

**EI-750**

**MOLLY SCHUSTER**

**BIRTHDATE: FEBRUARY 7, 1910**

**INTERVIEW DATE: MAY 23, 1996**

**AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 86**

**RUNNING TIME: 37:10**

**INTERVIEWER: JANET LEVINE**

**RECORDING ENGINEER: JANET LEVINE**

**INTERVIEW LOCATION: SUNRISE, FLORIDA**

**TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:**

**POLAND, 1914**

**AGE: 4**

**SHIP:**

**PORT:**

**RESIDENCES:**

LEVINE: Today is May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1996 and I'm here in Sunrise, Florida with Mrs. Molly Schuster. And Molly's brother, Sam Bernstein [PH], is also here with us. And both Mr. Bernstein and Mrs. Schuster came from Poland in 1914. Mrs. Schuster was four years of age at that time—

SCHUSTER: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —and is 86 years of age at the time of this interview. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. And I want to say that I'm delighted that I got to talk to you through your brother. And whatever you can remember will be great. So let's start out. Tell me what you do. Well, first, maybe, if you give where in Poland you were born and your birthday.

SCHUSTER: Where in Poland was I born. In Yanof.

LEVINE: And that's—and that's Y-A-N-O-F?

BERNSTEIN: Something like that.

SCHUSTER: I think so.

LEVINE: Okay.

SCHUSTER: I didn't spell at that time. [laughter]

LEVINE: Okay. And your birth date?

SCHUSTER: Was February the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1910.

LEVINE: Okay. Now, you mentioned earlier you had some vague memories of Poland.

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: Ah—

SCHUSTER: And vague memories—vague memories of my grandma.

LEVINE: Tell me about your grandma, whatever you [unclear].

SCHUSTER: My grandma was a little woman and I remember her just walking around or being near the stove or something. And she wore a black skirt and she wore a purple, polka-dotted blouse. And that stayed with me all the years. Whether it stayed with me from what I remember, or whether it stayed with me because we discussed these things so many times in the house with our parents and with the other children. And—and—

LEVINE: Was this your mother's mother or your father's mother?

SCHUSTER: My mother's mother. My father's mother, I don't recall at all.

LEVINE: Now, what was your mother's name?

SCHUSTER: Sura—Sara—Sura Rifkie.

LEVINE: R-I-F—

SCHUSTER: R-I-F-K-I-E, Rifkie.

LEVINE: And—and was—was your grandmother—do you remember your grandmother's name or just remember Grandma? [chuckles]

SCHUSTER: I just remember Bubbie.

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LEVINE: Bubbie, uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: It wasn't Grandma then; it was Bubbie.

LEVINE: Uh-huh, okay.

SCHUSTER: And—and for the life of me, I can't remember. Al would have probably remembered but Al is gone now. That was an older brother.

LEVINE: I see. So, aside from your bubbie that you remember, are there any other visual memories that you—

SCHUSTER: Little—

LEVINE: —that you have?

SCHUSTER: Little things, very vague. You know, just my mother walking around doing something in the stiegel [PH], whatever it was that we had. It's all far away now.

LEVINE: Yeah. Maybe you could tell—

SCHUSTER: I—

LEVINE: —some of the things that—

SCHUSTER: I remember being on the boat though.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. Well, before we get to that, what do you remember of your mother and father discussing about Poland when you were older?

SCHUSTER: When—when I was older? Most of the time, whatever they discussed they discussed in Polish and we—didn't want us to know what they were talking about. So they had me at a disadvantage and I was a little girl. I didn't pay too much attention to what was going on. Sometimes yes, sometimes no.

LEVINE: What ki—what language did you speak at home?

SCHUSTER: Yiddish.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Even—

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SCHUSTER: Even when I—

LEVINE: In Poland and then here?

SCHUSTER: Yeah, yeah.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, do you remember anything before the boat, leaving—  
leaving Yanof or—

SCHUSTER: Vaguely—Yanof.

LEVINE: Yanof.

SCHUSTER: Vaguely, like sometimes if I picture it, like, say goodbye to whoever  
was there, maybe an uncle of mine or maybe a cousin. I don't know  
because I'm not sure about that. But vaguely, vaguely I could  
remember that and then we were off.

LEVINE: I see. And do you remember—what do you remember about the  
boat?

SCHUSTER: The boat was a very big boat and I think we came second class. Did  
we, Sammy?

BERNSTEIN: Steerage.

SCHUSTER: Steer—no, I think that Papa always used to say that we came  
second cl—I don't know. But anyhow, I know one night we ate at the  
captain's table. And I remember and it was discussed a million and  
one times that they had eggs for us, which was a novelty in itself. So  
I was very—how should I say? I wanted to do everything myself.  
And my mother says she'll open the egg for me and I said, "No,  
[unclear], I'll do it myself." And so I went to open the egg and, of  
course, it was all over the captain's white tablecloth and everything.  
And I made a mess and the captain came over and he said not to  
worry, but they brought a different egg and my mother opened for  
me. So then I kept quiet already.

LEVINE: [chuckles]

SCHUSTER: And that's about what I remember until—I remember it was a long  
voyage. It was a rough voyage.

LEVINE: Do you remember the boat coming into the New York harbor?

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SCHUSTER: Only—only that I picture something in my mind but where I was not standing there, you know. But I do remember that when we got off, I think my father was there to—to greet us. That I do remember. And from there I think we went straight to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Do you—what was your father's name?

SCHUSTER: [unclear] David [PH]—Max David.

LEVINE: And do you remember seeing him—

SCHUSTER: Yes.

LEVINE: —there? Now, how long had he been in this country before you came?

SCHUSTER: A couple of years only, I think. I'm not too sure. But not too long.

LEVINE: And—and so do you have any impressions of Ellis Island?

SCHUSTER: Yeah. Yeah, because I remember being amazed when I saw men walking around with long braids. And I asked my mother what that was. And my mother said that that was a [unclear], which is a China man, and that that's how they wore their hair. I remember that. And it always surprised me when I saw it, couldn't picture a man with such long hair [unclear].

LEVINE: So you probably didn't remember your father when you first came.

SCHUSTER: Oh, when I came, yeah. Well, I knew my father.

LEVINE: You did? Oh.

SCHUSTER: Well, listen. I knew him for the three or four years that—that we were together. That he went away, wasn't too long. I still remembered him.

LEVINE: Oh, okay. So what was it like when you saw your father?

SCHUSTER: Lovely.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SCHUSTER: It was nice to be here. And, you know, you came to the Golden Land. You were happy to get here.

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LEVINE: Did you—did you—were you examined? Do you remember anything like that?

SCHUSTER: I—not too much. Not too much. But I under—I understand now that that's what they did because they didn't want anybody to come in with any foreign diseases.

LEVINE: And do you know if you stayed overnight?

SCHUSTER: I think we did. I think we did.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Do you remember anything about the food or the accommodations or anything about Ellis Island?

SCHUSTER: Not too much. Just the people that I saw walking around. This was just amazing to me, all the different people that I saw from all different lands. I was just in awe of everything.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, you were traveling with your mother?

SCHUSTER: And my two brothers.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And [clears throat] let's see, so when your father—then your father came to Ellis Island.

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: And then he took you off.

SCHUSTER: Took us off.

LEVINE: And where did he take you to?

SCHUSTER: I think we wound up in Harlem to begin with. Am I right or wrong, Sammy? I don't—

BERNSTEIN: No, Yorkville.

SCHUSTER: York—upto—in, yeah.

BERNSTEIN: Yorkville.

LEVINE: Yorkville.

SCHUSTER: In Harlem.

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LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: And—and do you remember, like, the apartment that you went to? Or I—I think your brother had written that there were family and friends around. Do you remember—

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: —that when you first got here?

SCHUSTER: Well, when you came, when they brought you here, you really came because you were going to settle where the [unclear] was. So there was [unclear] there, family. But I—I don't recall exactly who was there and who was not there, and everything was in a New World. I couldn't stop looking all around to see what was happening here.

LEVINE: Do you remember any things about the New World that—that really struck you as new and different at, you know, the [unclear]?

SCHUSTER: The streets were different. The houses were different. It was a tenement where you walked up three floors. I didn't remember walking up three floors when we lived in Europe. It was altogether different. The apartment, the—you say, like a railroad [unclear], whatever. But I don't remember too—you know, too much. And we—we weren't there long because then we moved. Where did we move to? Williamsburg or to Brooklyn?

BERNSTEIN: To Brooklyn.

SCHUSTER: To Brooklyn.

LEVINE: Now—

SCHUSTER: Where did we live first? On [unclear] Avenue? No. Yeah?

LEVINE: Do you remember any foods? Any new kinds of foods when you came—came to this country?

SCHUSTER: Well, then when—when we were here, no—no, it wasn't so much different because it was a kosher butcher and kosher—and I—and a Jewish grocery. And the foods my mother made were the—

LEVINE: Same?

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SCHUSTER: —same, you know. Maybe it was a little bit more or a little bit less; I don't know. But we were fed. My mother was very good at that.

LEVINE: [chuckles] Okay. Now, when you moved to Brooklyn did you start school in Brooklyn?

SCHUSTER: When I was six years old [unclear].

LEVINE: And what was that like? Were you able to speak English by then—

SCHUSTER: Little by little. Not too well but we learned in school. We spoke a little bit of English already but not too much, because in the house you spoke mostly Yiddish.

LEVINE: S—

SCHUSTER: But to learn from the street, from the people that you became friendly with, from the greena kazina [PH] that was here maybe two days before you, would teach you a couple of words that she knew.

LEVINE: Were—you say greena kazina?

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: What—

SCHUSTER: That's—that was—a greena kazina was somebody that came from Europe also who was a cousin.

LEVINE: Ah. Is kazina cousin?

SCHUSTER: Kazina is cousin.

LEVINE: I see, uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: Oh, uh-huh. So—so when you started school, were there other children in your class who had also come over that—

SCHUSTER: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: But there were also Polish children. There were also Italian children. And school was very nice. The teachers were nice. Of course, I wasn't the best behaved.

LEVINE: What were you like? Do—can you—can sort of describe how you were when you were a little girl and [chuckles] starting school?

SCHUSTER: A—a rebel, a little bit.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: And—but school, I liked. And my brothers took me to school because it was a big walk to school.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Now, what was your father doing for work when he came here?

SCHUSTER: My father was a cigar maker.

LEVINE: Did he do that in Europe as well or did he—

SCHUSTER: I don't think he ever worked in Europe. In Europe he was a scholar.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: That's the only recollect—recollection I had of it. Did he work in Europe? What did he do?

BERNSTEIN: Cigar maker in—in [several words unclear].

SCHUSTER: In [several words unclear]. Yes, that's—that rings a bell. Yeah.

LEVINE: So then he continued making cigars here?

SCHUSTER: Yeah. And—

LEVINE: And—

SCHUSTER: And after that they went into the grocery business. But we were big girls al—big children already when they went into the grocery business. Not too big. We were still on [unclear] Avenue.

BERNSTEIN: Yeah.

LEVINE: So was the community that you lived in—was it—was it a lot of people who had come from [unclear]?

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SCHUSTER: Yeah, an old friendly, nice, you know.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: Nice people.

LEVINE: Did you—did you socialize or did your mother—

SCHUSTER: I had—

LEVINE: —and father? Were they, like, part of a social club or—

SCHUSTER: Well, no, I think they—they were friendly with everybody and—and mostly, you lived not too far from your relatives. So your aunt was here and your cousin was here. And you had, like, the fam— everything was close knit.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: Nobody lived too far away.

LEVINE: Yeah. Did your mother and father have the attitude that you should become Americanized? Or did they have more the attitude to hold on to the traditions that you—that you had?

SCHUSTER: I don't think they bother us either way. I think my mother was a very bright woman. She went along with the times and my father went along with my mother. So it—it was—it was a nice family.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: And I could tell you about our family. We—when we got to Brooklyn we lived in a big tenement house and we were on the third floor. And there was a big double courtyard. And Friday night all the tenants that were within that circle there in that courtyard would leave their windows open, because we used to sing [unclear], which was the prayers, whatever you do Friday night. And everybody listened to the Bernsteins singing.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: And that was beautiful.

LEVINE: Wow. Were you particularly a singing, musical—

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SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: —family?

SCHUSTER: Yeah, my mother.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: My oldest brother. He was a listener.

LEVINE: [chuckles]

SCHUSTER: I was talented.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: I remember another thing, to go back to Ellis Island.

LEVINE: Okay.

SCHUSTER: I remember when I was seven years old, I think, Sinchra [PH] came from Europe with Esther. And Papa and Mama took me—did you go to Ellis Island with us? Took me to Ellis Island. And when I was on Ellis Island I sang, “America, I Love You” [chuckles] when I was there. And I remember it and I remember the words to this very day. And—

LEVINE: Do you want to sing it for the tape?

SCHUSTER: No, not really.

LEVINE: [chuckles] [unclear]

SCHUSTER: “America, I Love You,” but it was very pleasant, very nice and I saw the people that came. But we had to leave them there. And that’s when I saw the Chinese men that some were already—had cut their hair. But I saw quite a few that didn’t. But I was a big shot already because I knew about—at the [unclear]. And it was a very pleasant day and then I think they stayed a couple of days. They stayed there and then somebody brought them back.

LEVINE: Do you remember why they had to stay?

SCHUSTER: No, just that they were being interviewed or whatever, you know, to check them.

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LEVINE: Wow. Now, this she was what, cousins or—

SCHUSTER: This was cousins.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, huh.

SCHUSTER: And it was nice. So I remember that.

LEVINE: Yeah. So were there any differences in the way the religion was practiced here versus in Poland with observances—

SCHUSTER: No. No, we—we—we observed all the holidays. And you knew when it was certain holiday, they just did certain things, and certain holidays that you fasted.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: And we were a kosher home and we saw all the things that you see while you're growing up in a Jewish home, because they observed all the holidays—very—very important.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, did your mother and father become citizens?

SCHUSTER: Yes.

LEVINE: Do you remember when they did or was that an occasion or—

SCHUSTER: Well, it was very nice. I have my father's citizenship papers somewheres in the house.

LEVINE: So—so you continued in school until—what grade did you—

SCHUSTER: Well, I went to 63—Public School 63 until the sixth grade. And then I was transferred to Public School 173, which was on Pennsylvania Avenue. Right? And I graduated from school there.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: And I was a singer in that school too.

LEVINE: You were a singer?

SCHUSTER: In the—in the auditorium or whatever, I sang. And then we had the test—you know, when they test you, they—they play a record and you have to write down what song it is.

LEVINE: Oh.

SCHUSTER: So I got a hundred, passed in that. And I and—and about six or eight other students, we went to the world championship to take the test there.

LEVINE: Wow.

SCHUSTER: So we won some kind of a pin. I don't remember what I win but we won something. We didn't win first prize but we won something. And my singing teacher, I remember, was Miss Smith.

LEVINE: Did you aspire to—to—to be a singer? No.

SCHUSTER: No.

LEVINE: Ah—

SCHUSTER: No.

LEVINE: Okay, so then when you left school, what did you do then?

SCHUSTER: Then I went to high school?

LEVINE: And—and then, after that?

SCHUSTER: And after that I went work.

LEVINE: What—what kind of work?

SCHUSTER: I was a bookkeeper.

LEVINE: Uh-huh. And this was all in Brooklyn?

SCHUSTER: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Okay. And then when did you meet your husband?

SCHUSTER: My husband, I met March 26<sup>th</sup> and I went through—somebody that I worked with invited me to go to an affair. But I didn't go to the affair. I went—and I had to meet them on the East Side. And when I came to the house where I was supposed to meet everybody, I wasn't going with the fellow that was—that worked with me. But he made this date for me with another fellow.

LEVINE: You were surprised? You [unclear]—

SCHUSTER: I was—I—I was amazed. I said, “What—what is—what’s the story here?” So then they explained to me that this guy didn’t have anybody to go with, and he thought I was a nice girl so he put us together. But that was not my husband. My husband was there with another girl. And then we went to that affair and I sang at that affair. And I told you I was a rebel, right? They had a band of music. The dinner was lovely. The people were lovely. We were having a marvelous time. When I got up and I said, “If you all shut up, I’ll sing.” So they thought, ‘Who the heck does she think she is?’ [chuckles] But it’s true. I—I had a lot of guts. I got up and I started singing. And believe it or not, they did not let me sit down. They whistled and they hollered and they stood. And that’s when I first—I had met my husband where we met in the—in the lady’s house, the girl’s house where we were all getting together. But then he came over. He said, “You’re great. You’re”—puh, puh, puh—okay. And then from there he called me. And then he and a friend of his—I went—I was going out with one or the other. But the both came at the same time. And the only way I knew which one I had the date with was the guy that wore the overcoat, because they had one overcoat between them. [laughs] And that’s the truth. But it was very nice and I wound up marrying him.

LEVINE: Wow. What—what was your husband’s name?

SCHUSTER: Joseph. Very nice.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: Nice looking guy.

LEVINE: Yeah, and—

SCHUSTER: Nice person.

LEVINE: And so then did you settle in Brooklyn when you married?

SCHUSTER: When we got married, the first place we settled was in Coney Island because my husband came from Coney Island. So we took a little apartment there. My brother used to come. Remember, I lived on Mermaid Avenue? And that was, like, just for the summer. And then we moved to Keef [PH] Street in Williamsburg where we had a three-room apartment, which I furnished very nicely. And I lived there for quite sometime.

- LEVINE: Now, had your husband also come to this country from—from Europe [unclear]?
- SCHUSTER: No. No, because—[laughs] because when I brought him home to introduce him to my parents, the first thing my mother said was he's—was an [unclear] [laughs] because they thought that all the American people were stupid. That's the truth. [laughs] That's what Mama said to me. But he happened to be a nice guy.
- LEVINE: Uh-huh. Now, did you have children?
- SCHUSTER: I have two daughters.
- LEVINE: And their names?
- SCHUSTER: Naomi and Faith. And they're both married to lovely, lovely gentlemen. Very nice son-in-laws—better than the daughters. [chuckles] And from these two girls I have five grandsons, who are now married. And between them I have eight great grandchildren. So this is a beautiful family.
- LEVINE: When—[clears throat] when you look back on the fact that you came here from—from Poland and you were—you were young but the whole idea of coming to a new place and starting a new life, how—how do you think about that? The fact that you came from somewhere else and settled here, grew up here?
- SCHUSTER: At that time, I didn't think anything of it. At that time, the only thing I knew, my mother—my father went and now my mother—we're going. And I was going with the family and that's how it had to be. You didn't question your parents.
- LEVINE: No.
- SCHUSTER: It was a different world.
- LEVINE: How—how do you think about it now?
- SCHUSTER: Now, I think it's a miracle.
- LEVINE: [chuckles]
- SCHUSTER: And it was nice and there were good times and bad times. And we weathered the storm.

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LEVINE: Well, now, if you came in 1914 so you—you were here during the Depression. Did—

SCHUSTER: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: Did the Depression hit you personally hard or—

SCHUSTER: Not—not that I remember because, however good or bad it was, my mother was a very good manager. And we always had a very nice dinner and we always had breakfast before we went to school. And we always came home for lunch. I don't remember ever taking lunch, Sammy. Do you? We—we took lunch? I don't remember.

LEVINE: You said that your mother and father started a grocery store so—

SCHUSTER: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: —your father is making the cigars and then at some point later on they—

SCHUSTER: They—yeah, my mother—there was an empty store right downstairs from where we lived and my mother decided we—that it was time to go in business. And she did and it was very nice, very comfortable.

LEVINE: And it worked out?

SCHUSTER: Worked out very nicely.

LEVINE: Did—

SCHUSTER: Because from there they bought other stores and they did very nicely.

LEVINE: Did you help in the store?

SCHUSTER: We all helped [unclear] very good. But we all helped. Came Passover, you made up the orders that you had to deliver to the customers. And during the year, you came in and you helped whenever it was busy. You came in and you helped.

LEVINE: Was it—did you have, like—did you have kosher meat? Did you have [unclear]?

SCHUSTER: No, no, no.

LEVINE: This was just a grocery.

SCHUSTER: Groceries.

LEVINE: You had all kinds of dairy, all kinds of things. You had beans, rice, potatoes, pears, apples, peaches, grapes, things like that. Bananas. You had all these things that are in a little grocery store, family store.

SCHUSTER: Uh-hmm. [knocking sound]

LEVINE: Whoops. We'll pause.

SCHUSTER: Who's there? [tape off/on]

LEVINE: We're resuming after a knock on the door. Okay, [clears throat] let's see. Where were we? We were talking about the grocery store.

SCHUSTER: Uh-hmm.

LEVINE: And everybody helped in it.

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: And it was a ne—it was a neighborhood store. Do you remember people buying on credit? Do you remember during the Depression and all that?

SCHUSTER: Oh, not credit. You bought on the book.

LEVINE: How was that?

SCHUSTER: Whatever you—my mother figured up, or my father up on the bag or the paper that they wrote down, they'd put that number into the book under that person's name. And when she got money, she came in and she paid.

LEVINE: And—and did it work out?

SCHUSTER: It worked out.

LEVINE: Were people—actually paid?

SCHUSTER: Worked out, yes. They were—they were poor but they were honest.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm, wow. And did your mother and father start speaking English or did they—

SCHUSTER: Yes.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: Yes.

LEVINE: And let's see. Is there anything else about the community that—that you remember? [telephone ringing] Whoops. We're pausing. [tape off/on] Okay. I was asking you about the community, if there was anything else that you remember particularly [unclear].

SCHUSTER: It was nice. It was—it was—it was—you were friends with everybody. Everybody was friends with you. You played stickball. You played football. You play—I did. I was one girl with all the boys playing football, or—or handball against the wall. I was the only girl that played it. But I played with the girls also when the girls were there—with the girls who played jacks, with the girls who jumped rope, whatever we did. And it was a nice community life, easy. And it was always good—so far. You know, the mind is marvelous because it blocks out all the bad and you only remember the good.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SCHUSTER: So that part is great.

LEVINE: I was just going to ask you how your memories have changed over time, but you're more—

SCHUSTER: No, we have good memories.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: Yeah.

LEVINE: Yeah. What do you feel very satisfied about that you—that you have done in your—in your life?

SCHUSTER: That I'm here. That's one thing. That I raised a nice family, that my children are fine and taken—well taken care of. And my grandchildren—very, very nice boys, all of them. And I have to tell you a funny story. One of my grandsons is a doctor and one of my grandsons is a lawyer. And this doctor said to me, "Grandma, you must be busting your buttons because you've got a grandson a doctor. You've got a grandson a lawyer. You must feel very proud." I says, "A big deal with both of you. I really need a dentist."

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[laughter] So he says, "Grandma, you're incorrigible." I said, "Okay."  
[laughs] But they're lovely, lovely boys, every one of them.

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: Very nice and married nice girls. I told you I have a Janet Levine.

LEVINE: Yes.

SCHUSTER: She's married to Gary.

LEVINE: Oh.

SCHUSTER: She's got the best of the lot.

LEVINE: [chuckles]

SCHUSTER: He's an unbelievable boy. Unbelievable. They all are. They all are wonderful but he has a—a nature that it's hard to find.

LEVINE: What—what kind of a nature?

SCHUSTER: He's a very giving person. He'll do you a favor and he's very thoughtful of everybody and he's very kind to everybody and never sees bad in anything. Everything is good. Everything is fine. And that's the kind of kid he is all his life.

LEVINE: Hmm.

[END OF TAPE 1, SIDE A]

[BEGIN TAPE 1, SIDE B]

LEVINE: Can you think of any attitudes or values or ideas about living that your mother and father tried to instill in you, and maybe you also did with your children? But can you think of [unclear]?

SCHUSTER: Yeah, a feeling of respect, to have respect for an older person and to see if you could do somebody a favor, to do it. And to be honest and not to steal, and you toed the mark, more or less. You had guidance. Your parents were there all the time.

LEVINE: Were they strict, your parents?

SCHUSTER: I wouldn't—I wouldn't call my parents strict but they were—they were fair.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: And they were too busy making a living to—to even think of all the nonsense that goes on today. And I'm sure that plenty went on, knowing today the things that I know. You see, that history keeps repeating itself but in different ways. People were not as blatant as they are today. People were not as nasty as they are today. And—and today, when somebody says that she was out with this guy and she was out with this guy, and she thinks it's a record that she has made, people didn't do that years ago. It was hidden; no matter what you did, it was quietly.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: They weren't as brazen as they are today and they weren't as spoiled as they are today.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: And they had respect for their parents. We didn't hear of times that the kid just got up and beat up his mother or killed his grandmother to get the money.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: I don't remember hearing anything like that. Am I wrong? Did it happen and I wasn't aware?

BERNSTEIN: I don't know.

SCHUSTER: I don't know. Maybe I remember differently. I don't remember hearing things like this. Even if people did things that they weren't supposed to, it was not an open and shut thing. It was not as—as—they weren't as brazen. Not at all.

LEVINE: And are there any other things that you can think of that are—are big changes that you've noticed in—in the way people—

SCHUSTER: Well, the big change was that I came from Brooklyn and I settled here in Florida. That was a very big change.

LEVINE: Yeah. How long ago did you do that?

SCHUSTER: [coughs] Twenty-two years ago.

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LEVINE: And how is your life now? Now that you're [unclear]—

SCHUSTER: Well, now it's sad because my husband is gone. That bothers me. It still does. It's 12 years and it still does. I thank God for my brother. I thank God for my children. That takes a little bit of the sharp edges away.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm.

SCHUSTER: But it's not easy.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Do you have things that you—you do here that, you know, occupy you, keep you interested and absorbed?

SCHUSTER: I—I did a lot of nice work. I worked for Cancer Care. I worked for Red [unclear]. I worked for Deborah [PH].

LEVINE: Uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: I did whatever I could when I could. I can't do those things now.

LEVINE: Uh-hmm. Okay. Well, is there anything else you can think of that has to do with coming to this country or how your life has—has transpired since that time that you want to mention before we close?

SCHUSTER: Well, there's a whole change in my whole [chuckles] life. After—after many years that we just struggled though, things were good or not good. Then we went in business and we did all right. We did fine.

LEVINE: What kind of a business were you in?

SCHUSTER: We had restaurants and luncheonettes. Very nice. You're from Brooklyn, maybe?

LEVINE: I lived there once but I'm not—

SCHUSTER: But Pittcon Avenue, I'm sure you knew.

LEVINE: Yes, uh-huh.

SCHUSTER: Okay.

LEVINE: Yeah.

SCHUSTER: Well, we had a luncheonette on Pittcon Avenue.

LEVINE: Huh.

SCHUSTER: It was very nice. It was very interesting. Nice people. All the sales people, very nice. Those things I liked. Those things I enjoyed. I enjoy cooking anyhow, so that was good.

LEVINE: So it was like a mom and pop—what they call a mom and pop?

SCHUSTER: No.

LEVINE: No?

SCHUSTER: No.

LEVINE: It wasn't?

SCHUSTER: It was a business thing. It wasn't—we weren't old. We were young at that time. It was a—a—

LEVINE: Okay, we're pausing here. [tape off/on] We're resuming here. So you—

SCHUSTER: When we got through in Brooklyn and we came here we had—well, my husband had a heart attack in Brooklyn and we sold the [unclear]. And then we came here. And then when we came here we had retired. And I was here for a short while. When I got finished with the knitting and the sewing and the needlepoint, what—whatever we did, and the gossip and the talking, I said one day, "I'm going to work." And I went to work for city hall and my husband thought I was crazy because he said, "You worked all your life. Why are you going to work now?" I said, "Well, if I don't like it, I'll quit. You'll let me come back. And if I like it, I'll stay." And this was just that I wanted to get away from the humdrum existence. And I was there 12 years.

LEVINE: Wow.

SCHUSTER: I only retired a few years ago, which was wonderful. I loved it. I worked in the finance department and it was lovely.

LEVINE: Huh.

SCHUSTER: Lovely people, lovely surroundings and I was happy.

LEVINE: Yeah.

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SCHUSTER: So now I'm retired and I—I find what to do but I can't do it as well as I used to and I can't do it as often as I like to. It's hard. But it's a good life. The living is easy here; that's for sure. And we don't have the cold weather. We have other things but we don't have the snow and we don't have the ice. And it—the life is easy here.

LEVINE: Okay. Well, I think maybe we'll stop here.

SCHUSTER: That's fine.

LEVINE: I want to thank you. I've been speaking with Molly Schuster, who came from Poland [clears throat]—excuse me—when she was four years old [clears throat] in 1914. And we're here today in Sunrise, Florida in her home. And this is Janet Levine for the National Park Service signing off.

[END OF INTERVIEW]