

**EI-343**

**HARRY (AARON) PARASZEWSKI PARKER**

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**AGE 6**

**PORT: ANTWERP**

**RESIDENCES:**

- **CHOPOMOVA**
- **THE US: BROOKLYN, NY**

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm very happy to be here today, July 5th, celebrating the July 4th weekend, with Mr. Harry Parker, who was born Aaron Paraszewski, in Poland. He came to the United States from Poland in 1910 when he was about six years old. I want to say that I'm very happy that you were able to come today and that we have a chance to hear your story.

PARKER: Thank you very much Dr. Janet Levine and, first of all, I want to thank you

for having me here and, in fact, you were very nice with all the phones we made just to ( Dr. Levine chuckles) set this up. I'm very happy that I have some of my family here, especially my niece and her husband, who made all this possible. She's the one that took care of everything. And, I was here a little early and, of course, I saw our name on the wall, on the wall here, and it's very good. ( He laughs. ) In fact, I'm enjoying everything, thanks to Janet.

LEVINE: Well, maybe we could break precedent a little and you could just tell the little story about how you happened to come to be interviewed.

PARKER: Oh, yes, I think I was here, we were here about two months ago and I filled out a form. I filled out a form and I guess they liked something I wrote because a few weeks after that I received a letter and the heading on the envelope was the Department of Interior. I says, "Ay, wow, I'm a big guy here. ( He laughs. ) This come from Washington. And I got this letter asking me if I would be interested in this Oral History Project. And I certainly was and I answered that letter and we tried to set up a date, an appointment. And I finally got in touch with Janet and, after about a dozen calls here and there and so forth, we were finally able to make it on this day. I'll have to remember that. I better remember it because my ( he laughs ) anniversary's tomorrow. ( They laugh.) My big anniversary is tomorrow.

LEVINE: How many years are you married?

PARKER: I think I'm married, it will be thirty years tomorrow. Of course, I always tell my wife, it doesn't seem a day over eighty-six or something like that. ( He

laughs. ) She wants to throw something at me. But, if I may say so, I'm very happily married. She's a wonderful woman and sorry she isn't here right now. With the heat and the crowd on the holidays, it would be a little tough for her.

LEVINE: Well, she'll get to hear the tape anyway. Well, let's start at the beginning. Tell me your birth date.

PARKER: Well, my birth date is April the 18th, 1904.

LEVINE: And where in Poland were you born?

PARKER: Well, I was born in a little town which is outside of Warsaw. I remember it's Chotomova. That's the way we always pronounced it. The chs, you know, is huh in some languages. It's spelled C-H-O-T-O-M-O-V-A. Hope the right spelling. Because every time I would write a letter to certain people, like my cousin, I would sign it "Harry from good old Chotomova." See, ( he laughs ) and they would get a kick out of that.

LEVINE: Do you remember Chotomova at all?

PARKER: Very, very little. I do remember, as I said, it was a suburb of Warsaw and I used to have a fascination for the sun, for some reason or other. And I remember crawling outside --there was a little hill there --and I would just lie down and just look at the sun, until they ran out and grabbed me ( he chuckles ) and brought me in the house. And I was lucky it didn't affect my eyes at all. But it was one of those things. I do remember that.

LEVINE: Do you remember the house you lived in at all?

PARKER: No, that's something I, I don't, it was a small house I remember because there was about two or three youngsters in the bed, my brother and I and-- anyway, it really was a small house; that I can remember. However, we were comfortable. We were comfortable regardless.

LEVINE: And who were your family members when you were in Poland?

PARKER: Well, we lived with, of course my mother passed away when I was maybe two years old. And, after that, my father came here. My father came to America first, and after a year or so he brought us over. We came over, lived with my grandparents. I remember my grandfather.

LEVINE: What do you remember about him? What do you remember?

PARKER: My grandfather was a very religious man, see. Maybe he liked the way I understood him or something, speaking about religion, and he taught me very much about our religion and so forth. He was like an elder statesman in that little town and you always looked up to him.

LEVINE: Can you remember him, what he looked like and how he spoke to you?

PARKER: No, I'm very sorry about that. Of course, we have his picture and, through that picture, I can see how he looked. He was father's father, yeah.

LEVINE: What was your mother's name and her maiden name?

PARKER: Her maiden name I can't remember, but her first name was Frances.

LEVINE: Frances, uh huh.

PARKER: My niece is

LEVINE: Named after her.

PARKER: Named after her.

LEVINE: And your father's name, first name?

PARKER: Joseph.

LEVINE: Joseph. And what did your father do for work in Poland?

PARKER: He was a shoe maker. In those years, they were taught either to be a shoe maker or a tailor, as far as I remember the idea. He was a very good shoe maker. ( He laughs. ) He used to take care of, I have a habit of walking, when I walk my heels always one side ( he's laughing ). And I remember he used to fix them every two weeks or so. Little things like that you remember very well. He was a wonderful man, my grandfather. As we spoke about grandparents, you know, and how we always look up to grandparents, and I guess I was that way when I was with my grandfather.

LEVINE: Now, was your grandfather a shoe maker as well as your father?

PARKER: That I really don't know. I never knew what his occupation was as a

young man.

LEVINE: But he was religious. Do you remember any religious celebrations or any kind of observances when you were in Poland?

PARKER: Well, I knew our Sabbath, you know, would start on Friday night, see. And then I remember that everything would be, you know, all sort of set up, home and so forth. Very vaguely, very vaguely because it's something that it's very hard for me to remember all these years, see, especially when I was a youngster you know.

LEVINE: How about your brothers and sisters. How many did you have?

PARKER: I had one brother and two sisters.

LEVINE: And where did fall in the line of children?  
Were you at the oldest end or --?

PARKER: No, no I was the youngest.

LEVINE: You were the baby.

PARKER: I was the baby. My sister Annie, she was the oldest. She was about seven or eight years older than I. And we were sort of two years apart, see.

LEVINE: And what were your brother's --

PARKER: My other sister's name was Rose. Really, two wonderful sisters. The most wonderful sisters anybody could have.

LEVINE: Do you remember any experiences with your sisters, like when you think about them in your childhood times?

PARKER: Oh, yeah, sure. I remember when I was going to school and that time my sister Annie was working, see. You see, at that time, we lived in Boston. At fourteen years, when a youngster was fourteen years old, they could quit school and allowed to go to work, providing they had two years of night school, two years until they were sixteen. And, of course, we weren't very financially secure and so forth, and all of us, when we were fourteen, we stopped school and we started to work. And I do remember when my sister was working, she used to hate Friday night. She worked in a chocolate factory and I used to wait for her to come home and she would give me six cents. And at that time we would go to the movies. Friday night they would have those serials, like the Perils of Pauline and stuff and those, see. And we couldn't wait til Friday night to see the next episode. And here I had a nickel I think, a nickel and a penny for jelly donuts, not jelly donuts --

LEVINE: Jelly beans?

PARKER: Jelly beans, yes. And I even remember at certain times the admission was two for five. That is, you could have two admissions for a nickel, see. And we had some pretty smart kids there and they would say, "I've got two cents, who's got three? I got two cents, who's got three?" (They are laughing.) I remember those things very well.

LEVINE: We've kind of skipped ahead there. Let's go back to Poland. Your father left when you were about five years old.

PARKER: Well, he probably left earlier because I don't remember when he left the country.

LEVINE: You didn't remember your father in Poland at all then.

PARKER: In Poland, I don't. I really don't

LEVINE: Are there any other memories that you have of Poland, before you left for the United States?

PARKER: No, I really, well, I could remember that at times, at certain times, I don't know where we went, but we went to Warsaw. Yes, we went to Warsaw. It was about an hour and a half ride or something. And I remember as a youngster, my father would take my brother and I there, see.

LEVINE: What would you go to Warsaw for?

PARKER: That's something I really don't know. Maybe it was an examination for, in a hospital or something or to a doctor, but honestly I don't know where. But I do remember getting in a train and certainly it didn't have no, it was like sitting in a steerage. We were sitting in the back there, see. And tried to sit down some place there.

LEVINE: I see.

PARKER: On the train. It was on the train of course.

LEVINE: So until you came to the United States, the furthest you'd been would be to Warsaw by train from --

PARKER: Yes, yes, I mean as far as going to other places, other cities, no. Outside of Warsaw, no.

LEVINE: Now, how did you, who did you come to the United States with?

PARKER: I came with a cousin and my two sisters and my brother. There was four, five of us, far as I remember. And my father met us right here.

LEVINE: Did your father send money? How did you get the money for you and your cousin and brother and sisters to come?

PARKER: Oh, I guess he sent that, that time they had quotas, I think every country had a quota, especially Poland, and so many could come. And I think we probably waited a couple of years. That I really couldn't remember. I didn't ask about that in the family. And, oh, he sent us the tickets of course.

LEVINE: Oh, he did.

PARKER: Yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember the name of the ship?

PARKER: Yes, that I, it was the Kronland. That's something I was able to check up on and I found out it was the Kronland, spelled with a K, K-R-O-N-L-A-N-D. I think I read about it, much later it became a troop ship, probably in World War I, I guess.

LEVINE: Do you remember leaving your house or leaving your town?

PARKER: That was something, that I can not, no. ( He's whispering. ) I can not remember.

LEVINE: Do you remember traveling to the ship, the Kronland?

PARKER: I know we traveled. We traveled from one country to another, I think. The traveling quite a, but where and so forth I don't know but I think we took the boat, I think it was in Belgium I think. It could have been Antwerp or something. It wasn't Liverpool, that I'm pretty sure.

LEVINE: So you probably traveled to Antwerp and then you boarded the ship.

PARKER: We boarded the ship there, yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about that voyage?

PARKER: Well, I recall a fire that we had. At the time I didn't know it was a fire. And I found out later because I have a slight memory of many people, we were on deck and they were all falling down and on their knees and praying, see. Because I just looked around and I really didn't know it, that there

was a fire and, I imagine, there was a certain kind of anxiety. There wasn't a panic as far as I remember because nobody pushed me here or there and so forth. And I guess the prayers worked because nothing happened, to my knowledge, although I did get seasick. ( He laughs. )

LEVINE: Were you down in the hold of the ship? Were you in what they call steerage?

PARKER: Steerage, I think we were, yes. That was about the lowest grade, I think.

LEVINE: That was where everybody was in one space.

PARKER: That's right.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything about the accommodations, the food, anything like that?

PARKER: Well, as far as I know, the food wasn't bad because I wasn't very hungry. You know, I had times and, as I said, I got seasick, which of course, there was a few days we didn't ( he laughs ) eat. That didn't make much matter.

LEVINE: Now, your cousin was older than you and your sisters and brother?

PARKER: Yes, she was.

LEVINE: So she was kind of looking after you and taking after you on this trip?

PARKER: Yes, she was, yeah. She was. Very fine lady.

LEVINE: Okay, so, do you remember the ship coming into New York Harbor?

PARKER: No, I do not remember that. I don't remember the ship coming in. Of course, I do remember though that my father was there because my cousin, of course being older, she knew my father and I guess my sister Annie, who was the eldest, and probably Rose also. Because they ran to him, you know, and embraced and so forth. And he took a look at me and says ( he laughs ), "Is that the young one?"

LEVINE: Do you remember how you felt seeing your father?

PARKER: I was scared a little bit, scared you know, because, see, my father was, he was kind of strict man you see, you know what I mean, strict I mean, as far as children were concerned, see. We had to be good kids and we certainly were. And I was afraid probably how he would react to me. But he was a wonderful father though, wonderful father, good provider, fond memories of him.

LEVINE: So, he met you?

PARKER: Yes. He met us, yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember, is there anything about Ellis Island that you recall? How long were you here? Do you know how long you had to stay here?

PARKER: In Ellis Island, you mean? No, I don't think we had to stay too long because somehow I imagine they check up, who is going to sponsor us,

taking care of us and, of course, when my father was here, then that was it. Because I do remember going to my aunt's house, my mother's sister who, at that time, lived in Brooklyn.

LEVINE: So you left Ellis Island

PARKER: We must have.

LEVINE: And you went to Brooklyn. Do you remember anything about that? About your aunt's place? About your first few days in America? What struck you or anything like that?

PARKER: No, I really couldn't. I mean as far as incidents and so forth, I couldn't remember them.

LEVINE: Okay, so then what happened? After you --

PARKER: After that we came to Boston. We took the boat --that I remember. We took a boat, Boston boats at that time, from New York it went straight, wasn't went straight to Boston or not, but I know the Boston boats from New York, we had to change at Providence, Rhode Island and then take the train from Providence to Boston. We probably did at that time.

LEVINE: And what did you do when you got to Boston?

PARKER: Well, the first thing, our father had an apartment with us. We lived in the South End of Boston. And, of course, school was the first thing. We went to school right away.

LEVINE: Do you remember any incidents learning English?

PARKER: Well, of course, at first I mispronounced a lot of words, you know, see, but I learned English pretty good, fairly well. Funny thing about those years, we did not go to the same school. The children did not go to the same school at that time. My two sisters went to an all girls school, which was quite a way from where we lived. I think they call it the Franklin School. My brother went to a school that was called Abraham Lincoln School. I can't remember whether that was co-ed or not. And I went to a school, Quincy School, named after John Quincy Adams, who was, I think it was, fourth president of the United States, see, named after him. And that was an all boys school.

LEVINE: So you had never been in school? You had not been to school before you came to Boston?

PARKER: No, no, no.

LEVINE: And did you sisters and brother ever talk about school and the difference between school in Poland and school in Boston.

PARKER: The only thing, I know that my sister Annie, she went to school in, I imagine it was in Warsaw or maybe in the town there, see. And she could speak, she learned a little English there, as far as I remember because she was very quick in taking it up, you know, when we came to this country.

LEVINE: Do you know how you learned English? What was really helpful to you in learning to speak English?

PARKER: It was in school. It was just in school. There was no special school that I remember where we learned English, just being in school and teacher talking to us and trying to answer and so forth. It seemed it just came natural to us.

LEVINE: Were there a lot of other immigrant children in your class?

PARKER: I don't think so, no. ( pause ) No, see, very few immigrants would come to Boston those years, see. They would probably stay in New York or maybe further west, see, but Boston ( laughs ) I really don't remember any immigrants there, no.

LEVINE: So you stayed in school,

PARKER: I stayed in school, I was fortunate, I was able to graduate, what they called Public School, that was eight grades, before I was fourteen. See. You see, graduation was June and the following year would be my birthday, April, so for three or four months I went to a sort of high school, until I was fourteen. Then, of course, I had to leave high school like my sisters and my brother did. And I got a job as an errand boy, I guess, as an errand boy in a printing place.

LEVINE: And then you had to go to night school?

PARKER: I went to night school for two years. I think it was about two nights a

week. Though it wasn't bad but it was a little bit different than in high school, see, which, of course, we didn't have a chance to go to.

LEVINE: What was the night school like? Do you remember it?

PARKER: ( He laughs. ) You see, it was at night and I don't think they had a real teacher. Maybe at that time they could have had a substitute teacher, see. It wasn't something that you could really learn a lot. Let's put it that way, see.

LEVINE: So you took your first job as an errand boy, and how about your sisters and brother, what were they doing when they stopped school at fourteen?

PARKER: Yeah, well, my brother, I think my brother came to New York. When he was fourteen he came to New York and he learned a very nice trade through my, as I said my aunt lived here see, and her son-in-law was in, the business they had, it was part of a suit and cloak, where they had embroidery, see. He learned that trade. Embroidery was very good those years. And my brother became a very good operator. And I know he stayed in New York and he lived here. He got married here. And he made a fairly good living through embroidery.

LEVINE: And how about your sisters?

PARKER: Oh, my sisters, one worked in a, my sister Annie worked in chocolate factory, Apollo Chocolate.

LEVINE: What kind?

PARKER: Apollos Chocolate they call it, yeah. It was one of the finest companies at that time in Boston, in New England you could say, for that matter. And my sister Rose liked to work in the store, see, food stores. She became very well known working in a delicatessen store. She liked that very much, see, in Boston, so forth. And later on I came to New York, brother lived here.

LEVINE: What prompted you to come to New York?

PARKER: I can't remember whether I was out of a job or not. I figured I'd come to New York anyway, see. You know, take a trip and so forth. One of my visits to New York, I enlisted in the army.

LEVINE: What year was that?

PARKER: That was around 19, right after World War I, 1919 -- 1919,1920. I was sent to Camp Upon in New York state and from there we went to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. I can remember the name of my outfit. Would you like that?

LEVINE: Sure.

PARKER: It was Battery E, First Field Artillery, stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

LEVINE: Were you stationed there the entire time?

PARKER: Well, at one time we all set to go to the Philippines. I think they had some trouble there at that time, but that wore off and that was straightened out

and I spent the rest of the time at Fort Sill.

LEVINE: There's one thing that we neglected to discuss. Your cousin, who was older; your mother had died; your father then married that cousin once

PARKER: Yes.

LEVINE: Once you arrived here. Now tell me about that. Was that a typical kind of family arrangement?

PARKER: Well, I can't remember whether it was a family arrangement, That I can't remember, see. But I guess my father knew her when we were in the old country, in Poland. And when she came over I guess they get married and that's what it was, see.

LEVINE: It seems very --

PARKER: I can't remember any courtship or something like that. That I can't answer you.

LEVINE: It seems very often we hear about cousins marrying or people marrying in the same family.

PARKER: Oh, yes, it's prevalent as far as I know, in many countries. Those are countries that I know of and so forth, inter-marriage and so forth, where they can marry cousins or even nieces or something like that.

LEVINE: Well, do you think that your cousin came expecting to marry your father?

PARKER: That's possible, that's possible, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, well I think we'll pause here because we need to change the tape to the other side, and then we'll continue.

PARKER: Sure.

END OF SIDE A

BEGIN SIDE B

LEVINE: Okay, this is Side B now of my interview with Harry Parker and we were talking about your coming to New York and joining the service. How old were you then?

PARKER: Well, I wasn't quite eighteen but at that time I guess everything was all right. I was able to join, I was able to become a member of the armed forces of the United States, something that I was very proud of, I think I had written that down.

LEVINE: And then when you came out of the service, what did you do?

PARKER: When I came out of the service, I came back to Boston I guess and I

worked there. Trying to remember very much. I worked in Boston for a while in the printing line. Then I came back to New York. I got a job here in the printing line. And then, further on, in the 1940s, I joined the Post Office. I worked in the Post Office. I retired from the Post Office thirty-one years later. I thank the United States Post Office very much because it was a steady job for all that time. I made a fairly good living and when I retired the benefits were very, came in very handy. After I retired about two or three months after that, I just couldn't just walk around doing nothing and I took some kind of a test they had. They had a very good employment agency in the Grace Building at 6th Avenue and 42nd Street. And after they give you some instructions or lessons for about three hours or so, they ask you what you could do and whatever you said you could do, you have to write on it. In fact they had all kinds of machines there. If you said you are very good at the computer, that time was an adding machine or something, you could work on an adding machine. Well, anyway, I think I did a fairly good job because a couple of months later I was asked if I wanted to work in the bank and so forth as a temporary employee. Just temporary because the regular fella was out. I think he worked in the savings, he was a man at the time. I accepted that and instead of a couple of weeks it turned out, I worked there about six weeks and then they called me back a few weeks later as a temporary employee. And that was almost twenty years ago. And I'm still working for the same bank, which has a different name now. (Dr. Levine laughs.) And I still work part time, about three, four days a week.

LEVINE: Is the bank near your home?

PARKER: No, no, the bank is in Manhattan, on the East Side of Manhattan, mid-

town. And, of course, I live in Queens. But I get up pretty early and I have no trouble getting there. The transportation is pretty good at that time. In fact, ( he laughs) the New York subway isn't bad. Very nice, air conditioned, everything.

LEVINE: Well, I take it, you like working at the bank.

PARKER: Oh yes, yes, it's a very fine bank. Can I give the name of the bank?

LEVINE: Sure.

PARKER: It's the Commercial Bank of New York. It used to be the American Savings Bank, but since the American Savings Bank was very good but, of course, they ran into difficulties, like so many banks the last few years. And four of our branches was taken over by the Commercial Bank of New York. It's the Commercial Bank of New York, where I work now. Give the address, it's a branch on 79th Street and 2nd Avenue. And they treat us very well there and I'm very happy to be there.

LEVINE: Good. Tell me about your wife. How did you meet your wife?

PARKER: Well, I think, let's see, when I worked in the Post Office I was introduced to her through one of the fellas I work with, see. And I guess that's how it started. And we went out together . .

LEVINE: Do you remember what it was that you liked about her?

PARKER: Well, she was sort of small. She's very cute, very petite like and, of

course, she was brunette at that time and she could dance very well. And I became a good dancer, dancing with her. ( He laughs. ) And any time we had a wedding or some kind of an affair, see, we go out to dance and we really make a good showing. ( They laugh. )

LEVINE: Great. Do you have children?

PARKER: No, we haven't got any children. But my wife has, as I mentioned before, she had a son who has four sons and a daughter and they have grandchildren. So really my wife is a great great grandmother and she'll probably be a great great great grandmother very soon.

LEVINE: And what is your wife's name?

PARKER: Pearl. My wife's name is Pearl.

LEVINE: What was her maiden name?

PARKER: Puder, yeah, Puder, P-U-D-E-R.

LEVINE: What are you proudest of? When you think back over your life, what makes you feel very proud?

PARKER: Very proud of my family. I had a very nice family, my brothers, my sisters, I miss them very much, especially my sisters and my brother. And now I have a very nice family continuing, you know, I have four lovely nieces from my two sisters. Frances, of course, ( he laughs ) we call her Niece Number One; her sister Ruthie, Niece Number Two; and Jeannie is Niece

Number Three. Now my sister Rose also has a very fine daughter. Her name is Rita. And she has three daughters and they are very lovely and they are very nice. So between both sides of the family and, of course, Frances has children. You saw Mark. There's another son Jerry. Jerry's married to a very fine girl, Dawn. And Ruthie, Ruthie now is a grandmother. And she has two, three children, very lovely girls and a boy and they have children, which makes her a grandmother of course. And Jeannie, Jeannie has, oh, my goodness, she has two sons and a daughter. One of the sons is married. He lives in Texas. And we go to Texas often because that's where Pearl's family is and we try to get together many times. I really have a very nice family now too, very nice and I'm very, very proud of them.

LEVINE: When you think about starting your life in Poland and coming here as a young child and living out the rest of your life here, do you think there's any influence on you, that early time in Poland has had. In other words, do you think having started out in Poland has affected your life in any way?

PARKER: No, I don't think it did. As I mentioned before, see, it's hard to remember my life in Poland. But I know one thing, we had a tough life. Things weren't easy for my father because when he married he had other children, you know, and quite a family and we had to work hard and so forth. And I'm thankful that we all made it and we didn't have to go to anybody and each one took care of themselves and never asked anyone else. If we knew somebody needed some help, we were the ones who asked him if they needed help, see. No, our family has been wonderful. And, my life, well, whether it had to do with me being in Poland I don't

know. But I guess I was brought up pretty well.

LEVINE: Do you remember any of the values that your mother or father or your father or your cousin wanted to instill in you? Do you remember any of the --

PARKER: Well, my father used to tell me that "Harry, if you can't talk good about anyone, don't say nothing." I always remember that. He would also say, "Never argue on politics or religion. You can discuss it, but don't get into arguments over it because it's something that can never be solved." He was the best. I remember very well. And in school, of course, I had wonderful teachers. And they really had a great influence on certain things, which helped me try to be a good citizen, let's say, and a good person.

LEVINE: Can you remember any of those teachers particularly?

PARKER: Oh, yes, I still remember them very well, yes. I remember one teacher. It was in the seventh grade. She was very, very strict. In fact, as boys you know, before the bell would ring in school to go to the class, we would kid around, you know, play games or have a few fights and so forth. We'd get our hands dirty, our face dirty, and so forth. And when we came in the teacher would be at the door and we'd have to show her our hands. And she would look at our neck and so forth and if they weren't clean or anything we would have to go and wash them. And then come in. And then we would be late, of course, a few minutes, and we would have to stay after school because of that. But she was wonderful. She was fair in everything and she taught us. She taught me, anyway, a whole lot, to be

on time ( he laughs ) and always try to be clean and so forth. She was nice, very nice, I remember that, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay, well is there anything else? Well how about this phase of your life? What we could call old age. What is this part of your life like for you?

PARKER: Well, I try to keep busy, because I just can't around or stay in the park too long. That's why I'm glad I'm working. I don't know how long more I'll work because it's getting pretty tough at this stage of the game, you know. This probably, I'm sure will be my last year in work.

LEVINE: At eighty-nine, that's pretty good. ( She laughs. )

PARKER: I'd really like to take it easy for awhile, sleep a little late, like I did the last three holidays. And, I don't know whether I mentioned it over here before, but I this interview, by the way Janet, makes me feel very, very, very good. It makes me feel that all of sudden I'm somebody, see. Thanks to my niece and her husband, who made all this possible. She was the one that got in touch with Ellis Island and, of course, we have our family names on the Honor Roll, is it?

LEVINE: The Wall of Honor.

PARKER: The Wall of Honor and that's very something. And, of course, when we were here a couple of months ago and before we saw the film about the immigrants and when the instructor or the guide there us --she was a very fine lady, by the way -- asked "Is there anyone here that passed through here at one time or another?" I guess I was the only one that raised the

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hand, and I became a sort or celebrity because ( he laughs ) first of all, I got a hand there from the crowd in the auditorium. And going out this group of girls stopped me and one of them looked at me and then said, "I always wanted to meet an immigrant." And she looked at me like I was something out of this world. And I really felt good because, well they didn't exactly ask for my autograph, but ( he laughs ) I got to give it to them. And, again, Dr. Janet, I appreciate all this and I want to thank you very much for having me here.

LEVINE: Well, this has been a rare pleasure for me and maybe this is a good place to stop. I think you've waxed eloquent and I want to thank you very much for being here. I have been speaking with Harry Parker who came from Poland at six years of age in 1910 and today is July 5th, 1993 and we are here at Ellis Island in the studio and I am signing off.

## END OF INTERVIEW

### BEGINNING OF COMMENTS BY FAMILY

LEVINE: We're going to do something now that we haven't done before in an interview and that is Mr. Harry Parker has with him today family --that is, Frances Davis, who was his sister Annie's daughter and Mrs. Davis' husband, Al Davis, and their son Mark Davis-- and they are all here today in the studio: And we thought it might be a good idea for each of them to say, briefly, something about Harry Parker and how they see him from their vantage point. Why don't you start Frances.

FRANCES DAVIS: This is Fran and I'm, as Uncle Harry said, Niece Number One, ( she laughs ) and I love that title. To me and to my family Uncle Harry has always been a very important person. And it's very exciting to be here today. As I said when he mentioned that he felt important because of this, he has always been I think probably the most revered member of our family. A very gallant gentleman, we love very much.

AL DAVIS: This is Al Davis, who looks at Uncle Harry always as a celebrity, not just from a program. Who looked at him as a man that I care a great deal about and not as a uncle by marriage but, rather, as an uncle by blood, which is what I prefer to think of him. And, again, he will always be Number One for us.

MARK DAVIS: It's very special to be here today to watch somebody I have a very unique, intimate bond with, my uncle, being interviewed by the Ellis Island historical department. My uncle and I share a special day every year together, our birthdays, April 18th. And that, I can't think of anybody else I care to share that day with as much as it would be Uncle Harry. He's very special to us and we think about him very often and get together with him ever since we were kids, on every other week, to do many, many things. He's been a part of our lives on a very, very close basis. I am very proud to share this day with him every year. My name is Mark Davis.

LEVINE: Well, thank you very much. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing off.

FRANCES DAVIS: A second time.