Basic Detail Report

Title Interview with Tedeusz Zbylut

Date 7 July 2025

Medium born digital audio file

Description Audio file of interview with Tedeusz Zbylut. He was interviewed by Keara Lyons on 7 July 2025 in Fairfield, Connecticut. Tedeusz Zbylut was interviewed as part of the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History's Community History Project discussing moments of change in his life. This interview explores the personal and immigration journey of Teddy, a Polish immigrant who moved to the United States in March 1993 after winning a visa through the U.S. immigration lottery. He shares vivid memories of his life in Poland, his early work experiences, and the motivations behind leaving a communist country. Teddy speaks in detail about the challenges of adapting to a new country, especially the language barrier. Despite these hurdles, he began working as a painter before starting his own business just a year later. "After one year, I opened own business. I [was] making more and more money, and I have money for school, for kids." He proudly describes how his children attended and graduated from Fairfield University and now hold stable, professional jobs. His daughter is a nurse, and his son runs his own European car business. “Every year was better like free country, USA, really free country,” Teddy reflects. The conversation also includes Teddy's memories of hard labor in Poland, including working in a coal mine from ages 20 to 30 and running a small fish store. He emphasized the contrast between life under communism and the economic

possibilities he found in the U.S. In contrast, life in America gave him the chance to grow and provide for his family independently: “I am happy because America is always better to have a private business... I don’t like it have boss. I am boss.” Teddy also reflectes on his ongoing connection to Poland, including visits to see his siblings and observations of the changes in Polish society. “Now everything is in the store. When I was young, no. Nothing special in the store. Like oranges… only on the Christmas,” he recalls, emphasizing the scarcity of goods during his childhood. Despite his challenges, Teddy remains deeply grateful for the opportunities he’s found in the U.S. “I am happy because different country. This is freedom… If somebody wants to do something, make more money, it’s okay.” He concluded the interview with concern for his family still in Poland, especially given the war in Ukraine: “If something would be very bad situation, I have to help my family… I have to invite all family here.”

Dimensions Duration: 38 Minutes, 30 Seconds