

EI-926

VICTORIA POLEWKA SLUSARCZYK

BIRTHDATE: APRIL 16, 1894

INTERVIEW DATE: AUGUST 19, 1997

AGE AT TIME OF INTERVIEW: 103

RUNNING TIME: 17:58

INTERVIEWER: ROGER HERZ

RECORDING ENGINEER: PETER HOM

INTERVIEW LOCATION: ELLIS ISLAND

**TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY: TAPESCRIBE, GREGORY RYTEL-
(POLISH)**

TRANSCRIPT REVIEWED BY:

POLAND, 1912

AGE: 18

SHIP: LUSITANIA

PORT: NOT GIVEN

RESIDENCES:

POLAND: CIEKLIN

U.S:

ORAL HISTORIANS NOTE: C. Slusarczyk mixes English and Polish words together to create hybrid words.

HERZ: Good morning. This is Roger Herz for the National Park Service. Today is August 19th, 1997 [clears throat] and I'm in the studios at Ellis Island, speaking with Victoria Polewka Slusarczyk, who came in –from Poland when she was 18 years old.

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, I—I was 18.

HERZ: I'm also joined by Chester Slusarczyk, her son. Victoria, could we start out by you giving us your birth date, the—the day you were born?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *W jakim – jaki dzien i w jakim roku mama się urodziła.*

SLUSARCZYK: *Kiedy sie urodziłam? .*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: I forgot something, I don't know.

HERZ: Your birthday.

C. SLUSARCZYK: April 16th, [unclear]. April 16th, 1894.

SLUSARCZYK: No, I got—I [unclear] have nineteen years.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Your birthday, *kiedy urodziny mamy?*.

SLUSARCZYK: Jak?.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Jakie urodziny? Jakie dzień? W Kwietniu nie, Kwietniu, szesnastego Kwietnia nie?*

SLUSARCZYK: *.Szesnastego Kwietnia* or something.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, 1894 *nie? Prawda czy nie?*

SLUSARCZYK: In April, 19—

C. SLUSARCZYK: 1894. And—

SLUSARCZYK: (not understood)

C. SLUSARCZYK: 103, Ma.

SLUSARCZYK: 103?

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: And what was the town that you were born in?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *W jakim mieście mama? W jakim mieście mama urodzona była?*

SLUSARCZYK: In Poland, in farm.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: Do—

C. SLUSARCZYK: *W jakim miasto? Co to jest, miasto?.*

SLUSARCZYK: Poland, (not clear).

C. SLUSARCZYK: Powiat—

SLUSARCZYK: Powiat, Jasło.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, Cieklin is a suburb. Jasło is the town, the big town. Jasło.

HERZ: And you said you lived on a farm?

SLUSARCZYK: In a farm.

HERZ: Do you—

SLUSARCZYK: In a—I got—19 or 20 years, I come here. And I go to working.

HERZ: Do you remember a little bit about your mother?

SLUSARCZYK: Huh?

HERZ: Your mother?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Mama jak—*.

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, she's die already.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: What was your mother's name?

SLUSARCZYK: Mother, Katherine.

HERZ: Katherine.

SLUSARCZYK: Katherine Polewka.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: Can you tell us—

SLUSARCZYK: Yes, mother.

- HERZ: Can you tell us a little bit about your mother?
- SLUSARCZYK: What?
- HERZ: Do you remember your mother?
- C. SLUSARCZYK: *Czy możecie powiedzieć coś o mamusi? Mamie mama?.*
- SLUSARCZYK: Oh, she's—my father dies. She's with—with him and she got six kids and w—
- C. SLUSARCZYK: And work on the farm.
- SLUSARCZYK: And his—good— *dobre wychowanie.*
- C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, so you're getting a good living, you know.
- SLUSARCZYK: And—
- C. SLUSARCZYK: And—
- SLUSARCZYK: After a while, I have 18 years, this, I come here.
- HERZ: Do you re—do you remember a little bit about your father?
- C. SLUSARCZYK: Oh, oh, *tata mama rozumie, pamienta coś o— jak tata był? Jaki mama tata?*
- SLUSARCZYK: I don't think—my father died a long time—
- C. SLUSARCZYK: How old you was—
- SLUSARCZYK: That's my mother [unclear]—
- C. SLUSARCZYK: How old you was when—when your tata died?
- SLUSARCZYK: Huh?
- C. SLUSARCZYK: *Jaka stara mama była jak ojciec umar. -.*
- SLUSARCZYK: *Ojciec umar?.*
- C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.
- SLUSARCZYK: Maybe 17. *Jak father die.*

HERZ: And he was a farmer?

SLUSARCZYK: [unclear] while I was—

C. SLUSARCZYK: [unclear].

SLUSARCZYK: —19 or 20 and I come here.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Eighteen.

SLUSARCZYK: And a care of myself and I marry and live and have kids. And that's all.

HERZ: Do you remember—

C. SLUSARCZYK: [unclear].

HERZ: Excuse me.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Okay.

HERZ: Do you remember a little bit about your farm where you were as a child?

SLUSARCZYK: *Jak?*

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Jak, mama pamienta o farmie tam gdzie mama mieszkała na farmie, jak to było na tej farmie. Coś to miały tam, co—*

SLUSARCZYK: Because my father die. I am young.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: And is my mother, wi—with her.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: And she got six kids, or seven. And after a while, I get 18 years, I come here.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Yeah. Co na farmie, co tam, mama pamienta farmie? Mama pamienta?*

SLUSARCZYK: On the farm—

SLUSARCZYK: Before, in Poland, I work—work in a farm.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yes. *Co tam było? Jakie—?*

SLUSARCZYK: Farm.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: Potatoes and everything. Farm, farm.

HERZ: What—what things—what type of work did you do on the farm?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Co tam robili na farmie, co wy robili na farmie? Jaka robotę?*

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Co robili na farmie— (unclear)?*

SLUSARCZYK: Potatoes and plant potatoes—and cut the *na żniwą*—

C. SLUSARCZYK: Wheat. *Powiec—*

SLUSARCZYK: *Coś tam rosło to my żnily ręką.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Oh, they cut it by hand, cut whatever they had to cut.

SLUSARCZYK: Farm job.

HERZ: Did you do—

SLUSARCZYK: Helping my mother (unclear) and hard work. And [several words unclear] at 18 years, I come here.

HERZ: Do you—do you re—

SLUSARCZYK: Here myself and marry and have a kids. every kids. I got good kids.

HERZ: Uh-hmm.

SLUSARCZYK: [unclear]. That's all.

HERZ: Do you remember a little bit about the town that you lived in?
The people—

SLUSARCZYK: *Co?*

C. SLUSARCZYK: On—

HERZ: —as a child?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Mama pamięta o mieście gdzie mama mieszkała, czy to Cieklin—.*

SLUSARCZYK: No, in Poland.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Cieklin.

SLUSARCZYK: Not—not *tam*. Just Poland. Farm.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Cieklin is a suburb.

SLUSARCZYK: A farm worker.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Yeah, Cieklin to było, nie było miasto, malutka miasto było? Nie, to tylko farmy.*

SLUSARCZYK: No, no.

SLUSARCZYK: In Poland, farms.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Just like a province. You know, like—there was no—

SLUSARCZYK: And my mother [unclear] and after a while, I grow. Eighteen years, I come here.

HERZ: Did you—did you go to school as a child?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Mama szła do szkoły tam?.*

SLUSARCZYK: My kids?

HERZ: No, you.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Do szkoły mama. Szła do szkoły w Polce?*

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, I—I—eighth—eighth grade.

HERZ: The eighth grade.

SLUSARCZYK: And after a while, I come here, the—the—

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: Then I just stayed.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Y—

HERZ: Do you—

SLUSARCZYK: [unclear] in Poland.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: Did your whole—did your whole—

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: —family—

SLUSARCZYK: When I got 18—18 or 19—

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: —from Poland, I come here.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: After a while, I marry.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: And I got twenty years.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Mama, jak się nazywała szkoła co mama poszła? Jaką szkołę?*

SLUSARCZYK: Catholic School, St. John. (not understood)

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Szkoła?*

SLUSARCZYK: *Szkoła.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Co była, parafia jaka?*

SLUSARCZYK: Parish, parish.

C. SLUSARCZYK: The Parish of the—

HERZ: The Paris school?

SLUSARCZYK: School. Yeah—

C. SLUSARCZYK: A Catholic—

SLUSARCZYK: [unclear] farmer. Farmer.

HERZ: Uh-huh.

SLUSARCZYK: [unclear].

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: And the church? Did you—

SLUSARCZYK: Church, we had a nice church. [unclear].

HERZ: Can you—do you remember?

SLUSARCZYK: Everything a nice—

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Jak się nazywa— jaka parafia?*

SLUSARCZYK: St. John Cantius.

C. SLUSARCZYK: St. John Cantius.

SLUSARCZYK: St. John Cantius—

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Tu St. John Cantius— ale tam co było?*

SLUSARCZYK: Huh?

C. SLUSARCZYK: Both, *jako się nazywała parafia?*

SLUSARCZYK: St. John, Cantius.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Tu tak samo jak mamy tu?*

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Tutaj? My należamy do—*

SLUSARCZYK: *Świętego Jana Cantego. Tam w Polce.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Tam w Polce?*

SLUSARCZYK: *W Polce.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, St. John, Cantius.

SLUSARCZYK: St. John, Cantius.

HERZ: Do—do you remember what the church looked like?

SLUSARCZYK: I have 18 years; I come here.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Ma, mama pamienta jak kościół wyglądał? Czy to—*

SLUSARCZYK: *Świętego Jana Cantego.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Wielki kościół, czy mały?*

SLUSARCZYK: Nice—nice building, new church.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Wielki czy malutki, jaki był?*

SLUSARCZYK: Not—not bigger and—and, well, farm—

C. SLUSARCZYK: Farm—it's a small church.

SLUSARCZYK: Farm—

C. SLUSARCZYK: But she—

SLUSARCZYK: Catholic school, Catholic church and—

HERZ: Do you remember your trip to America?

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Mama pamienta—*

SLUSARCZYK: Lusitania—

C. SLUSARCZYK: Ma—

SLUSARCZYK: I got 18 years, I come here.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Mama, on się nie pytał to—*

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Mama pamienta w Polce jak tu przyjechała I na jakim okręcie? Ni pamienta, jak z Polce mama—przyjechała na train-ie, I po tym no okręcie—*

SLUSARCZYK: *A po tym na boat-cie*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah—

HERZ: You took the boat here.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: *Na boat, yeah.*

HERZ: And—and when you left your farm, went away from the farm, how did you go from the farm to the boat? Was it easy?

SLUSARCZYK: From the Poland, I come, now, train.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: On the boat to—*do* New York.

HERZ: Uh-hmm, and—

SLUSARCZYK: And then New York, take a boat and come here.

HERZ: Do you remember the boat?

SLUSARCZYK: Boat.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: I come—I—I was in a—in Poland and go *na—na* boat, seven day or eight day —

C. SLUSARCZYK: No, no.

SLUSARCZYK: The boat and come here, and after a while, go to work—working and marry and have kids and live.

HERZ: And the boat—

SLUSARCZYK: Not so bad.

HERZ: You were on the boat for seven days?

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah. Seven days, the boat.

HERZ: W—was it easy?

SLUSARCZYK: Huh?

HERZ: Was it easy? Did you have play or did you eat on the boat?

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, that—I think. You know, you go on a boat. They give you—eating. Only that's it.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Było trudno? Było trudno?*

SLUSARCZYK: *Jak?*

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Było trudno, czy dobrze było? Trudno było—Was it hard, Ma, or was it easy—*

SLUSARCZYK: Not—

C. SLUSARCZYK: —on the boat?

SLUSARCZYK: My mother was by me to guard— on the boat. And I come here and—

HERZ: And—

SLUSARCZYK: —I got job. And after a while, two—two or three years, I marry and afterwards got kids and—

HERZ: What—what kind of—

SLUSARCZYK: And live eight kids.

HERZ: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: School. A regular—

HERZ: What kind of a job did you get when you came here?

SLUSARCZYK: Bake. Baker.

HERZ: In a bakery.

SLUSARCZYK: Bake company. Bake.

C. SLUSARCZYK: No, the name of the company—

SLUSARCZYK: Sewing bag.

HERZ: Oh, a bag company.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Sewing clothes and [unclear].

HERZ: Uh-huh.

SLUSARCZYK: Come on, *chodz*.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, wait, Mom.

HERZ: And—and how many children did you have?

SLUSARCZYK: I have seven. And after a while, kids marry and I get 18 years before—I got 18 years. I come here—

HERZ: Do you—

SLUSARCZYK: —and marry and I got seven or eight kids.

C. SLUSARCZYK: And how many grandchildren [unclear]—

SLUSARCZYK: [unclear] kids marry—

HERZ: [laughs] What was your husband's name?

SLUSARCZYK: And I got husband and husband die and—

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Co imię, powieć imię.*

SLUSARCZYK: Huh?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Imię, tatowy imię powieć.*

SLUSARCZYK: John Polewka.

C. SLUSARCZYK: John Slusarczyk. Polewka, *Mome imię.*

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: John—

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: John Slusarczyk.

SLUSARCZYK: Slusarczyk my husband.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

SLUSARCZYK: My—my father named Polewka.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: Do you remember the name of the boat that you came on?

SLUSARCZYK: *Powiadeszło.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah *ale co imię tego boat-a co mama—*

SLUSARCZYK: *Tam— jak ojciec się nazywał.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: No, no. *imię ten boat, okręt co mam przyszła na—*

SLUSARCZYK: Boat?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Jakie imię.* Yeah, boat.

SLUSARCZYK: *Ja nie pamiętam jaki boat.* I did, no, take it boat in (not understood) Jasło. You know Jasło in Poland?

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yeah. *Ale co imię boat-a był co jak mama przyszła?*

SLUSARCZYK: *Nie pamiętam*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Lusitania, yeah? Lusitania?

SLUSARCZYK: *Ja nie pamiętam, gdzie ja tam—*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Okay you don't, she don't—she says she don't remember. But I think it was [unclear].

HERZ: What were the na—

SLUSARCZYK: I come and—it was two years. I go to work in bag company. And after a while I marry and I got kids and live in—

- HERZ: What are the names of your children?
- SLUSARCZYK: I have six kids.
- HERZ: What are the names?
- C. SLUSARCZYK: *Powiec imię każdego jednego, każdego jednego.*
- SLUSARCZYK: Oh.
- C. SLUSARCZYK: Mariszka—
- SLUSARCZYK: Mary. Mary. I—was Mary Polewka.
- HERZ: Yeah—
- SLUSARCZYK: I got Mary Polewka name.
- C. SLUSARCZYK: *Imię dzieci, imię dzieci.*
- SLUSARCZYK: Some—my daughter, Mary Polewka, Frank Polewka, Grzegorz Polewka.
- C. SLUSARCZYK: That's her brothers and sisters.
- HERZ: Uh-hmm.
- SLUSARCZYK: *Jaki, Joe. Grzegorz I kto?*
- C. SLUSARCZYK: Grzegorz—
- SLUSARCZYK: Frank—
- C. SLUSARCZYK: Frank.
- SLUSARCZYK: *A to Polands. Not here.*
- C. SLUSARCZYK: I want to— *ale on się pisał, mamy dzieci—*
- SLUSARCZYK: *No to moje dzieci.*
- C. SLUSARCZYK: No, *ja dziecko jestem—*
- SLUSARCZYK: Huh?

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Ja dziecko jestem!*

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *I kto więcej to jest?*

SLUSARCZYK: Oh, W Polce— My mother had the kids—

C. SLUSARCZYK: No, *Mamy familia tutaj, tu! Stąd.*

SLUSARCZYK: Oh, I don't know. (not understood)

C. SLUSARCZYK: Mariszka, Tadek, *Ja*, Regina, Lodzka.

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *On to się pytał. Możesz powiedzieć?*

SLUSARCZYK: *To powiedz!*

C. SLUSARCZYK: Powiedz od starszego, Marisza była (not understood)

HERZ: Do—

SLUSARCZYK: To najstarsza była— daughter, Mary Polewka.

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Nie Polewka, Slusarczyk. Mary, i po tym co?*

SLUSARCZYK: Mary, Frank—

HERZ: Mrs. Slusarczyk—

SLUSARCZYK: *Najstarszy był brat.*

C. SLUSARCZYK: *Ni mamy familia! Okay.*

HERZ: Do you remember on the boat—

SLUSARCZYK: *O daj mi spokój! I go home, Come on.*

HERZ: Mrs.—

C. SLUSARCZYK: Wait— *czekaj.*

HERZ: One more question.

C. SLUSARCZYK: Yes.

HERZ: One more question.

SLUSARCZYK: I go home.

HERZ: Do you remember when you came on the boat, seeing the Statue of Liberty?

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: What was—what did it feel like when you saw that?

SLUSARCZYK: Nice. I'm glad I came here. I'm glad. I love him. Before, I like—[laughs] now, too. That's United States. I like.

HERZ: Are—are you—

SLUSARCZYK: Is good. I got seven kids. Grow, everybody nice, good one, healthy. That's not [unclear]. That's nothing. Good kids and—

C. SLUSARCZYK: She was sitting—

SLUSARCZYK: —and my husband and I. I'm older and poor lady in—

C. SLUSARCZYK: She was sitting on—by the wall over there looking at the Statue of Liberty with me, you know, and she was saying, "Come on. Come on." You know, [laughs] like the lady was calling us.

SLUSARCZYK: And that's why I like the United States and—and I two—two or three years here single. And after a while, marry and after a while I got seven kids.

C. SLUSARCZYK: I hope you can—

SLUSARCZYK: And kids grow and husband die. And my—this is my—I widow and kids—

HERZ: Do—

SLUSARCZYK: —marry. This—

HERZ: You—you speak—

SLUSARCZYK: Everyone gets marry.

HERZ: You speak pretty good English. Do you remember what it was like to—

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah.

HERZ: —learn English?

SLUSARCZYK: In Poland, everybody Ca—Catholic and—and good—good kids. And I leave kids in Poland and come to—to United States. After a while, I marry and I have kids here.

HERZ: Hmm.

SLUSARCZYK: With my husband. After a while, my husband die. This, I stay with my kids.

HERZ: Well, I—I think this is a good—

SLUSARCZYK: And my kids good, not trouble with—with—with the jail, not trouble. Nothing. Just very good. This coming— very good thing.

HERZ: Well, I think that's a good place to end the interview and I want to thank you very much—

SLUSARCZYK: Yeah, okay.

HERZ: —for taking your time.

SLUSARCZYK: Okay.

HERZ: This is Roger Herz—

SLUSARCZYK: Thank you.

HERZ: —and we've speaking with—

SLUSARCZYK: Come on Chester.

HERZ: —Victoria Slusarczyk—

SLUSARCZYK: Come on. Yeah.

HERZ: —for the Ellis Island Oral History Project. And today is August 19th, 1997.

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SLUSARCZYK: Okay.

HERZ: Thank you.

[END OF INTERVIEW]