

**EI- 689**

**FRANK SZCESIUŁ**

**BIRTHDATE: JANUARY 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1894**

**INTERVIEW DATE: OCTOBER 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995**

**AGE AT TIME: 102**

**RUNNING TIME: 49:20**

**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE, PH.D.**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: SAME**

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: HALLIE BORSTEL**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**POLAND, 1911**

**AGE: 17 YEARS OLD**

**SHIP:**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES**

**POLAND: WOJNACHY, SOKÓŁKA**

**US: NEW YORK, NY; NAUGATUCK, CT; AKRON, OH**

LEVINE: Well let's just try. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and I'm here in Naugatuck, Connecticut today. It's October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1995 and I'm here with Frank Szcesiuł.

SZCESIUŁ: Szcesiuł.

LEVINE: Szcesiuł. Szcesiuł. Who came from Poland. We're not exactly sure what year, but maybe this will come back as you're talking about it. Mr. Szcesiuł is 102 years old and we're not sure exactly of his birth date but we'll fill that in later. So let's just start and tell me again where in Poland in were born.

SZCESIUŁ: Wojnachy.

LEVINE: Did you live in Wojnachy up until you left to come to America?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Was it a big town, was it a city?

SZCESIUŁ: Town.

LEVINE: A town.

SZCESIUŁ: A [not understood]. A village.

LEVINE: A village.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And can you describe it? What was it like?

SZCESIUŁ: Well [long pause] It was village, little [not understood].

LEVINE: When you went out on the street were there any shops?

SZCESIUŁ: No.

LEVINE: No stores? Was there a bakery?

SZCESIUŁ: A bakery, yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember going to the bakery?

SZCESIUL: [not understood]

LEVINE: I'm sorry, say that again?

SZCESIUL: Bread.

LEVINE: Oh, you went to get the bread? Uh-huh. And was there any other store besides the bakery?

SZCESIUL: No.

LEVINE: Do you remember clothing? How did you get your clothing? Where did you go to get your clothing?

SZCESIUL: Uh, go to a town.

LEVINE: Oh, you went to a town. Do you know what the nearest town was?

SZCESIUL: [pause] The name was Sokółka. Sokółka.

LEVINE: Sokółka?

SZCESIUL: Sokółka.

LEVINE: Sokółka. Would that be like S-O-K--?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Sokółka. O-L-K-A? Sokółka?

SZCESIUL: Uh.

LEVINE: No?

SZCESIUŁ: I got sick [clock chimes]. Well, I [long pause].

LEVINE: We'll wait till this thing's—You said you got sick? When?

SZCESIUŁ: Uh, well. About a year ago.

LEVINE: Oh, about a year ago.

SZCESIUŁ: I went [long pause] [not understood].

LEVINE: Let's talk first about when you were a little boy. We'll work our way up till now. But when you were a little boy, what did you do when you were in Poland?

SZCESIUŁ: [long pause, mumbles] [coughing]

LEVINE: Did you have any--?

SZCESIUŁ: [Superposed] I can't say.

LEVINE: Did you have jobs? Did you have any things you did for work?

SZCESIUŁ: [Superposed] No.

LEVINE: When you were in Poland?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] I took care of the cattle.

LEVINE: Oh, you took care of the cattle. Whose cattle was it?

SZCESIUŁ: Ours.

LEVINE: Your father?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: And your family had cattle?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh.

SZCESIUŁ: [Superposed] Cows.

LEVINE: Cows.

SZCESIUŁ: Horses.

LEVINE: Horses. [pause] And what would you do? Just describe like a day. You get up in the morning and what would you go and do?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah, we got up and go out to the pasture.

LEVINE: Go out to the pasture. Yeah.

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] Pasture. [not understood] Lock, unlock.

LEVINE: You would unlock the gate? Or lock the gate?

SZCESIUL: Night.

LEVINE: At night.

SZCESIUL: Yeah. Unlock. Seven o'clock.

LEVINE: That's when you'd bring them back?

SZCESIUL: [not understood]

LEVINE: And what would you—

SZCESIUL: [superposed] I milk the cows.

LEVINE: You milked them.

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: In the morning? And then you took them out? To pasture?

SZCESIUL: About eleven o'clock.

LEVINE: Then you'd take them—where would you take them?

SZCESIUL: The pasture.

LEVINE: [superposed] Roaming around.

SZCESIUL: [pause] I didn't do nothing.

LEVINE: (laughs) You didn't do anything? You just sit and—

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood]. Rye. Oats. [pause] And that's it. That's all.

LEVINE: Now the rye and the oats, were they growing or were they already cut?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah, they grow.

LEVINE: So they would graze on the rye and the oats?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah, they grow.

LEVINE: How many heads of cattle did you take out—

SZCESIUŁ: Our own.

LEVINE: to pasture?

SZCESIUŁ: [long pause] Uh, I take care of my own. Coup -- couple of cows. [pause]

LEVINE: So in other words, your family had couple of cows.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then would you take other peoples' cows too?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah, I -- I did.

LEVINE: So all together, how many cows would you be taking out?

SZCESIUŁ: Our four. [pause] My own four. [pause] We had--one, two.

LEVINE: So that's six.

SZCESIUŁ: Three. Three from down the [not understood]. Neighbors.

LEVINE: So you'd take out your cows and a couple of neighbors' cows.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: I see. And like when you would be there all day, was that fun for you? Or was it boring? Or was it—

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] They pay so much a year.

LEVINE: They paid so much a year. And they paid that to you?

SZCESIUŁ: They pay my father.

LEVINE: Oh, they paid your father. What was your father's name?

SZCESIUŁ: Joseph.

LEVINE: Joseph. And your mother's name?

SZCESIUŁ: [long pause] Anna.

LEVINE: Oh, A-D-A. Ada.

SZCESIUŁ: Anna.

LEVINE: Anna.

SZCESIUŁ: Anna.

LEVINE: Oh, Anna. Uh-huh. Do you by any chance remember her maiden name?  
Her name before she married your father? Her last name?

SZCESIUŁ: Her name was Saviski [ph].

LEVINE: Could you spell that?

SZCESIUŁ: S [pause].

LEVINE: No? Stavis—say it again, maybe I can spell it.

SZCESIUŁ: Saviski.

LEVINE: Saviski.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Ok. Anna Saviski was your mother's maiden name.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. What was your mother like? How do you remember your mother  
from when you were a little boy?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] [not understood] what I could say about it.

LEVINE: Was she a—

SZCESIUŁ: A lot of words.

LEVINE: Different worlds.

SZCESIUL: No. Words.

LEVINE: I'm sorry. Could you—

SZCESIUL: Words.

LEVINE: I'm sorry, could you try me again? Say it again? I didn't catch it.

SZCESIUL: [not understood] [pause]

LEVINE: [not understood] This is your mother?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Your mother? Did your mother have a lot of brothers and sisters?

SZCESIUL: Oh [not understood].

LEVINE: Do you remember any of them? Did they live nearby?

SZCESIUL: I can't tell you anything.

LEVINE: OK.

SZCESIUL: You think—you forget.

LEVINE: Yeah. But sometimes when you start talking about it things come back and you can recall the old days and what things were like back then—

SZCESIUŁ: I know. I can before. [not understood]

LEVINE: Well this may help you. If you can just sort of shake up your memory a little bit it may make you feel better.

SZCESIUŁ: I know.

LEVINE: How about grandparents? Do you remember any grandmothers or grandfathers?

SZCESIUŁ: I -- I couldn't tell you anything. I can't [pause].

LEVINE: Well you remembered taking—

SZCESIUŁ: One, same -- same name.

LEVINE: Oh, the same name. Yeah.

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood] Ma -- Maciej. (breathes in) That's the first name, Maciej.

LEVINE: Margie?

SZCESIUŁ: Maciej.

LEVINE: Motsy.

SZCESIUŁ: Maciej.

LEVINE: Maciej. That was your grandmother's?

SZCESIUL: My -- my father. My – my grandfather.

LEVINE: Oh, your grandfather. That was his first name?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Maciej? Uh-huh. And what did he do? Do you remember what he did for work?

SZCESIUL: On the farm.

LEVINE: Oh, he was on the farm too. On the farm was it always cattle? Or did you grow other things too?

SZCESIUL: Rye and wheat. Everything -- potatoes.

LEVINE: Potatoes.

SZCESIUL: That's all.

LEVINE: Do you remember any dishes that your mother or your grandmother made? Any kind of food that you used to like when you were a little boy?

SZCESIUL: [long pause] I don't know not the name. I don't know the name.

LEVINE: But what was in it? Do you remember what it was made out of?

SZCESIUL: Potatoes.

LEVINE: Potatoes.

SZCESIUŁ: Onions.

LEVINE: Onions.

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood]

LEVINE: What were some of the other things—can you remember anything else that your mother put in that dish?

SZCESIUŁ: Uh [long pause] uh.

LEVINE: Where you a religious family?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: What religion?

SZCESIUŁ: Catholic.

LEVINE: Catholic religion. Was there a church in your village?

SZCESIUŁ: About three miles. [not understood] South.

LEVINE: You'd go south about three miles?

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood] [long pause] On this way I can't – I can't.

LEVINE: Do you remember—would you walk to church?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Do you remember anything you passed along the way? When you left your house, and you were leaving to go to church, what would you pass by on the way?

SZCESIUŁ: Pasture.

LEVINE: Ok. Did you ever ride the horses?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah. [pause] Pastures. In the pastures.

LEVINE: When would you ride them? Why would you ride the horse instead of—

SZCESIUŁ: Sunday. Sunday.

LEVINE: On Sunday you'd ride the horse? To go to church?

SZCESIUŁ: Sometimes, yeah.

LEVINE: Sometimes to go to church. And other times just for enjoyment, you would ride it?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Mhm. Did you have brothers and sisters?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: How many?

SZCESIUŁ: [long pause] Oh, one brother, [pause] three sisters.

LEVINE: And where were you? Where you the oldest, or were you in the—

SZCESIUL: I'm the oldest.

LEVINE: You're the oldest one. Uh-huh. And then who came next?

SZCESIUL: Sister.

LEVINE: Sister. [pause] And who was the baby?

SZCESIUL: [pause] Sister was the baby.

LEVINE: What was that sister's name?

SZCESIUL: [pause] Stella.

LEVINE: Stella? Do you remember when Stella was born? [pause] Do you remember that? Did all your sisters and your brothers come to the United States, too?

SZCESIUL: No.

LEVINE: Who came here?

SZCESIUL: By myself.

LEVINE: You came by yourself?

SZCESIUL: [not understood] Lots of people.

LEVINE: I'm sorry, say that again?

SZCESIUŁ: Lots of people.

LEVINE: With other people, you came. Why was it that you came and none of the others?

SZCESIUŁ: I could make money. And help. My father. We--

LEVINE: You came here to make money to help your father to live. And so you must have been already a young man by the time you left. Yeah. And had you done—up until the time you left, you were taking the cattle out to pasture, that was your job? And how did you know about America? Who told you about it?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] I just read paper.

LEVINE: In the newspaper? Do you remember what you thought, why you decided to come here?

SZCESIUŁ: It was my father. [not understood]

LEVINE: Oh, so your father decided—that you should go. And he gave you the money to get the ticket.

SZCESIUŁ: I sent it back by the letter.

LEVINE: Oh, you sent it back by letter, what he had loaned to you to come here. Well, when you were leaving Poland, how did you get from your little town of Wojnachy—how did you get from there—

SZCESIUŁ: That's about a hundred, a hundred houses.

LEVINE: A hundred houses. Wow. So that was really a village, I guess you'd call it.

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] Yeah.

LEVINE: And do you remember the house you lived in?

SZCESIUŁ: [long pause] [not understood] Skin off.

LEVINE: Take the skin off?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: I'm not sure, are you talking about your house now?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. What do you mean, "take the skin off"?

SZCESIUŁ: [long pause, mumble]

LEVINE: Was your house made out of stone or wood?

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] No, wood.

LEVINE: Wood. And was everything on the same floor? Or did it have an upstairs?

SZCESIUŁ: They have a--

LEVINE: They had an upstairs.

SZCESIUŁ: (coughing) Oh.

LEVINE: Was there a basement? Was there a cellar?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: And what was down in the cellar?

SZCESIUŁ: Food.

LEVINE: Oh, that's where you put the food for the winter.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: And were the bedrooms upstairs, all the way upstairs?

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] No. On one floor.

LEVINE: On one floor. Do you remember the kitchen?

SZCESIUŁ: Uh, brick. Brick.

LEVINE: Brick oven? Or—

SZCESIUŁ: Brick. [pause] I don't know.

LEVINE: Did you have a fireplace?

SZCESIUŁ: I did.

LEVINE: Do you remember how your mother did the wash?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah. [not understood]

LEVINE: Where did she get the water?

SZCESIUŁ: Uh, the water [not understood] [train whistle]. From the -- well, uh—

LEVINE: [tape skips] Did she have to go to a well or did she—

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: [superposed] have to go to the river or--?

SZCESIUŁ: At the well they have a pail [not understood].

LEVINE: They have a pail and you put the pail down in the well.

SZCESIUŁ: And would come back up.

LEVINE: Would you turn a (cough) handle?

SZCESIUŁ: No.

LEVINE: No, just lower it on the rope.

SZCESIUŁ: Mm.

LEVINE: That must've been a lot of hard work for your mother.

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood] used to bring her water to the house.

LEVINE: Who would bring the water to the house?

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood]

LEVINE: Sometimes would you bring the water? And then sometimes somebody else—

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: [superposed] would bring it. Uh-huh. And (clears throat) did you ever go anywhere with your mother or father that you can remember?

SZCESIUŁ: Oh, [not understood] to buy, shopping.

LEVINE: A shepherd?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] Buy salt, pepper.

LEVINE: Oh, oh, you went shopping—like, to market.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: And that was in another town?

SZCESIUŁ: Town. [pause] [not understood]

LEVINE: So you'd get salt, pepper—

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: What other kinds of things do you remember getting?

SZCESIUŁ: Flour.

LEVINE: Flour.

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood]

LEVINE: (clears throat) Would your father sell people his wheat—

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] Yeah.

LEVINE: And oats?

SZCESIUŁ: Sell some.

LEVINE: He'd sell some of it and then

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] Right.

LEVINE: The rest would be for the family?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. When you left town, what did you pack to take with you to America?

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood] Money.

LEVINE: Some money.

SZCESIUŁ: For my passage.

LEVINE: For your passage. And did you have clothes, or—

SZCESIUL: Well, [not understood].

LEVINE: So where—

SZCESIUL: [superposed] [not understood]

LEVINE: When you left town, how did you get to the port that you took the ship from? How did you travel from your little village?

SZCESIUL: I forgot.

LEVINE: You forgot. Do you know where you got the boat—where you got the ship that brought you to America? Where you had to go for that? [pause] No? OK. Well, (clears throat) do you remember getting on the ship?

SZCESIUL: [long pause] I could spell.

LEVINE: Oh, good. Go ahead.

SZCESIUL: [long pause] Sokółka.

LEVINE: Can you spell it?

SZCESIUL: [pause] I can't spell you nothing.

LEVINE: (laughs) OK. But say it again, maybe I can catch it.

SZCESIUL: Sokółka.

LEVINE: Sokółka, that's the name of the ship?

SZCESIUL: No.

LEVINE: No.

SZCESIUL: That's the town that I went to.

LEVINE: Oh, Sokółka. That's where you went from Wojnachy.

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Sokółka. And then from there you got a train?

SZCESIUL: No. [not understood] It was a couple miles away from there. [pause] I forget.

LEVINE: Don't worry about it. It's all right, but whatever you do remember. So you went to a few towns before you arrived at the port it sounds like. Where you with other people from your town?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah, they were all traveling to America. How did you feel about leaving your town and your family?

SZCESIUL: I feel good.

LEVINE: (laughs) You felt good? Why did you feel good?

SZCESIUL: [not understood] The house. [not understood] Make some money. [not understood] My father.

LEVINE: Make some money and send it to the house to your father. We're continuing now, and we were saying—

SZCESIUL: Joseph.

LEVINE: Joseph was your father.

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Right. Do you remember saying good-bye to your father?

SZCESIUL: What?

LEVINE: Do you remember when you said good-bye to your father?

SZCESIUL: Uh. *Do widzenia.*

LEVINE: Say that again.

SZCESIUL: *Do widzenia.*

LEVINE: Virginia?

SZCESIUL: *Do widzenia.* Good-bye. Good-bye.

LEVINE: Oh, that's how you say it in Polish?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh. Can you spell that? How do you say good-bye in Polish? [pause]  
Just say it again and let's see if I can—

SZCESIUL: *Do.*

LEVINE: *Do.*

SZCESIUL: *Widzenia.*

LEVINE: *Widzenia.*

SZCESIUL: [not understood]

LEVINE: [not understood] How about your mother? Do you remember saying good-bye to her?

SZCESIUL: When I said to her—

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SZCESIUL: [superposed] [not understood]

LEVINE: You said the same thing. OK. So when you got to the ship, do you remember anything about the ship?

SZCESIUL: [pause] I don't remember anything.

LEVINE: How about the voyage? Was it a rough voyage? Do you remember—

SZCESIUL: [superposed] Well, it was, sometimes. High winds [not understood].

LEVINE: Sometimes there was high wind?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: And do you remember your sleeping? Where you down in the—

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] Well [long pause] [not understood].

LEVINE: Like in a bunk bed.

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And where there lots of people, where you were?

SZCESIUŁ: A couple thousand.

LEVINE: A couple thousand. Uh-huh. Did you go around the boat—did you have any fun on the boat?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] Once, when I dance.

LEVINE: Oh, you went dancing on the boat? Did you know how to dance, had you been dancing when you were still in Poland?

SZCESIUŁ: I dance. Polish.

LEVINE: Polish dancing. Uh-huh. Did you have a girlfriend? [tape noises] [pause]

SZCESIUŁ: When I came to the United States.

LEVINE: That's when you got a girlfriend. Yeah. Well, how about when the ship came into the New York Harbor? Do you remember when the ship came in—what you saw?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] I see the people.

LEVINE: What were they doing—the people?

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. You remember the Statue of Liberty? No? How about Ellis Island, do you remember what your impressions (Szcesiuł coughs) what your impression was of Ellis Island?

SZCESIUŁ: I can't tell you nothing about it. I don't know.

LEVINE: Did somebody meet you there?

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood] People from the village [not understood].

LEVINE: So the people from the village—three or four friends of your own—

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: [superposed] They came with you. Now, did somebody come and meet you?

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood]

LEVINE: OK. When you left Ellis Island, do you remember where you went?

SZCESIUŁ: I don't remember, I don't know that. [not understood]

LEVINE: Was it in New York?

SZCESIUŁ: No.

LEVINE: No.

SZCESIUŁ: Well, in New York [not understood].

LEVINE: You took a boat.

SZCESIUŁ: Train.

LEVINE: A train.

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood]

LEVINE: Did you settle in Connecticut? Is that where you settled right from the beginning?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] No. Downtown. By the Jews.

LEVINE: Downtown?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: By the Jews?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: In New York?

SZCESIUL: Uh.

LEVINE: [superposed] Oh, the Lower East Side? Is that where you went?

SZCESIUL: [not understood] Sokółka. Sokółka.

LEVINE: Sokółka. Well, when you first got here, did you start working right away?

SZCESIUL: Yes, I went into making shoes.

LEVINE: Making shoes.

SZCESIUL: Rubber shoes. (coughing)

LEVINE: Like the soles? And the heels? Was this in a factory?

SZCESIUL: (breathes in) Yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember the name of the factory?

SZCESIUL: [pause] [tape skips]

LEVINE: Goodrich.

SZCESIUL: Goodrich.

LEVINE: Goodrich. Uh-huh. And you remember where that factory was?

SZCESIUL: [pause] [not understood]

LEVINE: And so did you stay working in the Goodrich factory for a long time?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: [long pause] Then did you ever leave there and take another job?

SZCESIUL: I came home. I came home.

LEVINE: You came home?

SZCESIUL: [pause] [not understood] I got sick. [pause] [not understood]

LEVINE: Your eye?

SZCESIUL: Mm. I got sick. [not understood]

LEVINE: How did you meet your wife?

SZCESIUL: Goodrich. [pause] I can't tell you anything.

LEVINE: I'm sorry, say it again. You came—

SZCESIUL: Ninety-three.

LEVINE: When you came to the United States. And where did you meet her?

SZCESIUL: [long pause] Goodrich.

LEVINE: Norwidge?

SZCESIUL: [not understood] Goodrich. [not understood] Company.

LEVINE: Oh, at Goodrich. Did she work there too?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh. Was she also working on the heels and soles?

SZCESIUL: Yes.

LEVINE: And what was her name?

SZCESIUL: [not understood] Stella.

LEVINE: Do you remember her maiden name, her last name before she married you?

SZCESIUL: [long pause] [not understood] Name Valrad – Valradsik [ph].

LEVINE: Vlradshik?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Was she also from Poland?

SZCESIUL: No.

LEVINE: Where was she from?

SZCESIUL: Born here.

LEVINE: She was born here. Uh-huh. Did you have children?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: How many children did you have?

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] Seven.

LEVINE: Seven. Uh-huh. After you worked at Goodrich, did you work anywhere else?

SZCESIUŁ: After I work in a barber shop.

LEVINE: In a barbershop. Were you cutting hair? Did you study to learn how?

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] Yeah, I learn here.

LEVINE: You learned it here. Uh-huh. And then did you work for someone?

SZCESIUŁ: Yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember the name of the shop? (dishes clatter)

SZCESIUŁ: [pause] No. Private barber shop.

LEVINE: A private barber shop. And where was it located?

SZCESIUŁ: It was located here. In Naugatuck. I work in Akron – Akron, Ohio.

LEVINE: Akron, Ohio. Oh, was that where the Goodrich place was?

SZCESIUL: Uh.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So, in other words, after you got to the United States you went to Ohio—

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: And you worked for Goodrich. I see. How did you happen to go there, how did you know to go there?

SZCESIUL: [long pause] I talk to the people who know where – where you get – get a job. [not understood]

LEVINE: So some people told you—

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: [superposed] You could get a job there and that's why you went. I see. And then, the barber shop, was that also in Ohio?

SZCESIUL: Well, yes. I work there. [not understood] I got sick. A rock. I got—

LEVINE: [not understood]

SZCESIUL: A rock.

LEVINE: Iraq? [pause] How did you like being in the United States? When you first came—

SZCESIUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: And you started working? Did you like it—

SZCESIUL: Oh, yeah.

LEVINE: Or not? What did you like about it?

SZCESIUL: It was like [not understood].

LEVINE: Was there anything you didn't like about it?

SZCESIUL: No. [pause] I didn't like, uh, make shoes. Rubber shoes.

LEVINE: You didn't like that?

SZCESIUL: Yeah. [pause] [not understood] I work so many years and you change [not understood].

LEVINE: You worked so many years and then you changed what you were doing?

SZCESIUL: Yeah, the barber shop.

LEVINE: And you went to the barber shop. 'Cause you didn't really want to stay working on the shoes.

SZCESIUL: [superposed] I work.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SZCESIUL: [not understood]

LEVINE: And then did you like it—working in the barber shop?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: What did you like about it?

SZCESIUŁ: I make no shoes. New job. Nothing heavy [?].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SZCESIUŁ: Nothing.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. How were you affected by the Depression? Do you remember—in the 30s? The Great Depression? How did that affect you?

SZCESIUŁ: I work [not understood].

LEVINE: You still worked, during the Depression?

SZCESIUŁ: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you think it made a big difference to you, having come from Poland and spending the rest of your life in this country?

SZCESIUŁ: Yes.

LEVINE: What difference do you think it made—in your life and in you?

SZCESIUŁ: Working in the shop.

LEVINE: In other words, if you had been in Poland, you would have probably been still working on the farm.

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: But this way you were working in the shop. And you sent money back to your father?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then did any other members of your family come over here?

SZCESIUL: No.

LEVINE: No. Did you ever go back and visit them?

SZCESIUL: No.

LEVINE: No. Is there anything else—are you happy that you came to the United States?

SZCESIUL: Different job.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, a different job. And how about now – now that you've lived to be such a wonderful, old age? A hundred and two. How do you feel about your life now?

SZCESIUL: I can't explain to you.

LEVINE: You can't explain it? Well, you live here with your daughter Rita, right?

SZCESIUL: Yeah.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. [pause] You must have a lot of grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

SZCESIUŁ: Yes. I don't know how many I got.

LEVINE: Well, what makes you feel satisfied that you've done in your lifetime? What is it that when you think about it you feel—

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] Better – better job. You work every day.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. So that makes you feel good, that you got that job—

SZCESIUŁ: [superposed] Mhm.

LEVINE: And you worked every day. [pause] Do you have any feelings about this country that you would mention?

SZCESIUŁ: I feel good. It's fair in United States.

LEVINE: I'm sorry, say that again?

SZCESIUŁ: [not understood, tape skips?]

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Were you ever in the service, in the army or—

SZCESIUŁ: No.

LEVINE: No, uh-huh.

SZCESIUŁ: [long pause] [not understood] My daughter is gone.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SZCESIUL: [pause] She's working—working at a bank.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SZCESIUL: [not understood] She got to buy the house. [not understood]

LEVINE: She has another house. Uh-huh. OK.

SZCESIUL: [superposed] [not understood]

LEVINE: [superposed] Well—

SZCESIUL: My son-in-law.

LEVINE: Your son-in-law. That's Rita's husband. Before we close, is there anything you can think of more about Poland that maybe we didn't mention? Anything that you remember when you think back to the days before you came to this country that you think of?

SZCESIUL: What will help you?

LEVINE: What would help me?

SZCESIUL: Mhm.

LEVINE: Well, just any kinds of things you did there, thing that you remember about what life was like before you came here, and then what life was life after you came here. The differences.

SZCESIUŁ: That's all I got.

LEVINE: OK. Well, why don't we stop here. I want to thank you very much for remembering as much as you did. Now we'll put this tape in Ellis Island, and we'll have you on record there—and whatever you remembered about coming from Poland to this country and working here—

SZCESIUŁ: They train. My work—they train you. Barber work.

LEVINE: They try--?

SZCESIUŁ: Barber. Train.

LEVINE: Oh, barber work. And you were happy doing the barber work. Uh-huh.

SZCESIUŁ: I got sick. [not understood] I – I can't work.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Yeah. OK. Well this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service and its October 19<sup>th</sup> [tape skips] speaking with Frank [tape skips] 1995. I've been speaking with Frank Szcesiuł who came from Poland and is one hundred and two at the time of this interview. And I'm signing—

END OF INTERVIEW