**Janet**: This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. I am here with Shirley Katz at her home in Worcester, Massachusetts. It December 6th 1994. Now you would be-how old are you today?

**Shirley**: Today I am 85.

**Janet**: 85 years old okay. At the time of the interview. You came from Poland in 1929 via Cuba. And you were 19 years old going on 20?

**Shirley**: Yes.

**Janet**: Okay well I am very happy to meet you. I am looking forward to anything you can remember.

**Shirley**: I wanted to go so many times but I was tired down to business to children and I couldn’t make it. I couldn’t go.

**Janet**: Okay. So let’s start from the beginning. Tell your birth date for the tape?

**Shirley**: My birthday is may the 20th

**Janet**: And you were born in 1908.

**Shirley**: Yeah.

**Janet**: And where in Poland where you born?

**Shirley**: It was a little town before Vasa Sandoval. And there my mother she had six children. My father was a good tailor and the people that gave him [unclear 00:01:23]. So they took him to thee machine and I had an older brother and they both worked together. And instead of giving him money they gave him food.

And that why we always had a lot of food in our house. A lot we helped our neighbors. And that’s how we went on. But my father had all his family here in the United States. So they said [unclear 00:01:53] are you going to stay there? The children have no future. These schools were all catholic schools and they didn’t let in any Jewish children.

So we had a problem to get education. We couldn’t get it. So we have Russians refugee’s teachers. So my father and mother hired them and they were teaching us polish and Jewish.

**Janet**: In your home?

**Shirley**: Yeah they came to our home. And they were teaching us for quite a few years we learned polish, Jewish and we reading and writing. And when we get a little older they took my father to the United States.

And then he was there a few years and the [unclear 00:02:48] after him why didn’t you bring your family. So he started to get a permit from Poland to come into United States. But they [unclear 00:03:01] but to Cuba you still go in. so my brother was 18 going on 19.

So they found a way to take him to the military for soldiers and my father didn’t want my brother should go for a soldier. So he sent him away to Cuba. And he was there. He married in Poland before he left and then he took his wife there. But to Cuba we could go in.

But to the United States send us money and we went into Cuba my mother with five children. And we were there almost not quite a year and we came in to the United States. My mother with the five children.

My father had a home prepared. And soon as we went off the boat we all became American citizen because we were underage.

**Janet**: Your father was a citizen?

**Shirley**: Yeah. And my father [unclear 00:04:18] took us home and he says children I think you have to start to go to school. The first thing you want us to learn English. And we went to school and I was 19 going on 20.

I got a job. My father had a friend and he took me in to Edison light factory. And he taught me how to work. And the first week I worked there they handed me a cheese of $20. All America belonged to me. I brought a cheese and I gave it to my mother. I say go buy food for the children.

And I worked there for quite a while. They liked me. I tried to learn Fas to do the work right you know. And that man say let’s just say the Jewish word is shingo-dont be afraid to ask me questions.

So he stayed and he showed me how to do it and I did it wonderful. And liked me I was young. I was not as like now you know. I had blonde hair and I was-I think I shrunk a little.

**Janet**: What’s was your personality like?

**Shirley**: Very good. Very good. I was always a friendly person I loved people. Even Poland we had friends. We didn’t have the teachers went to the library and people helped us with books. I had so many books when I was there. Here I try to read some of. I have Jewish books I have Jewish paper I read.

**Janet**: What language were you speaking in Poland?

**Shirley**: Jewish and polish. I still remember polish but I never forgot Jewish. And we came back in our mothers house was a real Jewish culture house. She went to buy chicken and the [unclear 00:06:33] killed them you know and we always had beautiful Jewish home.

Friday we all had a [unclear 00:06:45]. But since they died. My father died first. My father died young. He worked very hard. But he was a very good father.

**Janet**: What was your father's name?

**Shirley**: Solesh in Jewish. Here they call them Israel. I don’t know Isadore. Very nice.

**Janet**: Wait excuses me.

**Shirley**: When I left Cuba I left a friend that we were going out since I was in Cuba. He was from [unclear 00:07:24] his brother had a she factory and I worked for them. And we really were very serious so I said look.

I am going to go in and work and make a little money and come back and marry you. he didn’t want me to go away but I had to go in. so I came back and maybe six months or eight months I was heretic went back and I married him. I married him in Cuba. And then it took him not even a year and he came into the United States.

**Janet**: Then you came together?

**Shirley**: No, no. I came first and then he came.

**Janet**: You married him and then you came back?

**Shirley**: Yes. You had to wait a certain time. So anyway when he came in he lived with my father and mother for a while. For a job he was the-he could sow the shoes. Like the tops. But around we were always in New Jersey.

All the family was in New Jersey. But he couldn’t get a job there. But I had to travel long island to get a job in [unclear 00:08:43]. Didn’t make much I made more than him. So anyway the first thing my father said Louie go become a citizen. So he did the first year he was here. He became American citizen.

And we liked for a while then my father says kids you don’t grow go to business. So I say we have no money. He say don’t worry your father is behind you. So he gave us a little money we bought a candy store. I had two girls you know. And it was not easy. We worked very hard but we tried to make a good living.

And raise the children nicely. We had one store-and then we had a very good store to buy. In a small town to buy in a small town [unclear 00:09:44] new jersey. So we all [unclear 00:09:50] candy and all kind of stuff.

Louie said to him, you know Mandy I have a very good store to buy but I have no money. He says Louie sit down how much do you need? He says a $1000. He wrote a cheque right away and gave us. He trusted us.

And we bought he store. And we really neglected with the Jew box with this with that. And we got-come on [unclear 00:10:28] take Solomon away- And as time went the kids got older they helped us a little. It was law we used to stay till 12.-here here-

Unknown: [unclear 00:10:42] she won’t bother you.

**Janet**: She is playing with wires that were the problem.

**Shirley**: You know we bought that store; we struggled for a little while and then we worked it up and then we made a nice beautiful store. The kids got older and they helped us [unclear 00:11:14] and unclear [00:11:17] we were surrounded with school.

All the kid from school came to us for lunch then the grownups came the teachers. I used to be the cook and make all this meals. My husband he was by the register the kids helped a little you know when they got older. The high school was our main customers no? So and we worked together for quite a while. We there for how many years [unclear 00:11:54]

Unknown: we were there about 20 years maybe.

**Shirley**: About 20 years. We sent he kids to college. We paid we bought them cars. They got jobs. She was a social worker and my younger gradated to be a teacher. And then what did [unclear 00:12:15]

Unknown: he was a chef for a while.

**Shirley**: He went to a big college in Massachusetts. And he took up economics. And soon he finished the college he got a job. They all worked and they all helped. And they come a time that we were tired of it. We were there more than 30 years. We made a lot of money there no?

Unknown: Yes we did mum.

**Shirley**: And we were so busy you have no idea.

**Janet**: so it was more than I candy store you were selling food?

**Shirley**: We have everything. That wholesale supplied us with everything. Toys and candy. Boxes [unclear 00; 13:03] and the people they were very good. We stayed till 12 o’clock to sell papers and everything.

But later on we got a little tired you know. It was not an easy job but we were so ambitious to make money so we had to do it. And with three children 6 o’clock my husband sends me home with the children.

They did them homework. They prepared their clothes. We managed you know. Then the family also used to help us. And then my father passed away. He was only 59 no 69. And mother remained alone. So my husband say look Shirley.

We can’t let mummy stay alone. We only had five rooms. My son had one room. The girl, and the living room and the dining room and the kitchen. But it was [unclear 00:14:06] it was convenient for us so we took my mother into my house. My son gave up his room for grandma and him sleeping on [unclear 00:14:20].

But anyway we managed. And we went on and on to help my mother. My husband was so good to her I can begin to tell you. She was five years with us. So she had sugar diabetes and she died. So anyway the family we were always together. A holiday was always in our house. We were the one [unclear 00:14:52].

We did have a dining room, we took out our bed and we made it a dining room and everybody was together. We lived a very happy life. And the children were so good helping us. So Rasi she took up journalism she was good. But the teacher discouraged her. And she got a rich father who could help you have to go and go and go.

So she gave it up and the best thing she did she become a social worker. She was the head of the branch there. She was so good. Very clever in school. And the other one too. And my son was very, very good. When he was graduating they picked it up from the national food company to come and be their sales man.

And he worked there for a long time. He met a very nice girl and he married. And she had a cousin and they took him in the real estate business. And it’s still there and my two daughters working with him. He used to be very good. So then my husband reached 70 years he says you know Shirley, I am going to sell this stuff. I am tired of it.

I say Louie didn’t want to sell it because we made such good-we paid for the kid’s college then they come out of college we bought them cars. We paid for them because they had to go to work you know. So anyway I says Louie you sure? I still did want to get rid of it.

He says I am too tired I can’t work anymore. He worked hard to 12 o’clock at night. He played along when things got a little better close 10 o’clock, nine o’clock. Soon as the paper come in. and that’s how we worked and made a lot of money.

**Janet**: Mmmh. wonderful.

**Shirley**: And my son was in real estate was in real estate and I loved to go to Jersey shore for a little rest. So he went away he find a house there he says Ma, I took a trip to Bradley bridge. I loved it there you know and the kids too.

And I saw I house, you and daddy go and see it and if you like they buy it. I came in the kitchen; it was a nice big kitchen. I didn’t look at the rest it was a new house. But [unclear 00:17:52] he got tired of it. And he went to go where the rich people lived. We went for it too I say you want cash so my son with us, he put our rate $10,000.

And we paid the rest. And we lived there maybe [unclear 00:18:19]. We had such a good time here. The whole town was always in our house. Shirley you have a cup of coffee? Then he went to shore in the morning he used to come back and bring three or two people.

Shirley makes breakfast for them. Good people. Its nice religious people. And he was very active in that shore. Not a lot at that shore but was near not too far from us. We could walk over there. And Saturday [unclear 00:18:59]. And we lived a very happy life. But then they had a health club and we joined them.

And the man says Louie what are you doing for your sugar diabetes. He says I didn’t even know I had sugar diabetes. And he was a big smoke. I say you stop smoking. He couldn’t stop. It was his pleasure I didn’t want he to do. Till he got very sick and he passed away. He was only in his 70s.

So the kids come over mum are you going to be alone in the house. Sell the house and come and live with us. So I am here only I think about five years. But you know when you get older you can make friends like when you are young. I don’t know here I belong to the JCC and I joined the temple.

And we went there for lunches you know. Because we didn’t have time. But lately this year I didn’t feel good. I went to an operation in my stomach. Be upstairs I feel down twice. I broke a little this one, I hurt this one but this year whole year I am whole.

I can go out you know. And I am getting a little older too. But I don’t want to face it. But to Poland I never want to go back.

**Janet**: Why is that?

**Shirley**: Because they hurt some of the Jews. And the Catholics and the Jews are against each other. We lived in a small town but we had 40 families but we were all Jewish people. All in business.

**Janet**: This was in the town?

**Shirley**: Yes

**Janet**: And the farms were around the town?

**Shirley**: Around the town yes. But my father had to live us home. He had to go about and make a living and bring us food you know. So back then the family sent the money and the best thing came we came to United States you know. We were older. My two brothers went to day school. They made public school and high school.

**Janet**: In this country?

**Shirley**: Yeah in this country. But we did have money to send her to college. But we all worked they all have jobs. And here I was settled with my children. And I gave them the best I could. I figured if we couldn’t get the education at least my children get it. And they were willing to wait you know. And they were very good.

And that how we are here now. This one got married. My son got married. But the younger daughter she had a nice boyfriend and she finished high school. So she wanted to go so much to college. So he went without marrying. But she says if you want to wait till I finish college. And even if you want to leave.

Nice boy. And since then she has never found another like him she gave him up. She goes out all in love you know. She is also working with my son. The two of them they all together they getting along fine. That’s the real estate place it wasn’t too good you know. But I still my son has two children in college.

From there now say but his graduating this summer. And the boy is brilliant. I want to show it to you. He made-for first year he went to [unclear 00:23:30] and he made his first year scholarship and he paid his own tuition.

And lady came over to my grandson and said 'here Adam my son went into this school he took up music like you and she handed him a cheque of $2000. She looked at it and she says any time you want to see me your welcome. He goes now to Massachusetts College for music. Great musician.

He writes music. He sings. And he-I think he made his own song. And the school called him the second Elvis Presley. But she took away the book. I will show you his picture.

**Janet**: Okay we will look later.

**Shirley**: Yeah in the book you know. He is a great musician.

**Janet**: wonderful. Let’s go back to when you were living in Poland for a minute your father's name was Isadore?

**Shirley**: Yes.

**Janet**: And your maiden name?

**Shirley**: [Unclear 00:24:47]

**Janet**: Okay now what was your mother's name?

**Shirley**: Anna

**Janet**: ENA

**Shirley**: Like her we say Anna.

**Janet**: And how about her maiden name? You know what that was?

**Shirley**: On my mother? Anna. Oh wait a minute I forgot. You mean her second name?

**Janet**: Oh yes before she married your father.

**Shirley**: Oh I think [unclear 00:25:16] or something like that see I forgot really.

**Janet**: Oh Okays so what about your brothers and sister what was their names?

**Shirley**: Well they also. I was older than them.

**Janet**: You were the oldest?

**Shirley**: My brother was the oldest you know. I was the next. They were two years younger than me. One washer name Esther and one was Sarah.

**Janet**: And what about your brother names?

**Shirley**: My brother names are Eche. That’s the oldest one. Then there was [unclear 00:26:02] and the other one was [unclear 00:26:05] the youngest one. The youngest one is still alive. He lives in Florida. He lived there with his wife because she was sick.

So they moved away from jersey to Florida. But she died and he is over. He comes ones in a while to visit us you know. But nobody of us went back only one sister went back

**Janet**: Why did she go back?

**Shirley**: I didn’t like it they hated her. Because they refused us education. And they were a little against the Jewish people that time. Now they say it’s just like any other country changed its religion not to be so much against each other so I think-but I still not go back.

I went away and I say goodbye forever. Because they hurting us. Not even we would go to school and learn a little polish. But they had the time for [unclear 00:27:19] and they didn’t want to mix with the Jewish people or the Jewish children. So we have-half of the town belonged to us. Because we had all this business.

All the Jewish people rough the business. Now I read in the Jewish paper that the polish people are asking the Jewish to come back. Because they were the business people you know. They have like a marshal [unclear 00:27:58] all beautiful vendors with beautiful clothes with fur coats with everything.

But they all started running because they know what was coming in so they all got rid of their business and they ran away whenever they had a chance you know.

**Janet**: Do you remember anything about the First World War?

**Shirley**: No I don’t think so.

**Janet**: No

**Shirley**: I must have been a child when [unclear 00:28:31]

**Janet**: Do you remember seeing any kind of violence or anything like that?

**Shirley**: No I tell you. The most of our young life we used to live in the woods. With all this if not the Russians attack Poland, so the German attacked. And they didn’t want the family to live in their home they sent us into the woods.

We lived most of our young lives in the woods. With no clothes and no nothing. And still when they start the war we went back to our houses. That was out youth that’s how we were raised. But thank God we had good parents and they watched us and we grow up to know for a better life.

So then we were all gone. And he youngest here got education means. So we were so happy that my father went and we had a chance to live Poland. We couldn’t go here we couldn’t go there. We had to stay in your own little-like you had your home. You were affairs at night to go out. People were shooting and the soldiers this and that you know.

As you were in Germany and Russia and Poland. And thank God we had to go away and come to the United States. I am telling you I was so happy I said to father, the best thing you did in your life is that you ran away and you brought us here. My father was a very devoted father.

**Janet**: Did your father ever have to serve in the army? When he was in Poland did ever-

**Shirley**: I don’t think so. I don’t know because we lived in a small town. He comes from a bigger town [unclear 00:30:50] my grandma had a bakery. And the other one next too grandma they all had they own little house. He was a tailor.

And my father came from this town to [unclear 00:31:13] to learn to be a tailor. But here he learns the whole thing. Measure and make the whole garment like a suit or a jacket or a warm jacket. He learned all this and he was teaching my brother to do the same thing. And they both worked together.

My brother was a young kid. He used to [unclear 00:31:43] and then come and work with my father. Help him doing the work he has to do. And that’s how we made a living. It wasn’t easy. And you know move it to girl so they were just home. And that’s why they had a lot of children. Nothing else to do.

**Janet**: What did they do for fun? Was there anything? What did they do for enjoyment?

**Shirley**: Not much. It was a little movie I think. But we did want to go out at night. My parents didn’t let us go out. But they had like Jewish clubs. And in the library that we used Togo they used to have like singing and dancing.

All the Jewish people were together. Nowadays it’s different. They even marry the polish girls you know. And Jewish boys.

**Janet**: But they always kept Sabbath when you were there?

**Shirley**: Yeah, yeah.

**Janet**: How about your grandma? What do you remember about her?

**Shirley**: Grandma was a [unclear 00:33:01]. But she and they had a bakery and they sold baked goods. The men never worked there they never had to go to work. And the women had little bakeries and they sold it. How much you need and that’s how you make a living.

**Janet**: Did you ever do things with your grandma? Did you go places with her?

**Shirley**: Yeah. No places to there. They we couldn’t go we couldn’t go anywhere. But a lady picked me up from a yard goods store. She says Shirley in [unclear 00:33:45] helps me in this store and I will pay you a few.

She gave me around eight [unclear 00:33:55]. And I worked with her. I was maybe 10 years old. And afterwards after she closed the store I had to go in with her and help her clean her house. I was washing the floors and she was dusting.

And that’s why she gave me eight [unclear 00:34:9] of each. But I used to eat with her. And she used to like me because I was very friendly to people. I made more sales than she did.

**Janet**: What was her name?

**Shirley**: Her name-Goldie. This was name. And her husband he never came into the store. He was gone to the [unclear 00:34:49] and he was sitting in trailer the whole day. And she and I would stay in the store selling things you know.

But they had one daughter I don’t remember. And then she got married and I was invited to the wedding. They had a nice Jew-they had nice big Jewish wedding. With all the [unclear 00:35:18] you should see them. It was a different life.

**Janet**: What was it like a real Jewish wedding when you went?

**Shirley**: The woman then separate. The men then separate. They had like oh getting together and jumping. But not together with the women. All separate line. It was different. And when I came here I had just to get a different [unclear 00:35:54]

**Janet**: Yeah can you think of anything else that was different there?

**Shirley**: There? Well at night we didn’t go out much we were afraid because there was always the polish with the guns with matching with the soldiers. So out parents didn’t let us out much. We didn’t have much recreation.

The only thing we had is the library. There we used to meet. There we used to have entertainment and there we all young people got together. Thank God for that and the all of the books. They had so many good books you know. I remember I read about a toy story. And what else?

A lot I forgot all that you know I read so many. And a lot of [unclear 00:36:53] books. I have here a girlfriend that she gave me two [unclear 00:36:56] books in Jewish and I read them. And I even worked here in a [unclear 00:37:06].

And there were a Russian lady she said Shirley where can I get a Jewish book for my mother? I say I will bring you one. So used to give it to her and she used to read. But now that I got see I didn’t go I worked here on the [unclear 00:37:24] shop.

I got to go back soon as I get back on my feet you know. I am going to go back to work. I love to work I don’t like to sit home you know? So anyway-

**Janet**: So you went to the libraries and you with young people in Poland?

**Shirley**: Yeah all the Jewish people. I had even a boyfriend in far away in my clan. So as he says Shirley you are going to send for me? I say I don’t know I can’t promise you. I am going there I will see how things are going to be. But then I met this fella in Cuba. I gave up the other one.

**Janet**: You liked this one better?

**Shirley**: Yeah it would be too hard to send the money to come you know. And this one was a little different.

**Janet**: What did you like about this one?

**Shirley**: This is what I tell you. My mother was with us and she used to cook like suppers and I invited him for supper. And he got so close to us he really said Shirley would you marry me? I say I don’t know I am going in now I don’t know how the situation will be with me and we could make a living.

He says don’t worry we will make a living. He was also have business there. His parents [unclear 00:38:59] had a bigger estate. And from the older from their parents. But we wanted them to come here. But they were so religious the father says [unclear 00:39:13]. They didn’t want to come here.

So Hitler got the best of them. We tried to locate them. He had a sister in [unclear 00:39:29] she was a teacher. We locate her-not her in the holocaust book we find her name that she was a teacher and she was sent from one town to another to teach Jewish children.

But a few years ago my son tried and then we didn’t hear from her or nothing. My husband if he wouldn’t be sick he would go down there. He wants to take my son and go down and see them you know. But he was sick and couldn’t travel. They didn’t let him travel. So then later on I think I have the holocaust book and I lend it to girlfriend.

Did you hear of Ruth Savage? She was a very active when she was young. Now she doesn’t feel good and we are the best friend. And she got Jewish books from me he gave me. And she gives me the Jewish paper. She gets it and then she gives it to me. The Jewish paper.

**Janet**: Now you mean?

**Shirley**: Yeah I go every Saturday to see her. She had a stroke and her feet don’t go no more. So she can’t come to see me so I go to-But she was very active in the Jewish community. She and I used to teach Jewish children how to read.

I knew how to read and write Jewish. And we used to teach them. And all the girls had to come back but she can’t walk. So I got to see her. Very lovely person.

**Janet**: Was she from Poland?

**Shirley**: No, no. I met her here in the JCC and we become very good friends. And I told her I read Jewish so I helped out with the children. I read and she-she was born here in the United States. And I helped her. But since she got sick and I got sick somebody else took it over. You have no connection with the JCC? Nothing? With [unclear 00:42:19]?

**Janet**: No. I live in New York and I just-yeah. So tell me now do you remember anything about dishes food that your mother made when you were in Poland?

**Shirley**: Well she did a lot of baking. Bread you had to bake your own. And [unclear 00:42:46]. You can’t get a [unclear 00:42:51] like this over here,

**Janet**: About three feet long?

**Shirley**: Yeah braided you know. She used to put in eggs and yeast. And you should see the way it grows up. Friday night the Halle was on the table and my father made caddish and we all had to take [unclear 00:43:12] and take a little wine to drink you know. My mother used to [unclear 00:43:20] every Friday and all the children had to be around for supper.

**Janet**: What would be of supper for Friday night supper?

**Shirley**: Well chicken soup, fish- we cooked the fish that my father brought and he bought the live fish and he put it in the bathtub. It use to swim around you know.

And my mother couldn’t kill him she says Solesh go and kill the fish because I am not going to do it. And then [unclear 00:43:59] and she put it together. It was delicious. You can’t get now a fish like that. Fish chicken soup and chicken. And the hula and cake. Everything she used to bake herself.

**Janet**: What was the house like where you lived?

**Shirley**: Well it was too big of a house. They have two bedrooms and a kitchen. And at night we put out a folding bed. And in the kitchen we also had one bed of my brother was sleeping there. And we slept-they had iron little bed and we put it up and we slept too in thebe.

But I remember they were all small. They had those children's beds you know. And he children sleep there and we slept in the bigger bed. But there wasn’t too much room. But everybody had they own little house.

**Janet**: Was it made out of stone?

**Shirley**: I think of wood. Every [unclear 00:45:24]. Everything of the house went outside. And we painted out the whole house. And we put in new straw for the children to sleep. Every [unclear 00:45:38] that was once a year we painted the house. And we lived pretty comfortable you know. As long as you had food that was the main important thing.

**Janet**: You had local-the things that were going around the village. The kind of farms whatever they grew that’s what you had?

**Shirley**: There we were few miles away but when my father came they load [unclear 00:46:12]. Then the farmers helped him get so we have to put it. So they dig out and they put it in the ground. And you could take them the whole year.

They keep nice and fresh. Cabbage potatoes and onions. And they used to bring us eggs. One day my father was given a cow. A live cow. I say where we are going to keep it. He says don’t worry. So we had a little porch. He made it warm and there was the cow.

In the morning my mother went out with a pale and draws out the fresh, milk and give every child a glass of fresh milk from the cow. That was our beginning of the breakfast. Then she had eggs, she had oats from the farm.

Everything from the farm. It was so good to us because my father was the only good tailor around that he could do the things that they needed you know. And they loved him. But he went away there for a whole week. He didn’t come home at night. Only Friday night he came home for Sabbath dinner.

**Janet**: What would he do when he went away for a week?

**Shirley**: He was sewing clothes for them.

**Janet**: He would go to houses and-

**Shirley**: One farmer came and took my father and brother with a machine and he was staying in his house and make clothes for the whole family. [Unclear 00:48:02] he used to say. This are all little things you know.

**Janet**: What would you wear when you were growing up? What kind of clothes would you wear?

**Shirley**: Well little skirts with blouses. Sweaters you know. Also they women use to crotchet. They made little sweater so they gave them for the children some sweaters. And they used to bring the leftover material. He made us little skirts.

Little blouses you know. He used to himself and I used to help him sew up the buttons you know and make button holes. It was a different life. It wasn’t easy believe me. But when he went away we remain my mother with the five children. And I was helping her with the cooking with the cleaning.

You know how we did out laundry? We had to warm up the water on the stove and put it in big round what they call it [unclear 00:49:15]. They washed it with the hot water, then they took the clothes and they went to the-they had a little lake and we rinse it out here. And that’s how we did our laundry.

How did we get up there? She used water at night with a [unclear 00:49:40] and everybody [unclear 00:49:43] and that’s how she gave us a bath. We grew up and it was nothing-I was never sick a day in my life. Then we were in the business. But I gave up for this so I am sick all the time.

**Janet**: What about medical care in Poland? If somebody got sick?

**Shirley**: Well it was [unclear 00:50:09]. We never had a doctor. My mother had really 11 children. But five or six die because we couldn’t get a doctor any medication. They used to have little-give them cough medicine. But something more they couldn’t do it.

So five children died you know. Because of no doctor no medication. But we were lucky we survived like that you know. And my mother for so many children thank God she was never sick. We were here together for a long time. And that’s her life here now. We were a very happy family.

**Janet**: Do you remember when you left for the United States? How did you feel when you were leaving?

**Shirley**: I was glad I was running. I was so glad to leave I didn’t like there.

**Janet**: And do you remember leaving Sadolvna? Do you remember [unclear 00:51:26]?

**Shirley**: Yeah I still remember.

**Janet**: What was it like when you left?

**Shirley**: It was a small town; there were a lot of polish people that had business. But they had like groceries. They brought their things from the farms to sell it. So we used to go out and but carrots or something you know. They had they own little place. They always used to be in the same place.

**Janet**: These were polish people?

**Shirley**: Yeah. But some were good but some-we helped polish neighbors with food. Because if we had a little too much we gave it to them. They didn’t have money to go but food you know.

**Janet**: When you left you remember packing up to go and leaving the town?

**Shirley**: Well we-I tell you. They told us if we didn’t leave from out town in [unclear 00:52:31] we get maybe [unclear 00:52:34]. So we sold our house to polish people and we lived in a little apartment near [unclear 00:52:45]. We tried to get a visa but we didn’t get it anyway till we went out to Cuba.

**Janet**: So what ship did you take when you left?

**Shirley**: I think the name of the ship was [unclear 00:53:00] Orillia.] I think.

**Janet**: And that’s the ship that too you to Cuba?

**Shirley**: Yeah that’s what that took us to Cuba. From Cuba we took another ship I don’t even remember the name of it you know it’s a long-it was a small ship. And then in about two days we were in America.

**Janet**: Do you remember when you got to Cuba anything’s that you saw that were different-

**Shirley**: Cuba at that time was not castor it was macchiato. And he had it the American style. And a lot of Jewish people the business people they came into Cuba. You should see the business they had here.

A friend of my husband [unclear 00:53:59] and he came and he opened a leather store. And he got rich. Because he was the only one.

**Janet**: What kind of store?

**Shirley**: Leather goods for shoes. All the shoe makers. It was a lot of shoe makers there. They all came to but the good from that man. [unclear00:54:21] he has a daughter and she still lives-she was born in Cuba-and she married a very nice man.

And Sasha came here. And she and her very nice parents came here. They all came from polish country. But that [unclear 00:54:53] he was a friend of my husband he was also a [unclear 00:54:58].

And he left to go he left in [unclear 00:55:03] a brother and she had one daughter. Brilliant girl. In Cuba you could get education you could get anything.

And she raised her she was a music teacher. Up state. But still in n Brooklyn. We went to see her and her mother was coming here they invited us because we were friends so we went to see her. I forgot the number. They had a beautiful house and they are consultants for business. Her father was a very educated man.

**Janet**: What was your experience like in Cuba?

**Shirley**: In Cuba? Not much. Like you know we are not going to remain there. But they had Jewish clubs. [Unclear 00:56:02]. And my husband-a girl couldn’t go out [unclear 00:56:09] so he took me out there. We used to go to dances there.

I was young I was only in my 20s. And he used to bring me home. And I enjoyed life there. It was freedom like here in the United States. But when Castrol took over it changed you know.

**Janet**: Do you remember arriving in New York on the ship?

**Shirley**: Yeah. And we went out of the boat. And people were standing there greeting us. And I says-it was I think on a Saturday-[unclear 00:56:51] you know we shake hands with a lot of people.

And then so many times I wanted to go and see but I was so tired down with three children. With the store and whatever. When people come in and I wasn’t in the store. Where is Shirley? I used to cook.

I had a brother in law butcher and he used to deliver me the best of meat. And I used to cook and the\_\_\_14 people-what do you got today Shirley? I always everyday something different.

**Janet**: When you came into the harbor the New York harbor did you see the statue of liberty the first time that you came?

**Shirley**: We were looking. But my father didn’t let us make step without him you know. And we were so in a hurry. We had somebody that came to pick us up with a cab.

**Janet**: Did you go to Ellis Island do remember that part?

**Shirley**: We looked around all over but they didn’t let is a minute out of their eyesight you know. Because we were young and we were-we bought some clothes to come in. nice clothes you know. And we didn’t have time to go to the beautify parlor. My hair was so curly blonde you know. But now-

**Janet**: Do you think you went to Ellis Island? Do you remember that at all? The big hall.

**Shirley**: Had to think so many year you know. But it’s so many time I said to my husband. You driving lets go over. When it comes to Sunday he was so tired so we tried to rest up. We found that up state and we use to go to New York see a shore and [unclear 00:58:51] you know?

**Janet**: Who picked you up? Who met you when you came?

**Shirley**: My husband had a very rich uncle. And when he used to come in the beginning when my husband came he used to come every weekend and he took us to New York for a treat. And we went every Sunday.

**Janet**: So you weren’t married when you-

**Shirley**: Yeah I went back to Cuba and I married him.

**Janet**: But when you first came from Cuba? Who met you? You came what with your two sister and -

**Shirley**: My father. My father always took care of us you know. Because alone he didn’t drive. The others used to go with a train or with a bus.

**Janet**: Where were you living?

**Shirley**: I was living in my father's house.

**Janet**: Where was that?

**Shirley**: In New Jersey [unclear 00:59:59] I still remember where I used to live. We had a very nice landlady she had a three family house. And they had a big apartment. So my father it wasn’t much to rent you know.

**Janet**: Let me just say that we are at the end of this tape and I want you to stop and I change the tape. So just wait one minute.

**Shirley**: Okay go ahead. Maybe you want to drink something?

**Janet**: Let me just say this is the end of tape one and I am speaking with Shirley Katz. - Okay now we are beginning with tape two and I am talking with Shirley Katz.

**Shirley**: My mother-my grandmother son was my mother's brother. And he had butcher. They had a little duplicate house and the brother lived together with my grandma. They had their own little apartment.

And he had a butcher store. [Unclear 01:01:03] you know in the back yard. And he used to kill cows. That [unclear 01:01:11] butcher for the Jewish family. And when he killed a cow and you know like the liver and the-

**Janet**: Heart?

**Shirley**: No, no. the liver comes with a lot of things you know. So he used to take the whole [unclear 01:01:36] the lungs and the liver and he brought to my mother. [Unclear 01:01:43]. She used to grill it on the kitchen stove. Was on coal.

She used to grill the liver and chop it up and gave us as sandwiches. And the lungs she used to bake like little [unclear 01:02:08] little rolls and the lung was inside. Chopped up with onions and a little-they used a lot of yeast.

My father used to bring also from the town again as a group and have called it a goose. and my mother used to take it to the [unclear 01:02:38] and take the [unclear 01:02:44] and make all this cook she used to bake little rolls and feel with this liver and the lungs you know it was delicious.

They used to make their own food. You couldn’t go out and buy food there you know. That why you brought the cow home. You should have milk. Isn’t that something? And they also buy and thank God I was never sick a day in my life.

A cold sometime yeah. I took out my tonsils when I came here. Because there was no doctor there. Here my father did everything for us.

**Janet**: Was he a tailor here too? Was you father a tailor when he was here?

**Shirley**: Yeah sure. Here you normally made good money. He worked in stores that they sale all suits men suits. And they have to be altered he do the alteration. And he got good paid. He worked here since he was in America he worked at one place.

And that’s why we couldn’t move away from New York. Because all this big stores was in New York you know. And he was a good provider. He loved my mother. The life he was so beautiful. Anna how you feel today.

And they were very good parents. You don’t find parents like this now. I try to be like them. I was very good to my children.

**Janet**: What did you learn from your parents that you tried to do with your children?

**Shirley**: Well I learned the good path of the family life to love your father and mother. And love your children and that’s why we are together. Soon as my husband died my children said ma you cannot be alone so sell the house and come and live with us.

But young and old I don’t think its combination. Sometimes maybe I am wrong but I can’t help it. I am sick and they have to do so much for me. I try to avoid. At night I don’t sleep well and they give me sleeping pill and everything.

But I can’t sleep at night. I take one Tylenol a lot of Tylenol. Sometimes I fall asleep and you know I can’t eat much. At night I am getting hungry. So they give me some crackers they should take with me. And my daughter makes me a little milk shake and a little juice and I just sleep the rest of the night.

I don’t know I tell the doctor she give me sleeping pill but the don’t want to give it to me. They says it’s dangerous. So the nights I don’t know I could jump off the roof. And that’s how it is/

**Janet**: Tell me about when you first came to this country what it was about this country-

**Shirley**: I would admire every minute of it. And the first thing my father says go to school. Learn English I went every night to night school and in the day I used to work I was the oldest.

**Janet**: What did you do for your world here?

**Shirley**: I worked in Edison light factory. To put the vials together. And he showed me a few times and he watched me my father's friend was the manager there. I was lucky you know. And I worked for part of my life.

The people were very nice to me really. And then I went to work on dresses, [unclear 01:07:06] and my father says you know children you are not going to grow by working and making the few dollars. And we don’t make much.

I had to go every day to New York. My mother [unclear 01:07:16] the oldest. My father was so crazy about-she had red hair a long hair and I took her to school and her little bot won the first prize for beautiful children. And my father loved her.

She was a baby if she cried it was before me to see why-why is the baby crying? I says maybe she is wet maybe she is-they loved her you know. I was the first one. Now my brother had they had a boy and they have married.

And she lived with him in Cuba. They house and he died when he was a young man. From overworking himself/

**Janet**: Do you remember the depression? Do you remember when the depression- well you came in 1929 so it must have been hard times?

**Shirley**: People couldn’t get any jobs and it wasn’t but my father always had a job. He always worked. He always brought money and food to the house that we shouldn’t be hungry. Because he was really get a good trade in him.

And there wasn’t many in the United States that they could take a garment and fix the sleeves the pants. And it was too big they took it to-I don’t know anybody you know. But he was always a good provider.

**Janet**: Was your mother happy in this country?

**Shirley**: Oh yeah. She was happy soon as we came into Cuba. Cuba was also on the same system like American. But when Castrol came in he changed all like the Russians you know. But I think the Russian go back now to normal life. Them day you think so?

**Janet**: Hopefully yeah.

**Shirley**: I read all the papers and I love our president. I think he is the greatest.

**Janet**: Why do you think so?

**Shirley**: You don’t think so?

**Janet**: Yeah I think so too. Why you think so?

**Shirley**: I think because he does a lot for the old people and for youngsters. The youngsters should follow him and go to school and not be in the street shooting people like they do now here in the United States you know. With the guns they try to collect all of the guns I read all the papers.

**Janet**: Do you think that-have there been other presidents you liked besides Clinton?

**Shirley**: I liked Roosevelt a lot. If not for Roosevelt we wilder have the social security. And that’s why I really admire him. He left something good in this country. And believe me when I was in the hospital and everything was covered from Medicare I was so happy.

I for this glasses last week I have to go for adjustment $2. In the follow up clinic you know. I had them for quite a few years so he says Dr. [unclear 01:10:47] you have to come every year-no every two years I paid only $2 for them. But I have to go for a little adjustment. [Unclear 01:10:59].

And you couldn’t get in any other country old people like we get in here. And that’s why I am very thankful you know. I remember I have here two aunts and two uncles and my grandpa from my father's side was here too. And my grandma she was a very active lady you know. So she worked in a Jewish old age home.

She was old but she would do things. Friday night I had to go and help her cover all the tables with white cloth and put out the lights the people that stay there and they [unclear 01:11:57] Friday night for the [unclear 01:12:00] you know. And I helped her.

And don’t you dare come in and not bring grandma a present. We didn’t have much money but we brought her some fruits oranges apples. It was my grandpa died [unclear 01:12:19]. He was such a good man.

All the family was really good to each other they helped each other. They lived in a different town. Ostia not to far away from us. And we always used to go and see them. And they were in Poland you know.

**Janet**: Do you remember any times with your grandpa when you were in Poland?

**Shirley**: Oh yeah my grandfather used to work in a-how you would call it? In a beer garden. They used to produce the beer. The factory that they made beer. And he used to deliver them to the town that we used to live Sadolvna.

He always used to come in and stay with us. It took one grandchild and one from the other. [Unclear 01:13:16] you know. But my other sister too. But one of my sister died and one lives in North Carolina with her daughter.

They came in here in the spring to visit me. She has a very go daughter. She keeps a-it like a home for the old age and she pays her end. Could eat there a restaurant and everything. She also had very bad arthritis all her life. Me thank God I was never sick a day in my life you know.

**Janet**: Do you think that the fact that you came here as an immigrant. The fact that you started out in Poland and made it here do you think that made a big difference for you?

**Shirley**: It made a lot difference. It give us courage to go to school. To learn English in one year we were all talking English. Reading and writing you know. And work. I always got a job. People used to tell me how you getting the job.

I says I go in I tell them I want to work. I didn’t care what it was. In the factory here there. And I always used to work. Not only for a few years. My father was smart and he sent us to business. My other sister’s husband was a butcher.

That was a good life. They made there their own house you know and they lived very nice. She had also two daughter. And he died after the Alzheimer’s disease like Reagan. Regan cold afford but my brother in law couldn’t afford. So anyway he died a young man you know.

**Janet**: What do you feel proud of that you did in life?

**Shirley**: I feel proud of the freedom America has. The pride that all the people should have. A home food, and if they can’t get it somebody provides it for them. Especially when I was in the hospital there so many old people sick.

And Medicare provides and pays. Me too. I was there. And now they send me a [unclear 01:16:01]. While I was there I got a little pimple on my back. And they tried to get rid of it. They still come with medication. Here [unclear 01:16:13] and they treating it every day. How did I get it?

It was one nurse she was a mean thing she was a retired nurse. And she says you have to go and sit in that chair-the reclining chair. She put me in there for five hours. And while sitting there and I couldn’t move I walked in a little and I can’t get rid of it. I can’t sit down much.

So the nurses come into the house I didn’t want to stay in the hospital. They come to the house and they treat me there. She days it get smaller but it takes time. And I got the medication for it so I am suffering with a little pimple in the back. Would you like a little drink a little soda? [Unclear 01:17:10]

**Janet**: Well okay. Is there anything else you would like to say before we close? Before we finish.

**Shirley**: Well I think I can’t-I was so sick you know being in the house. I came here [unclear 01:17:22]. So I am helping the kids with making dinner. And I go with them shopping.

They don’t know what to but because I always used to take care of the cooking and shopping. And I used to go out on Tuesday to the temple of Emanuel for lunch you know. But I couldn’t go this year. I my feet don’t go.

**Janet**: Well I want to thank you very much. This has been a wonderful time. I thank you. I hope you feel better soon. So you can go back out.

**Shirley**: I hope so I hope to see you again. I would like to show you the Jewish paper I got. You want to see it?

**Janet**: Okay, yeah. Let me just take the mice off. This is Janet Levine for the National Park Service. I have been talking to Shirley Katz. And this is the end and we are on tape two. And I am signing off.