

**Tom Zielinsky**

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Interviewer: Emily Hilliard

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**Thomas W. Zielinsky**

Tom Zielinsky is a member of Weirton, West Virginia's Polish community. He is a member of Sacred Heart of Mary Church in Weirton, where he plays at their annual Polish Festival and biannual Polka Mass. I met him at the Mary H. Weir Public Library in Weirton.

Transcripts proofed by Tom Zielinsky.

TZ: Tom Zielinsky

EH: Emily Hilliard

00:00

EH: Okay. So, could you introduce yourself and tell me your name, where and when you were born?

TZ: My name is Thomas Zielinsky. I was born in Steubenville, Ohio and raised in New Cumberland, West Virginia.

EH: And could you tell me about your family?

TZ: My family is, on my mother's side, she was Slavish and her parents- one came from Poland and the other came from Austria. My father's family, both his mother and father came from Poland. So, I'm half and half. I'm half Polish and half Slavish.

EH: Okay. And what did your parents do and I guess what brought you to Weirton and them to the area?

TZ: Um, I think the mining up in New Cumberland was really a strong suit for all the immigrants coming over from not just Poland or Austria or Germany, but Russia, Czechoslovakia... they came because there was work. And there was a lot of work, the brickyards starting in about middle 1800s continued through about 1976, gradually decayed to where there's hardly any remnants of the brickyards, but traditionally they came for work in the brickyards and then when the Depression hit, the brickyards started to kind of stagnate and Weirton Steel at the time was the predominant employer and so the men and or women transferred from the Rocky Side brickyard area down into Weirton.

I, my father was in, he only worked in the brickyard for a short period of time and then went to the military, he was in WWII. He was one of 4 brothers that served in the war. One of them did not make it back. And when he came back from the war in middle 40s, he then started working at Weirton Steel, just about like all the other men in that area did.

I grew up in New Cumberland, went to a one-room catholic school for 3 years until our priest passed away and they closed the school and went to public school and then my senior year, the high school that I went to in New Cumberland consolidated with Newell and Chester, West Virginia schools to create one high school. And I was the first graduating class in 1964 from Oakland High School.

About when I was 8 years old, my father brought this little box home and set it on the dining room table and my mother said, your dad bought you a present and I said, well what is it, and inside there was a 12-bass accordion. He decided I was going to take accordion lessons. So that was kind of the way they did things back then. So at that point I started taking music lessons with a gentleman from East Liverpool, Ohio, his name was Johnny Celli and I took lessons with him probably for about 4 years, I guess, 4 or 5 years and John ended up closing his studio and my dad then moved me to Dino Belli here in Weirton.

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And so I continued taking lessons from him until my senior year in school and it became a little bit too much to travel back and forth with all the school work and stuff, so. And then I went 2 years to West

Virginia University and then 3 years in the military. And then came back to this area and actually spent 2 years working up in Rochester, New York for an electronics company and when that company got dislocated I moved back to the New Cumberland/Weirton area in 1970 and I've been here ever since.

EH: Okay. Your teachers, were they Polish?

TZ: The only Polish teachers that I had were the nuns that taught us through the third grade. We actually had Polish classes after school on, predominantly on Fridays, which didn't really kind of set well, (laughs)

EH: Right!

TZ: You wanted to go home and start your weekend. But, and I saw that as a... later in life I saw that as a big mistake on my part, of not taking advantage of my mother and dad cause they both spoke Polish, my dad could read Polish, my mother could read and write Polish—she actually kept in contact with a number of relatives in Poland for a couple of years but I can really kick myself because of that missed opportunity.

EH: So the one-room Catholic church—that was Polish catholic?

TZ: Polish church. Actually in my research that I have been doing for this book that I'm thinking about writing, I found that the first Catholic church was built in the Rocky Side area of New Cumberland, this is just north of New Cumberland, in 1904. The bishop had a full day travel from Wheeling to find a spot to build this church which eventually became a mission church. And officially became the Immaculate Conception Church when they moved in the middle of 1930 to the north end of New Cumberland. But the Catholic school was an old hotel that was converted into a school building—had no running water. Had electricity but no running water—all of our bathrooms were outside. We got water from a well in the center of the courtyard, so it was quite interesting especially in the winter months. There was a chapel that was up on the second floor of the building and the priest at that time Father Olszewski, he held masses there where the church was relocated from Rocky Side into the North end of New Cumberland, but I remember growing up going to church services, whether we were just saying rosary or for special occasion for a holiday that all of the mass parts including the saying of the rosary was all done in Polish. So we had a lot of Polish, growing up with 2 brothers, we always knew that mom and dad were talking about us because we would switch over to Polish.

EH: Mmhm.

TZ: In our presence so we knew something was going on.

EH: And then were there other... well what was the Polish community like? Were there celebrations? What kind of community cohesion?

TZ: It was probably... in fact my wife and I both cherish the fact that there were these traditions that the Polish had, that would start at Christmas time, we would have the Christmas Eve dinner that was traditional, there was a way to set the table, you always sat an extra setting, always with the plate face down, that was for the uninvited guest. It was all not meatless, you had to have fish, and of course my mother was an excellent cook, she made pierogis, the little stuffed dough pocket, and mushrooms and she

would bake cookies and it was just traditional to be able to sit down. They had a wafer called *oplatek* that was traditionally blessed by the priest and at the meal you broke off a piece of the *oplatek* and you gave it to each member and you'd go around and get a greeting or some recognition of that person to your right. And then of course Christmas Eve, Polish Christmas carols being sung for midnight mass. And of course as I was growing up you had to become an altar server, so that was a learning Latin at a real young age, I probably served mass when I was about 7 or 8. So that was basically at Christmas and the families in New Cumberland were very, very close. We lived on a street where my mother's sister lived across the street, her brother lived diagonally across from them, her two other sisters lived at the bottom of the hill. My dad's-- mother and dad's house was right across from them so we were all within shouting distance and it was amazing that we never had a telephone until I think it was 1953 or 1954 but if we did something wrong the message got to the house before we did. So, they were always looking out for the kids. We didn't see it or recognize it at the time. So even with the law enforcement or any officials, they were just, it was like one big knit family.

Easter time again that was another time of preparation because of the 3 days of Christ having been to die on the cross on Good Friday and then raise again on Sunday, there were traditions for how you prepared. Back then you couldn't eat anything before you went to communion, before going to mass, so there was a lot of people that passed out! (laughs) Before communion got served!

EH: Uh-oh.

TZ: There were again a lot of food preparations and one of the things we still do this tradition is the blessing of the basket. Blessing of the basket on Holy Saturday is made up of kielbasa and pierogi and sweet bread with raisins, horseradish, hardboiled eggs, specially decorated eggs... oh, and wine! (laughs) There's a lot of homemade wine going on there too.

EH: Of course!

TZ: And that was your first meal on Easter Sunday. But there were weddings, especially Polish weddings, if somebody in the family was getting married it was a 3 day event, there was just no... the relatives would come in from out of state and the parties would go on and there was a lot of drinking. My father, and all this was I guess growing up, knowing how to make the kielbasa, knowing how to prepare horseradish—the horseradish would really knock your socks off. So, then the, let's see...

EH: So the food, did you learn to make if from your mother or father or both?

TZ: My dad, surprising, was a cook in the Army. Uh, he had a few recipes, but my mother outshined him so he let her do all the cooking. And I've picked up, I do all the cooking for us, so learning different techniques that my mother would do and how she would prepare stuff. I don't do pastries and things and she was an excellent pie maker. In fact, there was a pie shop in New Cumberland that this lady actually had a sampling of my mother's pie and she thought for years that her pies were the best.

EH: What was that pie shop called?

TZ: Martin's Pie Shop.

EH: Okay.

15:06

I may have heard tell of that.

TZ: And it sat, there was a filling station in New Cumberland and that's where they had a filling station and then where Martin's stood was their house. Jesse Martin was her name. She had... and she did an excellent job with pies, but... not quite as good as my mother's, so she hired my mother. And my mother came to work for Jesse so then her pies became exceptional.

EH: Well, I'm a pie maker so I'm always interested in you know, what kinds of people make and...

TZ: She would do any kind of pie—cherry, we would pick our own blackberries because we lived up on a hillside and we did it for two reasons—1, we picked the blackberries, mother would make pies, but the rest, my dad would make wine.

EH: Mmhm. I thought that might be coming.

TZ: (laughs) So we grew everything! Back then, my dad and his brothers had a large garden, from corn to lima beans to peas to onions to whatever. I mean it all grew in the garden. And then at the harvest, they would figure out what they would need, and then they would make, put up tomatoes, we had fruit trees that grew in our backyard that they would... and we would have the tomatoes and beans and all this stuff all through the wintertime. So they learned a lot in how to do a lot with little. And back then, there really wasn't a lot. I know my dad worked in the mill and he would bring home probably in the neighborhood, clear money about 65 maybe 75 dollars for a two-week pay, so mother would have to make sure there was enough that went around and somehow, she was able to make all that happen. We used to get our eggs, there was a delivery person in New Cumberland by the name of Mr. Cuppy and we'd get all of our eggs, he knew exactly how many eggs were on the hillside, he delivered them. Our milk was the same way—there was Adkinson Dairy right out of New Cumberland so we had all our milk delivered right to the back door. So...

EH: With the gardening and putting food up, was that something your parents knew how to do already, or did they learn it here? From other people?

TZ: They learned it up on the Rocky Side area. Their parents, they had even less than what they were growing up with. And as I did my research and learned that these homes that were built there, all the kitchens were downstairs—they were below ground or at ground level, so they kept everything in a cold storage area. I found that my mother's, mother and dad both of them came from the... Poland, they were... lost in my train of thought... they had chickens so they were able to have fresh eggs. They owned a cow, so they were able to have fresh milk as well as make their own cheese. So as my mother was growing up, one of 7 children, they learned how to do this from watching her mother and of course her dad was working in the clay mines, so only saw him basically in the evening, when he came home.

EH: So what are some of the recipes that you make now that you got from your mom and dad?

TZ: Well, I basically do... quite a bit, but I put my own twist to them. Spaghetti sauce, the way we do roast chicken, a lot of fish, could be able to do the way she prepared turkey, we don't eat a lot of steak, but the steak recipe that I do is traditional to how she did it in a cast iron skillet—extremely hot. Just basic

salt and pepper. Now if you want to get into more flavorful things, we can do like an aioli with the garlic and the oil and the basil and the tomatoes—in fact that’s what we’re gonna have tonight.

EH: Nice.

TZ: But from pork chops to city chicken, to making cabbage rolls, you know we don’t do... my mother had a recipe and unfortunately she took it with her... when she made her dough for her pierogi. And these pierogi that she made, they just melted in your mouth. It wasn’t a chewy dough—don’t know what she put in it or left out of it, but it was an exceptional dough. So those kind of traditional food things we’ll do... doing some soups, or like a goulash with meat. Course mother never had a slow-cooker type of a thing, but she would cook that stuff until it was just fallin’ apart. And the flavors—it was just amazing. So we’ve tried to keep that, pass that along to my daughter, but some of that, people are just kind of too busy to do anymore. So...

EH: Yeah. Have you ever made your own kielbasa?

TZ: No. No. The kielbasa, my dad tried early on because—he liked it with a little bit more garlic and more pepper than what he could buy. And then eventually there was a gentleman that made it over in Ohio that we were able to... he tried... we would go... right before the holiday season had started, he would go to these different places and try a sampling just to see if it was to his liking and then this one fella, he had it in—I can’t remember, it’s down around the Bellaire, Ohio area—he doesn’t make it anymore, he passed away. And we finally found a gentleman who went to Newcastle, believe this or not. Newcastle, Pennsylvania—it was a 2 hour drive for us, but he had to get the kielbasa. And this gentleman, his name was Wasilewski and he showed us, went into the smokehouse, took us in there, showed us how many... for Easter time, Easter was his biggest. He would make 35,000 pounds of kielbasa and these people would come into this little country store, wooden floors, the shelves were probably no bigger than the aisles here [in the library] and if you didn’t have placed an order, you weren’t gettin’ any of his kielbasa. And that gentleman passed away a number of years ago. His family, because it was so intense to make and keep the recipe consistent, they sold the recipe to Giant Eagle so you can buy it at the Giant Eagle market district up in Pittsburgh. And it says right on the package, Wasilewski kielbasa.

EH: And is Giant Eagle a regional chain?

TZ: Yes. Mhm.

EH: Then, I guess going back to music. Your teachers, your music teachers—were they teaching you Polish repertoire? Polka? What sort of genres?

TZ: They genre was mixed. Johnny Selly, while I was with him, he kind of had an all-around combination for us. For Easter there would be the traditional songs, the Easter bunny and that and then at Christmas, of course the Christmas carols, but he would also provide in addition to the polkas and waltzes and obereks, he would also apply the cha cha or something new that might have come out and so he would, he’d kinda put that music in front of me. And then after I left him, I went to Dino Belli here in Weirton and he had a very unique way of playing. Dino’s playing style was that he really did everything by ear. He could read music, but he chose not to. Me, I read music, I don’t play by ear. And I saw that as a disadvantage and probably about the last year I was with Dino, I was asking him his technique and I was starting to develop that and then my dad found out what I was doing and that was it. No. No more—said you have to read

your music. But then, in later years, it became a handicap for me because I would be out, I had a couple of good friends that had a band and played the accordion and they would always get me to come up and play a couple tunes and I'd come back and tell my dad, "If I could play it by ear, I'd be up there for a little bit while longer, but I only know two songs, so..."

EH: (laughs)

TZ: But, so it again, Dino gave you the sense to do the ability to use your talent to go out and to do entertaining and to do whatever. Once my senior year came, I didn't do a lot. I went to, as I said, college for 2 years and then to the Army for 3 and I really didn't pick it up. Maybe once or twice, in the C.O. I picked up the accordion and played on a Sunday afternoon. But I didn't really play until probably the early 70s when I came from New York and actually had a drummer play with me. I bought an accordion that's not quite like the one that's with me today. It made the accordion but it also emulated an organ. So we had a little combo, 2 man band that played through the area.

And then my working career kind of preempted all that, so then I stopped in probably the late 70s and didn't really pick it up again until my wife decided that she was going to have a conversation with one of the nuns at our church here at Sacred Heart of Mary and a gentleman had polka mass, so he was getting up in age and just wasn't able to do it and Sister Pancratia asked me if I would think about taking over the polka mass. Well I looked at the music and I thought, well, maybe I should write my own. Because this fella had, well I don't know where he got the music, but it had just—it was a lot easier for me to just start over. So we put together one of our first polka masses and then eventually I bought a newer type accordion that would layer different instruments, to give the mass a little bit more depth and perspective. And we probably redid the mass maybe a half a dozen times over the course of the last 20 or so years. We actually cut a CD back in 1999 at one of our picnics, a Polish picnic, and had it professionally recorded. But people—churches all around the area, Pittsburgh, all the way to the Southern end of West Virginia, over into Ohio, heard about us and wanted, had never heard the polka mass, but had heard about it. And then there was a lot of talk, and this was about in the early, probably mid-90s that this one priest who was really kind of the sponsor of the polka mass, wanted to meet us, and we played out in Burgettstown with him. I can't remember what his name is now. Do you remember, Patty [to his wife]? Father... what the father's name was?

PZ: Mmhm.

30:06

TZ: I'll think about it. Anyways, so in, with the accordion, then I also played entertainment for the people, they would always have a picnic or some gathering event afterwards, and I always kind of played that, and I still do. We just did 3 weeks ago, we had our polka mass at noon, and then I played music from 1 until 4 o'clock. But I mix it up, the genre is all over. I do a little country, rock 'n' roll, polkas, so it gives people a... some of the songs that they might not of heard for a long time, especially like the Glen Miller or the old 40s type sounds. So that's...

EH: So when you were growing up were there social polka dances that you played for?

TZ: No. We really, I mean there were a lot more accordion players back then. In fact in Weirton, I was surprised, we used to have little groups. And I played, I think there were 4 of 'em that were probably 15



of us at least in each of the groups. And they had the bars in the area, they would, if they were having a wedding or what have you, they would bring a polka band in and it was typically like in the case of these three brothers, they were called the Chetock Brothers, they were from Irondale, across the river and one played the accordion and one played the drums, and then Butchie played the sax and clarinet, and they were just, I mean they could play anything. They could mix it up, do whatever. And that's what my dad always envisioned with me playing the accordion, my two brothers would... one would pick up the sax, the other one would pick up the drums, but that didn't go very far. (laughs)

EH: (laughs) And did your dad play music?

TZ: No. No.

EH: So it was his dream for you.

TZ: Yeah, I mean it really was and this really came out of the blue because I was out playing ball up the road from our house and my mother called me down and I didn't know what she was needing, and whenever I see this box sitting on the table, open it up and I'm going, "what am I gonna do with this?"

EH: So you weren't necessarily excited, you were just kind of puzzled?

TZ: I was kind of puzzled! Yeah, and then it was a lot of work! I mean you had to... not only did you have to... the way Johnny Celli started you out is you literally had to learn music scales, you had to know what a quarter note is, what a whole note, how long to hold it, um, before he even got you started in there, and then of course when you play the accordion, your left hand is doing the bass part and you can't see it so you really have to understand the chord structure, and then your right hand, and you have to coordinate everything so your bellows are going in and out, so you've got a lot of things going on and for a 9 year old, it was like holy crap!

EH: (laughs) That's a lot to think about!

TZ: (laughs) It's a lot to think about, but it all worked out, it was something that I'm glad that I did. I really feel privileged that I was able to do that. In fact, I just took my old accordion, this was back in 1954 I believe when my dad bought me my first accordion—if you see pictures of me, I mean it was like this great big accordion and this little person. And that accordion is 60 years old, 62 years old and it still plays. And when he took it off the shelf, he had accordions in a case, and I wanted the black shiny one and back then, that was \$600. In 1954. That was a lot of money. So I was very privileged that he was able to spend that kind of money and I was able to play. And I took it all, we would have situations at school that they would have little entertainments for the people and stuff and they would always have me up there playing some song whether it was I think probably the most infamous was the Accordion Boogie or Beer Barrel Polka, or something like that. So those I knew by heart but the rest of it was a little bit difficult for me to tackle. But what I did was with the Festival of Nations that we do here in Weirton, representing the Polish community, I went back and did some research on who the people were at the time that were able to contribute to the genre and there's quite a few people that really brought life to the music, whether it was through a waltz, an oberek, a krakowiak, to a polka. And probably the most famous was the Dziadunio Polka. You've probably never heard of the Dziadunio Polka.

EH: No.

TZ: But you've probably heard of the Clarinet Polka.

EH: I don't know!

TZ: No?

EH: I might recognize it, but I don't know much about polka just by name, but I might recognize it.

TZ: Well the Clarinet Polka's a very famous polka and it was actually done, called the Dziadunio Polka and it was written back in the... I think in the late 1800s. But through all the different Polish musicians helped in one way to configure, one took a polka and one took a waltz and they combined them because one thought the polka was too fast and this one said the waltz was too slow and they made it into a krakowiak, which is an uptempoed waltz type thing.

EH: Is there.... So 3 counts?

TZ: MMhm. And then the oberek is done in the same style—it's  $\frac{3}{4}$  time, but it's a lot... a little bit different in tempo versus the oberek. So.

37:26

EH: Okay.

TZ: But we've been able to now entertain the people, the community, so they have a little bit more understanding of who the Polish people are, what music contribution they made to society.

EH: Yeah, so does the polka mass happen once a year, twice a year?

TZ: Twice a year. We typically do it on Mardi Gras, that's right before Easter. It's a prelude to Lent and they are able to do the paczki, which are the stuffed rolled donuts that we like. And then in usually August is when our Polish fest is for our church so we do the polka mass twice. It depends on the priest. If we... one of our former pastors really liked the up-tempo-ness of the mass, and especially now with the new accordion that I have it allows you to put trumpets in and saxophones and different things so that the tempo and the volume of the mass gets elevated a little bit. And, but he would like, he actually had us do a couple of extra masses, but then as the priests came through and a new one came in, some of 'em, even one of them is not that fond of it. One is, one isn't. More traditional. He's looking at more of a reverence type thing as opposed to getting' down and boogie-ing in the aisle! (laughs)

EH: (laughs) Well, he can deal with it twice a year. (laughs)

TZ: (laughs) Yeah, he always moves it over to somebody else, so there's another priest that takes over.

EH: That's funny. Does someone in the community make the paczki?

TZ: Um, yes. Our ladies at Sacred Heart of Mary Church, they use their recipes to pass down to the church. Some of the recipes are outstanding. And some of the recipes aren't... that good. (laughs)

EH: (laughs)

TZ: Um, the paczki that I grew up with, that my mother had, I mean these were excellent, and she did everything by hand, everything by scratch. Our paczkis that the church members make are a little bit more on a cake-side as opposed to a donut-type texture, a softer texture, and I grew up with the soft texture.

EH: Prune filled?

TZ: No, we never did prune. There was always some type of jelly—strawberry or pineapple, or just cream cheese type of... now there's a store over in Steubenville right on... actually it's in Wintersville, called Riesbeck's. And they make the best. Kroger's will—their bakery will try, Shop 'n' Save here in Weirton will try, but Riesbeck's is the best. It's almost like, you know, if you go up there and you get a mixed box, it's like having mother back again. They're excellent.

EH: Ah. Yeah, I grew up in northern Indiana about 2 hours from Chicago, so there's a large Polish community.

TZ: Oh yeah.

EH: I'm not Polish that I know of, but paczki was the thing you got on...

TZ: Paczki is just excellent. And again, this is one of the traditions that stay alive in this area. But it's just sad that you know, the generations that were trying to carry the torch forward, I mean even my own family, they're, they seem like they have more of a modern lifestyle and early on when they first got married, they tried to carry it on, wanted to carry it on, and then just... things overtime just kind of diminished.

EH: Do they still live in the area?

TZ: No. Our closest family is in Charleston, West Virginia. The rest of them are in Atlanta, one's in North Carolina, and Tennessee. My daughter and her family are in Knoxville.

EH: So aside from the church and the polka mass, what's the community—Polish community like in Weirton today?

TZ: Slowly declining, unfortunately. Most of the families that were once here, most have moved outside of the area because of the employment issue. So it's really who we have in Sacred Heart. And our parish, my wife does the financial recording for the monies that are collected on the weekend churches, er, weekend masses, and it's been slowly going downhill over the years. The choir—if you looked at the picture—we have a picture of our choir on the cover of the CD that we did back in 1999, and I think there's only 1 person out of that group and it was probably a group of 20 people in the choir at the time. So it's slowly going down. I have relatives, this would have been off of my mother's mother's side—their name was Dobush, and they moved to Hamtramck, Michigan and Royal Oak and that general area of Michigan, and we were up there probably about 5 years ago for my aunt's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, and it's slowly doing the same thing, it's just going by the way. And people just, even though they're part of that family, if that next generation doesn't embrace any of the traditions, it slowly erodes away and you don't even know that you're part of a Polish family anymore.

But back in New Cumberland, that was what was so exciting about the holidays is that families would get together and it would be upsetting to us kids when we had toys under the tree but we had to go to all of

our cousin's to visit with them so that we could have a piece of something and a candy, my uncle Oral made excellent fudge candy. And so by the time we would get home on Christmas Day, it was already time to go to bed. So we kind of missed that. We had to catch up. And you know the sled ridings that we would do to become creative, walking up through the hillside and doing exploring and stuff like that, my cousin, we just met with him, haven't seen him for a number of years. He lives in Tennessee. My wife and I went down to visit our relative this spring and we were reminiscing about how many times we would walk up—mother would say, "Don't go walk up past that thing!" and we would go "wonder why she said that!" (laughs) Sneak across the fence to see if there was some kind of alternate world or something, you know?

But we would walk, we would walk, and we would walk. It was just that the cousins, we were all together, we all went to school together. Some played sports. I was too small to play sports so I was part of... I was a statistician for keeping score of the teams. And, so but everybody kind of moved—once you graduated or even after graduating college, a lot of people never returned to the area.

EH: Where's the closest thriving Polish community? Pittsburgh?

TZ: Pittsburgh is probably the closest. Even the Steubenville area has declined. They closed one of the churches down over there a number of years ago. Polish Hill still thrives in Pittsburgh, and that's really... we've been up there a couple of times and... but again, it's that same declining community even though it's there and there are more resources, those resources are slowly fading.

47:24

EH: Yeah. Well maybe we could go outside or to a room that Pam has for us and you could play a little for me?

TZ: Yeah! Sure.

EH: And just before—do you have anything else you want to add about music or Polish heritage?

TZ: No, it was just that, I think that my biggest takeaway from my Polish heritage is what I'm struggling with now. I should have been more inquisitive to my parents when they were alive because they lived in an era that I'm finding out was absolutely unique in how people lived, how they worked. I was fortunate enough to get a hold of payroll records from 1900. Found my grandfather. First day at work, he made, he worked I think he ended up getting 3 dollars and 20 cents for the month. He was eventually paid, I think it was a dollar and 35 cents a day to mine clay. This was not with any type of machinery, it was done by pick and shovel. And loaded in the cars and hauled out by mules. But to go back and to inquire more about their growing up and especially because they knew the language. It would have been so easy to learn the language at being 3 or 4 years old, 5 years old, than it was for me to take a Rosetta Stone and try to return to Polish—your mind just doesn't work that well. That would have been my—kind of my biggest regret for doing that. But I would have continued the accordion and I think I probably would have went behind my dad's back and learned how to play...

EH: by ear.

TZ: Play by ear! (laughs)

EH: Well maybe some of the language stuff was their desire for you to be American—they you not teaching you?

TZ: I'm not sure... it might have been? But even with the sisters that we had, Sister Delores—she was the nice nun. Sister Arsenia not so nice. Of course she was a little bit older than Sister Delores. And my two cousins, Richard and Linda—on Friday afternoon after everybody was done, we would sit back with her and we would go through different words and I mean some of the words were you know, [unintelligible], thank you, dziękuję, or goodnight, *dobranoc*, you know those type of things kind of stuck with you, but when you sit down and really want to have a conversation with somebody, you're just not capable of doing that, so...

EH: Yeah. Yeah. I thought I had one more question but I think it escaped me. Maybe I'll think of it again.

TZ: Okay.

EH: I would like to come back around Easter cause I was talking with Pam about some of the women who make Greek Easter breads, and just maybe for the polka mass and some of the food preparation that happens.

TZ: Mmhm. Sure! Well and Yvonne, I mean I know you had an interview with her, but she does so much of what her mother does. Because of ways she makes the breads, her ability to take a palm and turn it into a magnificent piece of art, I mean it's just utterly amazing. That's a dying... that art has long faded. We don't have anybody other than Yvonne who does any of that palm work in our church. And I mean I learned the basic, which looks like a stick! (laughs)

EH: Yeah, she showed me some of that. I think it would be a good time to come back here, I think.

TZ: Yeah! That would be good.

EH: Well thank you very much!

TZ: Oh, you're quite welcome, thank you.

52:29

END OF TAPE