**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:00:04] Siblings or?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:00:06] Children?

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:00:06] No, siblings, brother or sisters?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:00:10] No, I was an only child.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:00:11] Where did you go to school?.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:00:21] I went to State Road Elementary on State Road, and I'm trying to think of the name of that, was on state road, and then from there after the sixth grade, I was we went to the Parma Schaaf Junior High, and that was on Redfern and I graduated from that school because it was a junior and a high school. That's where I graduated from, Parma Schaaf Junior High.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:00:56] Whan you were on the streetcar, did you go downtown, did you go shopping?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:01:03] Oh, yeah. I used to go shopping. When I was younger, my mother used to take me shopping downtown and because she worked and she used to have to shop and because it was so tiring, she would take me up to May Company on the top floor. They had a a playroom for the children. And that I would she would leave me there with an attendant and they would have a slide in a sandbox and and swings and different play thing area for the children. And then when she was through shopping, she'd come and get me. Yeah. And I was really thrilled and happy because I had no brothers and sisters and I met other children and I had somebody to play with and they were playmates. So I was really happy. I was thrilled. I loved to go to that playroom upstairs at my company because it was really fun for me not having any brothers and sisters to play with. Oh, well, as yeah, as I got older, my mother would take me with her sometimes, especially if I or she was buying clothes for me, then she would take me with her. And so then I would we would go together and whenever she had to buy me a pair of shoes. We used to have a problem because we'd have to walk from my company down to 14th Street to all those shoe stores that were little cranny shoe stores because I took a size 4-1/2 shoe. And I was I had a narrow foot and everybody didn't have that size for me. I used to drive my mother crazy.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:02:55] Pardon.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:02:56] How did you get downtown?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:02:56] On the street car. We used to take a Dinky.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:03:04] what is a Dinky.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:03:05] A Dinky is a street car that's very similar to the San Francisco street car.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:03:11] What did it look like?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:03:14] It looked just like the ones that are in San Francisco where the conductor would. Well, they were sort of brown and red. The conductor would go from front to back. He would take the street car up to Ridgewood at the bottom of the hill there on State Road. And then he would load up the people that are waiting there. And then he'd go to the front of the car and drive it down to Brook Park. And then we would meet the other CTS streetcar and the same thing going back. That was one conductor that would drive the car from front to back, just like in San Francisco.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:04:05] Oh.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:04:06] When did you move to Parma?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:04:15] When I was three years old, my father and mother bought a home on Ingleside Drive and there was this creek, down the road from us and there was only in the section of the Ingleside Drive, there was only like four houses. The front section of the street had more homes, but the back section cleared the creek, only had four homes, four or five homes. So we used to go down to the creek and there was like the old fashioned swimming hole. In fact, I think there's still a swimming hole down there, but I don't know how to get down there anymore because they've closed off the the area to go down. People used to drive down there and wash their cars in the creek. And there was like two ponds. Some was was small pond for little children like and one was a bigger pond. And because they wanted a bigger pond and the kids that were older would would bar it up. They would put planks and stuff to keep the the water in in the big pond so that it was deeper and they could swim in the big pond and it was a lot of fun. That was the only recreation we had. And it was cheap, for nothing.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:05:30] What happened to the creek?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:05:33] It's still there.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:05:34] Is it still the same as it was when you were there?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:05:39] I don't know. I haven't been able to go down there and I can't get close enough to the edge of the of the road. Where the road and the creek, you know, the creek is? I'm afraid of falling into the, falling down.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:05:53] So, I guess the other question is how has Parma changed?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:05:59] Oh, it's got a lot of homes like Marioncliff. There was no how homes on Marioncliff. There was no homes and all a lot of those streets that are there now. And you know, when now they after that, because we used to be able to drive down to the creek. As years went by, they filled that they took landfill and they built it up and they put homes on that over the over the one portion of the creek where we used to drive down. But the creek is still there, but the homes are on top of the wall of the creek because they filled it.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:06:37] When do you remember that happening?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:06:40] Well, that must have been a long after forty one, I would say, because I got married in 1941. I would say maybe '45, '48, after the war, that they gradually used that landfill for other homes and they filled it there and then they built homes on top of it. It's really unique how they did that. And I don't know how to get down there. I wish I knew how to get down there. That creek also is back to back with... I think it's Keystone on Broadview. Now, I've never, never taken Broad... Keystone down towards the creek to see if there's a way down from Broadview. I just never have done that. And I'm going to have to do that now that I'm thinking about it, because I know that there's people down there in the creek, but I don't know how they get there because they closed that one. One area where we used to always use it, you know, but it was.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:07:48] Do you know when they closed it?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:07:49] No, I don't. But it like I said, I left that my home there in Parma in 1941. I got married. Yes. So it must have been long after the war. I would say long after the war they did that.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:08:03] Where did you move then when you got married?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:08:07] I lived on Sackett in Cleveland for a year in an apartment and then we moved from there to Montclair in Brooklyn and then from there we bought a home off of Memphis and we lived there. In the meantime, war had come out, broke out, and my husband had gone to the service and he served in the Navy for two and a half years.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:08:30] How did you meet your husband?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:08:34] I met him through a wedding in the relatives. One of the relatives was getting married and he was related to the bride. And I was a bridesmaid and he was my usher. And that's how I met him.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:08:46] Did you have any kids?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:08:50] Yes, I had two children.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:08:51] Did you ever take them downtown?

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:08:55] I took them down on the bus when we lived off of Memphis occasionally. Not very often, because it was too much work to take two children down to downtown.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:09:06] Memphis,. Memphis Memphis and Fulton. Or Memphis and Ridge Road, Memphis runs.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:09:15] Did you ever take your kids to Memphis Kiddie Park.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:09:18] No I never took my children to Kiddie Park because I don't think it was even there at that time when we lived in off of Memphis. But you know where Memphis is? Yeah, it runs from Pearl Road, 25th Street, all the way to Lorraine Road or Tiedeman and so forth. Other streets connect to it.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:09:42] West 117th is very close to that. Yes.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:09:48] How do you think downtown has changed?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:09:52] Oh, it's changed a lot because there, we used to really enjoy the stores that were downtown like Higbee's and Halle's and Bailey's, Bailey's were downtown. We had a variety of stores downtown and a big selection, and the dime stores and places to eat downtown.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:10:16] Did you have any favorite places to eat downtown?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:10:19] Oh yeah, there was there was the Forum Cafeteria on Euclid Avenue.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:10:23] What was that like?

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:10:25] All that was nice because they had all kinds of desserts and foods that were reasonable. And then there was another cafeteria on Ninth Street. I don't remember whether it was Mills. I think it was Mills Cafeteria. And then there was another cafeteria on 4th Street upstairs, I think it was Anders Cafeteria. That was very reasonable. Food was very good. Because they had such a big selection of places to eat that were reasonable. And even in the dime stores they had, they had these sandwich bars where you could sit down at a bar in the dime store and have a sandwich or a hot meal or bowl of soup or chili. And so it was very interesting all the time.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:11:17] Did you ever have the Frosty's at Higbee's?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:11:21] Oh, yeah.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:11:22] What were those like?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:11:24] Oh, they were yummy. And they used to have hot dogs down in the basement of the department stores and they were like twenty-five cents for a hot dog, maybe even less. And we used to enjoy those hot dogs because they were the best selection of meat and hot dogs that there were at that time. You're a really good food.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:11:43] Is there anything that you would like to add?

**Theresa Alessi** [00:11:49] I miss the old time shopping centers and going downtown. Of course, a lot of that has changed now. The landscaping has changed, but I miss a lot of that. And I think it's because of the congestion. Too many people, too. All the buses load up and unload downtown on the square. So it's kind of difficult. There is too much commuting, confusion and commotion all the time. Yeah.

**Ruth Rachel Przybojewski** [00:12:23] All right, thank you very much.

**Theresa Alessi** [00:12:25] Thank you.