YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Ethnic Groups of Youngstown

Personal Experience

O.H. 1188

THOMAS C. RUDNICKI

Interviewed

by

Molly A. McNamara

on

August 30, 1988

THOMAS RUDNICKI

Mr. Thomas C. Rudnicki of 271 Avondale, Youngstown, Ohio was interviewed August 30, 1988 because of his Polish background Mr. Rudnicki grew up on the South side of Youngstown primarily Wayne and Knox Streets. His neighborhood was made up of a variety of ethnic cultures. Both Mr. Rudnicki's parents came to the United States from Poland. Mr. Rudnicki describes some of the family traditions and Polish customs in the interview. He discusses growing up in Youngstown through the Great Depression and World War II. Today Mr. Rudnicki lived in a mixed ethnic neighborhood on Avondale with his wife Rosemary.

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INTERVIEWEE: THOMAS C. RUDNICKI

INTERVIEWER: Molly A. McNamara

Subject: Parents immigration, traditions, and customs

Date: August 30, 1988

M: This is an interview with Thomas Rudnicki, for the Youngstown State Univeristy Oral History Program, on Ethnic Groups of Youngstown, by Molly McNamara, at 271 Avondale, in Youngstown, Ohio, on August 30, 1988, at 1:00 p.m.

Can you give me some background on your family? Your brothers and sisters and your parents?

R: Just pertaining to what they do or what?

M: Where did your parents come from? We'll start with that.

R: Alright, my father came from Januw, Poland, not to far from Warsaw. My mother came from a place called Kaszi-cie Malie, in the rural section in the southern part of Poland. My mother was a farm girl, a peasant, and my father came from a suburban city.

M: Did your parents meet in Poland?

R: My father came here with his father when he was sixteen and my mother came by herself with two girlfriends at the age of fourteen. They stayed, as everybody at that time, most of the Polish people were centered in the lower south side of Youngstown, which was South Avenue. My father stayed with his father in a place that was

located on Fountain Street at this time. It was a large flat, about fifteen apartments. And a lot of the men that came over worked in the steel mills my father worked in the Republic Steel, Bessmer Plant under South Avenue Bridge at the time. His father worked in the steel mills and brought him over into the steel mills to work. And they stayed at these boarding houses, these women would cook for them, and they would eat their meals there and they would have a bed for them. The average, according to my father, he worked between ten to twelve hours a day at that time. And approximate hourly rate at that time was $.35 cents an hour give or take, I'm not sure. My mother came over and she stayed with a family that her family knew in Europe and they also stayed in the vicinity of where my father stayed, located on South Avenue, and she stayed with a family called Konstantinowicz, she did house work. She worked for some of the families in Youngstown, the Gretchey family, who owned the First Federal Bank at that time, and she also worked with for the Hammmer family, who had the furniture and carpet store. I don't know really how they met, The Konstantinowicz family knew a lot of the people that lived in this apartment and that is probably how they met.

M: When your father and mother both came over here to this country did they plan on staying, or were they planning on working and going back?

R: Well, to give you a little background on that, my grandfather was over here once and the second time he was over he brought my father. Then after he stayed awhile he decided to go back and wanted to take my father with him, but my father didn't choose to go with him. So, my father stayed here, but my grandfather went back to Poland. A lot of these people did that.

M: Yes, I know.

R: They evidently made their money here, even though it was nothing compared to what the cost of living was here, but over there they could sustain themselves for a number of years on what they made here in the steel mills. So, he went back but my father stayed here.

M: What about your mom?

R: Well, her mother just gave her enough to put her on a boat and send her over and that was it. So, she had no intentions of going back to Poland .

M: So, she sort of left her family?

R: Oh yes, she left a sister and two brothers and my father left I think the same amount too. So she left

her family, yes. Unfortunately, for her they were going to send another one of her sisters with her, but she was just a little afraid . . . Heard how terrible it was crossing the waters and etc. She was a little fearful of that. So, my mother went because her two girlfriends in the neighborhood, their parents were sending them over here, so she came with them. So, she had company so to speak coming with two other girls here.

M: Now where did you grow up?

R: I grew up on the lower South Side. I was born on Wayne Avenue where Ohio Edison is now. I was born there and then we moved to a house on the corner of Murtle and South Avenue and that one burnt, and then we moved on Knox Street where I lived most of my life, up until I went into the Army. Knox Street was located where WBBW is located now, and prior to that of course Knox Street was a dead-end street about two miles from downtown Youngstown on the South Side. Steiner Packing Company, was located on about ten acres of land directly across from our house on Knox Street. Some of it was used for grazing of cows, pigs, and sheep that were brought in for slaughter. However, a greater part of it became a playground for us kids in the neighborhood. We made our own baseball diamond, football field, a miniature golf course at one end. We also had a two hole regular golf course I this field. We made our own golf clubs from old metal bed posts or discarded galvanize pipe. It was an ideal place to raise a family. After the war we moved to the upper South Side, Lucius Avenue. Practically all of my life I have lived on the South side of Youngstown.

M: Yes. Now, do you have any brothers and sisters?

R: I have a brother Ed, I have a brother Stanley, Henry, and John, and a sister Genevieve.

M: When you were growing up on let's say, the first couple of streets that you lived on, was it a Polish neighborhood?

R: Yes, Wayne Avenue was Polish. Most of them had lived in some of the same villages in Poland.

M: You're kidding?

R: No. On Myrtle when we moved there there was still Polish because the church was located at that time on South Avenue right across from the Ohio Edison office now. That was our church, St. Stanislav's Church. The school was there. Most of us living in this area attended St. Stanislav's School, which then was located

at 430 Williamson Avenue. Most of the neighborhood families were of ethnic background; Polish, Slovak, Croation, Italian a melting pot people.

M: How did you all get along?

R: Marvelously.

M: Really?

R: We had no problems. I think my childhood was to be envied by a lot of people that were anywhere else, because like I said, we had these resources there, naturally. We had the playing fields that we could designate through every season, if we wanted to play football, when we wanted to play golf, and play basketball, and whatever. Hockey, we played field hockey out there. So, we were the only ones that I would say on that short street, there were maybe twelve to fifteen houses at the most, and I would venture to say that there were about sixty kids, both boys and girls. So, you had a lot of company. In the wintertime there were hills going in over towards the South side park and where we could sled ride and used barrel stave with ski's at that time and we even had something that we built that I think was standing up until WBBW moved in. We had an underground, what we called "Shack", where we would ninety in the wintertime when we had nothing else to do, spend the time after school and we would go down there and we built this out of sandstone into a side of a hill and we covered it with different things like railroad ties and tin on top and then dirt over it, and you couldn't even see it from the side of the street. It was kind of an underground thing that we enjoyed doing. We did that during the summer months, just to do something. In fact we had a lot of guys that went in for boxing and that was our gym. Instead of having the equipment that they have today, they would lift stones.

M: No kidding?

R: This was a kind of "clubhouse" for us having very little money, most of us had none, we made do with outdoor activities. Depression was a very difficult period for most of us in this neighborhood.

M: I was going to ask you about the Depression. Do you remember much of it?

R: Very much. My father was working in the steel mills. He was laid off from the Bessemer Forty Mill. Thinking he would get more time he transferred to the Tube Mill of Republic Steel. He didn't do much better there he would get about five days of work a month.

M: Do you know what he did in the mills?

R: Yes, he was a Die Setter, they called him. He worked where they put the threads on the pipes that they shipped out to the oil wells and the gas lines and that was his job. So, he worked most of the time during and after the war. He used to walk from our house over the hill to the plant that was located down on Poland Avenue. I don't remember him ever taking a bus to work. Most of the men who would go at a certain time and they would all walk over together.

M: Now he worked all during the Depression? He never lost his job?

R: No. So, what happened was naturally when the Depression hit most of the mill, especially the tube mill because the oil industry and the gas industry too was affected by that. Most of them were laid off and he was not the youngest man but seniority had no rights. The industry or in the steel mills at that time, that was prior to the union, and there was what you might call a real solid click in the mill. It was at the discretion of a foreman or the boss to designate you, you, you work you, you, you go home. That is the way that they did it. That is the way my father experienced it. I never experienced that, but that is what he experienced. So, unfortunately he was one who was told to go home. We almost lost our home, but we were fortunate because the bank, First Federal, was willing to just take the interest and I remember him finding work with W.P.A. and just $6 every other month or something like that. They made a deal to keep the house. They were foreclosing so many homes that they didn't know what to do with it. So, they just took the interest and then eventually we paid off the principle once he got back to work, but during that course of when things were that bad we were already a little older so I caddied. My brother and I both caddied at Mill Creek Golf Course we would make at that time $.35 for nine holes, or $.65 for eighteen holes. Well we would come home and give my mother so much of it and we kept so much of it and bought our clothes with our savings. Actually that was about it for our family, and my father every once in a while he would paint houses or hang paper and clean interiors of houses if he could get a job like that. He was trying to keep things going for us and then eventually, ever once and a while, they would call him back to the mill for a day or two or something like that, but never for a period of where he would work for a month solid. It was one day here and maybe two days next month or something like that. So, we didn't go to soup kitchens. My father wouldn't go. We did go get flour. You were allowed twenty-five pound sack of flour for every month

I think it was. You would go down to the railroad docks on Boardman Street. Then I used to go and get day old bread at one of the bakeries. That was another source of keeping bread in the family, with the day old bread. The trucks used to come in whenever they would bring it down to the thrift store and you could buy it cheaper. So, I used to walk down every Saturday and every so often my mother would give me a dime extra ride and she would say, "buy yourself a cake." But she did a lot of baking. We had a garden and she did all of the canning. We had fruit trees in our backyard. We also had a chickens, and rabbits, I kept that. We also did something that a lot of people we used to dig in garbage cans and pick up a lettuce or produce that they would throw out of the grocery stores, and feed the rabbits and chickens with that. But you did those things because the rabbits needed food. We had chickens and we had eggs so that was good. My mother baked bread and did all the things that probably everybody else did too. You just worked for yourself. We didn't have any help from anybody because we were the only ones here and you had to do what you had to do to keep the family together. We were the first generation.

M: Generally, it was a bad time then?

R: Well, it wasn't pleasant but I don't think that we suffered. I mean I never went hungry. We had unusual meals but I know that if I ever gave my kids that they wouldn't sit at the table for it.

M: How do you mean unusual?

R: Well, we had potatoes with buttermilk sometimes for the main course but that was it, and we had barley soup was one of the other things we had, soup made out of beets in which they used the top of the beets to make the beet soup. These are some of the things. Cottage cheese was used a lot because we used to have a huckster come by and sell fish and cottage cheese and every once and a while my mother would buy cottage cheese and she would put noodles and of course who have probably heard piroghi mentioned a lot.

M: Yes.

R: She would make piroghi at home and that was another thing that she did. Then she would get all of her noodles and of course her chickens for chicken soup. Those were probably our best meals I can't think of any other. . .We have something with prunes in it, but I can't think of what it is.

M: I have heard a couple people tell me that and I was wondering why prunes?

R: I don't know, either they were cheap or plentiful.

M: All of the Polish people that I have interviewed have told me that that was one of the main things for instance on Christmas Day.

R: Oh, that was definitely. Barley and prunes was one of the things that we had for our vigil at Christmas. We used that combination, and there were a couple of other things that they used, but that was one of the things. There was something else made with prunes and I can't think of it, probably piroghi.

M: Now did you all eat the beet soup on Christmas Eve?

R: No, beet soup only lasted while the greens were in the garden. They could use the greens and the root itself she used to cut up. She canned that and we used to have pickled beets for the winter.

M: I usually ask people what their traditions are for Christmas Eve or for Christmas Day, or for Easter, or whatever and I have found that the Polish people do have certain traditions, like they don't eat meat like the Italians don't and they have certain foods. There is a type of beet soup, I don't remember the name of that, the prunes, there are several different foods that they eat.

R: Yes, unfortunately we don't continue on with the tradition.

M: Oh really?

R: I don't. The only thing we keep is what we call oplatki, which is a wafer. We break it with the family before. . .One of the things in our household I remember for Christmas, of course like you said we didn't eat meat, we had fish-herring is what we had with sour cream and then barley soup with prunes in it. When we started our meal my father would always put straw underneath the table and put a tablecloth over it. That was one of the traditions that they had in the old country. We never knew quite why the straw was there, but they told us that was from the stable. And one thing that was unbelievable, we used to have people come around the houses not cavoling. They would come to our home similar to cavoling with a small scale model of the stable with the various animals, a babe in a crib, Mary and Joseph and shephards. It would be portable enough to carry around from house to house during the Christmas vigil. He would sing and play an accordian, relating the story of the birth of Jesus all in Polish.

M: That is interesting. Now did you speak Polish when you were little?

R: When we went to St. Stanislav's school we had Polish classes in the morning and we had English classes in the afternoon. Naturally, my parents spoke Polish. My father did go to, at that time to the YMCA, and took the English courses. My mother never went. So we got to speak Polish when we were home. Most of the eight grades until we went to high school and then I will never forget Mrs. Bates, our English teacher, in ninth grade. She said, "All of you that came from St. Cyril's St. Stan's, and at that time St. Matthias, and some from St. Peter and Paul, our English class will continue after 3:00." And this woman would take her time and bring us back into English because we were so fouled up. I still have problems. My kids correct me once in a while on the "th's". The thing about the Polish language, there are a lot of "sz, cz's" and that type of thing and we couldn't speak it. We were so mixed up. We had the Polish in the morning and the English in the afternoon. When we came there we had difficulty with grammer. So, she took it upon herself and a lot of the kids, I know, gave this woman credit for the fact that she took time with us after school and tutored us actually. About ten or twelve of us would come and she would try to bring us back into the English language so to speak.

M: So, was it difficult for you to learn?

R: What?

M: English, I mean over, like over again?

R: Yes, it was difficult especially sentence structure and spelling. When you speak Polish at home and then come to school and try to speak English it was a difficult adjustment, it was for me. Certain words would give us a problem.

M: Right.

R: So we were thrown in with a bunch that went to the public schools. They took English all of the time. Not all of them because some of them couldn't afford it even at that time. Some of the Polish people sent their kids to public school at that time, although very few of them. But we find ourselves with the English speaking community and that was figured as, "Hey, you know I am supposed to be speaking as good as they are. Why shouldn't I?"

M: That wasn't uncommon though. Everybody I have talked

too has told me that, just about everybody out of every ethnic group. They had to relearn it. It wasn't until high school till they learned it.

R: Well, ninth grade is where we were confronted our problem. Because well, we spent eight grades in the parochial school and then ended up here at Wilson in the ninth grade. It was just a complete learning process again. We had to get the fundamentals again; the verbs, and the adjectives, and even the simple pronouns. You had to get the whole sentence structure again. Although the Nuns were terrific down there, it is just that they had to do the Polish. It was a mandate of the community parish at that time. Polish was supposed to be taught. We had the books and all of that stuff. But there is none now. So, you made the best of it and when you came home you spoke Polish to your family out in the street and you played with kids so you used the English langauge different. I would say for those of us that came in from that group, it was a little more difficult to pick up the English language.

M: Now do your children speak Polish today?

R: No.

M: You never brought them up on it?

R: Well, in fact I don't speak Polish that well. I can understand it. I can't write it. My brother is the opposite. He lived with my parents. He is a single person and he lived with my parents, and he of course can speak and read. Because they spoke and again they used the Polish language. But out of all of my brothers none of them speak Polish. Out of six of them I think four of us took the Polish. After that they started as they got younger they started weaning them because they found the problem in the public school system. So, they said, "Maybe give you a Polish reader." And they stopped the Polish history, they stopped the Polish religion, Bible studies, and all of that sort of thing. So, none of them at all had any knowledge of Polish. They could recite their prayers. That was the only thing that I could think of my brothers and sister able to say and to recite the prayers. My family was very religious.

M: So were your children sent to St. Stanislav's too?

R: My children all went to St. Stanislav's.

M: And they didn't teach them Polish there?

R: Well, there was a Nun in the eighth grade that tried to help bring back Polish. She was quite active in her

historical society and they were trying to bring back the Polish traditions. Then when my children were growing you had an influx, the Polish refugees that came in 1947, 1948, 1949 so these people had their own classes. See they weren't teaching it in the schools so they had their own classes on Saturday and they were teaching their people and they were trying to continue the Polish language. So, children were getting the English language in school and on Saturday they would get Polish. So they felt that they wanted to continue on with their Polish heritage and I think that some of the other communities did the same thing. So, they are trying to keep that alive yet in the community. My kids went to Cardinal Mooney. My daughter, two of them can sing Polish songs and hymns and you ask them what they are saying and they don't know. They might know a few words but that is it. Of course they feel bad too because they didn't continue on.

M: But that seems fairly common too. Now what do you remember about World War II? Do you remember Pearl Harbor?

R: Oh yes.

M: What do you remember?

R: Pearl Harbor, we were at home at that time and we had the radio on. The first report came in . . . Actually we didn't think anything of it. And suddenly they said that there was a bombing some place, and not thinking, "Hey, what is happening here?" But my father he was gung-ho on American everything. And he, right away got up and said, "Did you hear what they did?" He got all excited about this thing and then we got the message a little bit and we said, "They blew up our base down in Pearl Harbor." And of course a later on the President came on. Roosevelt came on the radio. In the neighborhood everybody all of a sudden everybody went out into the street and we got huddled into groups and I think that at that moment everybody said, " I guess we are going to go to war."

M: So, you figured that it was inevitable?

R: Yes, right then and there he said, "They blew up something, and we have to do something about it." That was the opinion of the gangs that we hung around. We said, "What do you think that we are going to do?" Everybody speculated on how they were going to do this thing.

M: So were you drafted or did you enlist?

R: No, I was drafted.

M: What year was this?

R: 1942. My brother went in ahead of me and then I followed him.

M: Describe for me then your job that you had during the war. Like you were telling me off tape.

R: I was one of the few lucky Army privates that got a big break on entering the service. We came into New York port of Embarkalion in the afternoon, about two or three train loads of soldiers, full packed and ready to move overseas. We were to get our training in England. Just before barding the ship, they announced over the loud speaker a need for soldiers who could type and take short hand. Out of three thousand soldiers only four of us stepped out. They took us to the office for testing I was the one who passed. My job for most of the duration with few exceptions. I started with a special order section make up troop list for ships heading to Europe ad Africa. Then I moved to a "briefing room" at this point we took all dictation regarding the formation of all troop movements. This is where all the planning and strategy for all convoys coming out of New York Harbor takes place. All Generals, Admirals, various troop ship captain and Merchant Seamen and the principals in laying out the movement of troops. Great ships such as Queen Mary, S.S. Homeanly, El De France, S.S. Brazil, S.S. Monteray were loaded with trios and equipment. This would be a strictly military operation no civilian personnel were allowed in this room. After transcription all notes and extra copies had to be destroyed and copies distributed to all commands in the convoy.

M: This was a very important job then?

R: It was very important especially when so many of our troopship even with all the secrecy the V-Boats of the German Navy were able to sink many of our cargo and troop ships. The New York port of Einbarkatin remained the hub of all troop convoys to Europe nad Africa. Eventually I recieved a promotion to the highest rank of enlisted men that of Sergent Major. We had a hand in training port company troops those were the men that loaded and unloaded ships at the ditinetion ports. We managed to make several missions overseas during this period especially bringing back the wounded and disabled soldiers and sailors which were hospitalized in the New York area. We also brought back prisoners of war. German, Italian, and even Russian deserters. Everything in the Army had to be recorded on paper and thousands of soliders were called upon to do this work.

M: What year were you discharged then?

R: 1946.

M: I see. Now did you come back to Youngstown after that?

R: Yes.

M: And by that time you were married right?

R: No, I didn't get married until 1947. I met my wife in New York City, she was from Indianapolis and I was best man for her brother-in-law and she came and visited him a couple times and we corresponded and married after the war.

M: Now is your wife Polish?

R: No, she is Dutch.

M: Oh, I see.

R: She is Dutch-German.

M: So when you came back to Youngstown you moved to this street here, Avondale?

R: No, I moved to Lucius Avenue so we were always coming back.

M: Now what was it like living there? Was it still a Polish neighborhood at that time?

R: No. It started as we moved up in this area it started slowly changing. You found yourself in a mixture, like you are right now. Later on English - German, Croation, at that time I think, and Hungarian on that side, very few Polish families all that just different nationalities.

M: How did they get along in comparison to where you grew up?

R: Well, I didn't have that much time. Our friends, we still kept in contact with the ones that we met down on Knox Street. I don't have too many friends that live in this neighborhood. My brothers do, they were younger. Everyone of us served in the Army in different wars. They got friends there, various part of the country my brother and I, the two Polish ones, we were down in the Knox street area that is where our friends were. So we got to know them, in fact there were a few places down there that we went to, a couple popular bars on the South side. We formed a club, with all our old friends.

M: Oh really?

R: Formed the Cardinal Mooney Booster club deeply involved in various committees, fund raising and such activities. Later I was part of a group of Veterans that started a Port of the Catholic War Veterans of the U.S.A. We were one of the first clubs to have our own buildings again on the South Side of Youngstown. Most of our memberships is from the church and surrounding area. We also formed a Mill Creek Caddy Association. Over four hundred members. Most of us are caddies that worked during the Depression. We will be celebrating our sixty-fifth year of existance in a couple of years.

M: I see. I just have a few more questions to ask you. Now have you ever been to Poland?

R: No. My father did.

M: He went back?

R: He made two trips.

M: Oh.

R: No, he was very disappointed.

M: Really?

R: Not in the sense that he wanted to see his mother. His mother lived there until she was ninety-seven years old. He wanted to see his mother, but things were so bad over there.

M: What years did he go back?

R: I would say that he went in 1965, 1967. Economically is what the problem was. When he got back he only came back with his suit that he had on. They just begged everything from him.

M: Really?

R: Yes, he even said, "Look what has been done." He said, "his wallet was empty."

M: That is sad.

R: Yes, and he said, "You don't understand how badly they are over there." He said, "I can't bring myself to go there. I wouldn't go there, if there was a better place in the United States or something like that." I never had the desire really. I would like to go maybe one time. Maybe I'll go, I don't know.

M: It might be better now, but then again.

R: Oh I am sure that it is a little better now, but it is getting worse again. You can't tell over there. Poland seems to be in the middle of everything all of the time. But things were so difficult. From what he remembered in Poland and what is happening and he would never go to visit again. He tried to buy meat for his mother they couldn't find anything. So he said that they made soup out of something and he said that it was all fat and lardy and he was on a special diet and he said that he couldn't eat that. So he finally found a doctor somewhere that was a distant relative of ours I guess, and he came from Warsaw he was able to buy meat and few other staples.

M: That difficult to come by?

R: Oh yes. When he was there it was that difficult to come by. He bought meat, and said that it wasn't very much, they just put it in paper, wrapped it up and gave it to him. He said that they actually had two or three meals out of that, It was difficult to get anything. They would get meat, but he was at the wrong time and he stayed over a month, but it seemed that their ration card or something didn't come up in a period this visit. They tried to get some but they just couldn't get them, because they, I guess like many others just didn't have the connections and just couldn't get it. Then he was supplying his mother with medication, which she needed. And all of a sudden they started to doubling and tripling the prescription. "Look at this. You had so much differences, your mother couldn't take all of this stuff." He said, "I don't know how old she is but this is too potent for her." He also said, "Well, I have a letter here written for her. This is what they wanted." He had the prescription then for it. So he gave it too him. One way or another, I guess, on the second trip, we found out that they were using the older people. Just like anything else have friends here and family here to give them drugs and other supplies that they used in the black market.

M: That is what I was thinking. They probably went to the . . .

R: Yes, so this is where the drugs got to after that.

M: So they resold a lot.

R: Evidentaly this is what happened. That is all, my father came back the second time he said, "I know they are restricted within and above."

M: So, you think that your father was generally not happy with what he found there upon returning?

R: I would say that he was. . . The first trip was better than the second trip. The second trip was completely disillusiong. He said he didn't feel good that even his own family would do some of the things that they did.

M: Yes.

R: But he said they did. "They have to survive," he said. He said, "So I just gave them everything I had."

M: I have heard this though.

R: He said that as far as he is concerned he would never go back and he never did. But he didn't say for me not to go or anything like that, but he did say that it is not what it was. He said, "The memories that I had there weren't there when I went" and he said "The only thing that I did was see my mother," Most of our family over there is deceased. We have no contact. I think that we have a couple of nephews at best. They write in Enlgish.

M: Oh?

R: Yes, you would be surprised. We send them Christmas cards at Christmas time and at Easter we send them cards and packages. They even write in English.

M: That is interesting. Things have changed.

R: Oh yes. They are educated over there, but they are still asking for things every once and a while. Every once in a while we send over the necessities, like the simple things. They definitely ask for tooth paste, soap, and some chocolate candy bars, and, different things. They ask if we have it. Especially, cheese.

M: Wow.

R: Any kind of cheese, strong or what. And one of the things that we used to do is send money, but we wonder about it now.

M: Yes, I would wonder about that myself.

R: Now there is no chances of them getting it now. People around here have the idea that they know how to counter that. We have these refugees you know and they come in the hard way and they know all the tricks of the game, so they will tell you what to do, how to do it this time, sew it into a pant leg or do something, or put in a hem of a coat, something you know that they wouldn't

detect.

M: That is a shame though that they have to live that way.

R: It is. There are people that, especially in the rural areas, that are really destitute and need assistance. If you wanted to you could send a package. The packages are a different matter. We have a contact here that takes parcel for us. I think every three months or so. He gets a truck load and take it to them up to Canada and there is a Polish ship that comes in there and it is for some reason every package that goes on that ship and gets to that Polish port is delivered to them.

M: That is good.

R: Oh yes. Like I said we haven't done it recently, but we have been sending stuff.

M: Is there anything else that you would like to mention that I haven't talked about? Anything?

R: The biggest thing is talking about how we grew up. I think that I missed that. My parents, although my father went to the sixth grade, he didn't go to school because he had gone to this Polish Army at fifteen.

M: I see.

R: My mother didn't get too much education, we had a routine in when we were growing up. Every night after dinner we would sit around the table and we only had a small house, but all the kids would sit around and we would all have to do our homework at that particular time. I think that we had a radio, no telephone electricity or car. My father learned with us because they couldn't do math with us. They couldn't help us with math because they couldn't explain the Polish into the English formulas and we couldn't quite get it that way. So, we tried to work with them on helping them, and this way they were learning from us and we were trying to learn from them the simple multiplication tables or something like that. Especially, my mother, she was a great one, she wanted to read. She would sit there with us and whoever finished his or her homework first would read with her and make sure she did the right thing. They were after education and that was first. Not all of us went to college, but my children all went to college. My parents couldn't afford it. We tried to send our younger brother to Ursuline at that time it was a Catholic high school and we couldn't afford the tuition over there so they went to a public school. There were six of us and three of us went to college.

M: Well, that is a pretty good number.

R: It was a fifty-fifty deal. But they always taught education to us. He told us he said, "That is why I came to this country, you are not going to make it if you don't get education." And he said, "Don't go back in the mill."

M: He was right.

R: Unfortunately, I only spent a short time in the mill. None of my other brothers worked in the mill. One of us is an artist, one does research at Stanford University, another one is a machinist, one manages a electric store, my sister, she is the one that raised seven children and then went back after her kids were raised and took a job. Most of us kind of stayed away from the mills. He (my father), used to tell us how bad it was in the mills, and why he went in there. He said, "Get yourself a job outside of the mill."

M: That is interesting.

R: This is where we all ended up. I know that we had a good childhood and I can't even think of one thing that was bad you know from the way that we grew up, to our parents being Polish, our religion, and going to church on Sunday. But that is about it. I just remembered that.

M: Okay, that is great.

R: I just remembered the study-theory that we had at home. We went to public schools and this was it. We had to do this work and it was on teaching the other. My mother could speak fluent English, and my father worked in the mills for the same people and they spoke the Polish language in the mills.

M: Yes, so there was no way he could.

R: He would come home and then lecture especially the younger ones school and education. You almost had no choice but to study. But I can't think of anything else, so.

M: Well, that is great. Thank you very much for the interview.

R: Well, it was a pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW