



Interviewed: Stephen Pincus

Oral History Clip Title: An Indoor Life

Theme: Arriving in Canada

Interviewer: Jessica Parker

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(Stephen)

We were now in January of 1982. In fact, I remember it was the twentieth of January. And it was the coldest winter I think that Toronto experienced until I think last year. And it was particularly cold because we had no clothing that was suitable. The coat that I had that I remember that I had bought in South Africa and kind of used on a cold day or two in the mountains in Israel was really, you know, what you would wear in Toronto in September. And for shoes, you know just to kind of give you a sense, I did have boots but I remember we met some friends—people we actually became very close friends of ours—and they took us to...right there, at the beginning, in 1982, they took us to the Rosedale Ravine to sort of do some tobogganing. And, you know, we got in these toboggans and going down, which was fine, but getting up was totally impossible with leather-soled boots, which is what I had, these kind of leather-soled boots without any grooves in them at all. So, you know, we weren't very well prepared physically for Toronto. And when we got here, we also psychologically...I remember being very fearful of driving because I thought, "How is somebody going to drive in the snow?" You must understand that in South Africa we had one snowfall in all the years that I lived there from the time I got there at the age of five until we left in my early twenties. And there was one year when I think there was one day of snow and so, coming to Canada, especially on the twentieth of January, was a very different experience. And I didn't, couldn't envisage how one negotiated a highway and I had in my mind...I remember asking people, "Do they have pipes under the road that melt the snow?" and, "How am I going to get around?" "Am I going to be sort of sitting in a cell for six months of the year?" I'm still asking myself that question. But it was very, very scary. And we came through Montreal. I think what happened was we caught a flight, if I remember, from Israel to Europe and then from there we flew through Montreal to Toronto. And I remember we touched down. The first point of touchdown in Canada was Montreal and we looked out and we just saw white. And again, in South Africa, and in Israel at that time, interestingly enough, the airplanes... you got off the airplane on a mobile staircase onto the tarmac and then you walked to the terminal. And there was no such thing as corridors, moveable corridors that abutted the plane. And so I kind of wondered, how am I going to get out but then I saw people getting off the plane with these things that came to kind of pick the people up and take them into the terminal. I realized this is going to be a different kind of a life. A kind of sitting inside in the winter, an indoor life. South Africa was an outdoor life. Our dogs lived outdoors right through the year. Twelve months of the year we could have

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barbeques outside. You know. Most people had...we didn't have but most people had swimming pools in their backyards and, you know, it was very much an outdoor life. Israel is kind of like that as well obviously. And Canada is quite different.

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