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Interview with Mary Babiarez, Polish immigrant, on June 14, 1969, at her home in Wilmington, Delaware, by John Babiarez.

Q What is your name?

A Mary Babiarez.

Q And what is your address?

A 506 Marsh Road.

Q And when were you born?

A On a farm.

Q What day?

A September 8, 1893?

Q '93?

A I think so.

Q September the 8th, 1893.

A 76 I'm going to be this September.

Q Yeah. Now in what part of Poland were you born?

A Galicia.

Q It was part of Austria.

A Yes.

Q And which--what was the name of the village?

A Charna [sp?].

Q The name of the village was Charna. What was life like there in Charna?

A Oh, it was nice but very poor because we are a big family.

Q Was this on a farm?

A Farm.

Q And how did they make the living?

A Well, raised rye and potatoes and everything--all vegetable. And there is the--you know, cow and the horses, everything.

Q Was this a big place?

A 14 acres.

Q 14 acres. What was your father's name?

A Marchez Fellupt [sp].

Q And was he from--born there in Charna.

A Yes, yes.

Q He was. When did you start to go to school? How old were you when you . . .

A I was seven I think--seven.

Q And what kind of a school was it?

A It's . . .

Q Did they teach in Polish?

A Polish, that's right--just in Polish.

Q Did the Church operate the school, or was it a government school?

A Government, government, I think. I don't think the Church had anything to do with it.

Q How long did you go to school?

A To eighth grade.

Q Eighth grade. So you were 15 years old when you finished school.

A That's right.

Q And you didn't go any further beyond the eighth grade?

A No. We started but don't finish. . . [sounds like "the German"] twice in a week, couple of hours. But I don't--they started there was kids too big and . . .

Q Did they teach you how to do anything in the school?

A Yes, yes. Sewing. And some addition, too.

Q All right, let's stop here and see what it . . . [starts again as follows]
Now you went to school for eight years. What kind of a school--how big was this school? Did it have one room or two rooms?

A They have four room.

Q Four rooms. Did you go all day to school?

- A No. Youngest go in the morning and the oldest go afternoon--they was divided.
- Q So grades 1, 2, 3, 4 went in the morning and 5, 6, 7, 8 went in the afternoon. And what did they teach in the school in the different grades? Reading? Writing? Arithmetic?
- A Reading, writing, arithmetic and history and . . .
- Q And all this was in Polish? Polish language?
- A Polish language, that's all.
- Q And who were the teachers?
- A Well, there was a family--a husband and a wife. She teach younger kids, he teach oldest.
- Q There were just two teachers for the whole school?
- A For whole school.
- Q How many were there in each class when you went?
- A Well, about 30. About 30 in each class.
- Q About 30 in each grade. And what--you said that they taught you how to sew. Did they teach you how to do anything else, how to work?
- A Oh, how to work in a farm, mostly in a farm.
- Q Mostly farm work. When did you first learn about America? When did you first hear about America?
- A First here come January 21, 1909, I believe.
- Q No, I mean, when you were young and you were still in school, at home, when did you first hear about America?
- A Oh, after I finished school, my cousin write me letter from America and ask me to come over here if I want to see it.
- Q Long before that, when you were going to school, was there anybody talking about America all the time?
- A Yeah, yeah, they talk and they talk a lot and the people was here and they come back and they talk a lot.
- Q So you heard about this when you were young, about America.
- A Yes, yes.
- Q Did you make up your mind then that someday you wanted to come to America?

A Well, not to last.

Q Well, I mean, did you dream, did you . . .

A Yes, yes.

Q Did you think about coming someday?

A Yes.

Q And what were you thinking about that if you came here, what--why did you want to come here?

A Well, I just wanta come here look for better livin'.

Q Better way of life. Right. And your cousin came here to Wilmington?

A Yes. She come to Massachusetts somewhere--I don't know where, but she move here.

Q She moved to Wilmington and then she wrote to you and asked you to come over.

A Asked come over and she send me money so I can come here.

Q How did you leave home when you decided to come to America?

A Well, leave home very sad. I was very sad, I have to leave home, all family, Mother and Father both cry [when] I leave.

Q Were you the oldest one?

A I am oldest.

Q How many brothers and sisters do you have?

A Two brothers and five sisters.

Q Are there any others here in America besides yourself from your family?

A Well, is my sister.

Q One of your sisters.

A One of my sisters.

Q And nobody else came.

A No, no.

Q And how old were you when you left home?

A Well, my birthday was September, I come here January.

Q What year?

A 1909---I think 1909.

Q So you were 16 . . .

A I was 16 in September . . .

Q And you left in January. Now, when you left home, it was wintertime?

A Yes, winter, cold.

Q And how did you go from the village to the seaport?

A Well, my father and mother bring me in a--they have a wagon . . .

Q And they take you to the railroad station?

A Take me to the railroad and they stay . . .

Q What railroad station?

A Sanjesu [sp].

Q And from Sanjesu, where did you go?

A To Krakow.

Q To Krakow, and from Krakow?

A Krakow to where you call?

Q Germany?

A Germany.

Q Hamburg?

A Hamburg, yeah. On the train.

Q On the same train. Were other people going with you, or were you by yourself?

A Well, to the Krakow they come five of us, but only two of 'em come--three was left back because some trouble with the eye or something. You know, examination.

Q When you got to Krakow, what did you have to do in Krakow--when you say examination?

A Well, examination, they just take you to a special room, and . . .

Q Did you have to make out any papers or answer . . .

A No, no papers.

Q Did you get passport, or . . .

A Oh, I got passport from my home, from my . . .

Q When you were still home, before you left.

A Yeah. I had a passport and everything.

Q You had to make the application for passport, and then it came by mail.

A Yeah.

Q So that when you left home, you had your passport?

A Yes.

Q And a visa to America.

A Um hmm.

Q And then from Krakow you went to Hamburg by railroad. How long did it take?

A Oh, I don't remember. I don't remember that.

Q Did you have to change trains?

A No, we go there, we was--you know, to go on the ship.

Q All you had was one companion from home--from Sanjesu, who went with you to Hamburg.

A Yes.

Q How did you live during this--on this trip? What did you eat? Did you get off the train to eat, or did they sell food on the train?

A No, they serve food if you get off of the train. They give you food . . .

Q Oh, at the station.

A In the station, and then . . .

Q Who gave you food? Or did you have to buy it?

A I think we got free. Some of the--you know, would take care . . . oh, some would take care, and this group, people . . .

Q Oh, was there a group, and somebody was--there was one person in charge of the whole group?

A Yes.

Q And this person then took care of you to see that you got food. Did you have to spend the night someplace, get off the train?

A Yeah, that's right. They take care of that.

Q Did you sleep on the train, or did you have to get off the train to sleep?

A We sleep in that like station, they have a room upstairs and they put you to sleep, the next day we go to the . . .

Q And when you got to Hamburg, did you get on board a ship right away?

A Yeah, we go on a ship right away.

Q A whole bunch? Was the whole trainful of people going, or . . .

A Well, there was a lot of them. There was a lot of people.

Q And they were from different parts, different villages.

A Different villages.

Q And everybody had somebody taking care of them.

A Sure. Each village had his own . . .

Q Leader.

A Leader.

Q And when you got aboard the ship, where did they put you?

A Well, they took me to the third class, down.

Q Down below.

A Down below.

Q And what kind of accommodations did they have? How did you sleep there? How many people were in this room?

A Oh, about--I think four. They have that bunk bed, one sleep down, one up.

Q And just four people in the room?

A I think it's four.

Q Small room.

A Small room.

Q And your friend from home, was she with you . . .

A She was in the other.

Q You didn't get together.

A No.

Q You had new people.

A New people.

Q How many people were on board this ship?

A Oh, I don't remember. I don't know that.

Q Do you remember what day you left?

A Ship.

Q What day did you leave home?

A Oh, well.

Q Charna.

A Charna? Well, I guess . . .

Q Christmas or after Christmas?

A After Christmas.

Q You were still home for Christmas.

A Yes, yes.

Q Was it very cold when you left?

A Well, it was pretty cold.

Q Was it cold on the trip, on the train, or . . .

A On the train it was not too cold, and as soon as we get into the ship, they have those . . .

Q Where it was warm. What did you carry when you left home? Did you have a lot of bags and baggage?

A No, I don't carry a lot of bags, just what I got on.

Q Clothing you had on, and . . .

A That's all.

Q No bags?

A Little bag, I don't remember even what I had, a little bag, that's all.

Q No extra clothing?

A No.

Q You kept the same clothing on from when you left Charna 'til when you came to the United States?

A Charna to here, to come here.

Q You had no change of clothing?

A No change of clothing and if I come here, right away, first thing we have to throw away and I get clean.

Q Must smell pretty good. And what else did you take when you left home, any money?

A No, no money. I don't have no money.

Q Oh, you didn't have any money for your trip?

A I think I have like two and a half dollar, but is worth it.

Q About two and a half dollars for the trip. How much did you have when you arrived on this side?

A I have all of it.

Q You didn't spend any? You didn't spend a penny?

A No, I don't spend it.

Q Well, who paid for all the expenses?

A Well, you mean that--the ship?

Q Yeah.

A Well, I have that pass--that cost \$40.00--the ticket, that gives you everything on the ship. All food.

Q Oh, \$40.00. And how did you pay for that?

A Well, my cousin she paid here and send me that ticket, so I just showed ticket and that's all, and I get all service.

Q How many days were you on the ocean?

A Eleven days.

Q Eleven days. That was in January.

A Yes.

Q And the weather was cold?

A Cold.

Q Did you get up on the deck, or did you have to stay below?

A Can't get up--I can't get on the deck 'cause I was sick, all that trip. All that eleven days.

Q So you stayed eleven days down below, and you were sick.

A Down there alone and I was sick, I can't lift my head.

Q Did any of the other people go up?

A Yeah, they'd go up, they'd come back sick and throw everything up, make a mess.

Q What kind of food did they give you on the ship?

A Well, they served good food.

Q Did you have to go to a dining room to eat?

A They have dining room on that floor, so if you go, you get anything you want, there was on table.

Q So you got food on the trip. And when you got to New York, what happened then?

A Well, we come into New York.

Q Did you go to the . . .

A Well, no . . . yes, somebody wait for us who where to go. I go to Wilmington, there I have direction, somebody bring me to the train, I just show the address, and that's all.

Q Well, did you have to go through any inspection before they let you go to the train? After you come off the ship.

A Well, they ask you some question and look at your papers, that's all--that passport.

Q And they didn't hold you?

A No, didn't hold. They give you a piece of bologna and pie or something.

Q Sandwich?

A Sandwich, and I put on the train to Wilmington.

Q And somebody'd take you to the train?

A Yeah, they put us in the train, somebody.

Q Right away.

A Right away.

Q What time did the ship come to New York? In the morning, in the night?

A I think in the morning, because . . .

Q And when you got off the ship, was . . .

A Get off the ship, pass all that inspection and I go to the train, I come in here 1:00 in the B&O station.

Q In the morning?

A In the morning, 1:00. And I sit in the B&O station until 5:00.

Q In the morning? Somebody came for you?

A No, nobody came.

Q By yourself?

A By myself. But the bus come in and some--well, I got, you know, address, piece of paper, and I showed this people that take care of the B&O station. Well, they told me, I don't understand, they told me that city bus come in. I go take a bus--they put me in a bus.

Q You were the only one that came to Wilmington from this whole ship? The others went to different places.

A Different places. So I take the bus. I come in here at 2nd and Walnut Street. And the bus driver throw me out and say, "That's here. You look now." So I look all the way down, it was dark; it was early in the morning, it was dark. I look, I say, what I'm gonna do. But man go to the work, which ones they live next door to the people, which ones I come. So I show him address, because nothing else will do, and he ask me, "Honey, show me the address, where you going?" I show him, and "Oh then come on, I take you to my house, it's next door people." He take me to his house. That was 115 Poplar, and I had address to 111 Poplar Street. So after that they take me up there and that's it.

Q When did you see your cousin in Poland?

A Well, I don't even think--about four years. About four years, a good four years.

Q Four years. So the next time you saw her was four years later in America, in Wilmington. And you came here because she was your cousin and she asked you to come here, and she sent you the ticket.

A Yes. And then she took care of me here, too.

Q I see. You lived with her.

A Yes. For a few months. After that she go to Poland.

Q She went back. But you never went back.

A No.

Q When you came here, what did you do?

A What I do? First, I take care of her baby, because she had little baby, nobody else could take care, so I--she was in the hospital, she was sick. So I take care of the baby. After a while I go work to . . .

Q Factory? How did you get to the factory, did you go by yourself, or did somebody take you?

A Well, she make arrangement with some friends, she know where they work at that factory, [Polish--trying to think of name].

Q What kind of factory? [Exchange in Polish] Leather factory.

A Leather factory, that's in Wilmington, Monroe and Front.

Q Front and Monroe.

A Yeah, that's where I worked.

Q That's the first job you took?

A First my job.

Q And what did you do?

A Oh, I what-do-you-call . . .

Q Cleaned leather, or . . .

A Fixed leather, make shine.

Q Oh. Polish it.

A Polish it.

Q How much did you get paid?

A Oh. First pay I make, I get \$1.75.

Q For how much? A whole week?

A Not whole week, just a few hours every day. Every day, because they was just teach . . .

- Q How many hours did you work? Oh, they were teaching you?
- A Teaching, that's why the pay. After a while I make \$3.00 and I work three months up there. After three months, I go to 11th and Poplar work--I make \$5.25.
- Q For how many hours?
- A Oh, from six to six, I think.
- Q Every five days? Did you work on Saturday?
- A Saturday half a day.
- Q That's five and a half days.
- A Five and a half days.
- Q So you got about \$1.00 a day.
- A Oh, that was big pay. I was happy.
- Q And what did you do there?
- A Same thing.
- Q How long was it after you came here before you went to work? One week, two weeks, three weeks?
- A Oh, I got the baby before . . . it'd be four weeks.
- Q It was four weeks before you started to work. And then you said when you came from Poland you only had the clothes that you had on and you had no extra clothing you brought. Well, . . .
- A Shoes I wear here one year before I get another--new ones. But the rest of the clothes are gone.
- Q You just threw 'em away. Well, you didn't change, you didn't wash . . .
- A No.
- Q How long did it take from when you left home 'til you got to Wilmington? How many weeks?
- A About--wait a minute. One, two--eleven days, fifteen days.
- Q Fifteen days in the same clothing. Don't take no bath on the ship?
- A I can't because I was sick. Can't even . . .
- Q And when you came here, your cousin gave you new clothing?
- A Oh, yes. I got my aunt here, another cousin, she gave me some clothes, and

they take me into town and buy new everything and fix me up.

Q So when you started to work, what did you do with the money?

A Well, I started to work, I saved the money, paid it back to my cousin, what she sent.

Q You had to pay her back for the \$40.00 for the trip ticket.

A Yeah, um hmm.

Q And how did you live then, with her?

A Well, she go back to Poland, I live with another people, her friend. They take care of me, I live with them, they cook for us and . . .

Q Well, what was life like here when you came here compared to the Poland?

A Well, first I missed Poland because I been used to it from little kid . . .

Q From living in the country . . .

A And the country, there was . . .

Q Open.

A There was open, there was very nice, just difference.

Q And here, was it crowded in the house where you lived?

A Yeah, there was crowded, and like I said . . .

Q How many people lived in the house?

A Many--two, four, eight--oh, about 10 or 12. They had three bedroom.

Q These were houses on Poplar Street?

A Um hmm.

Q That's where they're being torn down now. And they were bad when you came here.

A They was terrible, and now, that many years.

Q They were terrible when you came in 1909. So then what did you find here that was different. Did you find the work that you were doing was hard?

A Hard this work. And then at first I was disappointed--had to work so hard and used to working on the farm, that's different. But of course you work from the light to dark. Start in the light, it get dark, you can't see nothing and come home in the dark.

Q How about in the factory?

A In the factory there was difference. There was less hours because . . . but a year, after a year's time, I was used to it. I liked it, and I still like it now a lot better.

Q So you went to work in a leather factory. How long did you work there? Did you do any other work? Did you get laid off? Was there hard times here, or . . .

A No, except for that first work and the second work when I workin' at Poplar Street, 11th and Poplar. So 13 Lombard factory was same thing, they need girl upstairs, had to pay more money, one hour longer work, but pay \$6.25. So I quit here and I go there where they pay more money.

Q And how long did you work there?

A Oh, about--a good bit--a good bit, a year, I think.

Q And did you live in the same place the whole time?

A No. After that Poplar Street where I come, I lived there maybe six months and then after a while I live--they call [sounds like Miller Court]. It's in King and--no, Market and what's next, Shipley?

Q Market and King.

A And King. No.

Q Yeah, that's where Miller Court was.

A Yeah? Market and King. I lived there about 10 months, then from that place I've lived many.

Q When you came here, what kind of food did you eat? Different from in Poland, or . . .

A Well, a little bit different, but first if I come here and people which was here, they start to give you food, would tell you you don't like it. Well, first they give me bananas. So I don't like it because I never see that and they don't eat. And after that, give me tomatoes, so the same thing. And no [inaudible] and raisin.

Q When you made \$5.00 or \$6.00 a week, were you able to save some money?

A Oh yes, yes. Well, food cost me about \$1.20-\$1.35 a week, \$1.50 I pay for month board--for room.

Q \$1.50 a month?

A For room. But there was four girl there.

Q Four girls. In one room.

A Um hmm. But the housekeeper, she'd wash for us and iron--well, we helped to iron, but we cleaned the rooms and helped to clean, too, but \$1.50 a month.

Q And \$1.25 a week . . .

A \$1.35, \$1.25 for food.

Q For food. She prepared it.

A Yeah, she prepared it.

Q You paid her and she--you all ate at the same table. How about lunch, when you went to work? Did you pack a lunch?

A Oh, yes, pack a lunch.

Q Was that separate or part--did you have to pay separate for lunch?

A No. No. There was . . .

Q From the same money, \$1.35.

A \$1.35.

Q So that included lunch then.

A Um hmm. Yeah.

Q How long did it take you to pay back for the ticket?

A Oh, about three year or more.

Q Before you got married . . .

A Let's see, I have to think--at the time now I don't know--don't remember.

Q Did you send any money home?

A Yeah, I send sometime, if I have--send a letter, but not much money. But for Christmas and Easter I send some money.

Q When did you send the first money home, on Easter?

A For Easter, yeah.

Q Sent your mother and father . . .

A Dollar.

Q A one dollar present. And did you receive many letters, or write many letters?

A Yes. I always writing letters--but if I got dime, I don't write no letter, because I don't want to change dime.

- Q And when you got living--well, how did you find the life here, like Sunday, what did you do when you didn't work on Sunday?
- A No . . . we stay at home in the house, we don't go no place. Church. Not every Sunday.
- Q And for recreation, did they sing or dance or . . .
- A Where?
- Q You know, after work. Did they have any . . .
- A Oh, home?
- Q Yeah.
- A Well, there was a lot of you know, people, like ten or twelve, they bring the bottle of beer and they sit, talk, dance, and that's how--home.
- Q You didn't go?
- A No, no place.
- Q So you came here, you were--in January, and your birthday's in September, so that was--you were a little over 16. And then that was wintertime. Well, then came Easter and spring and summertime. Well, how did you find--was life better then?
- A Well, it still not, you know--there was here in the Poplar Street.
- Q Well, then, you were 17 in September and you were working now and saving money.
- A Yes, saving money. And then I find . . .
- Q What kind of trolley cars did they have?
- A Well, summertime they have that open trolley.
- Q Open . . . was it electric? Electric trolley cars?
- A I think electric, electric, yeah.
- Q Did you walk to work, or did you ride the trolley car?
- A Huh! Walk. Walk.
- Q You walked everywhere.
- A Everywhere to work.
- Q The first time you rode a trolley car was from B&O station when you arrived. When was the next time you rode a trolley car?

- A Next time, I don't even know. Oh, we go quite a few times for that Spring Park.
- Q Brandywine Springs.
- A Brandywine Spring Park, there was [inaudible] . . .
- Q That'd be summertime.
- A Summertime, Sunday. So I don't know, every Sunday or just once a . . .
- Q Well, when you went to the park, what did you do? Did you take a basket lunch, or . . .
- A We take a basket lunch and sit down and eat, and . . .
- Q And then when you went--at the park, what did you do, after you eat.
- A Sit down.
- Q Just sit? No run?
- A No. A lot of people up there run, but like me, they . . .
- Q What kind--you had a cousin here and you said she went back to Poland. Did you have some other friends then?
- A Here? Yes, my aunt lives here.
- Q She came before you here.
- A Oh, yeah.
- Q Did you know her in Poland before you came here?
- A Yes.
- Q And uncle?
- A I don't know uncle because he was here longer, maybe ten years before . . .
- Q So you didn't know him.
- A No. When I come here I met him.
- Q You first met him here.
- A Yeah. But I know aunt before then.
- Q And the uncle was your father's brother.
- A Yes.
- Q The aunt you're talking about is his wife.

A Yeah.

Q But you remember her in the old country.

A Yes.

Q Were there any other aunts or uncles here, or just that one.

A Well, just that one.

Q Nobody else.

A No.

Q And did you work any other place, or all the time in the leather factory?

A Just the leather factory.

Q Until you got married.

A Um hmm.

Q And you got married in June . . .

A June 13.

Q 1911?

A Yes.

Q So that's two years after you came here.

A Everything was . . .

Q And when did you first meet your husband?

A Well, he was in the mine, coal mine, in Scranton, and before I come here, he was here, workin', but he go to Scranton, coal mine, and he work there. And after I was here already, he come for visit from the Scranton. And I guess he met me and he get married.

Q And after you got married, where did you live then?

A Oh, we have like--not apartment, but one room and the cook stuff, in the center stove, the . . .

Q You cooked supper for yourself.

A Yes.

Q And how long did you--did you continue to work or did you stop working as soon as you got married?

A No. The pay up, right away. Soon as I get married, it's married don't work in that factory no more. Last day I work, I got my pay--no more. So I don't have no work and then my husband don't have no work.

Q Both of you were out of work when you got married.

A So I look for work, he look for work. And I go to 2nd and Walnut, there was that what-do-you-call-it . . .

Q Leather factory?

A Leather factory. But all American girls work up there, nobody else. And some my friends told me, you go there, you get the job, but you have to go every day, maybe month. So I did. I go in that filled-up waiting room, sometime I sit to 11:00. An electric light was there in the window, and I sit waitin' and then the boss come in, "No, no job." So next day I go there, same thing. I set. And end up they did, that my friend, she told me, "You go there every day and then he get tired of lookin' at you and he give you a job." So that's what happened. Maybe a week, I go every day and then he give me a job. And I got best job I ever had. And I make I think two nights overtime, I make \$9.00. That was big money.

Q \$9.00 a week. And you had to work five days and two nights overtime and Saturday half a day.

A Yes. But that was big money. I don't mind the work because I make a lot of money. So after a while husband get a job and we move from the place where we lived and rented another house. We lived eleven months, and then after that we buy our home. And have no money but some friend push us to buy, we buy it, and he help . . .

Q Where did you buy it?

A 412 Spruce Street.

Q What year was that?

A I just don't remember what year.

Q Two years after you were married?

A About three . . . eleven months--oh, no. Because eleven months we lived in the rented, one, two months, ten months--oh, almost two years, not quite two years, we buy home.

Q How much did you pay for the house?

A \$1200.

Q \$1200. Cash?

A No, no cash. No money--there was \$200 cash.

Q You had \$200 cash, down payment?

A \$200 cash from the boarder where I keep him.

Q You had \$200 for a down payment.

A Down payment, then a \$1000 mortgage.

Q So you bought the house. Were there many of your friends that bought houses like that?

A No, not many. Not many. Everybody started talking about that, why we do that. But we do that with some good friend pushing us, buy it, and after he buy home, tell my husband get citizen's paper right away and he be O.K.

Q Well, when you got citizen papers was 1916.

A '16 or '15?

Q '16, because I was one-year old.

A Oh, yeah. So that day I don't have to go get citizen's paper, I was with my husband.

Q How many children do you have?

A Seven.

Q Seven?

A Seven--no, three--ten.

Q Ten?

A Three, four, six, ten--eleven.

Q Eleven.

A Eleven, that's right.

Q Six living and five dead.

A Um hmm.

Q And when you have a baby in those days, what was it like? Do you go to the hospital, do you have . . .

A No, we have the hospital at home.

Q At home. There was no attention like you get today.

A No. No. There was a midwife.

Q No doctors?

A No. Unless you have to have a doctor, that's all.

Q Where did you go to church?

A Well, first we go to church to St. Hedwig's. After that they build the St. Stanislaus, that's where we belong, there. We was the first parishioner.

Q And when the church was built--you always lived on the east side of Wilmington.

A Yes.

Q You were the first parishioners at St. Stanislaus.

A Yes.

Q And when the parish was established, did it improve conditions, did it help--did the church help the people? Was it easier because you had your own church nearby?

A Well, it was much easier near the church--don't have to walk too far.

Q And the same kind of people belonged--all Polish people.

A Yes.

Q Now the war came, World War, the First World War. What was it like here during the war? Was there plenty of work?

A Plenty of work and everybody was worried.

Q Did you still get letters from home?

A Well, that was stopped for a while and after war was over, get the letter, but for I don't know how long, but it was stopped.

Q No mail.

A No.

Q And after the war, what happened? How did life change?

A Well, everybody was happy because men and the young men and married men come home. Some was happy, some was not. Same like now.

Q How long did you live on Spruce Street?

A Oh, about five year.

Q Five years. Did you sell the house?

A We sell that house, we go--we live on the 3rd Street Bridge.

Q Did you make a profit when you sold the house?

A No. We make a profit, but we do a lot of repair.

Q How much did you get for the house when you sold it?

A \$1800. But we don't know--with the prices, we don't know what's going on, we sell too cheap.

- Q Did you have everything paid for, the mortgage, when you sell it, or did you still owe some money?
- A They was paid.
- Q You had it all paid off.
- A That place we build a new kitchen, the first couple of months, then we got notice put the sewage, connect the sewage, and . . .
- Q Did you have electricity?
- A No, no electricity but maybe 20 time people come in before we sign out for get the electric, put this in house.
- Q And when they put the electricity in the house, what . . .
- A Oh, that cost \$18 for six room.
- Q To put the wires in.
- A That's all.
- Q And how much a month, electricity?
- A Oh, dollar--I think dollar something.
- Q So before that, what kind of light did you have?
- A Gas.
- Q Gas? You had gas in the house. You only used gas for light, not for cooking?
- A For the light, that's all.
- Q How did you cook? What kind of stove?
- A Coal stove, with coal, you know--coal.
- Q And heating?
- A Heating? Kitchen.
- Q There was no--just in the kitchen.
- A In the kitchen. The rest, we wrap up in the blanket, and . . .
- Q Did you have ice boxes, or . . .
- A No. After--I don't even remember when we get the ice box--I just don't remember.

Q So you didn't have no refrigeration.

A No.

Q So how did you keep your food, keep it from spoiling?

A Well, we go to store every day, in the morning, afternoon cook. For Sunday, Sunday morning we go to store and we buy everything Saturday and the store-keeper keep it in his frigidaire food to Sunday morning. Sunday morning we get up and then we go over there, get the food. He open up, see.

Q Well, after the war, did the people make more money, or during the war, they make more money than \$9.00 a week? They must have made . . .

A I don't know--they make more money I think, yeah.

Q Everybody.

A Everybody makes more.

Q And then after you sell the house on Spruce Street, you move to . . .

A Over 3rd Street Bridge.

Q South Heald Street.

A Um hmm.

Q And then what happened?

A Well it happened we sell that place--we not sell the place right away, but we--with the other fellow we start go in the grocery business. So after a couple of months we sell our house and then we have . . .

Q Why did you go in the grocery business?

A Because my husband always complained he wants to go back to Poland or else he would have to work in a business here, he can't work at the ~~Malvel~~ Iron, that was too hard work for him.

Malleable

Q Did he have trouble with his lungs?

A No. In the back.

Q The back. And so he quit working at the ~~Malvel~~ Iron and . . .

Malleable

A Well, he work and he could work, but he always complained, "I'm not gonna work; that's too hard. Let's go to Poland or else we look for business here." That's when we find the business and get the business.

Q So what kind of business?

A Grocery.

Q Grocery.

A Grocery business, we was there 10 months and we sold. And then we come to 3rd and Lombard, we stay to 1950--'52?

Q '52.

A '52, we stayed there.

Q Well, then you moved back to almost the same neighborhood where you first came to Wilmington from the old country. Was the neighborhood changed then?

A Oh, yeah, it changed. Was everything nice, everything--you know, there was all nice people.

Q People had changed.

A Changed. It was all the time clean the windows, curtains, everything.

Q And some of the people that you knew are now your customers.

A Oh, yes. Some of them I don't even recognize 'em but I go someplace, they recognize me. They call me, "Oh, hi Mrs. Stanley," they always call me Mrs. Stanley.

Q And now you were--in 1923, '24, '25, how was life changing for you. Now you were in this country 10 years, more than 10 years. Did you still think about the old country, going back?

A No, no.

Q Never?

A No. I always think I'm gonna stay here. I want to stay . . .

Q You liked it here.

A I liked it here, and stayed.

Q And you got used to the . . .

A I got used to it, everything.

Q When did you get your first automobile?

A Coh. I don't know what year that was. That was on 3rd Street. An Overland--I don't know--the first year I think we come into 3rd Street.

Q So you bought an Overland.

A Um hmm.

Q So you had a car now. Instead of walking, now you could ride.

- A We can ride. And when the time we ride, we put pillow cases and blanket and went freezing.
- Q There was no heat in the car.
- A No, no heat.
- Q Well, how about your family? What kind of family did you have now? Children?
- A Oh, I have five son, one daughter, 15 grandchildren.
- Q Well, that's now.
- A Oh.
- Q But then I was thinking when you first moved on 3rd Street to the store, and that was in the 1920's. Your family was still growing.
- A Oh, yes. Eddie was little baby at that time, when we come into 3rd Street. He'd be year old.
- Q And then you came into the 1930's, and what was--how were things now? Stop it there for a minute. When you came to this country, you said you got off the boat and when you came to Wilmington, you were the only one from that whole shipload of people to come to Wilmington. And you had a cousin here and you had an aunt and an uncle. Now, did you find people here from different parts of Poland?
- A Yes.
- Q All mixed up.
- A All mixed up. Neighbor--well, she's pretty good, make a nice neighbor.
- Q From the Russian part of Poland? And German part of Poland?
- A Yeah, Russian, German.
- Q Well, how did these people get along? They came from different parts of Poland, they had different ideas. Did they fight?
- A Not much, no. Just sometime, you know, like make a funs, but they don't fight.
- Q But there was differences of the way that they observed holidays and talked?
- A Well, almost same, a few holiday difference, and well, talk a little bit from the Russian they talk a little bit different than we are, from Galicia.
- Q Different accent.
- A Um hmm, different accent.

- Q Did you come in contact--when you came here, were you surprised to see other kind of people than Polish people?
- A Yes, I was surprised.
- Q What impression did you have?
- A Well, they was talkin' nice and everything.
- Q But you couldn't understand it?
- A Well, couldn't understand English, but from the other parts, the Polish people, you know, where I don't know them, but they talk nice and friendly.
- Q Well, when did you first start to learn English?
- A First--right away, little by little.
- Q What was the first word you learned?
- A Oh, gosh . . .
- Q Hello?
- A Hello.
- Q Goodbye?
- A Goodbye, Hello, How are you.
- Q How are you. You didn't go to night school to study.
- A No, I don't. That was my fault. I should go.
- Q You never went to school.
- A Never go since school here.
- Q And just learned English . . .
- A Just like that.
- Q Just like that. How about the other people that came and you lived with them. How did they--did any of them go to school here?
- A No, none.
- Q They all went to work.
- A All workin' and that's all.
- Q And how did they raise their children? Did they try to . . .
- A Well, send them to school--well, first, like I remember, there was a fellow

fourteen years, children, they go work.

Q As soon as they got to be . . .

A Um hmm. Eighth grade, they go to work.

Q How about your children? Did you send them to work when they were 12, 14, stop school?

A My children work there younger . . .

Q Well, they worked at home, but you didn't--but they kept on going to school.

A Kepted to going to school and they helped.

Q Now, what are your children doing now? Who's the oldest one?

A Who's the oldest one? Ex-mayor, John Babiarz.

Q Did you encourage him to go to school?

A Not too much. He was interested much about himself.

Q And he went to college?

A He go to college through--I was glad. He was glad, he go and he graduate.

Q And how about the other children, next one was what--daughter?

A Well, she got finished high school.

Q She finished high school. And what does she do now?

A Well, she tended grocery store.

Q She has the grocery store.

A Um hmm.

Q How many children does John have?

A Two sons.

Q Two sons. And your daughter?

A She has two, son and a daughter.

Q Son and a daughter. They're the oldest ones.

A Yeah.

Q And do they have any grandchildren?

A Yes.

Q So their grandchildren would be your great-grandchildren.

A Yes.

Q So how many great-grandchildren do you have?

A I have two--it's a your one and my daughter one.

Q Both girls?

A Girls.

Q You have another son, Edward?

A Yes.

Q And what does he do now?

A Well, he got the grocery store.

Q How many children does he have?

A They have two, two boys.

Q Two boys. Then you have a son, Bill?

A Um hmm.

Q And what does he do?

A Same thing, grocery store.

Q He has a grocery store. And how many children does he have?

A Well, he has four, four children, one daughter, three son.

Q Then you have a son, Joseph?

A Yes.

Q And what does he do?

A Well, he's . . .

Q He has a taproom.

A Tap--he has a taproom and he has two daughter.

Q Two daughters. And your youngest son is Stanley, Jr. And what does he do?

A He's the pharmacist.

Q Pharmacist. He went to college.

A College.

Q So that only two, the oldest and the youngest, went to college.

A College, that's right. The youngest have three children.

Q So he has two boys and a girl. So you have 15 grandchildren, 10 boys and five girls.

A Five girls.

Q And two great-grandchildren, two girls. And how long did you stay in business?

A Oh, about 20--29 year.

Q About 29 or 30 years, and you got out of business, then, in 1952.

A Yes.

Q And what happened? Why did you get out of business?

A Well, we get sick.

Q Sick? You were tired?

A Got tired, and we give up.

Q And you gave up the business. Then you moved here to Marsh Road, and you've been living here since 1952.

A Yes.

Q So it's a long way from Charna to Marsh Road.

A That's right.

Q In 1909, 60 years. And you have never gone back to Poland.

A No.

Q But you still write.

A Oh, still writin', and helpin' some--much as I could.

Q And you have no desire to go back and visit.

A No.

Q Why?

A I'm too old.

Q Well, you were younger, before.

A Well, when I was younger, couldn't afford to go. Now maybe I could, but get too old. Don't feel like goin'. As long as my mother and father live, I always think I go, but after they pass away, I

Q When you think back now over the period of time, when you left Poland, are you sorry that you left? Would you change your mind?

A No, I'm not sorry.

Q You're not sorry.

A No, I'm glad.

Q Oh, you said that one of your sisters came to this country. When did she come?

A Oh, she come about two or three years after--oh, about four year after I did.

Q And did you help to bring her here?

A Yes.

Q Did she want to come here, or did you to bring her?

A She wanted to come, yeah, she wants to come.

Q She wrote to you and said she wanted to come? Your mother and father wanted you to bring her here, too?

A Yes.

Q What did they say in their letters?

A Well, what they got to say? They glad that I take her.

Q And why did she want to come here?

A Well, I guess she wants to come here, work and make some better livin'.

Q Well, did you write to her, did you want her to come too?

A Yeah, that's right.

Q So when she came, did she live with you?

A She lived for a while with me. After a while they go live by themselves--she get married and then live by herself.

Q And who did she marry?

A She marry with my husband's brother.

Q Two sisters married two brothers.

A Two sisters, two brothers.

Q Did the--the two brothers are both dead.

A Yes.

Q Did the brother come here because of the same reasons?

A Same reasons. My husband write him, want to come here, so he come.

Q So he came here. Then those two met and were married.

A Um hmn, that's right.

Q Well, what else can you tell us about how life was first when you came here?

A Well, first, when I come here, that was tough. That was tough. Hard. Hard to make money, hard to buy anything. But little by little, little by little, that's . . .

Q How about the other people?

A That's the same way. Same way. Everybody start for nothing and then some come out good, some don't. They get sick or something.

Q Were there any of your friends that went back to Poland after the first war?

A Friends, they go back, but I don't know exactly.

Q Well, was there a lot of talk about going back to Poland?

A Yeah, there was a lot of talk and a lot of people go back, not . . .

Q But not your friends.

A No.

Q What was their thinking? Were they tired of life here and they thought it would be better back in Poland, why did they want to go back? These people that were talking . . .

A No, they go and they come back. They go and they come again.

Q They were disappointed.

A Disappointed, go for a visit and they used to come back.

Q But there were some who always talked about taking their money and going to Poland . . . but none of your friends.

A No.

- Q In your letters to home, did things change during 60 years? Or did they still write the same?
- A Still writin' most same. Not much change.
- Q They're still living under poor conditions.
- A Yes, yes. Oh, ho-hum. Quit.
- Q You want to cut it off there? When St. Stanislaus Church was built and you helped and you were one of the first parishioners, now when you had your own church and your own parish in your neighborhood, how did this improve things?
- A Improve a lot better, because people which ones lived this east side section, they go in the church. Before, some go, some not, because it was too far go to St. Hedwig. So after they build this church here, people help, and it's much better. Much, much better.
- Q Did the church have it's school?
- A Yeah, they have a school, but like from old homes I think . . .
- Q Old houses . . .
- A Old houses. But after that, build new school.
- Q Well, with the church and the school, did this bring the people closer together, did they help each other more?
- A Yes. Yes. They bring the people and get more children at school after build the school. Everybody worked together.
- Q So that having the church was a big help.
- A Big help. And it's still, that church, here and it's in beautiful condition, good condition.
- Q Around the church, was there social life now that improved--parties, dances, or . . .
- A Well, they have parties. They don't have much dances now.
- Q I mean before.
- A Before they have dance.
- Q Did this help to bring the people together?
- A Bring the people together, make 'em happy.
- Q And improved each other's . . .
- A Yes. That's right.

Q The priests that were at the church and the sisters that taught in the schools, did they help the people, too, with problems?

A Ho--yes, yeah, they helped.

Q You had someplace to go if you had a problem.

A That's right.

[END OF INTERVIEW]