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EDMUND STACHURSKI

BIRTH DATE: JUNE 22, 1892

INTERVIEW DATE: APRIL 18, 1994

RUNNING TIME: 2:02:42

INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PhD

RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND RECORDING STUDIO

USING THE PORTABLE DIGITAL TAPE RECORDER

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: NANCY VEGA; GREGORY RYTEL-(POLISH)

TRANSCRIPT NOT REVIEWED

POLAND, 1905

AGE 16

PASSAGE ON: LAPLAND

PORT: ANTWERP

RESIDENCES:

POLAND : RATORZYN, BOBY

U.S: DEPEW

HISTORIAN NOTES: Mr. Stachurski's daughter Jean Cash is present.

LEVINE: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service, and I'm here today with Edmund Stachurski who came from Poland in 1905 when he was sixteen years old.

STACHURSKI: Right.

LEVINE: Today is April 18, 1994, and Mr. Stachurski is now one hundred and one, about to be one hundred and two years old on June 22nd.

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STACHURSKI: Right.

LEVINE: Mr. Stachurski's daughter, Jean Cash, is here with him from North Carolina where they live. We're at the Oral History Studio here at Ellis Island. I'm very happy to have the chance to talk to you. I'm so glad that I was contacted that you were visiting the museum, and we can have as much as you can remember about your coming to this country. So let's start, you were born on June 22nd, 1892. Where were you born?

STACHURSKI: I was, well, I was born in Ratoszyn.

LEVINE: Do you know how to spell that?

STACHURSKI: Can you shut it off for a minute? Uh, uh, not exactly. I was raised really in Bobby. I born elsewhere, but...

LEVINE: Oh, but you don't know. Where were you raised?

STACHURSKI: I was, I was, I was born in Ratoszyn, like I say, and then I raised in Bobby, uh, B-O-B-Y.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. And you lived most of the time in Bobby before you came to America?

STACHURSKI: Before I came to America, well, I was all alone left in Poland. My family was over here. My father and second mother was over here.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh. What was your...

STACHURSKI: So I came to them.

LEVINE: What was your father's name?

STACHURSKI: Ignacio Stachurski.

LEVINE: And your mother's name?

STACHURSKI: My second, my father was the second marriage, so my, uh, new mother was Mary, Maria.

LEVINE: Maria. Did you know her maiden name?

STACHURSKI: Uh, when she was, when she, she was a widow, a widow when my Dad. When Dad married her, she brings two, three people with her, and my father has three of us.

LEVINE: Do you remember your, your, uh, your own mother?

STACHURSKI: No. My own mother, I remember from tales only that she was Pauline Price, Pauline Price, from home, mother's name.

LEVINE: Oh, Pauline Price.

STACHURSKI: Yeah. And she died, uh, when I was very, very small child. I, I very, I can't remember her picture or nothing. I just remember when she was buried,

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someone picked me up, told me, "You will have no more Mama, Mama."
And that's all.

LEVINE: Did you have brothers and sisters?

STACHURSKI: I have one, uh, brother was the oldest, and sister was the second, and I'm
the third.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And what were your brothers and sisters names?

STACHURSKI: My brother was Emil Stachurski, and my sister was Victoria Stachurski.
(voice off mic) I have a sister who's not here no more, but my brother is still
living.

LEVINE: And what was your sister's...

STACHURSKI: Oh, not, oh, I'm mistaken.

LEVINE: That's all right. Your sister married, then. What was her married name?

STACHURSKI: My sister was married to, uh, Malkiewich, Stanley Malkiewich.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, um, what do you remember about Bobby? What was the town
like?

STACHURSKI: Why do I come, why do you come here, do I come here?

LEVINE: No. When you lived in Bobby, you lived in Bobby, in Poland, the town you lived

in, the town where you grew up.

STACHURSKI: Well, I was, uh, I was with Dad and Mother for a little while. That is, I think I was. I was still very young. And many times given away to the other, other people asking for me to, to maybe watch their chickens or something. (he laughs) And from there it was, I don't know how, the details, but, but, uh, Daddy, my Dad left for a good many years after marriage, left for this country. He came in this country.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

STACHURSKI: I don't remember what day he came. He came, and I was left with this second mother. And then my second mother was left, I was all by myself left in a country, living with some other, learning a trade or something.

LEVINE: Did you . . .

STACHURSKI: That was still in Poland.

LEVINE: Did, um, you have grandparents? Did you know your grandmother and grandfather?

STACHURSKI: Grand, neither one I know. But I see my grandpa once when I was, oh, at that time I was still in Poland. You're too young, when all by myself he had, I was thinking of my grandpa. I know someplace. So I looked and I walk and see him. I see him once. He, he asked me to, to ride his horse, give him,

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give him a little lecture. (he laughs) That's all I know of my grandpa. I don't know. He didn't speak much, just like I did. (he laughs) I didn't find out much. Only one time I see my grandpa, and don't know much of his family. Only that he has, Grandpa has six children, the five sons and one daughter. So I knew all five, my uncles, but I never seen my aunt. I never see her.

LEVINE: Did you go to school at all?

STACHURSKI: I go in school in, it was sort of a, it was, in Poland it was, but it was, under occupation it wasn't much allowed to learn in Polish, in Polish, only Russian. So I, so I learned pretty good through, through the very short time I attended the school, good arithmetic and reading, writing in Polish only, but Polish was only allowed, uh, alphabet, like, ABC, and so on.

LEVINE: So you learned in Russian?

STACHURSKI: I used to write very good reading and writing by taking Russian.

LEVINE: And did, were you a religious family? Was your family religious?

STACHURSKI: Uh, we didn't, all, at that time when I was attending school, I was at home with my dad yet.

LEVINE: Yeah. Was your family a religious family? Did you observe . . .

STACHURSKI: Yes, my father was quite religious, a Catholic.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh. And did, do you . . .

STACHURSKI: Also the, the new mother was Catholic. I am, I come from Catholic descent, Christian, and all of that.

LEVINE: Do you remember any holidays, any, any religious occasions in Poland?

STACHURSKI: Well, the big holidays, uh, was these two big holidays are well known, I suppose, all over, through the world, Christmas, Christmas and, and, uh, just like me, we had, uh . . .

LEVINE: Easter.

CASH: Easter.

STACHURSKI: What you call?

CASH: Easter.

STACHURSKI: Easter, Easter.

LEVINE: Do you remember how those occasions were observed when you were a boy in Poland? What did people do?

STACHURSKI: Oh, they, the Poland, Polish people was all, uh, what, that's, the name comes from Poland, because there was a, there was all, uh, working, living from the, from the land, and work. Uh, that was houses, you call it . . .

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LEVINE: Farms?

STACHURSKI: Just like farmers, only . . .

CASH: Agriculture?

STACHURSKI: Farmers. Agriculture.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember Christmas when you were a little boy?

STACHURSKI: Oh, yes.

LEVINE: What was it like?

STACHURSKI: Oh, it was very, very happy. Father, uh, remembered, before he marriage, I remember some, he invited the neighbor always to help a little decorating to the Christmas tree, and do some good things to eat, help along. Father was very much handy, just like I am, in the kitchen. (he laughs

LEVINE: Would you have a big, a big feast? Would you have, uh, a big dinner for Christmas?

STACHURSKI: Oh, yes. It was smashed with all these figs. It was, uh, before Christmas we had, uh, always as a religious was fast for quite, for quite, no meat eating or nothing, just very tiny for a, for a, especially the last week before, before Christmas.

LEVINE: And then what would you eat on Christmas? What would you have?

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STACHURSKI: We, we just mostly get it, whatever there was of us, sing the song, Christmas songs.

CASH: Kielbasa, homemade.

STACHURSKI: Oh, the food was very good. (he laughs)

LEVINE: What was it?

STACHURSKI: It was, it was pierogi, pierogi of any kind, from, uh, cheese or plums or nuts, some kind of, what's, even sauerkraut. (he laughs) All good, and cakes, and pastry was extra good. (voice off mic)

LEVINE: Was your mother a good cook?

STACHURSKI: There was no mother, no Christmas that I was at. My first mother wasn't there anymore, and the second, the second mother I had I don't remember her at Christmas. My dad married her much, much later. Uh, I perhaps wasn't much at home many times, being with some, uh, relatives, they come and ask for me to come stay a little during the busy time, summer, or spring, or whatever.

LEVINE: What kind of chores did you have to do? What did you do for your relatives? What kinds of duties did you have?

STACHURSKI: Most, mostly watching, because it was always while I was young, it was your

duty to, to watch either geese or, or chicken, or cattle, something like, like this. Remember, uh, wherever I was, they'd be, they'd be doing, uh, linen threads, you know, or in the winter they was pulling the feathers, geese feathers, for *pierzyna*, or, yes. (he laughs) After, after where my, well, never mind now. Maybe you want, you won't ask, I'm dragging too much.

LEVINE: No, go ahead. Whatever you want to say.

STACHURSKI: Well, when I was, uh, a little, before my, my second mother left, I told you already that the father left for this country.

LEVINE: Yes.

STACHURSKI: She was at home, and I was with her and the other children. And then when father bring the, the family one by one, whatever he make, he send, take it for him, he bring them all, and I was the very last one. Well, I was, I was quite a boy at that time. When Mother was ready to come when Dad send the tickets for her, she placed me with her relatives some kind, I suppose, to learn a trade. But, uh, I did learn some trade in blacksmiths, but most of it they had learned, I had to, I had to work with watch the cow and horse and even do little plowing, plowing and everything, out in the field. But I'm, for some time that I don't remember, I had no way to know anything, and never thought it would be useful for me, so I no taught. I was with these people for some time until I was ready when Dad sent the ticket for me, very, the last one from the family. My father bring him nine, nine people altogether, one by

one, like this here. Well, I was the last one, like I said.

LEVINE: Tell me about the blacksmith, the training that you had to be a blacksmith. What did you do?

STACHURSKI: Well, uh, I, I tried to make horseshoe nails, and even when the blacksmith picks up a good horseshoe, uh, they show me how to do. The man held the horse's leg, and I put the shoe on.

LEVINE: Did you like doing that?

STACHURSKI: But it wasn't very much, uh, I had around, like, once in a while. Or I done a whole different kind, I was a strong boy at that time when I helping him in the kitchen, pounding the heavy sledgehammer or something on, like, a rim for the wheels, or axle for the, for the, uh, wagon, or something like that. All kinds of, uh, all kinds of work, blacksmith, I see, and I did work, building. I even make myself a little bit of a pistol. (he laughs) Yes.

LEVINE: Did people have pistols? Was that something people had? People had guns?

STACHURSKI: Well, a piece of, I took a piece of, a piece of gas pipe, you know, and made the rest of it, because I see some other guns, sometimes they bring for repairs to the blacksmith. Yeah, so I done all the rest. I make the whole thing, make the gun that I shoot.

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LEVINE: Could, it had shot? It worked? You could shoot with it?

STACHURSKI: It worked, it worked. I had to put the powder and a BB and stuff like this.
Yeah.

LEVINE: What did you do for enjoyment when you were growing up? What did you do for fun, or for pleasure, amusement?

STACHURSKI: There was, there was, there was no time for that. I was busy all the time with some kind of work. If not one, it's the other. Helping other, uh, the other families, or whatever. I was working all kinds of jobs, whatever it was there until, until I left the country.

LEVINE: Was there any conflict? Were there any problems in the town you lived in when you were growing up?

STACHURSKI: When I, this one I don't quite...

LEVINE: Was there any conflict? Was there any violence? Was there any, um, trouble in your town?

STACHURSKI: Conflict? [superimposed] Did I have? No, no. Only one time, uh, when I, my dad's last leg, when I came home, I only conflict had foolishly played doing over with the bike and I feel off the high things on my leg. I had my, over here, so, no other. And I had a conflict with my tonsils for a long, long time.

LEVINE: What kind of medical care did you have in the town?

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STACHURSKI: Medical care, I, I go or suggested go to doctor, and they, they never done nothing for the, they always tell me that, uh, my tonsils are not ripe to be taken out. They was all mess of ugly matter like this sore. I can never take, took a cold drink, never. It had to be really warm, or hot, whatever, not too hot. Never, never in long, in all my years I couldn't have nothing cold.

CASH: Still.

STACHURSKI: Yes. But, uh, finally when I, way back in this country when I married my, my lovely Helen, uh, she done the, the curing with me for me for the tonsils, because it was getting worse and worse, and it had never, never, no doctor can help me, they give me all kinds of those gargling and do nothing, so I was so disgusted at one time that I didn't care to live. I told her I fix the stick of the wood and put the quite a chunk of cotton and dip it in iodine and tell her to do quick and turn in there, and my God, I never realized that it's gonna, I know it's gonna be very bad, but I never realized it would be that bad. I almost was out.

CASH: Almost died.

STACHURSKI: But, uh, that's what done to kill my tonsils.

LEVINE: Wow.

STACHURSKI: It killed, from then on. Although, never have no, I, little bit some troubles in

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later years, because at the places for the tonsils, like it was, it left a little pocket like to gather the food all over here. Even my daughter was, when I was, yeah, well, wait, in the years once in a while see the doctor. (voice off mic) But never was serious or anything.

LEVINE: Wow. Huh. (voice off mic) Well, tell me when, how did you feel when your father sent the ticket for you to come to this country?

STACHURSKI: I, I didn't feel happy.

LEVINE: Why?

STACHURSKI: Because I was, I was kind of, uh, sore that so many others was going, going before, and I was for, for such a long time left all by myself, nobody there, no uncle, no aunt, nobody.

LEVINE: How many...

STACHURSKI: And always with the strange people, like. There was no strange, when I was with people like that they treat me good because I was, I was obey, obedient, you know. They, nobody was against me, you know. They all seemed to like me. And, uh, but, uh, I was at that question I was against, uh, I was feeling, I had a bad feeling that I was left the smallest, helpless, all by myself. (he laughs)

LEVINE: How many...

STACHURSKI: Well, when finally father, uh, sent the ticket and send, uh, five, sent five dollars. That was a, that was the, the money supposed to have on the way. It was, uh, Russian, Russian, uh, Russian money, gold. Russia has a lot of gold at that time, so, so when he says, "Send the ticket and the money," they give me in Russian five dollars. Uh, I thought, uh, I thought for a while that I don't want to go.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

LEVINE: How long had it been?

STACHURSKI: Until keep dragging a little bit, and then they, they wrote a letter to the people that I was with them and says why, I had the time was running out, I have to come. And they, they thought, I guess there was a little, uh, more decisive than I tried going. He kind of persuaded me that I, it would be better for me to go. Well, I kind of thought and thought, and make, make my mind that, all right, I will go.

LEVINE: How many years before that did your father come here? How many years before you went?

STACHURSKI: That I never make no, no tension of no kind. I don't know, none of this history, how long, or whatever.

LEVINE: Do you remember about how old you were when your father came to

America?

STACHURSKI: How old I was?

LEVINE: When your father left?

STACHURSKI: No. That, uh, that I don't know. I don't know exactly, no. But after, but it was quite a few years after he married, the second marriage, uh, but I never made no, make no way to keep the diary, you know, of this long. I don't know.

LEVINE: Do you remember leaving? Do you remember leaving to go to the ship?

STACHURSKI: Reason?

LEVINE: Do you remember leaving Boby to go to the ship?

STACHURSKI: But, I, sure. When I, when I was, uh, make up my mind I go, well, there's, I had, I know that I gonna go, I got to go through the boundary of Russian and Austria boundary, and, uh, well, then take a horse and buggy to the train up there, that was already from the house through the border, through the border, and all the way to the Austrian, uh, train, the Austrian train. We got on, and the train was traveling, uh, through, through the rest of, not very long, through the Austria, through the German boundary, and then we, I, uh, I got the German, the German train, a good train, in Germany, because Austrian trains was very poor at that time. They, the immigration was so awfully thick

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that it was no longer, I had to, when I entered the Austria, I have to ride what you call...

CASH: Boxcar.

STACHURSKI: Uh...

CASH: Boxcar?

STACHURSKI: Boxcars, like that they transfer chickens or whatever. Yeah. There was no, everybody had to, boxcars was fixed for the people. They couldn't have enough of repairs in chairs, so they fixed the boxcars, just the two stools on each side, whoever got there, whatever, to sit, and the rest when they come, they had to stand, hang onto each other. It was thick, just like sardines. (he laughs)

LEVINE: And that was because so many people were immigrating? That's when...

STACHURSKI: That was when I was coming in, coming to, to America. You see, I can't tell you that story one after another, I never make no real –I remember all of that, but no just exactly one after another. It was, I'm telling you beginning and ending and stuff like that.

LEVINE: That's okay, that's fine. So, tell me, when you got, then, to Germany, and you got on a good train.

STACHURSKI: Yes.

LEVINE: And then what?

STACHURSKI: I got, I got on in Germany, a German train. It was nice, depot, train depot. And, uh, ride a German train to, to Belgium, to Antwerp, Belgium. Then I'm supposed to, supposed to, uh, get on, get a boat. Yeah. While, uh... (he coughs) Yes, I don't remember how long that train was in there. Anyway, when I remember landing in Belgium, to board the boat, the boat was, uh, it was, that was, uh, intended for me, it was too full. People was so packed and they've been, they've been waiting in Belgium already for eight years, eight days. Uh, so those get on my boat and the people I was in, the group have to, have to take, stay, wait, eight days until the boat comes again. So we, so I had to stay in a hotel, eight days in, uh, waiting, in, uh, in Antwerp.

LEVINE: What do you remember about Antwerp?

STACHURSKI: Well, there was everything new to me. It was, uh, that, the city has a big building, new brick, or cobblestone buildings, and, uh, and, uh, horses, transportation was different than by us, I'm telling you. In Poland, uh, they have a cart with great, big wheels, just two-wheel cart like this here, and either, either big, uh, dog pulling under the, under the cart there is, if it's a light delivery, and when it was a heavy delivery it was horses. I'd never see until I come in the horses were so big you could sleep on his back. (voice off mic) That was interesting to me. I'd never seen horses like this here. Then, uh, during the eight days, well, we had a guide, whoever wants to go

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explores the town, cities, and the different things and, uh, so I was the, always interested. (he laughs) So there'd be quite a group, was taken, you're taken, and had a leader, and keep walking through the, visiting the city, and different things. Like this year I went to the, to the, see where the dry docks was, where they built new boats or repair and, uh, even, I like it so much I ever sneak out sometimes over the gate and go by myself exploring, which I wasn't allowed. (he laughs) Yes. But, anyway, I, one day they come, the boat came, and I'm not sorry that I missed that boat. I see so much in, uh, and I missed the, when I, my ticket was for the, well, the most expensive that could be, you know, boat. When the, when I was getting the new boat, it was the first class boat. All the actress people, agents, companies, agents, people happy, and it was such a rich-looking boat. The very first A-1 boat, and I never expect it. Well...

LEVINE: Say the name of the boat, the name of it.

STACHURSKI: Uh, the, that, was that I already saw, Lapland. That was the boat. Oh, it took eight days. I would, uh, board the train, it took eight days through the Atlantic, eight days. On the fourth, on the fourth day, I believe it was about between third and fourth days when we got in, in, an awful storm, and I, I don't know how we ever got out of there. That big, that boat was guiding in so deep, and I had covered with the water all the, how it ever climbed that hill, because it was showing this, I could see this here after, all different interesting people that they'd been two or three times in there they had

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pictures showing, so that's how I, I know, because after third day, third day, when they see that storm coming, everybody got to clear off the deck, including me. I never saw inside the boat. I was out on the deck all the time watching, watching the birds and stuff like that. But at that time nobody was staying. Everybody, shipmates turned up all the windows, and people, every, everybody was put in just like into cemetery. (he laughs) Everybody's sick. Not me, though. I wasn't. And somehow I was stronger, or whatever. I never, I just closed my eyes when they, when they, when they go and mess, throw up, you know, and stuff like that. You couldn't get into the boat, to the restrooms or nothing. I just hide myself. After four days, then it was nice weather again, fine.

CASH: Dad, can I ask you why you weren't sick and everybody else vomited? Tell her why you think you were not sick.

STACHURSKI: Why? People was somehow, uh, so greedy, the food was gorgeous, and people indulged themselves in the eats. You could go to kitchen even extra, demand whatever you want, they give you. That was very, very first class, you know? And, uh, and I was, uh, I don't care, somehow, for this. I fix myself herrings. I like herrings, you know? I went to kitchen and took, uh, a jar. The man in the kitchen give me jar, put some onions in whatever is needed, you know, to prepare it and have it, in a little bigger box. And I, I eat this herrings. (he laughs) And a piece of bread or something. And maybe that was, helped me with, I never over ate so much like the other people.

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Yeah.

LEVINE: Did your father send you the first class ticket, or was that because the other boat was too full, so you were put on this...

STACHURSKI: I was still on the same ticket.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. But...

STACHURSKI: It was still on the same ticket.

LEVINE: Describe the boat a little bit.

STACHURSKI: This classy boat.

LEVINE: What did it look like?

STACHURSKI: Oh, that boat was just like you go to the nice hotel, the best hotel. There was a swimming pool, there was all kinds of playing things, pool tables, and some athletes, athletes doing things, you know, musician, even, playing all the time, people dancing and, that is, before the storm, before that storm. (he laughs) But after storm. Yeah. So I was, I was lucky on the boat, very, very, lucky on the boat. It took eight, seven days. Seven days to cross, to come to, near to New York shore. Uh, it was quite a ways, stopping the boat, big boat, our boat, stopped, you know, quite a ways. But I could see the land and trees and just far away, because it was too shallow, I suppose, for that big boat to come. We were stopped there, and a small boat came from, from

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the, from the land, and, uh, question all the people, and give injections against all kinds of, doctors, you know, inspectors, inspections, overall, that they, on that day, uh, boat coming, other boats coming and taking people by bunches, uh, little by little, because it was so many people on the big boat, you couldn't put them. So each group was taken into the land, to New York. And down, uh, we was regrouped, whoever go which way. One goes east, another goes north, the other goes south, Chicago, Buffalo, like me I was going towards Buffalo.

LEVINE: Did you have to go to Ellis Island?

STACHURSKI: Yes, after, sure, after I got on land that you regrouped, then took, took, well, the group which I was in through the, through the island, the island, and into this Statue to see. Uh, I remember this here, uh, and after was, after then it was, again regrouping I already decided to, to whichever when they did that.
(Ms. Cash makes comment off mic)

LEVINE: But, tell me...

STACHURSKI: So I was scheduled, scheduled, going to go wherever I was going to the, to the train, to the train.

LEVINE: Well, tell me what Ellis Island was like for you.

STACHURSKI: Well, it wasn't, it was a small island. (Stuttering) It's, in fact, I tell you the truth, that, uh, I couldn't observe anything. I was so, uh, preoccupied,

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everything new, which is always a question, you always have to have a traveling tickets, and they wouldn't give much to the people. They won't give so much time for the people to, to go around to see what, what, some of them. Like I was probably very lucky, I was in, I was in such a big group when I was, uh, scheduled to the train.

LEVINE: And then were you examined and everything at Ellis Island? Did you, were you examined here at Ellis Island? Did you see a doctor?

STACHURSKI: No. That was all through.

LEVINE: That was on the boat?

STACHURSKI: That was, once I left the boat and come to, uh, I went through the doctor and all kinds of examinations and injections and stuff like this here before I went to Ellis Island. That was all, I already done, just scheduled to my point of going.

LEVINE: So what happened to you here? What did they do? What, what happened when you came to Ellis Island, and you were in this big building. What did they do here?

STACHURSKI: People had to see in and think whatever he can see. There wasn't much explanation. Who is interested, he goes, goes around and see, and feel around. They wasn't too, too in a hurry. Uh, give a little time. Nobody tell you anything anymore whatever. You're on your own then.

LEVINE: They didn't ask you questions? Nobody asked you questions?

STACHURSKI: It was, it was no more questions. There was only questions, "Have you any more money with you, with you?" Well, uh, they told, (coughs) they told, I couldn't understand the, whatever he asked me. I says, "I don't know." So he asked me in some different language. I says, "No." And then he did ask me did I do understand, do I understand, but they told me, "Don't tell nobody," they warned me in a letter before I come, "Don't tell everybody that you got money." (they laugh) So I kind of remembered, I says, I says, "I don't know." So he says, "Ah, they give me box of food, like, uh, well, some, uh, need some fruits, banana, tomato and apple, and regular lunch, uh, just like you would buy as a TV lunch, but it was a very different kind of box. To, just to, to take this along because it takes a day-and-a-half to, to get, I wasn't put on a first class train, although it was first class to me compared to the others. It was a nice train.

LEVINE: When you got to Buffalo, who met you?

STACHURSKI: I came, I was, I wasn't going to, to, to Buffalo. I was going to Depew, New York, Depew, New York, which is on the outskirts of Buffalo. It's ten miles from, from the city of Buffalo. Yeah. That was, that was where my, my father lived, my father and mother. But, uh, all mother's children and my sister and brother wasn't there. I, uh, wasn't living in there. But when I got off that train, uh, I was very much, even, even before I, I got off that train, when I was

traveling, traveling this day and night through the American fields. That, uh, that, I says, is this the kind of town? It looks to me so poor. Because it was, it was going through the farms and picking up milk cans and delivery to the stores like this here, that's why it took so long, you know. And, uh, when I, when I finally conductor announced, uh, Depew, Depew, New York, I learned this by heart, Depew, 65 Penora Street, which I can never forget up till today. (Ms. Cash makes a comment off mic) So when he, when the man announced Depew, the train stopped way out in the field someplace, and there was a big factory, a name by Gould Factory, they make the couplings for the, for the trains, for the boxcars. It was no place. There was no kind of a train stops or nothing, it was just a plain track, and opposite, across the last, there was a few chip houses, like they say, a few, uh, I wasn't interested. There was another part with me, which I don't mix in with this. When she learn me going to America, she somehow find out that I'm going to America, that was the next village. She even asked me to wait a day for her until she gets her papers ready. She was traveling with me all the way. So when, because she was living right, just across the street from my father, uh, that was her husband, she was a young, a young married lady. She was with me. The two of us just got off the train by the big factory, fence tall, and the rest of it is nothing, nothing. We don't know which way to go. It was far from the...

CASH: Big reception.

STACHURSKI: From the little, uh, we kind of talk with the other girl, which way we gonna go, what to do. She says, "What are we going to..." She's asking me which way, what you think we're going to go. I says, "I don't know any more than you do." "But," I says, "my hunch says we're going take, go left." And we walk along the railroad, you know, back where, back where the train before the train. That trail pass, he should have stopped on Penora Street, but he passed that street quite a ways. So when I make a decision to go left, I came to that sign, sure enough, I read the sign Penora Street. I says, "Oh, my gosh, it's good." Now Penora Street, don't know which way to go, because it was crossing the railroad. (Ms. Cash makes a comment off mic) So I says, "Well, again we're going to go left." And I start to read the numbers on the houses, you know, according to this, smaller, I have number 66. So I figured out we go that way all right. And when I come, I found where my dad lived, by myself, come to 66 Penora Street where my ticket was.

LEVINE: Okay we are going to...

END OF SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO

LEVINE: This is tape two now, and I'm talking with Edward...

CASH: Edmund.

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LEVINE: Edmund, sorry...

CASH: Stachurski.

LEVINE: Stachurski. And, um, we were just talking about how you found your father's address when you got off the train.

STACHURSKI: Uh, that, that address, when father sent the ticket I had the address where to come. So I got, I learned that address by memory, while, before I left Poland yet. I know. I remember that 66 Penora Street all the time.

LEVINE: What happened when you reached 66 Penora Street?

STACHURSKI: It was a very big disappointing to me. Uh, nobody again. I found only Mother. Mother is, that was my, you know, my second mother. She had a boarder, she, for the living everybody had to work up there, over here, the same as anyplace else. Uh, Mother had boarders. Father had a little house with, uh, with, uh, with two bedrooms. Him and a wife occupied one bedroom, and one bedroom was let out for the, for the, for the boarder, like. Uh, the housing was awful tight so they had to squeeze in as much as they could to the bedroom someplace for to sleep, or to live. And any, any woman or any, they have this boarding that she keep working and feeding these two workers. Well, Mother had two of them herself—four, four boarders. There was one bedroom, about four, four workers. Two, two were working days, and two were working nights. (Ms. Cash comments off mic) When, when one got off the bed, another come in. (he laughs) And take the

bed, to sleep. That's how it was.

LEVINE: Who were these...

STACHURSKI: In those days it was, uh, ten hours, some men worked twelve hours a day while most of them worked ten hours in six days. Yes.

LEVINE: Were the boarders people who had come from Europe?

STACHURSKI: The boarders, they used to be from Poland. There was one Russian, one Russian was. It was later on then, not. So when, uh, they, there was no room for me at all when I come. You see how it was filled. I, I didn't met, Father was at work, and all I meet is, uh, is Mother with the, talk a little with her, but she didn't have much time to talk about it. Ah, a little bit about how did you come, how's the travel. I didn't even have much time to tell her, because she was so busy working. And, uh, what am I going to do? I see, when I come, over there I was all alone, and right here I feel I have no home, no job. Too, I was too, too young go to work because in those days there was strictly, you've got to be eighteen until you get a job. So, yeah. And too young to go to school to learn the language. No home, no language, no work. I was so disgusted for a while that I, I says, I thought to myself, "I am sorry I left it." (he laughs) I higher back over there. Yet, no. Finally later on there was, my sister and brother was away from there. I didn't see them. They was in a little town called Perry, New York. So, they, I was suggested send to Perry, New York. There was a cotton mill that, uh, anybody that not

allowed to go get a job, too young, so he could work in that cotton mill no matter the young ones working with the knits. Yeah. So I only, I did met my, my sister, uh, for a very short time, because, uh, Father sent for her to come to, to Depew, to Depew, New York. This was in Perry. There was a man, uh, by the name Malkiewich, he wanted to marry, that she married this man later. I suppose Father makes a little arrangement for that somehow. So, so my, Victoria, my sister, left for Depew, and, uh, my brother Amil, when he came, he had no job. It was a poor time at those times for a job. There was no job. And he was working on a farm someplace, and when I came to Perry, New York, I met him, uh, for a short time, uh, with him. He sort of will help me to re-dress, buy something, whatever I need. Not very much, explain a little bit, and then he left, also, quick. And then I left all by myself again, all the time. Yeah. So, uh . . .

LEVINE: What was it like to see your father when you finally met him? What was it like to see your father again?

STACHURSKI: Well, my father, he was, he wasn't, uh, he didn't, he wasn't very enthusiasm, I suppose. He had no place to put me, to keep me. Uh, he didn't, he talk a little bit, not much, to me, and only I was suggested, and they help me, they arrange for me to live and go to my brother and sister there. So that's how I got to Perry, New York.

CASH: He worked in the foundry, his father.

STACHURSKI: That's where I first, uh, started working, in that cotton mill, and lived there for
—

CASH: What kind of work did Grandpa do?

STACHURSKI: Uh, Grandpa was, no, not Grandpa. My father was a blacksmith helper. Those, those days was mostly foundries, foundries, companies were foundries and car shops. So he, so he was with one of the companies, uh, that, uh, they had a blacksmith, and he, he was helping. He knew a little bit, because he, he, when he, one time he placed me with my Christening father when I was very young. He was a blacksmith also. I was too young, but I was working with, with him. So at that time he see a little bit about the blacksmith. One day ask him when he applied for the, for the job. He says he can help blacksmith. He's a helper, blacksmith helper.

CASH: How much an hour did your dad get?

STACHURSKI: Oh, dad, dad got, uh, a raise. The rate was fifteen cents an hour at that time, and father got a raise, one penny. He got sixteen cents an hour. And I worked, when I went to the Perry, New York, I started to work, they were, somebody pay, I don't, I can't tell you even now, who paid for me, I couldn't see. Nobody hire you. I was eager to find somebody tell me what to do. No, they just tell, they disturbed me, and, just like this is, "Go over there, do what you can." That's all. So I, I've been there doing what the others do, showing, try to do. I was making five, uh, I was working five days, ten hours a day,

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and on Saturday it was, uh, it was a half a day, sixth day it was half a day. So these five days I had a dollar a day, ten cents an hour. A dollar a day. And that was five dollars, and on Saturday supposed to get fifty cents, because it was after. So they only give me twenty-five cents. All I have is five dollars and twenty-five cents a week. How I stayed there, I don't know. (he laughs) It's quite a while in there.

LEVINE: Where did you live? Where did you live?

STACHURSKI: They, I say they because . . .

CASH: Where did you live?

STACHURSKI: They, nobody, nobody tell me anything what to do, where to do. Somebody arrange for me to go, where to go. I suppose someone knows, and there was a boarding house. They, someone sent me over there. There was a farmhouse, a big farmhouse, European country, Austrian. There was an Austrian woman boarding. She had girls and a couple of, a couple of men in there. That was an old house with a lot of bedrooms, a little bit of small bedrooms. So I had one of them. And, uh, somebody paid, paid me five dollars, uh, her, to board me. I paid three dollars a week for this board, and I have, I have this two dollars and a quarter left for, well, to buy, whatever, shoes, or whatever it is. Yeah. So I wait for quite a while. That's where I, I met, I was already, well, not quite a year when, when the little girl, uh, Helen Szwierzaski, Szwierzaska .

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LEVINE: Can you spell her name?

STACHURSKI: That was my, that was my future life, it was then. (he laughs)

LEVINE: Spell Helen's maiden name.

STACHURSKI: Huh?

LEVINE: Spell Helen's maiden name, your wife's maiden name. How do you spell it?

STACHURSKI: Uh, she was Victoria . . .

CASH: No.

STACHURSKI: My wife. She was, uh, Helena.

LEVINE: Helen.

STACHURSKI: Szwierzaska.

LEVINE: Can you spell Szwierzaska?

STACHURSKI: Uh, I can't, Szwierzaska. I can spell it, I'll tell you, you're going to have to write it down. I . . .

CASH: He can't write. He can't see to write. I can write it. (she writes) It's an S. (she writes) He can't see, though. It's hard for him to see.

LEVINE: Okay. So, tell me, when you first met Helen, where did you see her?

STACHURSKI: Where I first see her?

LEVINE: Yeah.

STACHURSKI: She was working in, in one of these same mills were that I was. I see all the people that work in this here, just like . . .

CASH: You did it right. Szwierzaska.

STACHURSKI: The Polish, mostly Polish, uh, people. They almost have to, because nobody understand a word, uh, of American word, so they kind of keep together, and, uh, then once in a while, uh, one of them that came maybe a couple of years before, well, maybe he knew a few words, so they usually ask him for, for something. Yeah.

LEVINE: So what did you think when you first met Helen?

STACHURSKI: I was, I was, that's how she got, when, when she came, uh, there was a group of, because she came, uh, ten, I was over there in nine.

CASH: Five.

STACHURSKI: 509. And, uh, and she came, uh, in five, in 510. A group of people, new people, coming, uh, there was a few of them, and I noticed her, she was so kind and so nicely dressed, because her story was not very good on the boat again. She was very, very ill. Uh, so at New York they, they, uh, burned all

the clothes. They didn't, they dressed her very nicely. She was so clean and nicely. That's how I noticed her. I says, "By golly, that's a nice girl. Oh, how nice!" Those are years and years. I seen her, and I kind of remember her. I was at, most of it, then she noticed that, I noticed her, and she noticed me when, I was in a band, playing in a band. You know, we formed a band in there, joint, and at the Christmas time, uh, we as a musician, we go caroling from house to house, and, like this, and I, I was the one that had a very good voice at that time, and sang the Christmas songs, which I knew a good few of them. Mostly the Polish people in there, and some Slavic, some Slavics. They understand as well, just a little bit different than regular Poland people. Yeah. So she noticed, she noticed me. They kind of dressed me, uh, when they're caroling, they dressed me as an angel, an angel, in a white, uh, long, and fixed, uh . . .

LEVINE: Wings?

STACHURSKI: Wings on my back. They made the best. And she kind of liked me and was talking so much all about me. From then on we knew kind of, she knew me and I know her. Sometimes the girl says, "Oh, this was . . ." They was joking, jokingly, you know "Oh, that's my, that's my angel. That's my angel." Because . . . (Ms. Cash comments off mic) Yeah. So that Helen, she says, "No, my angel, that's my angel." (Dr. Levine laughs) And, by golly, it did happen that I was her angel. It was, uh, four, it was four years like this here before, before we got, uh, I'd been, I'd been in Perry and then go to Depew,

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looking all the time, trying to get a better job, and couldn't get it there, and, uh, coming back again. And when it was four years ago, one time, I call Helen. This all, uh, before that once in a while we, we walked together to town. It was a nice little town, clean. Something like ours.

CASH: Like Epex?

STACHURSKI: Yeah. (he laughs) Uh, and, uh, go to show. Show was, cost a nickel at that time, so . . . (Ms. Cash comments off mic) So we go to show sometime, and ice cream cone. Ice cream, this was also a nickel or something, or chocolates or something was ten cents maybe, eight cents. Yeah. And, uh, we never, we never associate too close, never, until it was time after four years I says, "Helen, we, we knew each other for so long, and I love you so much, and you try to love me, and we're gonna get married." I says, "You think it over. You don't have to tell right away," I says. "No," she says, "yes." She was alone, too. She had no, she had a sister also, just like I had a sister, but her mother, uh, took her older sister away and left her alone just like my father left me alone. And, uh, so she had nobody in there. She didn't have much to think. Her mother, her mother didn't like me. She didn't. She didn't expect, accept me, as a, as a son-in-law.

LEVINE: Why was that? Why didn't' she like you?

STACHURSKI: I don't know. I didn't, I didn't even, I didn't know her at all. But, uh . . .

CASH: It was because she already had found a husband for your, for Helen. Kraw—

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... She was looking. She had a husband for, Jan, was it Jan?

STACHURSKI: Well, they all, all, her older sister, she took, uh, quite a long time ago from Paris, and marry her, in Pennsylvania, Oil City, Pennsylvania.

CASH: And she also had a boyfriend for, for Helen. Babka had a boyfriend for Helen.

STACHURSKI: Oh, yeah.

CASH: Well, that's why she didn't like you.

STACHURSKI: Oh, yes.

CASH: Because you didn't have any money.

STACHURSKI: Oh, yes, she was. But she hated, she refused . . .

CASH: She hated me, too, so.

STACHURSKI: That's right. That's why she hated me, on account that she knew that I was going with Helen and, uh, she was trying to, to marry her for, for another man that he have some money. I didn't have money at that time, no money whatsoever.

CASH: I don't know why.

STACHURSKI: So that's why she says she didn't like me.

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LEVINE: So were you and Helen, you were still working in the, um, in the . . .

CASH: Cotton mill.

LEVINE: Cotton mill. You and Helen were working in the cotton mill.

STACHURSKI: Yes.

LEVINE: When you got married.

STACHURSKI: Yes. After, yeah, we were married, we both worked for a long time in the cotton mill. Yeah. She was working there all the time in the cotton— I was just partly when I get, I took a train, which is, was, uh, I don't know, forty miles, I think it was. You had to go by train from, from, uh, Perry, from Perry to Depew, New York, to my father, to see, and not only my father, trying to getting a good job, something in a factory, or someplace, a better paying job. But, uh, no. I didn't do. So I returned back again to Perry, and I worked in Perry.

CASH: That's where I was born, my brother and I, the two children.

LEVINE: So you, did you get raise? Did you stay at the cotton mill? How long did you stay at the cotton mill?

STACHURSKI: I wasn't steady. I was, I was the, uh, working in, just like I told you, there was nobody to talk to, nobody hire me. Hire you, you could come and work, if you work, you get paid. Somebody, you never see nobody. And if you don't, if

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you want to, if I went away, well, I went away. I don't know, I guess they stopped paying to somebody. Yeah.

CASH: You worked in a steel factory. Steel. That's where you hurt your eye.

STACHURSKI: Oh, yes. I tried another, I tried another job. And then there was, uh, in Perry, New York, there was another company. There was just these two companies, the knit mill and, uh, and a, uh, and a, what you call, uh . . .

CASH: Foundry?

STACHURSKI: No, no, not foundry. But, uh . . .

CASH: Steel? Steel?

STACHURSKI: Uh, couldn't, I couldn't say exactly.

CASH: What did you make there?

STACHURSKI: Uh, they make cutlery company.

CASH: A steel company.

STACHURSKI: That make, uh, all kinds of knives.

CASH: It's a steel company.

STACHURSKI: So I started to work, uh, on, like the, uh, make the pocket knife, you know, knife. Uh, you had a, at home I had to do by hand. Down there at that cotton

mill they have a factory that wheels running in a big strip that you work this strip, and the big hammer was, was pounding on the knife to shape up, because there was a cotton rope, something like that. But I wasn't, uh, much on that, because somehow the other people was, uh, they put me on a punching pass. I work on that a little bit, on that machine and had, I suppose I didn't do so good, whatever. So I was on a punching, uh, punch holes in a brass or in a, in a fish-bones, they make for pocket knives, you know, and even for, uh, for kitchen, big knives, you know? I even make one knife up there, a good steel knife. And there was a silver, a silver . . .

CASH: Handle.

STACHURSKI: Different kind, cheaper silver, it was. It was a handle, a silver handle. But I, you remember that knife.

CASH: I've got that knife.

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE TWO BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

STACHURSKI: Yeah, it's still in there. (laughs) Yeah. But, on that punch place, that was my darkest day of my, of my, I don't know if I say life.

CASH: Life. Yeah, I guess so.

STACHURSKI: Though, because, I can't say it, but it was a very, very dark cloud. That very tiny, uh . . .

CASH: Scrap.

STACHURSKI: Material, dress material, struck me right in the pupil, and only in my right, my right eye. So, uh, well, I was going until my eye almost got, uh, before it got, uh, white, you know, it would have. So the company pay, paid the hospital. The other man helped me, you know, some other man helped me. They, the doctor, I used to remember his name for a long, long time, he pulled that metal out, but when he pulled out, at the same time he tore, he tore the thing that . . . (Ms. Cash comments off mic) I lost, I lost. I never see nothing, just like, uh, a person would see through the frosted glass, see nothing.

CASH: Right.

STACHURSKI: Just the light. Uh, one eye, my left eye, was serving me all through the rest of my life.

LEVINE: Did you . . .

STACHURSKI: That was my very darkest day.

LEVINE: Did you keep working, or did you stop working then?

STACHURSKI: After, after that, uh, I, I went back, and worked again yet for a while in Perry, until, until, uh, until I married, we married, and then I, I left, left Perry. Let's see how it is, uh, for Depew again. There was a man I know, uh, well, I know, he was a Polish man. He used to know the paintings, some

decorating painting, wallpapering.

CASH: You worked someplace electrical. When was that, electrical, out in a factory?

STACHURSKI: Oh, that was, that's right. That was, that was before . . .

CASH: Yeah.

STACHURSKI: Before that, yeah, when I went, that's right. When I left Perry I went back to the, to the, uh, to, uh, to Depew. I, uh, somehow, uh, they got a job that I don't remember how I ever, uh, got the job. There was a man, uh, I'll never forget his name, Tom O'Hara. Yeah. He was so good to me. He, he showed me how to, uh, how to, uh, work on a, on a light, on lamps. Uh, well, uh, the lamps with the same Gould Company where I landed when I told you I didn't know which way to go. That was that time, I returned to that. And, uh, he showed me how to work, these lamps was twenty yards, a great, big yard, because it was a very big company, and, uh, this, uh, tall, uh, electrical poles, uh, each went so far, had a light. The carbon, like this here. Why, we had to know how to adjust them, if you, so you don't, just like on your automobile contact. That was the idea. I had to, when he learned me, when he teached me how to do it, which I pick up very quick, anything, then he left it to me. He showed me, he showed me to take care of this light for the whole, uh, yard. In the foundry, even, in the foundry when a man was, uh, molders, working. They had this lamp, lamps hanging on this when he was

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working on a bench, you know. I even, fixing any kind of a lamp, he showed me. Uh, so I was prepared, uh, with a belt and my tools and climbed the poles, fixing the light. And I was, uh, showed which, which line is what, and where is the switch. There was a powerhouse, oh, quite a ways, where the big, uh, generators was working in there. There was all the switches in there, electrical switches in there. He showed me which switch is for what, to these lights, you know? Well, I quick remembered, and he told me, "When you work, you come and pull the switch out and hang the sign, hangs off." (he laughs) I do that carefully, I do that, I remember. I fixed these lights, I don't like this here. I gotta remember go work put the lights, don't keep, work through the foundry, also. And then, uh, these molders pull out the strike, and, uh, they're striking for the, for the better, better work, working hours, and better pay.

CASH: They were forming a union.

STACHURSKI: No, at that time . . .

CASH: Not at that time.

STACHURSKI: At that time I was, I was in the union. This, all these molders was union. The whole thing was union. And I wasn't, was not in union at that, so that, that master mechanic, O'Hara, he told me, he says, "You come in. Never mind the stop." I says, "They stopping me, they won't let me in through the gate." He says, "Don't mind them. Climb the fence," he says. He knew how good

climber I was. (he laughs) "And, and come in," he says. "I teach you everything about electric." And he did show me quite a lot. All through my life I never need electrician. I fix all my, a good many buildings I had, I didn't need. So, anyway, the strike was on. I could climb that fence. The fence was tall, and raggedy. You know how it could tear you to pieces in there. And they wouldn't let me in. The strike was on almost six months. And, uh, I couldn't stand there anymore. I had no, no, nothing to pay with, no money any more. I run out of the money. But I make a little at that time. And, uh, I went back to, to Perry, New York, still injured with that eye. When we were married, I, it's, my conscience is still not clear. [tapping] I didn't explain to my, my future wife, uh, what I. But she kind of heard it, that I am a man only with one eye, and she married. Yeah. So she kind of knew on this eyes, like this here, but I didn't tell her. Later on she knew openly. Well, I, it was my hard, hard struggle through, with all, I never could get a good job because doctor won't pass me examination for the eyesight. So when I met that European man one time in Depew that I started to tell you, he was a decorator like this here, well, he was working by himself in, I, somehow I knew him. Dominick, Dominick, his name was. Uh, well, he says, Dominick, whatever you, you want to help you on the pasting the paper. You know, he had the table. I helping pasting the paper, I was pretty good at it right quick. So right then he see that it's good, so I work with him. I prepare the papers, and he was hanging the papers. Well, I catch up right away and do all myself paper and painting. And from then on it was my trade.

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LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. So how many children did you have?

STACHURSKI: Two, and only one.

LEVINE: What are their names?

STACHURSKI: This, this angel now, and another, and my son, uh, who lives in, uh, what you, in, uh . . .

CASH: Detroit.

STACHURSKI: Michigan.

CASH: Detroit, Michigan.

STACHURSKI: Detroit, yeah, in Detroit.

LEVINE: And what's your son's name?

STACHURSKI: He's J.J., he call himself. He was, he was christened Zdzisław.

CASH: A Polish name.

STACHURSKI: Zdzisław. I like that name. It's a, it's a very nice Catholic and Polish name, Polish name.

LEVINE: How do you spell Zdzisław?

STACHURSKI: , Zdzisław it's kind of, uh, Z-D, no.

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CASH: Z-D.

STACHURSKI: G . . .

CASH: Z-D-I-S. Z-D, let's see.

STACHURSKI: It's a . . .

CASH: I-S-L-E-W.

STACHURSKI: It's a translation. It's a different letters.

CASH: Yeah.

STACHURSKI: A different name.

LEVINE: And your daughter's name? Your daughter's name?

CASH: Janina.

STACHURSKI: Janina Stachurska and Zdzisław Stachurski.

CASH: They call me Jean, now I'm Jean.

LEVINE: So Jan, how would you spell that? Y . . .

CASH: J-A-N-I-N-A. See, it's got that little N . . .

LEVINE: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh. And do you have grandchildren?

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STACHURSKI: Oh, yes, I have four. Four grandchildren.

CASH: My children.

STACHURSKI: Jean has three, and my brother . . .

CASH: No, your son, your son. Your son, not your brother.

STACHURSKI: Huh? Oh, my son. I get somehow mixed up.

CASH: Well, you've been talking I don't know how many hours. This lady here has got a lot of patience.

LEVINE: Well, this is wonderful. So you have, and do you have great-grandchildren?

STACHURSKI: Uh . . .

CASH: Yes.

STACHURSKI: My son's daughter has no children at all. And, and . . .

CASH: That's your grandchildren.

STACHURSKI: The grandchildren.

CASH: Dale Anne.

STACHURSKI: Has no grandchildren.

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CASH: Yeah, Dale Anne is your grandchild.

LEVINE: Well, we're saying now great-grandchildren.

CASH: Oh, great.

STACHURSKI: Oh, grand, oh, she's a grand, granddaughter, oh, yeah. My . . .

CASH: No.

LEVINE: You have grandchildren.

STACHURSKI: My son has a one grand, grand . . .

CASH: Granddaughter.

LEVINE: So you have grandchildren and children. Now, um, what do you feel proudest of that you did in your life? What makes you feel very proud when you think of it?

CASH: Existence.

STACHURSKI: Uh, how, how do I feel as a father?

LEVINE: What makes you feel satisfied about your life, something you've done, or something about your life that makes you feel very satisfied?

STACHURSKI: Well, makes me satisfied. After we, after we married, I sort of settled, settled and started to, started building a new life, like. I always struggled, she

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worked quite a while in a, in a mill, you know, a cotton mill, and I was doing all different kind of jobs when I was, uh, wasn't allowed in no places. Even on the railroad I work, in the steel, steel mills, and, uh, all, all kinds of different, different . . .

CASH: I don't think he understood you.

LEVINE: Yeah.

CASH: He didn't understand you.

STACHURSKI: And that was, I run away from, from the, I get lost now. I didn't finish my question.

LEVINE: Well, let me start another way. Um, you started out in Poland, and you were there till you were sixteen, then you came to this country.

STACHURSKI: Oh, yeah, oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: How did that make a difference to you, do you think, starting out the way you did, and then coming here for a new life?

CASH: I don't think he understands.

STACHURSKI: Well, uh . . .

CASH: What makes you the most pleased?

STACHURSKI: The different, the difference was the only thing was I have my wife, mine, that I got rid of the slavery, like I call it, in Poland, and this is the free country for me, because it, I was told all the time what it was, and that's why I came here, and I accepted it, and I feel good that I, that I came.

LEVINE: And what makes you feel very good about your life, after you came here? What makes you pleased that you did? What makes you feel satisfied or proud?

STACHURSKI: Well, after I, I came, oh . . .

CASH: I don't think he understood that.

STACHURSKI: Those, those make sure I used to like that, uh, life, good for your life in Perry, New York, while being, up to fourteen, up from, from five to fourteen (he coughs) but really now [gap] up there, uh, my only, mind was thinking always how, I didn't have a very, good, I, I couldn't make enough to make a good, a good home for my wife and me and myself. Uh, being separated, many times she worked different, I was different. Then the war coming, to put me out of, that I had to work on government jobs during the first war and the second war. That was, that was different. It, my life, my life was such a, such a tear up, such a mixed up, that I can't, I can't really distinguish that settle, settle in one place and have everything, just always thinking to, to, to gain somehow and to work, to make better, a better living in my life.

CASH: I think I can answer that question for you. She asked what is most satisfying.

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STACHURSKI: Yeah, maybe you understand more.

CASH: Yeah. That you finally found somebody that really loves you.

STACHURSKI: Oh . . .

CASH: Your wife. You were looking for somebody. Your father loved you but he didn't have time.

STACHURSKI: Oh, yes.

CASH: Your mother died. And I think that's what mostly satisfied you, that you found a home in America.

STACHURSKI: Well, I . . .

CASH: And found a love.

STACHURSKI: Well, I thought some that think way before . . .

CASH: Well, but she asked you a question now.

STACHURSKI: But I didn't really finish. I was very, my life, happy life that I have the companion.

CASH: That's what satisfied him most.

STACHURSKI: With me, and help.

CASH: That somebody loved him.

LEVINE: Yeah. Uh-huh.

CASH: You know, he was pushed around. Love but, you know, secondhand love.

LEVINE: How about heroes? Did you have any heroes in your life, people you looked up to, people you admired? Is there anybody that you can think of that you, that you thought was just a wonderful person that you looked up to?

CASH: He had no time. Work all the time. *Jezus aby.*

STACHURSKI: Not, not much. I had, I thought many times of a father just in case, well, if I have no place to go, but I never did go and ask him for anything or do. I had in mind, but not . . .

CASH: Tell the lady, Daddy, that people at that time when you were young, had no heroes. There were no heroes. All there was was a punch, time clock, and you worked from morning till night. That's what most people did. There were no heroes like we have now. There were none. That's what they want to know, really, in history. There was no heroes. People have heroes now; they've got time, television. They had nothing.

LEVINE: How about this time in your life, in your old age? How is this time in your life?

STACHURSKI: This time? Wonderful, good. Good, being, uh, when I come, when, uh, daughter came and asked me to come, to come live with her because, "You're getting old, you're getting old, you better come and live together for a little while before, before you'll be gone." Well, at first, I know that she's just, I'm, I ask her to come stay with us many times, you know, but I didn't. I wasn't too strong on it. I know she had to build her own life, so, uh, when she came that time she says come to live. "Well," I says, "well, all right." I ask, I ask her to come live with us. There is room and plenty to eat. Those days there was. We was pretty well fixed at that time. But, anyway, we was, way it was, she was separately. So when she says to come I make up my mind. Life, by then, life was kind of getting this mental, uh, troubles.

CASH: Yeah, and it was your hip, your hip.

STACHURSKI: And, uh, and I came, I was thinking of that, Jean, too. When you come to get me, I was just about to make up with another woman that she was going to Chicago to have this, uh, replace, replaced. And I was just about, when you asked me, I says, "Well, never mind it. I go with you." I didn't know that, that I'm going to do this with you.

CASH: But I did.

STACHURSKI: I says, well, maybe I'm going to find someone, or maybe I'm going to do. I was very badly hit with osteoarthritis in my hip. Hip, and all over. It still would be, I can't get rid of it at night, and many times at day, even. But I fight

it out all the time. I won't let it settle. I push it away, and that's how I keep it away.

CASH: So at ninety he had his one hip replaced, ninety-one he had the other hip replaced.

STACHURSKI: Yeah. So, anyway, when I, when I come, I made a different, a different life.
(Ms. Cash comments off mic)

LEVINE: Yeah. Well, to what do you attribute your wonderful old age? To what do you attribute the fact that you're living longer than most people?

STACHURSKI: Well, I had a good memory, my family, with Helen, that we, we, uh, been together and traveled through a few states.

CASH: He didn't understand you.

STACHURSKI: And go, I was very much, that was my good, good life.

LEVINE: You had a good life.

CASH: She wants to know why are you living so long. What, why are you living so long.

STACHURSKI: Why am I living so long? After I have, uh, three, three operation at one time with my hip and at the same time a hernia I had fixed, I says, "Do it while I'm there." And, uh, and some, and some other . . .

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CASH: That's not why you're living that long.

STACHURSKI: I got lost.

CASH: You worked hard. Hard work is why you're living so long. Right? Hard work?

STACHURSKI: Hard, oh . . .

LEVINE: Do you have a sense of why you've lived so long, why you've had such a long life?

STACHURSKI: Yes, yes. After I was fixed, kind of fixed, then I started exercises. I contribute this so very much to it.

CASH: That's right.

STACHURSKI: Exercises. This arthritic things, at first a little pushed me into it. But I tried the chiropractors and stuff, they didn't do. They, uh, then when I, after they fixed, being fixed, I started exercises. I didn't leave. And the other day I had to have, help myself. And so, and so I've been exercising even today if you see me, I'll be exercising.

LEVINE: Well, I think that's a good place to stop. I want to thank you so much. It's really a pleasure. You're an inspiration. Thank you. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm signing out.