

Funders Credit Bed

VOICE OVER:

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PROGRAM START

Pete Rosenblum gets off the subway, walks down the street.

Still photo: his parents' bakery

PETE ROSENBLUM (*voice over:*)

This used to be my parents' bakery

Pete continues walking.

Archival: guys on corner

NARRATOR:

One day Pete Rosenblum went back to the Coops -- the place where he grew up.

Pete enters gate, greets Yok Ziebel and Julie Lugovoy

YOK ZIEBEL:

How are you Pete, good to see you... Did you lose weight?

PETE ROSENBLUM:

No, I'm shrinking...

YOK:

No

PETE:

Yes

YOK:

We're all shrinking.

PETE:

I know, but that's the only way...

Julie smiling

NARRATOR:

Pete and his friends had an unusual childhood.

YOK:

There are certain people that think when we were 5, 6, 7 years old, that we were going to conquer the world (*laughs*).

PETE:

Yeah, weren't we? That's why they built these buildings, for the headquarters for us...

YOK:

Yeah but we didn't know it at the time.

PETE:

No they didn't tell us, that we were expected to conquer the world.

Push in to window with plants on the sill.

PETE (*voice over*):

But they set it up, you know. This was going to be...

Still photo: Reunion cover--pan down from window to faces

Music

NARRATOR:

Who would build a house to conquer the world?

Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack

HARRIETTE:

When I was little I assumed that the whole world was Communist. And certainly the whole world was Jewish.

Still photo: Reunion photo--pan across faces

Interview, Amy Galstuck Swerdlow

Music continues

AMY (*voice over then on camera*):

These were garment workers!

They were so gutsy to think that they could build an apartment house for 700 families.

Still photo: Reunion cover--pan down faces

Archival: Montage--dancing & demonstration

NARRATOR:

From this apartment house, they planned to make a revolution.

Still photo: Reunion cover, pan across faces

Music continues

Interview, CU Julie Lugovoy

JULIE (*voice over then on-camera*):

What would bother my parents about living in America was this sense of being servants to somebody else.

I think that what they felt here was that they were the owners of both their apartment and of their fate –
of what happened to them.

*Still photo: Reunion cover, pull out wide
Music continues*

Dissolve to SCAM 1st Court & Indoors: camera moves through gate, up steps into courtyard

PETE (*voice over*):

This was all an experiment. The people that started the experiment thought that we'd end up with heaven on earth.

MAIN TITLE, supered:

AT HOME IN UTOPIA

Coops Trees to Rooftops: pull back to see roves, park, city in distance

NARRATOR:

They bought land in the Bronx, across the street from Bronx Park, North of Manhattan. It was 1925.

Dissolve to: Artist's rendering of the Coops.

NARRATOR:

They planned to build a cooperative apartment complex, the biggest yet seen in America. The United Workers Cooperative Colony -- The Coops -- would be as different as possible from the places they used to live.

*Still photos: Lower East Side Street Scene – high angle; Tenement laundry, pan down to women and children; Front of Tenement building; Family doing piecework, Workers in sweatshop
Music*

NARRATOR:

The Lower East Side. Brownsville, Williamsburg, Harlem--airless, crowded, even dangerous
holding pens for immigrants without money.

But they hadn't come to America to waste away in sweatshops and slums.

Archival: Subway Construction – long shot of tunnel and closer shot of man drilling.

NARRATOR:

The city itself moved to disperse them.

Archival: Elevated subway – Kelly Tires sign

Still photo: Asian Mkt- men outside

Archival: Elevated subway– from below

Still photo: Neighborhood African American Children

Still photo: Ansonia Exterior

Archival: Elevated subway, past station

NARRATOR:

With overcrowding in the slums at crisis proportions, New York extended its subway through the
poor neighborhoods, past the streets where rich people lived, to the outer boroughs where land
was cheap.

Elevated Station – train L-R between buildings into station.

Dissolve to still photo: Subway – 1915-Allerton Ave.

Interview, Pete Rosenblum

Lower 3rd: Pete Rosenblum

PETE (voice over then on-camera):

The building of the subway in 1920 is what opened up the area of this section of the Bronx.
And the people who came to found the Coops came up there by subway and when they came,
they saw it was empty.

Still photo: undeveloped East Bronx

Coops Subway to Rooftops

*Coops Courtyard: Yok Ziebel, Julie Lugovoy, and Pete Rosenblum meet current Coops resident,
Michael Poindexter.*

YOK:

What is it like living here, is it, ah...

MICHAEL:

I think – I like it a lot. I'll tell you what I like about it. It's the grass, we have trees, over there I

have Bronx Park East, and ah...

YOK:

Do you know a lot of people that live in the house?

MICHAEL:

I know probably everybody. Everybody usually speaks to me. How far are we going back with you gentlemen?

YOK:

With us? I go back to 1930.

MICHAEL:

Wow! I enjoy it now, I can only imagine how much better it would have to be, 70 years ago.

YOK:

Seventy? Don't say things like that! *(They all laugh.)*

MICHAEL:

Was it diverse like it is now?

YOK:

It was during – no, it was mainly Jewish, mainly...

Still photo: Reunion cover - push in to Rose Ourlicht.

Music

PETE *(voice over)*:

Some of the first generation women in the Coops were extremely strong women.

Rose dressing to go out (Rose in mirror)

Interview, Boris Ourlicht

Lower 3rd: Boris Ourlicht

BORIS *(voice over then on-camera)*:

My mother Rose was an early member and organizer for the International Ladies Garment
Workers Union

Local 22 – which was the Jewish local.

Rose Dressing to Go Out – putting on lipstick, putting on her jacket

ROSE *(voice over)*:

I was the sort of girl and then young woman that I don't want to remain in the kitchen with the

children.

Still Photos: Rose with Rose, Postcard

Archival: women working at sewing machines

Still Photos: Rose in hammock, Local 25 on strike.

BORIS (voice over):

My mother had been through many, many struggles both in Poland and in the U.S., and she was looking for a better way of bringing up her children, and she believed in a communal life, mainly of workers.

Still Photo: Camp Nitgedeiget ad, 1925

Dissolve to Still Photo: Two women at Camp Nitgedeiget

NARRATOR:

The cooperative movement in the twenties was widespread. Unions, socialists, and communists launched all kinds of worker-owned cooperative businesses.

Still Photo: Cooperatives store truck

Archival: Co-op Restaurant – pan down to crowd

Still Photos: Formation of CPA 1919, 1924 Vote Communist poster

NARRATOR:

American communists had split from the socialists in 1919 to form their own party. Their emblem was the hammer and the sickle, and their cry was revolution.

Political Map, 1919 – various shots

NARRATOR:

That same year, New York City mapped all its radical groups. The map is color coded by ethnicity. The Jewish organizations are red.

Archival: Palmer Raids

NARRATOR:

The government was moving aggressively to prevent sedition. During the Palmer raids, thousands of immigrants were rounded up, arrested, deported.

Still Photo: Vote Communist bldg –move ending on the “Freiheit”

Archival: Freiheit crowd

Still Photo: Artist's rendering of the Coops

Yiddish 2: Yiddish text of Noah London's tract

Music

NARRATOR:

In this atmosphere, Jewish leftists decided to build an enormous cooperative house all their own.
They spread the word through their own networks in their own language--Yiddish.

VOICE OVER:

Mir veln bashafn a festung far der arbeter_klass itzt kegn zeine shonem.

NARRATOR:

We want to build a fortress for the working class against its enemies.

Still: Coops ad –

VOICE OVER:

Di ershte ko-operativeh arbiter kolony in New York—1000 tzimmer!

NARRATOR:

The first cooperative workers colony in New York! A thousand rooms!

Still: Coops share

Music

NARRATOR:

To raise money, they sold shares in the cooperative at 250 dollars per room.

Still: Goldbond ad

NARRATOR:

Some took all their savings out of the bank to invest in the Coops.

Interview, Amy Galstuck Swerdlow

Lower 3rd: Amy Galstuck Swerdlow

AMY:

Now I once read about what these Gold Bonds were, they were like fifty dollars. Life savings
was like fifty dollars.

Still: Coops site plan

NARRATOR:

By 1928, on the wave of a buoyant economy, the cooperative had taken out two mortgages
totaling more than two million dollars –and built the house of their dreams.

Coops Rooftops, courtyard, NY skyline: pan across roofs and push into courtyard.

Music

Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack

Lower 3rd: Harriette Nesin Bressack

HARRIETTE (*voice over then on-camera*):

My mother had lived on the Lower East Side and then she had lived in Williamsburg in Brooklyn and when she moved into the Coops she was delighted, because where she lived before there was no greenery.

And in the spring, when just that pale green would come, she would say “this is the part I love.”
And my kids to this day, they say “That’s your mother’s color coming up now.”

Archival: Shalom Aleichem hat-makers

NARRATOR:

In a burst of confidence, three other Jewish groups soon built their own cooperatives in the Bronx.

Archival: Shalom Aleichem Cooperative, people dancing in doorway

NARRATOR:

Socialists and Communists built the Shalom Aleichem houses.

Still: Farband Flyer

NARRATOR:

Labor Zionists built the Farband houses.

Still photo: Amalgamated fountain & people
Music

NARRATOR:

And the Amalgamated clothing workers union sponsored the Amalgamated houses.

Daniel Libeskind looks at first drawing

NARRATOR:

That's where the architect Daniel Libeskind grew up.

Interview, Daniel Libeskind

Lower 3rd: Daniel Libeskind

DANIEL:

That is an amazing drawing, you know I’ve never seen this drawing, because....when you live as a teenager in a block of housing you don’t think of as plans. I had –All my friends, I can tell you –the Kufershtines, and the Lipmans, and the Strauses and the Shermans – they all – you know – I can point to almost every apartment here. They had – you can see it in the plan – disposed the blocks in such a way that first of all ... the apartments were more sort of like houses, and created intimate units. But I think what was really successful is that the inner courts and the streetscapes were brought together and there were gateways which made you feel that you were coming into a community.

Amalgamated Courtyard – move in, pan around and up
Music

DANIEL (*on-camera then voice over*):

The Amalgamated and these houses, these cooperatives, are situated in a very beautiful area of
the Bronx.

This whole vast area, later built more densely -

Park to building 6

Still Photo: Amalgamated Fountain & people

DANIEL (*voice over then on-camera*):

- had Van Cortland Park – so there was greenery not just within these buildings but all around. I think that was the greatness of these houses, that beyond – that the founders of these houses had a bigger idea than simply putting people in a nice environment. But they had an idea that the way you build houses could also foster and generate a new social contract between people.

Archival: Montage of dancing, poetry

Music

NARRATOR:

They wanted a haven where their own culture could flourish.

Still: Lopsic title page

Dissolve to Archival: classroom

NARRATOR:

After school their children learned Yiddish.

Archival: Shalom Aleichem shop & shuleh

Still photo: Amalgamated Kindergarten easels

Dissolve to: SCAM basement

NARRATOR:

The basements were warrens of communal spaces.

Dissolve to still photos: Reading in the library, Schaeffer at Piano, Edith Segal dancers, Coops cafeteria, girls at easels.

AMY:

And then you'd have these little girls with their little boxes of watercolors, painting.

Shalom Aleichem plans

DANIEL (*voice over then on-camera*):

Certainly these were not works of ingenious architecture, they were very, very standardized. But even if you had social spaces in the basement, it was better to have social spaces in the basement

than none at all.

And this community that utilized these buildings I think rose to that occasion. They didn't care that the you know reading room was in the basement, they enjoyed the reading room just as much as if it had been in the penthouse.

Interview, Julie Lugovoy

Lower 3rd: Julie Lugovoy

JULIE:

It was airy. This was a very important thing – airy. *(he chuckles.)*

SCAM Flowers Wall

Music

JULIE:

Having a piece of land where there were things growing on it and where there were flowers or hedges or anything growing, was something that only rich people had on their estates! Here they had it in their apartment house!

Tour: the guys meet a resident, Lout Leam, who does a lot of gardening in the 3rd court.

JULIE:

Oh you got a fig! Oh wow! Fig leaf! Did you plant this fig?

LOUT:

Any things I planted. Plant plant plant plant...

JULIE:

It's beautiful. And where are you from?

LOUT:

Cambodian.

JULIE:

Cambodia. Do you have figs in Cambodia?

LOUT:

No no – no.

Interview, Julie Lugovoy

Lower 3rd: Julie Lugovoy

JULIE:

My father took a course in agricultural college in farming. And from that, he started to become the gardener in the Coops.

Still photo: courtyard and park

NARRATOR:

They had built themselves a garden.
People came from as far away as Europe to see what these newcomers had done.

Still photo: Pete on the Fence - Pete Rosenblum as a child, sitting on a gate post.

PETE (voice over then on-camera):

My impression as a child was that people came to look at us and admire us.

Still photo: courtyard and park, wide angle.

Dissolve to steadicam pan of 1st Court – move around former rose garden

Music

NARRATOR:

They saw themselves as citizens of the world.

Interview, Yok Ziebel

Lower 3rd: Yok Ziebel

YOK (voice over then on-camera):

The main force of the Coops, the main force of..
.. all the kids in the Coops although we didn't know it at the time, was – politics.

Various visuals of section J – hammer and sickle doorway

YOK:

Look, section J, the hammer and sickle. And I lived on the 4th floor.
This is where we spent most of the time.

Push in to upper fire escape

Still Photos: Sam, Dora, David Ziebel, Dora Group photo – CU on Sam, CU on Dora

NARRATOR:

Yok Ziebel's parents came from the Russian empire.

YOK:

My parents knew each other as teenagers. They came from a shtetl in the Ukraine, a small village.

Archival: Collective farming- Starvation – shots of shtetls on fire

YOK:

That area was being ravaged by the Cossacks and the pogroms and people were being massacred.

Still photo: Pogrom dead with shawls, Pogrom dead children

NARRATOR:

Russia's ruler--the Tzar--had encouraged race hatred. Thousands of Jews were slaughtered.

Still photo: Dora group photos – MCU Sam, MCU Dora

NARRATOR:

So a group of young friends set out across Russia on foot, including Yok's soon-to-be-father and mother.

Interview, Yok Ziebel

YOK:

They had a particular mission. They wanted to get to America.

Archival: Russian Battalion in snow, Revolution February 1917 (Karinsky waves hat), Lenin at station, Red Army Battles – pikes/rifles in air, Winter palace

NARRATOR:

That winter of 1917, Russia was swept by revolution. The world watched amazed as the socialists got rid of the Tzar, and then the communists got rid of the socialists.

Interview, Amy Galstuck Swerdlow

AMY (voice over then on-camera):

Well of course the Russian Revolution – I wasn't born yet – was this great victory of the socialist cause and the working class. This is before the factions and the divisions and the discontent with Russia – I mean Jews for the most part were thrilled with the Russian Revolution – overthrow the anti-Semitic Tzar, overthrow all that oppression.

Archival: Lenin--Celebration

AMY (voice over then on-camera):

You know their attitude was, the Soviet Union was this little nucleus of socialism surrounded by capitalism, surrounded by enemies, and we had to protect it.

Still photo: Cobblers Shop, Palestine – Sam Ziebel, to hammer in hand

Coops Courtyard – pan lintel, hammer to sickle

Music

NARRATOR:

It took Yok Ziebel's family more than 10 years to reach America.
They moved into the Coops at the beginning of the Great Depression.

Archival: Bronx shopping street during the Depression, various shots

AMY:

The whole system was falling apart. First of all my father was unemployed, there was no money

—

The garment center workers were out of work and they couldn't pay their rent.

And even the people who lived around the Coops were workers.

Archival: Pan Hooverville

NARRATOR:

On their way to school, the children passed makeshift villages of homeless men.

Dissolve to still photo: Glastuck family in park

AMY (voice over then on-camera):

My father believed, in the Depression, that this was the final stage of capitalism.
He didn't know about the New Deal, and he didn't know the ways in which Capitalism could
save itself.

But when millions of workers were unemployed, it was desperate.

Dissolve to Ext 2nd house – ornamental brick facade

NARRATOR:

The Coops now took up its founding challenge—to become a fortress for the working class.

Still photo: Sam and Celia in frame – pan to Sam

Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack

HARRIETTE (voice over then on-camera):

My mother and father were both founding members of the Communist Party of the United States.

Still photos: Sam and Celia in frame – pan to Celia, Sam Nesin, age 7

HARRIETTE (voice over then on-camera):

And my father was kind of a street kid, from Brooklyn, and he would make speeches when he
was a child.

He used to raise that one finger, and we used to say that's the finger that said,
“If it takes me twenty years, this country will have prosperity.”

Archival: POV from elevated subway, Bronx

HARRIETTE (*voice over*):
My father led a demonstration of unemployed to City Hall.

Still photo: Daily Worker re Nesin Demo – headline and text

NARRATOR:
They were pushing for unemployment relief at a time when none yet existed.

Archival: Oct 16, 1930 City Hall Rent Protest – various shots
Music

HARRIETTE:
I didn't hear about it until after it happened. And the way that I heard about it was that my father was in the hospital and that he was badly hurt.

Still photo: Daily Worker headline re Nesin in Bellevue
Steadicam– up stairs
Still photo: Pete Bike Boy

PETE (*voice over then on-camera*):
He came home and my parents discussed the fact that he had been bloodied at this demonstration.
So it always stayed in my consciousness that the unemployment insurance that I was collecting came from Sam Nesin's blood.

Still photo: Reunion photo – slow push in to Josef Galstuck.

NARRATOR:
For all its mil
itance, the cooperative itself was financially bankrupt.
It moved into the limbo of financial receivership.

PETE (*voice over*):
People had invested some of them their life savings, and they got nothing from it.

AMY (*voice over then on-camera*):
My father Josef Galstuck was a leader in the Coops. He was on the board of directors – he was one of the people they were always angry at.
I remember the office as a place of screaming like you never heard.

Still photo: Buster&Amy&Coops

AMY (*voice over then on-camera*):
But what seems remarkable to me – and I thought I knew it at the time – was that

even though they lost it financially, they continued to control it.

Steadicam Willow Courtyard – pan from trees up to windows

NARRATOR:

They controlled a house where most of the residents could barely make ends meet.

Interview, Boris Ourlicht

BORIS:

During some of the years of the Depression, we couldn't make the rent.

Still photo: Rose at window

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):

The reason that my mother was not afraid is that the Coops had a non-eviction policy
No one person can be evicted if they didn't pay the rent. And so we had that protection.

Archival: Rose in her apartment

NARRATOR:

Boris lived in this two-bedroom apartment with his parents, and sisters, and an occasional border.
They became the foot soldiers of every protest.

Yok Ziebel, Pete Rosenblum, and Julie Lugovoy on Allerton Ave near the Coops.

YOK:

Do you remember this building?

PETE:

I remember this building.

YOK:

Remember there was a big rent strike here?

PETE:

Yes.

YOK:

I remember that was my first...my mother dragging me here.

Archival: rent strike montage

NARRATOR:

Neighbors down the street from the Coops were being evicted.

AMY:

And the furniture was sitting outside on the sidewalk. This was terribly frightening to me.

NARRATOR:

People from the Coops did not stand idly by.

Interview, Boris Ourlicht

BORIS:

The women, my mother included would go up into the apartment. Crowd into the apartment, so they would stand shoulder to shoulder, and the sheriff's deputies could not get in to evict the family.

*Archival: rent strike, evictions-paddy wagon
Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack*

HARRIETTE (*voice over then on-camera*):

I remember yelling at the policemen.
They laughed and said we came from Little Moscow.

*Still photos: Tenant action, farm protest march, Farmer protest ("justice for the land"), Farm protest crowd, farm protest milk, protest women children
Coops hammer-and-sickle doorway. Push into hammer
Music*

NARRATOR:

In the depths of the depression, twenty-four states including New York passed emergency legislation against mortgage foreclosures. They had all faced the wrath of people who were unwilling to lose farms and homes to the banks. In this political climate, the leaders of the Coops were able to negotiate a stay against foreclosure.

Still photos: Cobblers Shop Palestine, portrait Sam Zeibel

NARRATOR:

During these years, Yok's father was a Union Organizer.

Interview, Yok Ziebel

YOK:

My father was a functionary of the communist party.

Archival: Snow storm 1930s, Detroit: men get off train, pan river rouge plant, tracking shot men at giant machines, black workers with liquid steel, Still: GM strike outdoors, Archival:

Detroit: workers running during strike; snow, snow storm 1930s, birds, on frozen ground, in tree

YOK:

In 1936 my father was sent to Detroit to help in the organization of the UAW, the automobile workers union.

And it was during the time of the organization of the CIO, and the organization of the so-called unskilled industries, like the auto, steel...

And in January or February of 1937 he contracted pneumonia and he died there.

Dissolve to Still photo: CU on Dora, Ziebel children, – CU on David, CU Yok, Coops ext winter, snow

Music

YOK:

My mother was left to raise the two of us... though living in the Coops made it a little easier.

Still photo: tree in flower outside school

YOK (voice over then on-camera):

I remember specifically the first time that I had to be absent on May first - that's May Day – when I had to bring a note from my mother. And the note specifically said, “excuse my son from school because May First is a worker's holiday and he is a worker's son.”

Archival: young boy, May Day

Still photo: Boris & sisters May Day

Interview, Shulamit Ourlicht Miller

SHULAMIT (voice over then on-camera):

My teacher said, Miss Schneider said, “Aren't you Jewish?”

And I said “Yes.” She said “Well why don't you stay out during the Jewish holidays?”

And I said, “My holiday is May 1st.”

Archival: May Day 1936 – little boy CU, May Day NY 1935 w/sound: Title supered as separate optical “100 Thousand March”, Announcer talks about this big May day demo; May Day 1936 – Philadelphia, Announcer: where the statue of William Pen looks down on the city, ... also peaceful; May Day Chicago 1935 – children marching, Sound: children marching and chanting “join our ranks, join our ranks.”; May Day Paramount 1936 – Mexico City, Announcer – about Mexican socialism.

Coops Subway to Rooftops to Cityscape – push in to NYC

LEAH OURLICHT CAMPANELLA (voice over):

We would line up outside the Coops, and then we would go on the subway together, we would sing songs on the subway, we'd take up the whole train.

BORIS OURLICHT (*voice over*):
We knew about history and when people would say “that’s a Russian holiday” we’d correct
them,
and say “No. This is the most American holiday that there is.
It started in Chicago in 1886 and it was a result of the Haymarket Strike.”

Archival: May Day demonstration: marching down Broadway, “Footwear” banner; men and women marching

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):
All these unions were part and parcel of the May Day parade.
My mother always marched. And I marched with her.

AMY:
Very boring.

Archival: 1937 May Day – crowd, and marchers moving into Union Square.

Interview, Amy Swerdlow:

AMY (*voice over then on-camera*):
You know if you’ve ever been in a big parade, you just wait and wait and wait and stand hours
and
hours and hours until your turn comes to march. But to see those thousands of people who
believed what you believed, you thought the whole world did.

*Archival: May Day demonstrations, various shots – CU Hitler caricatures, May Day NYC 1934
– “Hitler & Dolfus Must Go!”*

Music

Interview, Julie Lugovoy:

JULIE x(*voice over then on-camera*):
We all knew about the things that were happening that had to do with discrimination or with
labor -- or, with fascism.

AMY:
We were the first people aware of fascism. Now I don’t know what year that was, but I couldn’t
be more than 10 years old.

*Archival: May Day demonstrations – children marching, “Abolition of Child Labor” sign,
Scottsboro Boys car, Black man speaks into mike*

Interview, Yok Ziebel:

YOK (*voice over then on-camera*):

Scottsboro Boys started in 1932 when I was 6 years old. There were Black men being lynched and framed in this country, and we knew that.

Archival: May Day demo – children marching: “We are with our parents”

Interview: Julie Lugovoy

Lower 3rd: Julie Lugovoy

JULIE (*voice over then on-camera*):

And when we marched on May Day, these were things that were ingrained in us. I mean we were of the age when this went right to our souls.

Archival: May Day – marching in front of movie theatre , and float w raised fist. Cut to huge crowd, high angle, – marchers pass before reviewing stand, high wide angle of enormous crowd in Union Square. – Fade out

Steadicam entering Coops courtyard through archway, into courtyard, to balconies

NARRATOR:

In the Coops, Jewish communists couldn't leave the mounting dangers of fascism and racism outside the gate. And so, in the early 1930's the management responded to the direction of the Communist party by encouraging a small number of black families to move in.

Still photo: Black Family – in the same courtyard

JOYCE:

We lived in apartment J44, in the 2nd House

Interview: Janet, Joyce, and Margaret

Lower 3rd Janet Jones Laidman

JANET:

Yiddish! Yiddish was the thing, I first remember when we came to the Coops – “*Oy gevald!*”

Lower 3rd Joyce Jones Sykes

JOYCE:

“*sap-mir nisht kein chinik*”

Lower 3rd Margaret Jones Oliver

Dissolve to Still photo: Margaret & twins outside

Interview, Margaret Jones Oliver:

MARGARET (*on-camera then voice over then on-camera*):

Well I was walking down the street with the girls one day, and two men were staring at us and I said to them, “I wonder what those men – why those men are staring at us.”

And Joyce said “It’s OK mother, he said ‘*Shayne Maidls.*’” *(they laugh)*

JANET *(on-camera then voice over)*:
“Pretty little girl” and all that
It was safe too. It was really safe.

Still photo: Marilyn & Janet on rooftop

JANET:

Or people would say “I’ll meet you on the roof” or something like that, and we’d have a little social life there.

Coops Subway to Rooftops: wide shot of Coops roofs

Coops courtyard: Yok Ziebel, Pete Rosenblum, and Julie Lugovoy meet one of the Coops janitors, Chris Colon.

YOK:

Do you know that these buildings are historic? They’re on the national registry, registered with the government.

CHRIS:

These buildings here?

PETE:

Yeah, you can’t change the outside.

YOK:

Uhh, well the weren’t supposed to brick up anything, like there were windows there. That was a clubroom.

CHRIS:

Oh really?

Exterior Clubroom: back angle as Chris goes down steps to let them in

YOK:

There was a little room on the side...

CHRIS:

I have keys to all the rooms here.

Interior Club Room in the basement.

The men come in down the steps:

YOK:

This is my old clubroom.

CHRIS:
This is the room you spoke about.

YOK:
Yeah, there was a wall here, and there was another door here, and a door to that room.
And there was a dance floor. What did you do to my dance floor?

*Still photos: Boys and girls dancing in the basement clubrooms.
Music*

CHRIS (on camera):
You guys must have a beautiful friendship to still be together, you know?

Still photo: Couples dance Clubroom – bear rug at back

YOK (voice over):
There were very many youth clubs –

Still Photos: Clubs montage--Atlas Club, Budenny Club, Club Falcons w/Bear Rug, Basement party 1940's, "Beau" Bell, teens at basement dance, Reltucs,

YOK (voice over):
There were the Atlas, the Incas, the Budennys named after a Russian general, there were the Falcons, Club Chesterfield, Club Avalon - the only girls club was the Reltucs.

Archival: Yosl Cutler, puppeteer – he rises with puppet and bows –

NARRATOR:
"Reltuc" backwards spelled Cutler, a left-wing Jewish puppeteer.

Archival: Cutler's puppets

CUTLER (voice over in Yiddish with subtitle)
Do I pay the landlord for the room or for the bedbugs?"

Still photo: Vanguard Softball Champs

Archival: Basketball in Coops playground, Pals in front of Luncheonette - wide high angle of playground

Interview, Yok Ziebel:

YOK (voice over then on-camera):
We all were avid followers of sports – But we were known as little Moscow.
Like everything else it was us against the rest of the world.

Coops playground – the guys walk through. Julie Lugovoy notices a dedication plaque on the ground:

JULIE:
This is – Guilliani

YOK:
Screw Guilliani

NARRATOR:
They knew what they stood for. If the rest of the world was against them, then the rest of the world was wrong.

Still photo: Yok and a friend as teenagers at the refridgerator.

NARRATOR:
But in 1939, all that self-confidence was badly shaken.
Interview, Yok Ziebel:

YOK:
Suddenly we were confronted with a pact that was signed between Stalin and Hitler called the Soviet-Nazi pact.

Still photo: New York Times re Hitler Stalin Pact – pan headline

NARRATOR:
For many Jewish communists, a deal between Fascism and Communism was incomprehensible.

Interview, Amy Galstuck Swerdlow:

AMY:
It shocked people out of their wits because Hitler and the Germans were the enemy.

Still photo: Josef Galstuck and friends play chess.

AMY (voice over then on-camera):
And I remember my father saying “*shvayg*, don’t say a word, you don’t know what they know in the Soviet Union. Just be quiet or you’ll end up in the gutter with the Trotskyites.” I never got over that. I never got over that.

Still photo: Coops (view from park)

NARRATOR:

They now had to choose between being a good Jew and a loyal Communist.

Still photo: Boris Ourlicht as a teenager, weightlifting

BORIS:

I accepted the whole thing. I was a member of the Young Communist League.

Still photo: May Day Demo 1930

Coops Cityscape to Rooftops to Subway – push in to elevated train

Archival: POV from elevated train; several shots of man on soapbox addressing crowd.

Interview, Boris Ourlicht:

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):

We would get a stand, and an American flag, it would be at 5 or 6 o'clock when people were coming home from work, and we would get up on the stand and we would start talking about how wonderful the pact was, what a means for achieving the protection of the Soviet Union and achieving peace it was.

And people who were coming from work or were standing around would say, Oh you're full of crap. You don't know what the hell you're talking about. You're a Nazi sympathizer. And we would argue with them.

Archival: Rose Exiting Coops

Music

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):

In my own immediate family, my mother felt that the pact was a betrayal of the Jewish people. So there was this division in our family, and there was this division in the Coops too.

Archival: various shots of Rose Ourlicht walking

ROSE (*voice over, subtitled*):

We were the tools of a movement that is destructive, that is reactionary. So, it's like lovers. It's sad, it's a tragedy, it was wonderful while it was lasting.

Archival: several shots of German attack on Stalingrad; Stalin, Hitler with generals, German tank rolls forward

Music

NARRATOR:

Soon enough, Jews and communists were on the same side again, because Hitler broke the pact and invaded the Soviet Union.

Archival: Stalingrad burning – statue of children in ring

Interview, Pete Rosenblum:

PETE (*voice over then on-camera*):

Once the Nazis invaded the Soviet Union, there was a tremendous amount of unity.

Still photo: Dime a Shine Stops Hitler in Time

Archival: Various shots of the corner store -man leaves with newspaper

YOK (*voice over*):

We whole-heartedly threw ourselves into the war, getting the United States into the war, and it was only until Pearl Harbor that the United States did come into the war.

Still photo: Headline Pearl Harbor War of the World

Archival: Pear Harbor – smoke billows from bombed ships, Celebrities Aid War Effort – several cuts, Jimmy Stewart, Joe Lewis, Women W.A.V.E.S. Hunter College

Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack

Still photo: Harriette in Navy 1944

HARRIETTE (*on-camera then voice over*):

I wanted to join up. And I joined the Navy.

Archival: Harriette in uniform at party

HARRIETTE (*voice over then on-camera*):

Suddenly – after a childhood of being against everybody else, we were with the group, we were on the side of everybody else, and it was the first time I felt like I was part of the larger scene and not just this little enclave in the Bronx.

Still photo: Honor roll in Coops courtyard

HARRIETTE (*voice over*):

Everybody was very patriotic.

Still photo: Coops corner & honor roll – flag bowing in wind

YOK (*voice over*):

Our boys were going to serve, and they were all over the world.

Still photos: women in white, – Christmas

PETE (*voice over*):

The mothers of the servicemen were doing bandages, were communicating with the soldiers, were participating in bond drives.

Interview: Pete Rosenblum

PETE (*voice over; then on camera*):

People in the Coops really felt that the world had caught up with them, and that they had shown leadership, and that the United States was now going to move - keep following the left and move to the left.

Archival: 1940s garment workers at work and Ext 7th Ave Garment District

NARRATOR:

The war brought work.

With the economy healthy again, the states withdrew their protection against mortgage foreclosure.

Steadicam in courtyard, from upper windows to front steps

Music

NARRATOR:

The directors of the coops were able to find a new mortgage.

It would only cost the residents a dollar more per room per month. Here was their chance to keep the Coops cooperatively owned. And then, once again, they stumbled—on politics.

Interview Harriette Nesin Bressack

HARRIETTE:

There was a meeting about raising the rent so that they could meet this mortgage.

Steadicam driving shot circling the Coops

Interview, Yok Ziebel

YOK (*on-camera then voice over*):

I remember a famous meeting, in the auditorium, packed, with people from the Coops. I was there, didn't take part in the meeting, but I remember some of the arguments, and the old arguments came up about that Soviet pact, and because of this bitter feeling there was a definite split...

HARRIETTE (*voice over then on-camera*):

And there were people who said No, this was a workers' colony we can't afford to pay more rent and it's not right that we should.

Steadicam driving shot circling the Coops

Interview, Pete Rosenblum:

PETE (*voice over then on-camera*):

Other people said we can afford a dollar a month a room because everybody's working, and that way we'll maintain a co-op. So there was a tremendous battle –

Steadicam driving shot circling the Coops
Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack:

HARRIETTE (*voice over then on-camera*):

And my father who wanted desperately to keep the Coops got up to speak, and ordinarily my father was listened to. And he didn't speak Yiddish very well. And he said to them,
"If we don't raise our rent, *veln mir falirn di hoysn.*"

Steadicam driving shot circling the Coops
Music

HARRIETTE (*voice over then on-camera*):

In Yiddish, "We will lose our pants" – what he meant to say was "*Veln mir falirn de Hayser*" – we will lose the houses. And he was speaking very passionately, and to his dismay and surprise the audience burst into laughter.

Steadicam driving shot circling the Coops
Interview, Pete Rosenblum
Music

PETE (*voice over then on-camera*):

They voted at that meeting to not pay the dollar a month increase, and one of the arguments was, that since we were the leaders, of the community, that if the Coops people voted to increase their rent, all the other landlords would say Hey, the Coops raised their rent, therefore we can raise your rent. So they lost control, and a company called the BX Corporation took over. And that's how the Coops stopped being a co-op.

It's almost as if they separated the actuality of losing the Coops from the prospect of, you know, we're going to have a great world after this.

Coops courtyard – pan down from roof to "private property" sign.
Music

NARRATOR:

So that's how, in 1943, their ideological passions caused them to lose their cooperative once and for all.

Courtyard:– the guys walk up the steps and meet Janice Walcott, a current resident.

YOK:

My knees are killing me. My knees are killing me. Hello Baby how are you! Ah, Good to see you
moowaa.

JANICE:

Oh brother, how you guys doin'?

JULIE:

How are you?

PETE:

Hi – even you got old!

YOK:

No, Janice didn't get old –

JANICE:

Oh brother – I got grayer, that's all, I just got grayer, that's all.

Interview, Boris Ourlicht:

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):

The last time I saw the Coops, is when we became involved in trying to reconstitute the tenants' association.

The last time we were there, there were all kinds of different people – black and white and Chinese and Vietnamese and Cambodians and Albanians and Russians and – and I don't know whether there are one or two Jews or not.

Still photo: Boris in uniform with his mother, Rose

Archival: Sailor walking by Coops' bricks; sailor and friend walk by Coops playground.

Music

NARRATOR:

In 1945 the war ended and the men came home with high hopes.

The new GI Bill would pay for most of them to go to college, gaining the education their parents had only dreamt of.

Still photo: Science Club

Interview, Julie Lugovoy

JULIE (*voice over then on-camera*):

I used the GI Bill for my Masters degree at Brooklyn Polytech.

It like raised everybody in the Coops one level economically.

Still photo: Coops Board, 1940s

NARRATOR:

The Coops itself seemed unchanged. The tenants were so well organized they still ran the show.

Still photo: Three men in uniform

Soda jerk in corner Luncheonette

People on Allerton Avenue, near Coops

NARRATOR:

In local politics, the Coops was a force.

JULIE (*voice over*):

The Coops were strong. We had the American Labor Party, and we supported some of their candidates. And the American Labor Party candidates were elected.

Still photo: handsome young sailor (Bernie Shuldiner)

Music

NARRATOR:

Into this mix came a young organizer who was new to the Coops.

Interview, Joyce Jones Sykes

Lower 3rd: Joyce Jones Sykes

JOYCE

Oh – (*laughs*) All the kids would just SWOON and say – Bernie, there he is, there he is...

Still photo: Bernie & Norma in fur – greeting outside Coops

NARRATOR:

Bernie Shuldiner had married into the Coops' Yiddish-speaking cultural elite.

Dissolve to Still photo: Norma Dubitsky Shuldiner

NORMA (*voice over*):

My mother was the head librarian

Still photos: Coops Board, 1940s - push in to Mrs Dubitsky; Reading in the Coops library: push in to Mr. Dubitsky

NARRATOR:

Mrs. Dubitsky had set up the Coops' very own library in the basement, 20,000 volumes in English, Russian, and Yiddish.

Interview, Norma Dubitsky Shuldiner

Lower 3rd: Norma Dubitsky Shuldiner

NORMA (*on-camera then voice over*):

My father read the New York Times every day. But til the day he died he never spoke a word of English. He was a *Yiddishist*. That was what was important to him in his life.

Still photos: Norma & baby – standing outside, summer; Bernie & young Joe – bathing suits

NARRATOR:

But Norma and Bernie had other priorities

YOK (*voice over*):

Bernie Shuldiner became the leader of the Allerton Section of the Communist party, what we called the Section Organizer -

Interview: Bernie Shuldiner

Lower third: Bernie Shuldiner

BERNIE (*on-camera then voice over*):

In my early days in the movement, when nothing was moving on the Negro question, nothing, we were the first who forced the issue onto the streets and into the schools and everywhere, as regards black participation in our society.

Still Photos: Storefronts on Allerton, group of teens on steps

NARRATOR:

Bernie briefly became head of the Coops' tenants association, which controlled who moved in.

Archival: women push baby carriage

Interview, Bernie Shuldiner:

BERNIE (*voice over then on-camera*):

Now we considered it to be very important that the Coops be further integrated. And therefore we began to urge that steps be taken to bring more blacks into the Coops. At that point I came into, I came into a clash with Norma's father.

Still Photo: Mr. & Mrs. Dubitsky in front of the Coops

Interview: Norma Dubitsky Shuldiner

NORMA (*voice over then on-camera*):

My father was not anti-black. He was friends with the black families who were there, so was my mother.

It's just that they began to see that the balance of power maybe, and that the Jews – the Jewish cultural ideal that they thought that they were developing in the Coops would disappear.

Still Photos: Group meeting in auditorium; Mr. Dubitsky speaking.

Interview, Bernie Shuldiner & Norma Dubitsky Shuldiner:

BERNIE (*voice over then on-camera*):

At that meeting in particular, I was speaking on the question, and before I knew it, Norma's

father
in a rage, you know, came up and tried to pull me off the platform -

NORMA:
I came in late that meeting and I came in as my father was on the stage grabbing him, cause I had to get my kids to sleep.

BERNIE:
I obviously upset him very much, and the fact that I was his son-in-law did not stop him.

Still Photo: Norma/Bernie/parents/son – outside the Coops in summer

NARRATOR:
Bernie won that argument with his father in law. Slowly – almost imperceptibly – the Coops began to change.

Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack:

HARRIETTE:
My father told me that if there were two families applying for an apartment and one of them was black, then the black family would get it. And he felt that it was their duty to do that.

Still Photos: Janet Jones playing piano;, mixed race party in Jones' Coops apartment

Music

Interview, Margaret Jones Oliver

Lower 3rd: Margaret Jones Oliver

MARGARET (*voice over then on-camera*):
Oh, we used to have open house. Because in the Coops we knew that anyone who came in would be a nice person, any young fella. And I used to put a bottle of ginger ale in the punch before I served it. And one day one day one fella went over and says, I'm getting another drink, that has got a kick. (*They laugh.*)

Dissolve to Still photo: Margaret in Chair

Archival: White Bronx street scene, black Harlem street scene

NARRATOR:
Now more than ever, the Coops was different from other neighborhoods.

Archival: Girls in Red coats on Benches-- playground

Interview: MaryLouise Patterson

Lower 3rd: MaryLouise Patterson

MARYLOUISE (*voice over, then on camera*):

I grew up in neighborhoods that were black. You didn't live in a building with white people. So it was very different to go to a place like the Coops, and to see black and white people living together because then the children socialized together -- which we did! And I did!

Still Photos: Rent Strike Coops – sign re “first vacancy to negro family”, Angie- gorgeous

BERNIE (*voice over*):

There were several strong Negro people in the Coops who were leaders. One was Angie Dickerson who was leader of the tenants' movement.

Interview, MaryLouise Patterson:

MARYLOUISE:

Well I went to Angie Dickerson's with my mother and my father.

Dissolve to Still Photo: the Patterson family

Dissolve to Archival: May Day NYC 1934 – Scottsboro car

BORIS (*voice over*):

Bill Patterson would come over there with his wife. Patterson had been a lawyer for the Scottsboro Boys.

NARRATOR:

At the Dickersons – and other places in the Coops too – young blacks and whites could meet.

Still Photos: Apartment interior; Angie's party

Interview, Boris Ourlicht

Lower 3rd: Boris Ourlicht

Still Photo: Libby as WAC, Libby portrait

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):

Because I had befriended the Dickersons, in 1947 when – during the summer – I went there to talk to 'em, and there was this – oh! She was a beauty. (*He cries.*) So, that's how I met Libby.

Still Photo: Libby dressed up.

BORIS (*voice over then on camera*)

And the first date, I had an old Ford car, and we went down to Greenwich Village. And I guess I was nuts or naïve. And of course, when I was driving down the Village, I was stopped by a cop. And the cop pulled us out of the car, and he pulled me aside and he said, “Where'd you get this Ho?” And I said, “That's not a whore that's my girlfriend.” He says,

“What the hell’s the matter with you, are you crazy or something?” He says, “I’m going to take you in.” And he says, “Of course if you want me to arrest her as a prostitute I’ll let you go.” I said, “No, I’m not going to...” *(he cries.)*

So... So he took us in. And he kept us in the station for a couple hours. And that was my first date.

Archival: “Surveillance” montage: various shots of Allerton Ave, and FBI agents.

Coops courtyard: pan down from roof to section J, wide

Music

Interview, Yok Ziebel:

Lower 3rd: Yok Ziebel

YOK *(voice over and on camera):*

There started in this country an anti-communist hysteria. And as such, the instrument that the government used to intimidate people was the Federal Bureau of investigation. And the Coops was a prime target. And I don’t remember the exact year, when my mother came off the subway, from work, we went into the Coops, and entered our section where we lived, and my mother went to get the mail, and there was a young man standing there with a black suit and a thin tie, and I knew right away who he was, and he said to my mother, “Can I speak to you Mrs. Ziebel” and she said, “Who are you?” He said, “I’m from the Federal Bureau of—” I don’t think he even finished it when my mother spat in his face. And he wiped himself off and walked out, and we went upstairs. My mother, she didn’t take crap from anyone.

Still Photo: – Dora Ziebel leans against tree

Still Photos: Collecting signatures, Anti-racism

Music

PETE *(voice over):*

The impression was that the Coops had a block of votes. So that there was fear by the political machines that the Left was going to be taking over.

Still: 1950 – map of assembly districts

Dissolve to Tour Ext Britton St – pull out from subway

PETE *(voice over):*

And so the electoral districts were split along Britton Street, so that each of the buildings of the Coops voted in a different electoral district. To prevent the Coops from voting as a block.

Archival: Peekskill- newsreel shots

NEWSREEL ANNOUNCER:

Tensions abroad, tensions at home. In Peekskill New York, a sign of the times. The pro-Soviet

singer Paul Robeson was scheduled to perform, and a surge of anti-communist feeling burst into violence and riot.

Archival: Paul Robeson in Moscow – he sings a Russian song: track continues under Interview, Bernie Shuldiner

BERNIE (*on-camera then voice over...*):

Well Norma had a life-long love affair with Paul Robeson.

Here is an educated black man, who overcame a great number of obstacles.

And then began to take responsibility for the social-political developments in our country.

Archival: Paul Robeson in a parade in Glasgow

NARRATOR:

Paul Robeson – pro-communist and almost larger than life – galvanized communists and anti-communists.

Dissolve to Archival: Peekskill – entrance to concert parking, – crowd booing on sidelines

NARRATOR:

People from the Coops flocked to Peekskill for Robeson's concert on that hot September day.

Archival: Peekskill montage– cars drive in, police marching Interview, Bebe Ziebel

BEBE (*voice over then on-camera*):

And as we drove up we were horrified because there were hundreds of people standing along the road

and they were shouting the most horrible obscenities at us.

Archival: Peekskill – girls thumbing noses

YOK:

“Go back to Russia.” “Nigger-lover.”

Interview, Bebe Ziebel

Lower third: Bebe Ziebel

BEBE:

We had never really seen ordinary people being so hateful and so angry, at something so simple.

I mean, he was just going to sing.

Archival: Peekskill – audience settling down – police resting, huge crowd sitting Music

YOK(*voice over*):

The grounds were the hollow.

Still photo: Peekskill Concert - audience, Robeson at Microphone

BERNIE (*voice over then on-camera*):

And we made a ring around the stage.

Because at one point we heard that there were snipers on those hills, that were going to shoot him.

Archival: Peekskill, guards standing shoulder to shoulder, hills, concert crowd moving, and/car sign “oust the commies”, police holding people back, policemen pushing back a group of men, shoving a black guy.

BERNIE (*voice over*):

When the concert was
was done and people began to start to leave, to go on the buses
the police moved in on us.

Interview, Norma Dubitsky Shuldiner:

NORMA (*voice over then on camera*):

We went to the bus... And the driver had disappeared.

Archival: Peekskill policemen line holding back

Interview, Boris Ourlicht:

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):

Some hundred bus drivers had abandoned their buses, so a cop opened the door to one of the buses and
he says “get in the bus.” And I got in the bus, I had never driven a bus before.

Archival: Peekskill – fighting, man with wounded head; high angle shot of melee.

BORIS (*voice over*)::

He starts piling people into the bus. And I saw all around me state troopers doing the same thing.

Still photo: Peekskill Concert Bus – hecklers, Robeson’s epithets, Anthony Lavazerri Car Chasing – several angles, Trooper surveys damage – broken windows.

Interview, Norma Shuldiner

NORMA (*voice over then on-camera*):

So we’re going down Route 6, and we began- to get stoned.

Interview, Harriette Nesin Bressack:

HARIETTE (*voice over then on-camera*):

People said it reminded them of pogroms, in Europe.
If you weren't there, and I wasn't there, it was something unreal. I knew it had happened but I
couldn't believe it.

Archival: Peekskill bus drives by

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera...*):
Meanwhile, while I was driving out of there, all of a sudden
I got flushed and I said, "Hell, they can't do this to me." I'm sitting up here in this bus.// I don't
know what happened but I gunned that motor and I start to go right for these guys and behind
me, I look in the mirror
and all these busses were behind me.

Steadicam tracking shot around Coops – buses pass.

NORMA (*voice over*):
When we got home to the Coops, the streets were mobbed. And they were applauding us and
taking us around and everything.

Archival: Bronx River parkway – cars pass, highway sign

NARRATOR:
Outside the Coops, Americans were building again

Archival: Bronx River Parkway – driving in to Coops

PETE (*voice over*):
A lot of the younger men got married and moved to the suburbs. Then they would come to visit
their parents on weekends, on Sundays, and the place was all of a sudden full of cars. So that the
automobile culture had reached the Coops at this time.

Archival: Bronx River Parkway – driving under bridges

NARRATOR:
But some young men took a different route out.

Interview, Boris Ourlicht:

BORIS:
I joined the Communist party! And Bernie Shuldiner was my leader!

Archival: Detroit late highway, Detroit late crowd
Interview, Boris

Music

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera...*):

The Party was sending young people out into the steel mills and the auto mills to organize. So

Bernie said –

- “We’re going to have socialism especially if you guys go out and organize the workers. Forget about college.” And of course he was, he was such a dominant force in my, in my life, I listened to him and I said “Hey you know it sounds, it sounds reasonable.” And he says “Of course if you’re going out, you got to get married.”

So Libby and I got married.

Still photo: Boris & pregnant wife

Archival: Detroit late plant LS ext, Detroit late men – black guys at furnace in goggles

BORIS (*voice over*):

A couple days later, we drove out to Detroit to work.

Interview, Pete Rosenblum

Lower third, Pete Rosenblum

PETE (*on camera then voice over*):

In April 1949 I volunteered to go down south

Dissolve to Still photo: Pete Graduate

Archival: South late train

YOK (*voice over*):

He finished Cornell, and he went into basic industry working in a steel mill in Birmingham Alabama.

Archival: South late plants – aerial, South late men – working in freight car door.

PETE:

The idea was that I would make friends with other white workers, and then we would talk, and eventually we would discuss race issues.

Still photo: PR Store – bakery

PETE (*voice over*):

My parents couldn’t stop me, I was 21. And I decided I was brave enough to do it.

Archival: Rose Ourlicht near Coops; Still photos: Rose Ourlicht – in straw hat, rose & Boris w/ straw hats

Music

Interview, Boris Ourlicht:

BORIS (*voice over then on-camera*):

For one thing my mother was dead set against me going to work in a factory. She said, “My hopes were with you to become an educated professional. I mean, I worked all my life in the factory—”

“Why do you want to go back in there?”

Interview, Pete Rosenblum:

PETE:

It was insane on my part and the people who sent me there were even more insane, but I was at a young age, and it was a marvelous experience, you know, being with people who were that brave and stupid.

Archival: Home movie, the Coops neighborhood in snow – LS high angle marooned bus, and windy subway platform

NARRATOR:

The Coops itself was shaken one last time.

Archival: Home movie: the Great March Snow Storm of 1956 intercut with newsreel, Khrushchev casts vote, Khrushchev Revelations

YOK (*voice over then on-camera*):

In 1956 when the famous Khrushchev Revelations about the Stalin mass murders and all his crimes, came about – it was like a bombshell.

Archival: The Great March Snow Storm of 1956 – people walking through snow near Coops buildings

Music

YOK (*voice over*):

And when those revelations hit the streets, so to speak, the Coops was torn apart. A lot of people left the Communist party, a lot of them in the Coops and a lot of them nation wide.

Still photo: Dora Ziebel, 1975

YOK (*voice over then on-camera*):

My mother remained steadfast for a long time, loyal to the Soviet Union. Sense that it was very difficult talking to her.

Still photos: Dora Ziebel, old now; Dissolve to Red Army pikes

Coops hammer and sickle doorway

Steadicam around Coops courtyard, low angle

YOK (*voice over then on-camera*):

When my mother died, her decision was to be cremated. And we decided that the best place to

spread her ashes would be in the Coops. Which my brother did in the First House, where we lived. He spread her ashes.

Archival home movies: 89th birthday party for Rose – Libby walks up in red coat.

Dissolve to still photo: Libby & Boris w fake nose.

Music

Interview, Boris Ourlicht:

BORIS (*voice over then on camera*):

Libby died December 16, 1995. When we got married didn't have any kind of ceremony, didn't tell my mother.

Still photos: Ourlicht Christmas, Dissolve to Ourlichts 1970s

Archival: Home movies of 89th birthday party for Rose

BORIS (*voice over*):

I never asked her about this, but I think she saw dire consequences in living in our society with a black woman. But she became involved in my family when my kids were born, and she was, she was a good grandma to – they – she accepted and loved my children, and uh, they were a part of her, you know.

Archival: Home movies of 89th birthday party: Rose smoking

NARRATOR:

By now the builders have passed on, and their buildings have Changed considerably.

Archival: home movies from Shalom Aleichem Houses: dancing in doorway

Still photo: Shalom Aleichem Houses same doorway now

Music: Ode to Joy

NARRATOR:

The Shalom Aleichem apartments have been privately owned since the 1930s.

Still photo: Farband Flyer

Dissolve to Still photo: Farband Houses courtyard

NARRATOR:

The Farband sold off one of its buildings but the other remains a Cooperative.

Still photo: Amalgamated Fountain c. 1930

Steadicam through Amalgamated Cooperative now

NARRATOR:

Only the Amalgamated Cooperative—originally backed by a powerful union—flourished and grew, today housing 1500 families, some of them 4th generation descendents of the original co-operators.

Still photo: Penn South – several angles
Music

NARRATOR:

Through the United Housing Foundation, the managers of the Amalgamated built high-rise cooperatives all over New York.

Still photos, various high-rise cooperatives: East River Cooperative, Co-op City

NARRATOR:

When Co-op city was ready in the 1970's, a lot of people from the Coops moved in, drawn by modern conveniences like elevators and central air-conditioning— and the chance to live in a Cooperative again.

Coops courtyard: Julie Lugovoy talks with Elsa Mitchell, a current resident.
Music

ELSA:

I would like to restore the rose garden. Where did you have the ...

JULIE:

The arbors?

ELSA:

Yeah the arbors.

JULIE:

There were four of them, over the walk,

ELSA:

Oh

Dissolve to Still photo: Lugovoy Senior, holding water bucket

JULIE (*voice over*):

My father always found new places to garden and if he couldn't garden in his own place he gardened in somebody else's place – Which is a tradition I try to still carry out. (*He laughs.*)

Yok Ziebel, Pete Rosenblum, and Julie Lugovoy leave the Coops courtyard with their friends,

several current residents.

JULIE:
It went over the walk.

PETE:
Exactly

JULIE:
And take that mulberry out! *(He laughs)*.

ELSA:
Take it off, right?

Tour Everyone Walking – pan mulberry tree

JULIE *(voice over)*:
Gardening is work.

Coops courtyard - children running and playing

Coops Rooftops zoom to courtyard – pull out

Tour Elevated Station (FO)

NARRATOR:
The Coops has new gardeners, whose children have dreams of their own.

VOICE OVER
For more information about this program, visit itvs.org.

Tail credits

Music