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JOSEPHINE JASINSKI

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POLAND (AUSTRIA-HUNGARY), 1911

AGE 15

PASSAGE ON "KAISER WILHELM DER GROSSE"

GUMB: This Dana Gumb, and I'm speaking with Mrs. Josephine Jasinski on the 23rd day of January, 1986. We're beginning this interview at 1:20. We're about to interview Mrs. Jasinski about her immigration experience from Poland in the year 1911. Okay, Mrs. Jasinski, if we could begin with where and when you were born?

JASINSKI: I was born in the eastern part of Galicia, Austria at that time. And raised there until I was fifteen years of age. Then I came to the States. And November 30th I left home, and I arrived in New York 5th day of December on Hamburg American Lines. And the name of the boat was Kaiser Wilhelm the Great [Kaiser Wilhelm Der Grosse]. And I got to New York, to Castle Gardens, because I was going further. I went to Chicago because you, you had to have somebody, you had to have an address of somebody that you could come to this country. Otherwise you could not come. So I traveled with a girlfriend, and she had a cousin in Chicago. So I went with her on her address. And there I got the job, and I worked, uh, 1911. uh, I worked in, living out, doing housework, general housework. And then my dad, 1930, he came to this country and he came by me to Chicago. And then I, He wanted to be with me, so I left the housework and went to work in the factory and I boarded with him there, my cousin. And I was in Chicago for five years. And my dad couldn't get a job in Chicago so we had a friend in Newark, New Jersey that

offered him a job and he came to Newark. Then about five months he sended for me, he sent that I should come to Jersey. And I, when I was living out, doing housework, and I worked for four years, and in 1919 I got married. And from then on I raised the three boys. (She laughs.)

GUMB: Okay. If we could go back to, um, to Austria--

JASINSKI: Never. I never went back. It wasn't much interested, because 1911, and you know 1913 the war, World War One broke out.

GUMB: But the town, where you were born, Galicia. Can you say that again, the town?

JASINSKI: The town I was born, I could tell you the name, but I could spell it to you.

GUMB: Could you spell it?

JASINSKI: H-O, no, H-R-O-D-Y-C-Z-E.

GUMB: What, what do you remember of Galicia?

JASINSKI: What?

GUMB: What do you remember of the town?

JASINSKI: Oh, it was a small town, about four hundred residents. It was a beautiful little town.

GUMB: What did, what did your father do there for a living?

JASINSKI: My father, well, he was really by trade a farmer but he used to, to, he was quite a politician, so he went lobbying. In other words, you just could quote him as a farmer. He had a dairy business. And that's all I can tell you about that.

GUMB: Did you go to school there?

JASINSKI: I went, yes, to all four grades. And, uh, a year to, well, continuation, like once a week, like that. I took a part of a high school education.

GUMB: So, how old were you when you decided to come to America?

JASINSKI: Fifteen. I didn't decide. My dad decided.

GUMB: Okay. Your dad decided for you.

JASINSKI: He decided for me, yeah.

GUMB: So you went, uh, with your dad?

JASINSKI: No. I went myself with another girl, as I told you.

GUMB: Oh, that's right, yeah.

JASINSKI: Yes.

GUMB: How old was the other girl?

JASINSKI: Oh, she was about twenty-five. She was older than me.

GUMB: Was she a relative?

JASINSKI: No, no. Just a neighbor, from the same town as I was, yes.

GUMB: So why did your father decide to send you to America?

JASINSKI: Lack of money. (She laughs.) He asked me, really, he went under, he went broke and, you know, let's face it. People used to come and say how great it is here, so he thought, well, that I should go and work and try to help and to get up out of the hole that they was in.

GUMB: It seems, fifteen, that seems young.

JASINSKI: Yes. Oh well, you know, in Europe, fifteen, you had to battle for yourself already. So I came here. I went and I lied about my age until one time an old lady where I worked, the mother of the Mrs., she cornered me, she says, "Just tell me how old you really are and when did you come here?" And I said I was here a year or so. That's what she was told in the agency in order to get the job, so you fibbed.

GUMB: Oh, you were really younger?

JASINSKI: No, I was fifteen. But I said in the agency, I said I was seventeen.

GUMB: Oh, yeah. Right.

JASINSKI: So--

GUMB: When your father told you that he wanted you to come here,
how did you feel? How did you feel about it?

JASINSKI: You know what? Honest truth, I don't know. I just, I
guess, was stunned, that's all.

GUMB: Did you feel sad, or--

JASINSKI: No. I didn't feel sad. I, as I says, pays to be dumb once in a
while. And I was scared, not sad, but scared. Long, out, of the first time of your life
coming from home of seven children. and I really was scared.

GUMB: How did your mother feel about it?

JASINSKI: Well. my mother, she felt bad and she says, "Well, you just go for
a couple of years to help us along." Well she passed away before, during the World War
One. As I said, my dad came here. So--

GUMB: Well, so you remember a lot of, uh, growing up there. You remember
a lot of hardship that, uh, was very difficult?

JASINSKI: Hardship? Well, you could call it hardship. You mean,
out in Europe?

GUMB: Yeah. Back in Europe, before you left.

JASINSKI: No, no, I don't. As I told you, my dad was quite a politician and we were pretty well off. You know, I never remember being hungry. I never remember, like you would hear so many people come, hardship. No, I don't. I don't remember that. I remember when they went broke and had to sell everything, that was, well, they had, uh cows and horses. They had to sell that in order to pay the debts.

GUMB: Why did they go broke? Do you remember?

JASINSKI: (She laughs.) I don't know. They tell you and the different things they say and different business. But I--

GUMB: Do you remember how old you were when that happened?

JASINSKI: Oh, twelve, thirteen, fourteen. And one night my dad come home and some, uh girl, a woman, she was about thirty years old, she came back from this country to Poland and she was telling how, you know, how easy it is to get jobs and do this, and how well you were paid. So my dad decided that they're going to send me. I was, at that time, the oldest in the family. So, of course, I was it.

GUMB: Okay. Um. okay. Yeah, uh, as far as your, your family, uh, the going broke, was that shortly before you left?

JASINSKI: Yes, yes. And that's the reason I left.

GUMB: You had, uh, six, did you say six other brothers and sisters?

JASINSKI: What?

GUMB: How big was the family?

JASINSKI: Oh, living was seven of us. At the time I left home it was, well, seven again because my sister, oldest sister got married and lost her husband and she came back with the children, so there was seven of us. Of course, my dad and my mother.

GUMB: What kind of house did you live in there?

JASINSKI: Well, a nice, my dad built a house and built it up. He got in debt, he built quite a nice house, a brick house. We had four rooms and we had quite a nice, nice property.

GUMB: Okay. So once your father had decided that you were going to come to America, do you remember what procedures you had to go through?

JASINSKI: Why sure. You had to go to the agency and you had to pay, at that time, eighty dollars a trip.

GUMB: Eighty dollars for what?

JASINSKI: For cross, to come to the States.

GUMB: Oh, for the ticket.

JASINSKI: So my dad borrowed the money and bought the ticket and sent me out. So I went and I got here, as I told you, and--

GUMB: Well, before we get there, were there any other procedures? Did you have to go to the American Consulate or anything to, uh--

JASINSKI: No. Well, the procedure, no, I don't remember anything. I know my dad bought a ticket, but when I got here to New York, well, there was quite a procedure because, uh, if you had nobody to go to, you had to address, back you go, because they would not leave you or if nobody claimed you, they called the St. Joseph's Home and they used to put, if nobody claimed them, then they were sent back. So I, as I told you, I came with this woman, and-

GUMB: What was that about St. Joseph's Home?

JASINSKI: (She laughs.) You know, refugees, you would call the refugees, goes there. That's all I can tell you. That's all I remember.

GUMB: Wendy? Okay. So, um, uh, you were, uh, making the arrangements to leave, uh, your, the, the old country, to leave the old country. What did you take with you? What were your, what kind of things did you take with you?

JASINSKI: Uh, a pair of shoes, a change of clothes and some money. That's it.

GUMB: Any special possessions?

JASINSKI: No.

GUMB: No souvenirs or mementos?

JASINSKI: No, no.

GUMB: Do you remember how much money?

JASINSKI: When I got to Castle garden I had thirteen dollars left and I got there, going to, you know, well, when you first got into there you had to, there was a gentleman there, at the desk, and ask you if you have any money on you, or your, I told him, I says, "Yes, I have thirteen dollars." And I went to give him the money, and he says he does not want the money. Just give him one dollar.

GUMB: You gave him one dollar?

JASINSKI: One dollar. And for one dollar they gave you a lunch box because I was going on the train from, uh, you know, from the harbor I was going through Castle Gardens and then right straight on the train to Chicago.

GUMB: What language did you use talking to that man?

JASINSKI: Polish. He was a Pole. I couldn't use English. I didn't speak it. No, no, they, you know, they was pretty well prepared for "greenies." It's funny, but it's true.

GUMB: Okay. What kind of lunch was it, for a dollar?

JASINSKI: Oh, you know, one of those short, hard salamis, banana, orange, and a couple of rolls. Slices of bread, that's it.

GUMB: Had you seen a banana or orange before?

JASINSKI: Oh, yes. Banana I never had at home, but I know what they was. You never had one at home. But oranges, yes, we had.

GUMB: All right. Uh, well, getting back to the old country, uh, uh, what about passports? How did you get a passport? Did you have to--? Do you remember?

JASINSKI: You had to go to the, to the State. Well, that, afterwards, I didn't do it. My dad done. You had to go to the State and get the passport. You had to have a passport.

GUMB: Okay. So, uh, what, what port did you leave from?

JASINSKI: Hamburg, Germany. and Hamburg American Lines from Hamburg.

GUMB: How did you get there from, uh--

JASINSKI: On the train. It was, I think, we were overnight, twenty-four hours from the place where I was put on the train, to Hamburg. Twenty-four hours.

GUMB: Did, did our father accompany you to Hamburg?

JASINSKI: No, he did not. He accompanied me to a city called Lemburg. They had an uncle there, and I stopped, dad took me there to say goodbye. And from there my uncle was a conductor on the train. He took me to the train and seated me and my girlfriend, had a good seat, and that was it, and then it's the first time I seen my dad crying when he bid me goodbye. He was in tears, and so was I.

GUMB: Did you feel like you were going to be back in a few years?

JASINSKI: Oh, yes. I felt great, they told me in four years you're coming

back home. You're not going to stay over. I'm here seventy-four years.

GUMB: You mentioned Lemburg.

JASINSKI: Yes. That's, well, in Polish they called it (?), and in German they called it the city of Lemburg.

GUMB: Could you spell that for us?

JASINSKI: In Polish?

GUMB: Well, in English for the transcriber, for the transcription.

JASINSKI: Oh. I don't know. Lemburg.

GUMB: Okay. We'll figure it out. Okay, so, you traveled by train with your girlfriend to Hamburg.

JASINSKI: Yes. To Hamburg.

GUMB: All right. Uh, what was the voyage like? What do you remember about the voyage?

JASINSKI: The voyage? Pretty rough. It was very rough. And it was five days on the, on the boat, on the ship. (She laughs.) I remember one time it was so rough, it was on Sunday morning, uh, a baker was, you know, they were bringing rolls to the, to dining room, and the wind just swept them off hands and turned it overboard. It was very rough.

GUMB: So, um. on the voyage, do you remember what class you were traveling?

JASINSKI: Uh, third.

GUMB: What were the, what were the accommodations like?

JASINSKI: Accommodations? (She laughs.) Well, third class was the accommodation, a large room, and I remember, you know, a double decker I slept on, on top of where my girlfriend was, uh, it was rough.

GUMB: Was it clean?

JASINSKI: Oh, yes. Yes. And, of course, you had to get up and go to the dining room. You had three meals. Don't ask me what we ate, because I don't remember, but it was okay.

GUMB: What other kind of people were in this big room?

JASINSKI: Oh, boy. Jews, Germans, Poles, Russians. Mixture of. all kinds of nationalities. Of course, who paid more money, well, then they was upper class. But, uh, for eighty dollars I was down, nowadays you would call it steerage. So--

GUMB: What did they, what did they look like? Were they--

JASINSKI: What did they look like? Who, rooms?

GUMB: The other passengers. Did they--

JASINSKI: Oh, some of them were, I tell you, some of them were pretty good, especially Jewish people. They traveled with style. I can't tell you that I traveled with style, because I didn't. But there were some people that traveled pretty nice. Of course, there it was no luxury trip. But a lot of, I remember a couple of Jewish people coming. They were pretty well dressed, it was all right.

GUMB: Okay. Do you, as the vessel was approaching land, do you remember your first impressions?

JASINSKI: Yes. Scared. Scared. We had to go from Castle Garden on a ferry boat to, uh, a station in Chicago. The name of the station was La Salle Station, and from there we took the train and went to Chicago.

GUMB: There was a woman on the ferry boat? What did you say, there was a woman on the ferry boat?

JASINSKI: No. The woman that was with me.

GUMB: Oh, yeah. Right. Okay. All right, well, do you remember seeing the Statue of Liberty?

JASINSKI: Oh, sure. I remember seeing the Statue of Liberty, but I really didn't know nothing about it, so, but, you know, in the mess, I could still see picture being on the boat and seeing the Statue of Liberty in the far distance. But that's all I remember.

GUMB: Okay. Um. all right. So, uh, once the vessel came into the harbor, uh, what happened then? Do you remember

what, the procedure was?

JASINSKI: When we came to harbor, hmm. Well, then it was like a, like a cab, well, a horse and buggy. And, as I told you, you had to have an address, you had to have a place to go to. So this girl that I traveled with, well, it was her address and we walked out to the, out of the, on the harbor, there was a, a Jewish taxi driver, with a horse and buggy. And, uh, he spoke Polish, of course. They knew the people. And, uh, he took us and asked for an address and it was, I don't remember the name or the number, but the name of the street was Western Avenue, Northwestern Avenue in Chicago. And we got there, and then I was kind surprised, because when I came there the people lived very poorly. And I said, "Oh, my God." I left home and the place looked terrible. You know, it was a, a, a tenement block. And all kind of (?) and all kind of people lived there.

GUMB: Well, going back to that, uh, the taxi driver in New York who spoke Polish to you?

JASINSKI: Oh, sure. He was a Jewish fellow, but he spoke Polish.

GUMB: How did he know to speak Polish to you?

JASINSKI: (She laughs.) You'd be surprised how ell they know their trade. I don't know how he knew it, but he spoke. Well, maybe he heard me, I don't know.

GUMB: Did you feel conspicuous like a, a "greenie", as you said?

JASINSKI: Yes, I, I felt scared.

GUMB: So, uh, let's go back. When, uh, when the vessel was entering the harbor and it got into New York harbor.

JASINSKI: Yes.

GUMB: Do you remember what the, what happened, what the procedure was, uh, did a ferry come pick you up, or what? Do you remember?

JASINSKI: Yes, yes. Well, you see, the ticket was bought by agency, and then you was like, like any other group. You were under the agent, or they correct you, because, I suppose, if I was all by myself without and guidance, I wouldn't even know what way to turn. But, uh, it was agents, that they told you where to go.

GUMB: The agent was for the shipping line?

JASINSKI: Yes.

GUMB: Right, for the, yeah, and where did the agent tell you to go?

JASINSKI: Well, he didn't tell me where to go. I had an address, but he just couldn't, you know, when you get off, they had a, you had a big name on your, it was well labeled.

GUMB: Oh, you had a tag?

JASINSKI: Yeah.

GUMB: What did the tag say?

JASINSKI: Name, and, uh, the address you was going to. And that was it.

GUMB: Do you remember where, where did you land in Manhattan, in New York City? Where did the, where did you first set foot on ground? Do you remember that?

JASINSKI: Well, in New York harbor. But--

GUMB: Do you remember going to Ellis Island?

JASINSKI: Oh, sure.

GUMB: Okay. So, uh, so you got to Ellis Island.

JASINSKI: Yeah.

GUMB: And, uh, you might have mentioned that, were there some kind of medical examinations there?

JASINSKI: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. I told that to Gloria. The first thing, you came to, you had to go to the doctor, you had a perfect examination, your eyesight, and everything. And when you was checked all right then you went further. If not, oh, I don't know what they done with people that was not fit. I had a little trouble with my eyesight, but somehow one doctor sent me to another and they okayed and I went on.

GUMB: Were you alone at this time?

JASINSKI: Yeah.

GUMB: What happened to your girlfriend?

JASINSKI: Well, she was there too, but she went through the same, you know, they had a different division that you go to. It wasn't only one. So--

GUMB: Right. Do you remember how long that medical exam took?

JASINSKI: Well-- (She sighs.)

GUMB: Do you remember it being a long time, or a short time?

JASINSKI: Well, no. About half an hour.

GUMB: Okay. Uh, uh, let's see, uh, so, um, hmm/ Do you remember what kind of tests they gave? They gave you an eye test?

JASINSKI: Oh, yes. Quite hard eye test.

GUMB: How did they test your eyes?

JASINSKI: Quite a bit. I don't know, I couldn't tell you, but I know they took quite a while because I have, uh, a scar from smallpox on my left eye. Uh, inside of the pupil of my eye, sort of pulled down, and they had quite an examination with me, but, uh, they passed me and I went.

GUMB: This is the end of side one.

END OF SIDE ONE

BEGINNING OF SIDE TWO

GUMB: This is the beginning of side two. Okay, Mrs. Jasinski, is there any problem with, um, you know, as such a young girl, only fifteen, you were only fifteen years old, such a young girl going through this procedure alone? Did, was there any problem with that, or--

JASINSKI: I had none. And if you ask, I think, fear alone kept me from different, you know, I never was one to be inquisitive, like, you know, looking for trouble. I was always a kind of a scared little thing. But I guess I, now that I know, of experience, I never encountered any.

GUMB: Was there interpreters there, interpreters, people who spoke Polish?

JASINSKI: Oh, yes. You mean in Ellis Island? Certainly. They had a different interpreter, as I say, all nationalities. Jews, Germans, Hungarians was there on the ship. So they must have had interpreters, because none of the people spoke English. I know I didn't.

GUMB: Did the doctors who examined you, did they have interpreters helping them?

JASINSKI: They didn't give you no questions. They just examined you and signed an okay or rejection. And then from that room you went and wait for your trunk, where you was going, you see.

GUMB: You, you waited--

JASINSKI: Oh, I waited for about an hour. I had to wait for a train. And, as I said, there was a, people who took care of that took you, or corrected you where to go.

GUMB: How about, did anybody look at your passport, look at your papers?

JASINSKI: Oh, sure.

GUMB: Did they ask you any questions?

JASINSKI: Not too many. In fact, it was always written, what was to be written or asked. No.

GUMB: Okay. I think you were, you were explaining before how, in your papers, you had a, had an address, where you were going, and that was Chicago?

JASINSKI: Chicago.

GUMB: And that's where your relatives were?

JASINSKI: I had no relatives. I told you. I went with this girl, on her address and her relatives. She had a cousin. I had nobody here, absolutely nobody.

GUMB: I didn't understand this before. Okay. So you were, in your papers it was saying that, uh, you had relatives--

JASINSKI: My name, and from where I hailed, and where I was going.
And that's it.

GUMB: So, uh--

JASINSKI: I'm sorry I haven't got them. I did have them, but when
we had a fire I lost all those papers so I, I can't verify
nothing because they burned.

GUMB: Did, did, uh, anybody on Ellis Island ask you how much
money you had?

JASINSKI: Yes. A man asked me, and I told him I have thirteen dollars. So I
gave it to him and he gave me twelve back and kept a dollar, and for the dollar they gave
you a lunch box because you, you was going further, so you have something, uh, you know,
they didn't serve no meals on the, on the train.

GUMB: But, uh, okay. But he was like, uh, a shopkeep. Was he a
shopkeeper kind of person? You know, like a, uh, a merchant
selling food? He wasn't an official, right?

JASINSKI: No.

GUMB: Okay. Do you remember any of the officials, the
immigration officials asking how much money you had?

JASINSKI: No.

GUMB: Did you pay that man for the box lunch American money?

JASINSKI: Sure. Oh, they exchange your American money in Hamburg.

When you went on the boat the porter, they change you the Austrian money to American money.

GUMB: Okay. So, did you have to exchange money on Ellis Island?

JASINSKI: No. No. That was done before you got on the boat.

GUMB: Okay. Uh, uh, did you have to buy a railroad ticket on Ellis Island to get to Chicago?

JASINSKI: No. That was already included in the, in the ticket on the boat. That was all paid.

GUMB: So do you, do you have any, how long do you think you spent on Ellis Island?

JASINSKI: Oh, about three hours.

GUMB: So you took your lunch with you?

JASINSKI: Oh, yes. Took it on the train. As I say, they had no dining cars for greenhorns like myself. (She laughs.)

GUMB: Did you get any kind of, uh, overall impression of the, the various officials there on the island, their attitudes toward the immigrants, how they, they felt about the immigrants?

JASINSKI: Oh, I couldn't tell you that. They seemed to be all very nice. They handled the people with courtesy. So I couldn't, no, I couldn't say there was anything wrong.

GUMB: Okay. All right, um, do you remember how you got from Ellis Island to the train, to the railroad train?

JASINSKI: On a ferry boat.

GUMB: And do, where, did you go to?

JASINSKI: La Salle Station. That I don't remember, really from the ferry boat. I guess I was in the harbor where I really couldn't tell you, I don't remember that.

GUMB: Right. Okay. So, um, uh, then you arrived in Chicago and, uh, you might have said before, but, where did you first go?

JASINSKI: Where did I first go? Where did we come? As I told you. The taxi cab, the horse and buggy, picked you up, and it brought us to Western Avenue and 18th Street. I don't remember the address, and it was on Saturday morning, very droopy, December day. And that was it. I came in, and the first thing I was served was coffee and donut. (She laughs.)

GUMB: And whose home, whose home was this? Whose home was this on Western Avenue?

JASINSKI: The girlfriend's cousin.

GUMB: Oh, I see.

JASINSKI: Not mine. I didn't know the people from Adam. But I was with her, uh, I was treated as, as a greenhorn. And then, it was on Saturday, and it was a friend of my family. She said to me, "You know, you've got to go to work." And he took me to an agency to look for a job. So I, I went. You paid four dollars for an agent, and the first job I got, it was housework. And I, as I say, I lied about my age. I lied about how long I was here. And I told you that the old lady, the mother of the family, she went through me like a, and she knew that I was fibbing. And I was supposed to do general housework, cooking and all. And I lived, they had three children, mother, and a man and wife. There was five, six people. And I was supposed to do the laundry and prepare the meals. Well, the old, the old lady look at me and she came to my room and she asked me, I told you, she asked me how old I really was and how, because I said I was here several months and I was here, not seven days here. (She laughs.) Well, they kept me for a week, and they told me to go. They didn't just put me out. The man, he was a banker. They had a bank downstairs. He was very nice, very well educated, Lithuanian people.

GUMB: They spoke Polish?

JASINSKI: Yes. The mother spoke well Polish. So they all, they was Lithuanian.

GUMB: Why did they tell you to go?

JASINSKI: Because I wasn't able to cope with the work. They was a big family and--

GUMB: Too much work.

JASINSKI: And the mother says, well, you know, she says, "You know, child, you can't cope. My daughter-in-law wouldn't be able to. She doesn't do the work. We expect you to do it." And they had a house, up and down, and cooking and six in the family. So I was there one week and they, the gentleman himself, he brought me to an address where I gave it to him, you know, to the people that I landed and, uh, the following morning I went back to, to agency, and they gave me a job in hotel. Hotel La Salle in Chicago. On Michigan Avenue, was that Michigan Avenue. And I was a chamber maid. I had sixteen rooms to make beds, sixteen beds to make. And do some dusting.

GUMB: Where were you living during that time? Were you still living at--

JASINSKI: That was included. For twenty dollars a month, or eighteen dollars a month. I had a room and board, you know. You stayed right in hotels. And worked six, seven days a week. Every second Sunday you had off. I didn't go nowhere because I had no place to go, so I stayed in hotel.

GUMB: Was. was there any way you could learn English during this time?

JASINSKI: You know when I learn English? While in the train, you know, places like hotel and stuff, there's a lot of people that they, they have nothing, the officials have nothing to do with you, and the help. well, they are different nationalities. They know the language. I learned English when I went to live out. I lived out by a doctor, a Jewish doctor. And, uh, he saw I was a teacher, and he taught me quite a bit. And the most of it I learned when my own children was growing up, went to school, and I learned, really, uh, as good as I can speak.

GUMB: Uh, how long was it before your father came to this

country?

JASINSKI: Oh, 1911. Two years. 1913 in June he came. Well, he claimed, because he claimed that he was worrying about, over me, what happened to me, because I didn't write much, and they expected the money to come and I couldn't send it because I didn't have enough to send it. So my dad come, well he claimed that.

GUMB: Your mother stayed in the old country?

JASINSKI: My mother stayed in Europe. She passed away during the World War One, 1920.

GUMB: I wonder why your, your father didn't come here first? That was sort of typical, that was the typical story with the father coming first.

JASINSKI: (She laughs.) That I couldn't answer you. I told you, they expressly told me why they want me to go, just to make money. Because the false talk, the way people talk, or make things up. Well, they thought the dollars would come for nothing, but they didn't. My dad find out when he got here, because he didn't work for thirteen months. He couldn't get a job. So I had to support myself and him. That's it.

GUMB: So in those two years before your father came here, could you send money back? Were you able to send money back?

JASINSKI: Yes, I sent him forty dollars. Yeah, I did. Half of my fare, because, no, that was eighty dollars in Austrian money, eighty guilders, rather, and forty dollars American money. So I sent them my fare. That's all. I couldn't do anything because I really didn't have nothing to, to send.

GUMB: Okay. Um, okay. Um, what were some of the problems in, in, uh, adjusting? How did you go about adjusting to the new country? I'm not phrasing this question right. Uh, let's see.

JASINSKI: How did I adjust? I tell you. As I told you, I had nobody here. I was totally alone. Working in hotels, people, the girls, you know, they stayed, they sleep there, they had every second Sunday off. They used to go out, because they had someplace to go. I did not have no one to go to. So, you never ate so much candy as I did in my days when I was alone. Five and ten cent store, yeah.

GUMB: When your, uh, when your father came here, uh, what were, what were you doing then when your father came?

JASINSKI: I was working in hotel, I told you.

GUMB: Oh, you continued to work in the hotel?

JASINSKI: Yes. No, I, then, when he came here, when he came to Chicago, naturally he wanted to be with me. So, I couldn't have him in the hotel. I quit there and I went to work in the twine mill, McCormick's Twine Mill. And I, well, I, uh, my husband's, late husband's cousin, we boarded. I had a room, and he had a room. And he, as I says, he didn't work for fourteen months when he got here to Chicago because, uh, he, he never worked hard in his lifetime and the first time he, (she laughs) he got a job, he got a job in the coal yard. And when he came home, for a dollar and a half, he came home that night and he showed me his hands, was all blisters. What could I do?

GUMB: Uh, were there any, uh, customs that you brought from the old country and continue to practice in this country? You know, any kind of customs, during

Christmas--

JASINSKI: No. Not while I was single I had no customs. You just-

GUMB: During Christmas? How about during Christmas? Were there some, some, uh--

JASINSKI: Stayed in a hotel.

GUMB: Well, how about later?

JASINSKI: Oh, well, later, when I got married, well, then I lived my own life. Then I had Christmases, yes.

GUMB: Were there some, some things that you did during, uh, Christmas that came from the old country?

JASINSKI: Sure. Everything came from the old country. All the customs, all cooking and all, yes. Then I went to, when I had my own home and my own family. And my husband's people, and my father went to, back to Poland in 1920, so I had nobody again. But I got married, I lived pretty decent life. I had a good husband.

GUMB: What, what kind of customs? Can you name some examples of things that you, that your family did during Christmas that came from the old country?

JASINSKI: (She laughs.) Oh, boy. Well, that far I didn't practice because out in Europe for Christmas, for instance Christmas Eve, well, the first thing is, was brought in he house when the sun come, went down, what you eat, and then under the table, and the candles on the table, lit. And the supper, with different, uh different things. Well, you know, twelve apostles. And I am Catholic, and I lived all my life like that.

Yes, if we had a--

GUMB: Hay under the tables?

JASINSKI: Yes. Hay under the tables, representing the crib with the hay.

GUMB: Oh, oh. A creche scene with the hay. All right. When did you begin to feel like an American?

JASINSKI: Well--

GUMB: Can you recall?

JASINSKI: When I (she sighs), I don;t know. I guess when I got married and had my own family. I lived the way we wanted to live. My husband was Polish, but he believed in raise the family, true American family. We lived nice.

GUMB: When did you become a citizen?

JASINSKI: I became a citizen 1946.

GUMB: Okay. What did you have to do to become a citizen?

JASINSKI: What'd I have to do? You had to, well, uh, first you had to apply for it, and then it took so many weeks or so many months until you was called to City Hall. And then you went to City Hall and raised your hand to denounce your country and pledge allegiance to the flag.

GUMB: What, so there were, was thirty years there when you were not a citizen, from, uh, you know, before you became a citizen, many years went by. Why, why, uh, 1946, did you become a citizen?

JASINSKI: Well, I don't know, because I tell you, I couldn't explain to you why. There's really a lot of people lived in those days, that was not citizen, and they lived in the country and worked. But when we, when I got married, well, that was different. Then we was really American family.

GUMB: Did it, did it feel different being a citizen? Did you-

JASINSKI: It felt great. Poland never bothered me. I wished them
 awful lot of luck. But they, I could call myself a hundred
 percent American. I have three boys. All three boys was in the
 service. I lost one son in North Africa during the World War One,
 in the armory division.

GUMB: Right. Two. World War Two, right?

JASINSKI: Two. That's right. Uh, Carl was Marine, this son, and my youngest son, Martin, that's in Massachusetts, he was in Seabee.

GUMB: Okay. All right. Did you ever get back to Poland?

JASINSKI: No. Never did. For one thing, I was too busy to go anywhere, so I, I raised family and, and--

GUMB: Did your family want you to come back? Your sisters?
Did your sisters want you to come back?

JASINSKI: Yes, they wanted me to come back. I, my, Gloria told you, my sister, when I lost my husband, she says, "Why don't you come back home? How can you stay alone and, in strange country?" I says, "You're crazy. If I go by you I'll be in a strange country, but I'm no stranger here." So I never, never went back. I had no reason.
(Unidentified voice speaks.)