

Transcript of edited excerpts.  
BIRCHARD, TOM

"Yeah, I'm Tom Birchard, the occupant of this house, and owner of Veselka Restaurant for the past many years, and also a trustee of the Greenwich Village Society for Historical Preservation.

Back in those days, there was no American menu, if you were English speaking. Veselka, especially when it came to the food, it was really intimidating to come, virtually impossible to come in and order something and get your food delivered to you accurately. I came in [19]66; the place had been there for twelve years before I got there, but even when I arrived in '66 there was really no written menu. There was a thing up on the wall...

The core of his business, obviously, was Ukrainians. They were coming in to get their newspapers. It was like a little social center, to get the news. There was a Ukrainian daily newspaper back in those days called Svoboda and you know like the other people coming for the Daily News and the New York Times, there was a big Ukrainian population coming to get the news. And really, when it came to Ukrainian news, that was the only source. It wasn't on TV, it wasn't on the radio. Typically those people would come, and some of them would get something to drink or have a coffee or a milkshake and hang around and talk. Slowly, over time, he started preparing food and selling it—in the beginning it was, I remember, cabbage soup, which was really sauerkraut soup, and borscht, and pierogies, and stuffed cabbage, and maybe blintzes. And coffee... And Coffee and pastry."