

EI-087

ISADORE SAMET

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POLAND, 1914

PORT: HAMBURG

AGE 16

RESIDENCES: HADADKIF

US: NYC LOWER EAST SIDE

SIGRIST: Good morning. This is Paul Sigrist for the National Park Service. Today is Friday, September 6th, 1991. We are here at Ellis Island with Isadore Samet, who came from Poland in 1914 when he was approximately sixteen years old. Good morning, Mr. Samet.

SAMET: Hi.

SIGRIST: Can you please start by giving me your date of birth?

SAMET: The date of birth? Uh, truly I do not have the correct date, being I was born in a very hick town and they never posted any births there because nowhere to go to do that. They had to go to big cities and they never mentioned it, never went, never took their time to go there, so the right date, but the right date was the 23rd of September, I was born 1898.

SIGRIST: I see. What town were you born in?

SAMET: Hadadkuf.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that?

SAMET: It was a small rural town. I don't think that it had more than thirty, forty people living scattered around all over the town. And, as a matter of fact, you know, I'm Jewish, and my father's Jewish, and mother, and they were the only Jews living there. My father had a place where peasants came from the cities, they used to stop over, and serve them drinks and things like that. And that was the way he made a living.

SIGRIST: This was like an inn of some sort, like a little restaurant that he had?

SAMET: It was a restaurant and serving beer and liquor. When they stopped over sometimes they had maybe four or five or six people stopping over there. Life over there was very pleasant, and for children especially. And this place had to be rented by the government because on account of the liquor. And he was there a number of times, a number of years, stand. And somebody, at a certain time, after four or five or six years, somebody else rented it out from him and he had to leave. After leaving there he moved to Skalat, where my father was born.

SIGRIST: What was the name of that town, please? The name of

that town.

SAMET: Skalat.

SIGRIST: Can you spell that, please?

SAMET: Skalat. S-K-A-L-A-T. That was also Poland. And started to do things there, whatever they could possibly do.

SIGRIST: I'd like to ask you a question about the restaurant. Did you live in the restaurant in that building, or did you live separate?

SAMET: We lived there. They had a special room there, whatever children were at that time, I don't remember. In total, that thing, we had about ten or eleven children there at that time where none of them lived through age. I was the youngest one.

SIGRIST: How old were you at this time when your father had the restaurant? How old were you?

SAMET: I was there, when I was born, you know, when they sold it I was then about maybe five years or so.

SIGRIST: So very young, you were very young.

SAMET: And we stayed in Skalat. And not very long time,

until we tried to find ourselves a place where it can work and serve a living for the family.

SIGRIST: Did your mother work?

SAMET: Well, ordinarily, it was not physically, but she worked as a manager on a farm where we used to take care, see, there's enough people working on the farm and do the right work. And otherwise she was the manager, let's put it that way. So we stayed there for a while, and then we come moving back again to a different one, place where I don't remember that on there. And unfortunately something happened there and Mother passed away.

SIGRIST: Your mother passed away.

SAMET: At the age of forty or, I think, forty-one.

SIGRIST: What did she die of?

SAMET: Ordinarily I'm not sure, but I was told from the older sister, some, like cancer. And in those days they didn't know the difference from cancer, it was operated, and she passed away then. Four or five children were left at that time. I was the youngest one.

SIGRIST: Was your father very sad when she died?

SAMET: Yeah. Well, the children was not capable of themselves to assume the responsibility of the house and the rest of the children. My oldest sister came over. She says, "Well, we have to do something." So she took the other sister with her and another brother got a job somewhere nearby where she lived, and I had to be transferred back to Skalat to an uncle of mine and I was only about eight years old, no education whatever.

SIGRIST: What was living with your uncle like?

SAMET: My uncle there was sort of a religious man, no children, I was the one. When I got there she was, I assumed that she was against her wish to be there.

SIGRIST: You're talking about your uncle's wife.

SAMET: Yeah. For some reason or another there was a big dispute between her and her husband, my uncle, and there were on the verge of separating. She claimed that my father went in through the windows and took the clothes off for him. That was her claim. Anyway, this is part of the dislike to help not him there, but to help me there. But I'm the one. Well, anyway, I began to start learning.

SIGRIST: From your uncle.

SAMET: At that age I had to begin from small, with children where the age maybe six or five or seven, which is, I did not realize at that time. So I was with them there for a little while.

SIGRIST: Did you feel out of place?

SAMET: No, not, I didn't know any different.

SIGRIST: Did you want to learn?

SAMET: Yeah. So I learned as much as I could. I mean, the lower part of it.

SIGRIST: What were they teaching you? What were you learning?

SAMET: I learned (?), education, a Jewish education. And reading and writing. (?) difference of the people.

SIGRIST: You said that your uncle was a religious man.

SAMET: Yeah.

SIGRIST: Does that mean that you had to go to synagogue regularly when you lived . . .

SAMET: Definitely, yes. Three times a day. I say three times a day, I say morning, it can be afternoon there twice. I observed and became confirmed at thirteen years. Usually that

was the time.

SIGRIST: So you lived with your uncle for a number of years.

SAMET: But that was a very unhappy. I didn't have the love, neither from the parents or from them. Neither from the uncle or from her.

SIGRIST: Did you ever see your father?

SAMET: My father was a very different, he got married again there, and he lived, he done a job, whatever it is.

SIGRIST: Did he visit you at all, or did you go to visit him?

SAMET: Eh, within a period of six, seven, eight years he came over to visit me. And one time I went over to visit him, which he didn't recognize me at that time no more, there. When I came over there, he right near, wagon, horse and wagon then. He asked me who I am.

SIGRIST: How did you feel when he asked you who you were?

SAMET: Well, due to the fact I was very innocent about all these things. I begin to feel about the later years how much I lost.

SIGRIST: Did you ever see your older sister or any of your

other brothers and sisters, or no?

SAMET: I, well, if you, my one sister came over to the United States. That's the second from the, the older one was married.

Anyway, I was learning, and I was learning hard. I wanted to be, myself, I wanted to be just like somebody else. My sister felt, especially after the information there, thirteen, fourteen years there, I began to get acquainted with the people, with the boys. There I could, I could understand them, they could understand me there, because I knew, I learned already what I learned. So I began to learn languages, the Polish language, the German language. And partially the Jewish and Hebrew language.

SIGRIST: Did learning come easy to you, or was it harder because you were older?

SAMET: Uh, it was, the will was there. And as long as the will was there, I enjoyed it, and I wanted it. So I learned all these languages until, when I become in age where I began to realize I have nothing to look forward to. I wrote my sister then and she sent me a ticket to come over to the United States.

SIGRIST: When had your sister come over?

SAMET: She come right, I think about a year after Mother

passed away.

SIGRIST: So she had been here for a while by this point.

SAMET: Yeah. Anyway, I began not to observe the ways where my uncle did want to observe. He was a smart man, you know.

SIGRIST: Describe your uncle for me. What was he like as a person?

SAMET: He was a modern person, smart. Very intelligent, but rigid. Not, I wouldn't say orthodox, anything like that, fanatics, you know. He was not. But when I began to show my ways a little bit different what he wanted, he talked to me one time, very seldom he did talked to me. He said, "Look, I don't like what you do. Do whatever you wanted. You want to belong to Zionists here or there, I don't care." Because Zionists was against the Orthodox. "But learning, I want you to learn." That was the words, and I did.

SIGRIST: Well, of course, education was very important to him.

SAMET: That's what I did. Until I was in that age where I got the ticket and my sister, from here, she passed (?). And am I taking away a lot of time now?

SIGRIST: No. I wanted to ask you some more questions about

living with your uncle. Can you describe the house that you lived in when you lived with him?

SAMET: Well, a nice house, a younger house. He was doing business what they call that flax, what they call flax. The thing there that they make clothing out of.

SIGRIST: Flax, sure.

SAMET: And I don't know, he had two or three or four partners there and the whole thing. They done it in a big way there because they had to buy, peasants used to visit them and days, when their market days, two or three times a week they bring it in there. So they had to buy it, and they bring it over to him, and he paid them whatever they asked or whatever he can afford to. And they used to pile it up real high there and bring it in, working like in a factory there.

SIGRIST: So your uncle had some money. It was comfortable?

SAMET: Well, they lived comfortable, yes. She and the other went there, she had a business of her own.

SIGRIST: Your uncle's wife?

SAMET: She had a business, a dairy. Cheese and creams and milk and all this here stuff.

SIGRIST: What was she like as a person?

SAMET: I never talked to her. You had to ask her something there, that's it.

SIGRIST: And, as you said, she wasn't very happy about you being there.

SAMET: That's right. And she done pretty well there because she usually gets the milk from another little hick town delivered from a farm, and she used to take care of it. Sometimes I used to help.

SIGRIST: What did you do?

SAMET: I didn't, (he laughs). When you take the cream off and you put it in tubs so the cream comes up. You take this cream off, and a lot of it. And they had a barrel there, a big barrel with a handle there that you put the cream in there, and you had to keep on turning and turning and turning. Not the old way there. They had one for the old way, but this was the new way, and till the butter churned out. And people used to come and give two cents for butter and a cup of milk there, three cents or four cents, whatever. Everything was a little money.

SIGRIST: Did they keep cows on the property?

SAMET: No, no, no. The cows there was on the farm, and they used to milk them, the farmer sent milk over to the city for somebody. And somebody used to come in once a week to get paid, whatever milk they delivered. So that was a business. So I wanted to go further there, but I stopped when I got the ticket, and I said I want to go to the United States.

SIGRIST: Let me ask you some questions about your sister who was in America. You said she came after your mother died.

SAMET: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What did she do when she got here?

SAMET: Uh, when she got here she, I think she was working as a maid.

SIGRIST: Where in the United States was she?

SAMET: She was in New York. I don't know, when I came there she was already married.

SIGRIST: But when she first got here she wasn't married.

SAMET: That's, she got there before she got married.

And . . .

SIGRIST: Had she been writing you letters back and forth?

SAMET: No. I wrote to her. The only thing she sent me the ticket. The ticket, I think, was thirty dollars. She was making money then, and then she was taking on payments, and sent me the ticket. She used to pay it out, by the time I didn't have any money to go and take a train to come to Hamburg.

SIGRIST: What did you know about America?

SAMET: Nothing. I never read about it, never. I didn't have any idea. The only thing I know there that she is there.

SIGRIST: So you didn't really have any expectations about America.

SAMET: Uh, anyway, I had some friends already went at that time, they loaned me some money to come over here.

SIGRIST: Did you ask your uncle to borrow money?

SAMET: No, I didn't. He never offered any. And he, as I understand, he wanted me to leave, from the pressure coming from his wife. So I came over here right at this building.

SIGRIST: Before we get there, do you remember packing?

SAMET: Yeah. It was nothing to pack. They had a little, a little valise. I had a few things there. I didn't have much there. I had a lot of (?). I didn't take anything along with

me. That was all the packing that I had. No money.

SIGRIST: When you said goodbye to your uncle, was it . . .

SAMET: He was away that day, so I didn't say goodbye. I said goodbye to her. And, something important I was going to say, but I, finally when I got on the train to come over here on the border at that time it was restricted between the German and the Austrian border.

SIGRIST: Did your aunt go with you to the train station?

SAMET: We are on (?). We are supposed to do the duty for service. They took me over there with their friends, both of them. They went together to the police station to give the money, whatever those got. Then they figured out there I can only go to a certain place with that ticket. Further out I got to have money to go home. On the way back, we had to go back to a border, (?). I don't know if you ever heard of that. That was a big, a lot of people used to go through there. I sees my friend there, "What's the use of going home? Let's go over here. We lost our (?), so we go over here." Sure enough we're going through. We went through the other work there, and we hide ourselves in the corner there, somewhere in the train there. Maybe someone was going to come up. We come in, we came to (?), Germany, no money. It was night time, trying to get

information there in Germany. I don't know. They told me they had, like, three trains going to Hamburg, and I had enough money there to buy a ticket for that. So I go in there, there's nothing, no seats, nothing there. You just sit on the floor, whatever. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Very primitive.

SAMET: We got to Hamburg.

SIGRIST: You keep saying "we." Were you traveling with friends?

SAMET: With this man, yes, this friend of mine.

SIGRIST: Who was this man that you were traveling with?

SAMET: A friend of mine.

SIGRIST: Why was he going to America?

SAMET: Uh, he had some problems there with his family, his father, at that time.

SIGRIST: Where did you meet him?

SAMET: He had, he always had some money. That way he had, I don't know. So, anyway, we come to Hamburg. That was a Friday afternoon we arrived there, and no place to go. And I inquired

there because I made my ticket to them, so I didn't want to carry it with me. So they got it all right. What happened, it's four or five o'clock Friday, nighttime, no place to go to sleep, and forget about eating. So we, my friend had a brother in Hamburg. They came along, as we stand they came along to the office. "What are you doing over here?" So I tell him the story. So they brought us. He says, "Don't go there. Come with me there. We'll take care of you."

SIGRIST: Great. That was good for you.

SAMET: So in the meantime I send the telegram, I got a few friends there, they send me some money there. Sure enough they did send some, and paid him whatever he asked for. And got into the boat, the small boat first, then we got on to the big boat.

SIGRIST: So you stayed overnight with your friend's brother?

SAMET: In Hamburg I stayed about three or four days there.

SIGRIST: Three or four days.

SAMET: We were there until the boat was ready to leave.

SIGRIST: Did they, before you got on the boat did they do any examinations?

SAMET: No. I'm going to come to that. And we went on

another boat.

SIGRIST: What was the name of the boat?

SAMET: Uh, the Emperor.

SIGRIST: Do you remember what oceanliner line it was?

SAMET: It was a nice setup inside there. We got two, got two in a room there. And . . .

SIGRIST: And your friend was with you in, you had a cabin in the boat?

SAMET: No. We, everything was just very simple. And . . .

SIGRIST: Did you have a separate room in the boat?

SAMET: The two of us.

SIGRIST: And this was your friend.

SAMET: Yeah.

SIGRIST: What was your friend's name? Do you remember?

SAMET: Uh, Lawter.

SIGRIST: Levita?

SAMET: L-A-W-T-E-R. He's passed away, too. And we had food,

they served food.

SIGRIST: Where did you eat in the boat?

SAMET: Whatever they brought in.

SIGRIST: And where? Did they have a dining room in the boat?

SAMET: Yes, a dining room there, people there, waiters. I wasn't eating very well because during that period of time coming over there I wasn't able to eat anything there. I don't think I was, maybe ninety-five or ninety-eight pounds weight. So it took six days to get here.

SIGRIST: Was it a rough voyage?

SAMET: No. It was rough for some of them, but it was not for us there.

SIGRIST: You didn't get sick.

SAMET: We were higher, not way down on the bottom. We came over here and got into a small boat. I think it was a small boat, then. Brought us on to here.

SIGRIST: To Ellis.

SAMET: Yeah. And they was leading us just like a bunch of cattle. (he laughs) I'm sorry I have to say that.

SIGRIST: That's quite all right.

SAMET: And in the big room there. And we stand in line. People are sitting out there waiting in line, people are going through. My friend went through and I went after him. They put the chalk on the coat, so I don't know what the chalk. Put me on the side. And I went on the side, find out what's, what happened with that, for an examination.

SIGRIST: We need to pause just for a moment.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

SIGRIST: You said they put a chalk mark on your coat.

SAMET: That's for the examination. They examined me. I passed through.

SIGRIST: What kind of examinations did they give you?

SAMET: Oh, you know, the heart and things like that, the eyes. I was all right. The only thing, I was young and not eating enough. Even at my uncle's place there I didn't, they didn't feed me enough anyway there, and I was hungry at times. So after that put me in, what do you call it, around, right around out there, what do you call it? They put, you know, all

the people in there which . . .

SIGRIST: An enclosed area of some sort?

SAMET: Yeah, where you can't get back out. My brother was over here already there. But he was supposed to take me back. So he went over, he showed his papers, everything was all right. And he come over to take me out. Someone called him for some reason or another, so now he's standing right in the middle there. The men, "What are you doing over here?" That's what he said. "Take that right back again (?)." (he laughs) So he comes over to look for me. I'm not around. And then they start searching there what happened to me. So finally he got me there and we got out of there.

SIGRIST: Did you recognize your brother when you saw him?

SAMET: Yeah.

SIGRIST: How, when did he come to America?

SAMET: Well, he was here almost about, say, six, seven years.

SIGRIST: And what was he doing? What did he do when he got here?

SAMET: He was working in a clothing factory, a buttonhole machine, whatever it is there.

SIGRIST: Here in New York.

SAMET: It took me over, he wanted to give me a treat. So he said, "There's some peddlers around the street coming out from here. There's some tomatoes." I never had a tomato in my life. I didn't know what sort of a tomato looks like. (he laughs) So he gave me a tomato and I eat the tomato. I spit it out. I couldn't take it. (he laughs) I said, "What is this, what they give me to eat?" He started laughing, so we kept going there, no tomato. And coming back to New York to Avenue B where lived my step-brother he lived with, they had about two rooms there. They had about his sister and her sister and him, and they had two children there, a man and a wife.

SIGRIST: They had a house full of people. Let me ask you a question. What happened to your friend?

SAMET: He was all right. He went through there all right. He became a window cleaner.

SIGRIST: Did you, but did you say goodbye to him at Ellis Island, or did he go with you to New York?

SAMET: Well, he was gone already there. I couldn't, I couldn't make any (?). But we got in touch after a while then. So anyway, when I came out, I didn't shave. Where I'm going to

sleep, he was sleeping in the kitchen on just a little bed. And I got to go and sleep with him in that little bed there. I didn't sleep in the bed. I was sleeping on the iron things there, you know. And finally I got in touch with my sister. I went to my sister then. I lived with my sister then.

SIGRIST: So how long did you stay in this first apartment? Just overnight?

SAMET: Not much, a couple of days, a couple of days, and that was too much. (he laughs)

SIGRIST: Where did your sister live? Where did your sister live?

SAMET: I lived?

SIGRIST: Where did your sister live? Where did you go to live with your sister?

SAMET: Uh, Union City. You heard of that. Have you heard of that?

SIGRIST: Is that in New York somewhere?

SAMET: No, in New Jersey.

SAMET: It's in New Jersey.

SIGRIST: So I went over there, everything else. I stayed there. She served me some food, and we come to talk what to do with me with all the learning they had, didn't learn enough to support myself to do something for support. Well, one of them tell me they was like a (?) teacher, one was this, the other one was that. I don't know the language, what good is it? It can't be done. Anyway, tell me that they have to go and look for a job with me. I understood, I didn't understand at that time what a job meant. It meant, a job means you have to go to work, and they said it in Yiddish. "You have to go to work." I said, "What is work?" "Just work, in a factory." In my times, the peasants used to work, young, a young kid there. All right. Got a job and in a (?) shop in Hoboken, New Jersey. And, in embroidery . . .

SIGRIST: In Hoboken.

SAMET: . . . shop. A shuttler, they call it. Take shuttles to big machines now, up and down. You have to watch it. The shuttle runs out of cotton, you have to put another one in. Okay.

SIGRIST: How did you get from her house to Hoboken? How did you travel to work?

SAMET: Foot.

SIGRIST: Oh, so it was very close.

SAMET: Uh, every time tell me I got to be there sunup, seven o'clock in the morning. They finish, they have a bell. When the bell rings you go home. (?) See, I think it was on Saturday, too, I believe. Every day, except on Saturday, okay. It's payday. You're given an envelope. You look in the envelope. I open it up, sure enough there was seventy-five cents for the whole week. What are you going to do with seventy-five cents? So I buy a roll or a cup of coffee, a roll for a penny and black coffee. Then I had to pay two dollars for a room there, a month.

SIGRIST: To your sister?

SAMET: Near to her.

SIGRIST: Oh, you got your own room after a while.

SAMET: Yeah. And what happened . . .

SIGRIST: Did you move to Hoboken? Did you have a room in Hoboken?

SAMET: Yeah.

SIGRIST: That's where you lived . . .

SAMET: Union City.

SIGRIST: Oh, but just near where your sister lived.

SAMET: Union City.

SIGRIST: Did you live by yourself?

SAMET: That's right.

SIGRIST: Or did you have a roommate or . . .

SAMET: A little room there. But evidently, I only stayed there one night. There were so many mosquitoes down there, they bit me up to pieces. I was afraid to walk out. So I got out of there, and got somewhere else, not as bad. Come the second week, I had the pay, there was a dollar. We had an increase of twenty-five cents. Well, I thought to myself it's not for me, I wasn't brought up that way. And I can't get nothing else because on account of the language. So I went to night school.

I was going to night school one night. There was a bunch of people there that they even didn't know their ABC. They learned it after. And the second night I said, "What am I learning over here? I can't learn nothing that way." So I quit it. Now, the question here was what are you going to do in order to learn?

SIGRIST: Yeah, how?

SAMET: To learn, they had a newspaper they called The Observer, and I bought the newspaper and I started reading. Excuse me. And I read. Whatever I didn't understand, I matched it up to make the sentence, understand what it is.

SIGRIST: And that's how you learned English.

SAMET: And I kept on studying every day, studying that, studying that and studying. It took me about three months. Finally after that I got myself a job and, also in Union City. Near western Hoboken there's a building there, the Prudential Insurance Company. Fine. They had it in Jersey City, Jersey is Five Corners, it's still there. I got the job collecting and writing some insurance.

SIGRIST: What year is this?

SAMET: Whatever I could. It was new to me. But we had a manager over there, he was a dog. We used to have a meeting there on Saturday afternoon there, raise the hell out of him. He says, "Anybody can't write, get the hell out. Get out of here." Well, I didn't. I stayed. I was making about six, seven dollars a week.

SIGRIST: Well, and you must have learned English very well in order to have a job like this.

SAMET: I did.

SIGRIST: What year is this? What year did you get the job at the insurance company?

SAMET: I was there with them I think three, four years.

SIGRIST: And what was . . .

SAMET: What year, I don't remember. But I do remember I then began to go out with a girl as a young boy, I mean. We met together and went together. A very nice girl. She was also a foreigner but she knew the language very well.

SIGRIST: What country did she come from?

SAMET: She came from Starysuncz, Poland.

SIGRIST: Starysuncz.

SAMET: That's Stary, it means old. Suncz, the name of the. And we went back in company there for a few years, probably two or three years I went in. I kind of got discouraged now with the job, I have to go to collect at Five Corners. They have men working for the Pennsylvania Station and the trains, and if you didn't catch them when they get paid they're in the tavern there spending, you know, on the day before on everything. So I had to get there before anything like that. That was tough. You

had to go on Sunday and try to catch them, because in the insurance business if you lose some business you have to make it up or you don't get no commission on the new ones.

SIGRIST: Did you like working in the insurance business?

SAMET: Yeah, but I began to feel that it's not enough. I'm not getting nowhere anyway there.

SIGRIST: Because you came from a different country, did you feel out of place there?

SAMET: No, I did not. I, as a rule, even today, I like people all the time. I like to speak to people and to get ideas of their mind. I don't know if it made a difference whether they agreed or not, there wasn't any time to have any problem with anyone.

SIGRIST: Were there other people who had been immigrants that were working for this company?

SAMET: Yeah. So anyway we decided to settle in, my wife, I got married.

SIGRIST: What year did you get married?

SAMET: In 1918, four years later. I think, I'm not sure what date it was.

SIGRIST: Was this the girl that you had been going with, or was this somebody new?

SAMET: No, no, the same girl that I met there. We lived together seventy years.

SIGRIST: Ah. And she was from Poland also?

SAMET: Yeah. And I got a business, I had to open up a candy store. And also in Jersey, on Central Avenue and First Street. I didn't have much money there. I got together pieces here and there and stopped at a candy store. I was doing very well. Very good. But we got there six o'clock in the morning and twelve o'clock at night, a young chap. And she didn't like it. She had seen what was wrong at that time, already huh. Somebody came along there, and he wants to buy it. He owed me three thousand dollars. At that time, three thousand dollars, I was a half a millionaire. So I'll take, I'll sell it, and I'll get something else. But enough, (?), and not enough experience to go on to do something else. So I got some other business in Rutherford, New Jersey and I had some friends, I was acquainted with them. They were in that business, children's clothing, had a nice store there that opened up, a lot of money there. And they helped me to shop and this and that.

SIGRIST: You accomplished quite a bit in just those few years after you first got here.

SAMET: That's not enough, that's not enough.

SIGRIST: Let me ask you, we only have a . . .

SAMET: I'm not taking up too much time here?

SIGRIST: No. We only have a few more minutes left and I have a couple of questions I want to ask you specifically. One is did you like America? Did you like the country when you got here?

SAMET: I come to it. By the way, until I became thirty-five, thirty, thirty-five, I was struggling to go back, here and there, business. Nothing worked. Even if I had something that did work, I always got a competition. In those years especially anybody was doing real well, then somebody comes in competition there and knocks you out. Finally the Depression. I had a store in East Orange, a luncheonette. I put a lot of money in there, not all the money there, the payments. And after there were two or three people working with me, we were doing very well. The Depression came along. You know when the Depression comes along, the people we used to have coming in, I used to have a nice trade come in and I used to give them cigars, three for a dollar, and groceries. When that come along, there were

all people that used to work, professionals, they used to pass me by there because they used to buy five cent cigars instead of three for a dollar. And during the Depression I tried my best again and couldn't revive it. I got out, no money, no work. I had to give it up. I was out of work a while. Finally another friend I got acquainted with there, he was in the business. I went to work for him there. By the time I got through there I didn't have enough even for the fare using the car. I got acquainted there with the man from the office where he used to purchase their merchandise, coin operated machines. I went over to him and I said, "Now, look." I knew him. I got acquainted with him through talking with him. "I got no money. I'm can only tell you I have a wife and I have a son and I've got to make a living and I can't make a living. If there's any way you can help me out." He says to me, "Well," he says to me, "I'm only a manager over here. There's no way I can help you out. The only thing I can help you out, you want to go and buy whatever merchandise it is, don't buy them, these equipments. I'll rent them to you." I says, "Good." So I went around, I got a few cases here and there. I didn't have the car at that time already. So I used to hire a cab to bring it over. Finally things worked out very well, very good, and the best way after those each, to start, to do something. So then I didn't, I stayed till retirement, I was seventy-two years old. I didn't

want to give in there because I wanted to make a little money.
There was money there.

SIGRIST: You were very lucky.

SAMET: That's it.

SIGRIST: Very fortunate.

SAMET: I was unlucky. I did not enjoy it. I got too old
already. My wife, older, and if you want to enjoy it it was too
late. So here I am.

SIGRIST: Did you ever see your father again or communicate with
your father?

SAMET: No.

SIGRIST: What about any . . .

SAMET: Well, you know what happened during the war. There's
nothing, there's nothing left as far as family is concerned.

SIGRIST: Did any of your other brothers and sisters who were
still in Poland, did they ever come to America after you came?

SAMET: No.

SIGRIST: Well, we have just one minute left. Let me just ask

you the question I asked you before. Are you happy, do you like this country? Was this country good to you?

SAMET: Well, as I said before, I did like it. I did not expect anything the best. I didn't think I deserved that much.

But the atmosphere of the people, the way they lived and the way they reacted amongst each other, I felt this is the best way to live. And that's the way I have it as today. I have people, I have been together with them, that know me from years, they take me around and they, whatever. I live in a East Orange. I suppose you know that. Small, like a senior citizens outfit there. And they like me.

SIGRIST: And you're happy there.

SAMET: I'm happy with them. They're happy with me. And I do some writing for them. I do a lot of writing.

SIGRIST: You'll have to play the tape for them of your interview.

SAMET: And I go to the Y, the same way. And the little family I still have, they like me, and they love me.

SIGRIST: Well, it sounds to me like you've had a very full and active life by all means, and I want to thank you, you know, for taking time out and coming here to . . .

SAMET: Thank you very much, then.

SIGRIST: It was our pleasure. This is Paul Sigrist signing off
for the National Park Service.