: A very simple ham sandwich.

MP: That's it.

RB: Do you spend much of your day on your feet?

MP: All the time, never sit down.

RB: Never sit down, even when you're sewing?

MP: Only for sewing, Yes, not much.

AP: Well, on the machine.

MP: Two minutes, five minutes.

AP: Oh, about an hour, otherwise I stand on my legs all the time.

MP: That's what we are making: shoes made for walking and for standing, for standing.

48.04 **RB: You both have a great sense of humour.**

AP: It keeps us going.

MP: If you lose your sense of humour, what's left?

RB: That's right, that's right. So, when you're working here, do you chat amongst yourselves or do you work silently?

AP: We haven't got the time.

RB: You haven't got the time?

MP: No, of course we got - - -

AP: No.

MP: - - - we get customers in, you know.

AP: We talk to ourselves, we talk when we are driving, you see.

MP: We come together to work.

AP: We are together to work and go home to work.

RB: So, you both drive still?

MP: Yes. I don't drive any more.

AP: I do.

RB: You drive?

AP: Yes.

RB: So, do you need glasses for your work?

AP: Yes, only for the machine.

MP: Not me, not me.

AP: Otherwise I don't, you know.

MP: Don't wear any glasses.

AP: And for long distance.

MP: I look through people without glasses.

AP: Long distance when I'm driving – just started about eighteen months ago.

MP: I said I look through people without glasses.

RB: Through people.

AP: I can drive without the glasses just as good as with the glasses.

RB: When I first came here you said that William Holden [Hollywood actor] sat in this seat.

MP: Just here.

RB: What did you make for William Holden?

MP: We made a couple - - -

AP: William Holden was in the Hay Street.

MP: In the Hay Street, but on that settee.

AP: That's it, Yes, that settee, yes.

RB: You brought the seat with you?

MP: We made him crocodile, snakeskin, lizard skin.

AP: Two pairs of boots and two pairs of shoes.

MP: And boots and he went back and went back to America and sit in his, you know, he had a bath. In the bath there was drinking and he died there, you remember - you don't know the story?

RB: I don't know the story, no, no.

AP: Don't know.

MP: In the bath he died. That was two weeks after we made him the shoes.

50.00 AP: We made for Frank Sinatra, we made for Sammy Davis Jr, we made for the Beatles.

MP: Beatles.

AP: For the Bee Gees.

RB: So, did these people come to your shop themselves or their -?

MP: Yes.

AP: Oh, no, the Beatles were in the - - -

MP: In the Hay Street.

AP: No, in Kings Cross we took the measurements, in Kings Cross in the hotel when they came to Australia.

MP: Yes. But the Bee Gees, the Bee Gees came over there.

AP: When the Bee Gees came over they didn't have money to pay a deposit.

MP: And Mrs Kelly was there, Mrs Kelly was there.

AP: Agent.

MP: And Mrs Kelly said, "I'm sorry, boys, you'll have to wait for the deposit". Maurice, Yes, Bee Gees, big.

RB There was one Maurice, .

MP: Maurice, the one who died.

RB: That's right.

MP: Yes.

RB: Do you look after the measurements, the manufacture, the accounts, everything?

AP: Everything, Yes, Yes.

MP: Yes.

AP: I do.

RB: And you've got three storeys here.

AP: Yes.

RB: Did you have a multi-storey place in Hay Street or just one floor?

AP: Oh, the Hay Street, we had a - - -

MP: Hay Street was we were look from here to here [demonstrates visually] so long the shop and we had another storey there too

AP: Another store. We had another store there where they made for the Guess [Gas?] Company. We had the whole floor, we started there in our little room we started and where the Guess Company is now.

MP: On the Guess [Gas?] Company site on the right hand side - - -

RB: , .

MP: - - - , there is still the little houses there. We had our rooms of - - -

AP: We had the whole floor, the top floor.

RB: So when people would come, customers would come, would they come to a small area like this or a bigger area?

MP: Customers don't look for beauty - - -

AP: No.

MP: - - - they only look for beasts.

52.00 AP: We used to go also home measurements to customers to take the measurements at home.

MP: Customers' homes. Those invalids what could not drive to our place I used to drive to their home, home visits.

AP: So, we used to go home.

RB: And do you still do that?

MP: No.

AP: No. Not any more, no.

MP: Finito.

RB: You don't make shoes for people who - - -

AP: Oh, , .

MP: We do but we tell them "Take a taxi and we pay for the taxi". Why should I go now? You know, it's cheaper to pay for a taxi than to go over and your time.

AP: No. You see, just a matter of fact yesterday was supposed to come one from St Vincent's Hospital. He wanted to come at three o'clock, I said, "I'm sorry. Three o'clock we are going home", so he's coming next week.

RB: Do you always finish at three religiously?

AP: Yes, sometimes half past two.

MP: I said "Enoof is enoof".

AP: Half past two, we got something to do at home.

RB: I've never had shoes made for me but tell me what would be the process if I was to come here and ask you to make me a pair of shoes?

MP: Bring yourself with your feet.

AP: We take the measure - - -

MP: If you don't come without your feet and measure you up and that is called bespoke. Do you know the word, bespoke, what it means?

RB: I do.

MP: Yes?

RB: Hand-made.

AP: Then we make a last; we give them a try on, the first pair.

MP: Bob Carr [former Premier of NSW and Federal Foreign Minister in Labor Governments] was here and we were talking with him and he said, "Boys, what does it mean 'bespoke'?" and Bob Carr is a very knowledgeable man. Not many people know what it means, "bespoke". Do you remember it was a film called 'The Bespoke Overcoat'?

54.00 **B: I don't remember that film.**

MP: No, you were not born yet.

AP: It's very good.

RB: I notice Bob Carr calls you "boys".

MP: An English one.

AP: We are calling "custom made".

RB: And I notice that Bob Carr calls you "boys".

MP: Oh yes. He spoke with us in German. He polished his German.

AP: When the President from Fiji used to come - - -

MP: Sir Ratu [Ramsese] Mara.

AP: They closed up this street from both sides. He was here, and telling about politics for about an hour's time. He came with the securities, you know.

MP: Then he invited me over to Fiji and I was in his place in the Fijian, you know the Fijian - - -

RB: I do.

MP: - - - the hotel. That did belong to his wife, his wife's mother. So, I was there for three weeks a guest.

AP: We made him three pairs every year: two pairs of shoes and one pair of slippers.

MP: And the King of Tonga came over. [Doorbell rings]

AP: King of Tonga. Queen Salote came here fifty years ago. She was seven foot tall [2.13 metres].

RB: Heavens.

AP: Yes, size twenty two.

Part 1 interview ends