

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Interview with Joseph Bach December 12, 2015 RG-50.030*0858

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PREFACE

The following interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The reader should bear in mind that this is a verbatim transcript of spoken, rather than written prose. This transcript has been neither checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy, and therefore, it is possible that there are errors. As a result, nothing should be quoted or used from this transcript without first checking it against the taped interview.

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JOSEPH BACH

December 12, 1015

Question: This is a **United States** Holocaust Memorial Museum interview with Mr. **Joseph Bach**, on December 12th, 2015, in **Chelsea, Massachusetts**. Mr. **Bach**, thank you very much that you have agreed to talk with us today a little bit about your story, and what experiences you had during World War II. I'm going to ask the first basic questions, and then from that I will ask other questions about your pre-war life before all of these things began, so that we have a sense of what was the world you were born into. Tell me, what was the date of your birth? When were you born?

Answer: 1908.

Q: The – and which month?

A: November.

Q: And day?

A: Fourth November.

Q: November fourth. And was your name when you were born also **Joseph Bach**?

A: Yeah.

Q: And what town were your born in, or what place were you born in?

A: Hospital.

Q: Hospital, I know. Where was the hospital located?

A: I know, in **Lvov**.

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Q: In **Lvov, Poland**, okay. Can you tell me wh – how many brothers and sisters did you have?

A: One.

Q: A brother or a sister?

A: Brother.

Q: Okay, what was his name?

A: **Siegfried**.

Q: Was he younger or older than you?

A: Younger.

Q: All right. And your parents, your father, what was his name?

A: **Henry**.

Q: **Henry Bach**. And your mother?

A: **Marvina**(ph).

Q: And what was her maiden name?

A: **Holzhaiger**(ph).

Q: **Marvina**(ph) **Holzhaiger**(ph)?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Can you tell me what kind of – can you tell me a little bit about your family? What did your father do to support the family?

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A: He has a store.

Q: What kind?

A: China, this a – this a – this a –

Q: China store?

A: China and porcelain, this – this line.

Q: And was it a large store?

A: Medium.

Q: Okay. Was it in **Lvov** center?

A: Ah, near center. Depends how you look at it.

Q: Was – did your father have any brothers and sisters?

A: Yeah, he had.

Q: And were – about how many did he have?

A: How many I don't remember. Wait a minute. A brother, a brother, he has one.

Q: Okay.

A: He was – he was taking care of animals, of horses. He was in the army. He was a

[indecipherable]. It means in –

Q: In the Austro-Hungarian army, or the Polish?

A: Yeah, in Austro army.

Q: Okay.

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A: And they ter – in **Poland** when come, so he had private. He was a private with the **[indecipherable]**

Q: Oh. And tell me, did he have – did your father have more brothers and sisters, or this one brother?

A: One brother more.

Q: Okay.

A: He was in **Vienna**.

Q: Okay.

A: Some kind of representative, I don't know what representative.

Q: Now, was your family always from **Lvov**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, it had lived there for generations?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. On your mother's side of the family, did she have brothers and sisters?

A: Yeah.

Q: Mm-hm. Did you know them?

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you – were you – did you meet a lot – you know, when you were little and growing up, did you visit uncles and aunts?

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A: Yeah, they come to visit us and talking. That's all.

Q: Your brother and yourself, did you go to Polish schools, or Russian schools?

A: I go to German schools.

Q: You went to German schools?

A: Right.

Q: Okay. And why was this? Because **Lvov** is so far away.

A: Because – because German school was the quality the best.

Q: Uh-huh.

A: Mathematic, other thing, were the best. Polish school or schools, nothing special.

And th-they wanted special.

Q: What language did you speak at home?

A: Polish.

Q: Okay. When you were growing up, how many languages did you know?

A: Again Polish, German.

Q: Did you speak Yiddish?

A: No.

Q: Okay. Did you speak Russian?

A: No.

Q: Okay. So, would you say your family was assimilated into Polish society?

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A: Like less and more, yes.

Q: Okay. Did your – was your parent – was your family very religious?

A: Medium.

Q: What does medium mean in this case?

A: What?

Q: What does medium mean? What did you – how did you –

A: It means you go when it was holiday, keep the holidays, but not special.

Q: You were the older son.

A: So?

Q: Did you – did you get any special treatment by education, or were both you and your brother the same?

A: My, my brother the same.

Q: Okay. Did you go to gymnasium?

A: Yes.

Q: Also German?

A: German.

Q: Okay. And what about any university? Did you enter university at all?

A: Yes.

Q: Where?

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A: In **Paris**.

Q: In **Paris**?

A: Yeah.

Q: What were you studying?

A: Medicine.

Q: Did you want to be a doctor?

A: Yeah.

Q: And can you describe something about what **Paris** was like at the time? Was this in the 1920s, or 30s?

A: A nice, entertaining spot.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. Twice [**indecipherable**] But now it's too [**indecipherable**] same stuff.

Paris is **Paris**.

Q: Yeah, it is. How many years were you there?

A: Three.

Q: Three. Did you finish your studies?

A: No, the – I have to finish five, not three.

Q: Uh-huh. And why did you not finish them? What happened?

A: A little stuff.

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Q: Tell me about the little stuff.

A: War.

Q: Well that's – that's big enough. That ha – you know. So you – so the war interrupted your studies?

A: Right away. Come back home.

Q: Okay. What did – when you came back home, was it 1938, or '39, do you remember?

A: I don't remember.

Q: Had the war –

A: Was –

Q: Uh-huh?

A: Yeah. War.

Q: What – when you came back – now, let me back up a little bit, I have another question I didn't ask. Would you say your family was well-to-do?

A: Not bad.

Q: Not bad. Did you have – tell me a little bit about your parents' home. Did they own their own house?

A: No, they don't – they didn't – we didn't – we live in nice house, but we didn't own it.

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Q: And was it a single family home, or did you live in a flat?

A: That boy – three family, three – three – okay, three family house.

Q: Okay. And what kind of modern conveniences were in that house? Was there electricity –

A: Toi – toilet paper. I don't know what, you know [indecipherable] is.

Q: All right, I know, I know. But you know something, toilet paper is –

A: Correction – wait a second.

Q: Okay.

A: Correction. For those that are doing only question [indecipherable] have sense.

Q: I understand that some of my questions may make no sense.

A: Sure. You can take it out.

Q: Ah, it's okay. I'll tell you why I ask these things. Because people today don't know how – whether the places where people were from were very developed, or whether they were modern –

A: Some – some they were, some not. One house could be very modern, and one other is not so modern.

Q: And when I ask that, you see, it also tells me a little bit more about how well off or not well off a person's family was. So I ask things like –

A: Medium. I wouldn't tell that it's rich, or the – medium.

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Q: Medium.

A: No – no problem financially or – or eating or something like that, I know.

Q: So did your parents pay your tuition in the – in **Paris** for medical studies?

A: Oh, sure.

Q: Okay, so they could afford that?

A: Yeah, it's – it's a – no, that was not so big.

Q: Okay. When you came back to **Lvov**, what – what did you do? Did you start working anywhere?

A: **Metro Goldwyn Mayer**.

Q: You started working at **Metro Golden Mayer**?

A: Right.

Q: How did that happen?

A: I wanted to get the job, and [**indecipherable**] basically, I wanted to be a doctor.

Q: Okay.

A: But when is vacation, you go up and apply in a job what you can.

Q: Okay.

A: So.

Q: And so you got that – how did you get that job?

A: I don't know myself. I got it, that's all.

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Q: Okay. And what was your job at **Metro Golden Mayer**? What were you supposed to do?

A: We talk about how order, you know, order for pictures, and to send all additional means **[indecipherable]** you need to be in **[indecipherable]** all advertise, all this **[indecipherable]**

Q: So you mean like when a movie would – would be sent to **Poland**, you would ask about additional advertisements for the movie, or –

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: They send the movie, and they sell all advertising, all what you – what this movie are needed. You understand? When you give it to a movie, they get everything with the movie. You don't really order.

Q: Okay.

A: You give them the whole business.

Q: So your job was to make sure that movie cinemas got the movie with the advertising attached to it?

A: Yeah, advertising was my department.

Q: Uh-huh. And did that mean you had to translate the advertisements that they sent into Polish for – from **America**, or –

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A: What's on **America**, was in – in Polish.

Q: It was in Polish already. All right.

A: Yeah, they always prepared.

Q: Okay.

A: **Matthew**, relax.

Q: Excuse me?

A: I talk to **Matthew**.

Q: Okay. He will. Hang on a minute.

M: Can I look at this for a minute?

A: No.

M: Can I have it for a minute?

A: Yeah.

M: Thank you.

Q: Okay.

M: I'm relaxed, are you relaxed?

A: Yeah.

M: Okay.

Q: Okay. This is **Matthew**, who is Mr. **Bach's** grandson. So do you remember some of the movies that – that you distributed at that time?

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A: I [indecipherable] starting in the movies.

Q: I know my – we want to know about this connection to **Metro Golden Mayer**, we're very interested in it.

A: What is interested, that's a movie, that's all, it's a business, it's nothing else.

Q: Okay.

A: **Pani(ph)** [indecipherable] **Pani(ph)** **Valesca(ph)**, this I remember.

Q: **Pani(ph)** **Valesca(ph)**?

A: Ah this one, Polish dignitaries, ah, all baloney.

Q: All baloney.

A: Sure, it's – it's [indecipherable] were some picture extraordinary.

Q: Yeah?

A: Ma, picture, you stamp it. Next.

Q: How many cinemas did **Lvov** have?

A: Around – around 12.

Q: Uh-huh, about 12 cinemas. And did you have to have personal relations with all of those cinema people?

A: What I have a [indecipherable] they came to the office, and they got whatever is needed, that's all.

Q: Okay. Did any Americans ever come?

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A: Okay we don't talk about the movies, we talk about the other things.

Q: We will, we will.

A: I'm sorry, it's finished.

Q: Okay, no more movies.

A: [indecipherable] what is movies?

Q: So, how long did you work there?

A: Not very long. I work it – I work it twice.

Q: Okay.

A: What I wanted when I have vacation.

Q: Okay.

A: And I work it when start the war. I came back home right away, and I temporary job, I think, go [indecipherable]

Q: Okay.

A: And I start the old [indecipherable]

Q: So tell me, did you – were you already in **Lvov** on September 1st, 1939? That's when the war started.

A: So I was in **Lvov**.

Q: You were in **Lvov**?

A: Yeah, well, right away that letter, come immediately, war.

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Q: Okay. Can you remember – can you tell me how everybody reacted, what was going on in the city?

A: Was very upsetting, what you can't imagine. German are quite potential [indecipherable] and a lot kids, a lot this, right away in the army, in the [indecipherable] different stuff.

Q: Did you want to join the army, or were you going to join the army?

A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: They took where they wanted. Polish army prepare the – yeah, Polish material for war. But it's not – it's not like – like German. Polish was much smaller country. They can't produce so many soldiers. It's – it's impossible. [indecipherable] there are armies now of thousands. Here could be maybe 1,000. It was hard. And don't forget that German had excellent prepare.

Q: Yeah.

A: This here, **Poland** against German? It's a poor country.

Q: In comparison yes, very much so.

A: What – what are even talking about Polish and German.

Q: Yeah.

A: Okay.

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Q: So what about your brother? Was he at – in **Lvov** at that time too?

A: Who?

Q: Your – your younger brother.

A: Now let me think. I don't know remember **[indecipherable]** something's happen. My younger brother – no. He was like absent.

Q: Okay.

A: He was in somewhere **[indecipherable]** something. He didn't have him, because my situation was different. When I came back from **Paris** –

Q: Okay.

A: – I had my job.

Q: Okay. You had a job, you had the **MGM** job.

A: **MGM** job. I was already – I had been there. Very pretty girls.

Q: That's one of those benefits.

A: Yeah. So, here – here were, let's see, girls – uh-huh, Russian grab **Poland**.

Q: Tell me how, what happened?

A: What – how? You put a million soldiers in **[indecipherable]** you are in **[indecipherable]** Polish compared to **Russia**. Are you si – are you laughing?

Q: Well, it's – it's not a laugh that's funny.

A: It's nothing funny.

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Q: Yeah.

A: They are nothing compared to **Russia, Poland** compared to **Russia**. So
[indecipherable] grab it all, **Poland** right away.

Q: No, but I'm confused now. Tell me – you said the Germans were grabbing
Poland, and now you're saying the Russians were grabbing **Poland**. How did this
happen? What – what did – didn't they grab the same parts, or what?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: German started building up.

Q: Okay.

A: And staying – staying on the line some [indecipherable]

Q: Okay.

A: And the Russian moved in.

Q: And which – which army took over **Lvov**?

A: **Lvov** took am – **Russia**

Q: Do you –

A: [indecipherable]

Q: Okay, so that was part of the Russian territory.

A: Right.

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Q: Do you know why it was that they took one part, and the Germans took another part?

A: They – they – go talk to guy, I will get – ask him, why you taking this?

Q: You're absolutely right, I don't think anybody goes up to them and says, why you take this?

A: Shake hand, take this. Wonderful, you know –

Q: Yeah.

A: – that's so wonderful.

Q: Do you remember seeing the Russian soldiers coming in? Do you remember your first impression of them?

A: I saw it.

Q: Tell me what you saw.

A: I saw Russian soldiers, what I saw.

Q: How did they look?

A: Huh?

Q: How did they look? Did they look like they were modernly dressed, with modern equipment, and –

A: They were very well dressed, and they were well having this, you know. They prepared themselves for war with **Germany**. This is it.

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Q: Ho-How did they behave with people in **Lvov**?

A: Depends. If it's girls, different. Grown-up – grown-up girls, different. And they were very, very sharp. They don't trust no one.

Q: They didn't trust anybody?

A: No. They were right. But – Polish don't like **Russia**. And suddenly I was caught.

Q: Yeah? By whom?

A: By some inspector, I don't know how you call it. And they ask me, did you **[indecipherable] Metro Goldwyn Mayer**? No, my – I wasn't at **Metro Goldwyn Mayer**. Another one, I forgot. So I think yes.

Q: So they asked you if you had worked at these places? At **Metro Golden Mayer**?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And you said you did.

A: Yeah. What I **[indecipherable]** what I have to hide?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, so he telled, you are an American spy. I almost fall from the chair. Tell me, why you think this way. Because American, and their working people used to use for political stuff. I do –

Q: Had you ever met an American?

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A: No. No [indecipherable] agent for, they came from – from **America** about the movies. I told that he is crazy, or that I am crazy. Somehow you – he told to me, you may go home. I went home.

Q: Okay.

A: The same night came a agent with a – with a – some gendarme, some kind. He tell me, you are American spy. My father got red like – Mommy almost fainted.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I was looking [indecipherable] crazy. But up there is no crazy. When he tells, you are.

Q: Doesn't matter if that's not the truth.

A: No, forget the baloney talking [indecipherable] he told you –

Q: Truth. Yeah, okay.

A: – that's all. And he's right, not you. So I moved – my mommy almost fainted [indecipherable] can't imagine. So I work – I went with the guy. Four hundred people.

Q: What – who were these people?

A: Very nice people. A rabbi was up there too, and was very nice people, director [indecipherable] directors [indecipherable] the higher of the richer class, how do you want.

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Q: Okay. So in Soviet terms, it could be class enemies.

A: Yeah. So right away march north.

Q: By foot.

A: By foot.

Q: Okay.

A: We went to the place where the oldest – what – what you use?

Q: For what?

A: For – for travel.

Q: Trains?

A: Trains, ah, there were trains. Loading trains.

Q: What kind of gr – what kind of trains, were they passenger trains?

A: Who cares? Some buses, or some not, it's a transportation, that's all.

Q: Okay.

A: You got the piece of bread and **davay payoma(ph)**, and we started going north.

Q: So tell me, what does **davay** and **payejom(ph)** mean?

A: What?

Q: What do **davay** and **payejom(ph)** mean?

A: Let's go.

Q: Okay. Okay. Those are Russian words.

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A: Right.

Q: Okay.

A: And we went up there, maybe three days, four days.

Q: By train.

A: By train, right.

Q: Okay.

A: Later we took a little by cars.

Q: Where in the car – in the train that you were in, were there whole families in there? Was it just men?

A: No, no fam – no families, only men.

Q: Only men.

A: No – no families.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. And we went around 3,000 miles.

Q: That's a lot.

A: A lot, it's not a lot, depends how you look. It's very cold up there, and it's –

Q: Did anyone tell you where you were going, or why you were going?

A: Don't be funny. Tell me. Who I am, I am nothing. Tell me. I live – they give you food a little. You have where to sleep, that's all.

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Q: Did you have someplace to sleep in that cattle car – in that – in that train? Do you remember the conditions?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Yes?

A: You lay on the floor and you sleep.

Q: Okay.

A: So. That's a – such a naïve. So – so we – I were up there, I got up there, it's very cold in this [indecipherable]

Q: Okay.

A: And I was three years up there.

Q: Where were you, where did they bring you?

A: They have such a big – I don't know how to call it. Big. There were – people were sleeping by hundreds.

Q: Was it like a labor camp, or work camp?

A: A work camp, I don't know –

Q: It was a work camp.

A: Work camp, right.

Q: Now the Russian word could be gulag. Was it a gulag?

A: It was a gulag, too.

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Q: Okay.

A: So, up there I was three years. Later they starting letting out slow, people.

Q: But let me – I want to stay with these three years. So they l – they bring you to this place far north where it's cold, that's like a la-labor camp, a gulag, and what did – what happened then? What did you do there?

A: Well, what do you think of – you do?

Q: Okay.

A: They were – they – I will ask you what you do. Oh boy. So they – after three years they let you slowly out –

Q: But – **Matthew**, I'm – I need – I'd like to – I'd really like to find out what happened there. So what kind of work did you do?

A: They gave me work in the – something, repairing something, building something. What's the point? You're only tool, you know, you're not j –

M: How – how many were – were there – how many people were there with you?

A: Three thousand, two thousand.

Q: Were they all from **Poland**?

A: Most of them. But it's funny thing, a lot of Jews.

Q: A lot of Jews?

Interview with Joseph Bach
December 12, 2015

A: Right. And I was there – there final, this is the – slowly they started letting out. You understand, there are sit – 3,000, you're exhausted, and there's nothing more they want to do, so slowly there that you're old. You still are – are alive. You still are alive. Your first thing, go home, right? So you schlepping home through **Asia**.

Q: Through **Asia**.

A: Yeah. So getting [**indecipherable**] and after different performances, you are home.

Q: Okay.

M: And – and during your time in the camp, what was your – your daily life? You –

A: They have music. La-Laborer, so you're only part of labor. What your –

Q: Did a lot of people die there?

A: Enough.

Q: Enough. And what did they usually die of?

A: I don't know, they get different sickening [**indecipherable**] infection and this, that.

Q: Were you hungry while you were there?

A: You were once in any labor?

Q: Never.

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A: So there hunger – a guy who works by hand is always hungry. But this is not important, they don't kill you. You're hungry, so – I will tell you why I am telling you this.

Q: Tell me.

A: So I came back home after big, big **ba-bom-ba-boom**, I'm home. Now is **[indecipherable]** came to my house. Janitor **[indecipherable]** house, mister, your whole wife is killed, o-or – all the people of your family is killed. Which mean **[indecipherable]** they came here, and they killed them. Why? They're Jews. They don't like Jews. I was **[indecipherable]** when I heard the news, I didn't know what to do. Go to my brother house, they're all killed, even the small kid who was two – two years, are killed. So I was looking. I did make a better bargain than there. Nobody's killing me out there. I didn't eat so much, I can survive. But here was murder.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was – my wife – my wife – my mother.

Q: You were married by then?

A: No, my mother, I – you know mother, your mother.

M: Yeah, he means his mother.

Q: He means his mother.

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M: Yeah.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: So – so – so I went to my mother. My mother –

Q: Yeah.

A: – was suicide.

Q: Oh dear.

A: So she has a very good friend, Polish woman. She came to me, **Joe**, I will tell you why your mother suicide.

Q: Okay.

A: Why. They have it a big public houses. The soldier can go and have sex how many times he wants. So this kind of women are dying very fast. So your mother **[indecipherable]** suicide. This was – that was the end of the story. Coming down – and then I went right away to Polish army, and I was in Polish army three years.

Q: So can you explain to me, because there were many Polish armies. There was the army of General **Anders** **[indecipherable]**

A: You talk about he – historic, you don't take about this now. You talk about who it was once. And here is – was not Polish army. Was one Polish army under the direction English, you know.

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Q: Oh yeah, that was General **Anders** army. Under the English direction was General **Anders**.

A: You talk about different sha – time.

Q: Okay.

A: So – so – and –

Q: You joined.

A: – I went. For three years I was in army, and was in **Berlin**, and they tell me goodbye **Charlie**, go home. So I went home. I went to Polish movies. Atmosphere was stinking. You couldn't go around. I didn't feel like natural. I see like the eyes are different, it is look at me like – like a something what I sha – what I shouldn't be in **Poland**.

Q: Cause you were Jewish?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Because I don't belong here. I'm a – I'm – Germans – German so long, that they impressed the Polish, Jewish are this, are that, are something, not – so it wasn't that – so you – suddenly you see lots of Jewish in **America**. Simply they run away, was – is no place to live.

Q: Yeah.

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A: So –

Q: Where did you go?

A: When did I go? I was in – no, I was in the army.

Q: You were in ar – tell me about army.

A: Yeah.

Q: Tell me about those three years in the army.

A: [indecipherable] what you doing in the army.

Q: Where were you fighting?

A: Oh, straight from ac – the line of the **Lvov**, straight to **Berlin**.

Q: So, through **Poland**.

A: Sure. I wa – what else to be? Okay, **c'est la vie**, this is it.

Q: Wa – were you a soldier? What was your job in the army?

A: Killing.

Q: Yes, of course. But –

A: So it's nothing pleasant and nothing nice. I was a deadly enemy of German,
that's all. And it was – means nothing to talk, should he give in, should she give up,
I don't care. I'm getting the dessert. So the [indecipherable] the war, you should
know. So [indecipherable] later, I started what I started. I don't unders – I – I went
to Polish film, was not a friend [indecipherable]

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Q: Then what did you do?

A: But going to Polish film, I looked up the film. I go look it up. I saw a couple Jews who [indecipherable] Christian and they're living up there.

Q: Ah, they were passing as Christians?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Was this back in **Lvov**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Later I – I push [indecipherable] it was the other name, I forgot. So this [indecipherable] and then [indecipherable] one place where people who wants to go and for a doctor, come together. They put their name, and this guy decided where you will go. You can go – you – they send you to **America**, they send you to **Chile**. They send you where you want, where you don't want.

Q: Were you still in **Poland** when you were – you know, when you started to make these decisions?

A: What I was?

Q: Were you still in **Lvov**, had you already moved out of **Lvov**? Where were you when you started to find out where you could go?

A: I was not in **Lvov**, it was a different, other country. What's the difference?

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Q: Was it **Austria**?

A: I – yeah, I decided to move out from **Poland**. I didn't like this. Most men don't do me any favors [**indecipherable**]. So I went and I talk [**indecipherable**] **Poland**, th-they [**indecipherable**] to **Asia**, heck knows, they go in [**indecipherable**] So I [**indecipherable**] right, and it sounds a little bit English, so I thought, let's see this way. When I say this way – women like to attach to the man. They feel securer later, more – a young woman by itself is in less – less dangerous situation, even from Jews, you understand? So they like to attach to a man to defend her.

Q: It's safer.

A: Defend her.

Q: Yeah.

A: So I attach. I attach not to one, I attach to three Jews, yeah. They attach – they attaches – attached to me. They were very friendly then, and two were very pretty girl. So I say, you know what, I will come there a lot. Let's do [**indecipherable**] make a business. I married. Was very nice wedding.

Q: Yeah?

A: I didn't have a penny but the wedding was beautiful.

Q: Really?

A: Really.

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Q: What was your wife's name?

A: She is here.

Q: I know, but tell me, what was name when you met her.

A: Same still as what is there.

Q: Okay. Where did you meet her?

A: On the street. Where I have to meet a woman? Where I meet her? I meet her, her mother and her sister in ge –

Q: In what country?

A: In **Poland**.

Q: Oh, you met her in **Poland**?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: So we decided I am the **partner familias**(ph) and I am taking over the gang.

Q: Okay.

A: And [**indecipherable**] was very as – attractive, very, very friendly, and her mother tell me, what do you look for a rock, you have a diamond here. And I married the diamond.

Q: You married the diamond.

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A: Yeah. I – I didn't see the diamonds, but [indecipherable]. So, and we went and discover **America**.

Q: Together.

A: Say la – yeah, **c'est la vie**.

Q: Well, tell me, from what country did you leave for **America**?

A: **Poland**.

Q: Oh really?

M: From **Austria**.

Q: Was it from **Austria**, or from **Poland**?

M: You – you met at –

A: No, no, no, no, no, no. We are from **Poland**.

Q: Yes.

A: But we have to go through **Austria**. You understand, because this is just connect. Okay, who cares?

Q: A lot of people care.

A: We just go to **America**.

Q: Okay.

A: And now you have the whole story like – no charge, let's go something to eat

[indecipherable]

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Q: You know, I have one more question to ask you, and that is, when you got to **America**, did you go back to work for **MGM**, or did you work someplace else?

A: No, no, I – no **MGM**.

Q: No **MGM**?

A: No **MGM**.

Q: How did you support your family here?

A: You work.

Q: What did you do, what kind of work?

A: Wait, I have to remember, I don't remember what I do. I worked for somebody, I don't know, I don't remember.

Q: Okay.

A: For somebody here, for a while.

M: You were at a store.

A: Later, this is the business. Later, no, you want – she wants to know beginning. I work for somebody, I don't remember, so –

Q: Okay.

A: So –

Q: Well, that's the short version. That's a fascinating version, you know, of what you – of – from 1939 til 19 fi – '45 and beyond.

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Interview with Joseph Bach
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A: It's enough.

M: Do you want to tell us more a-after –

A: No, I don't want to tell us more, my wife will kill me.

Q: No, she won't.

M: She wants you to tell us –

Q: She wants you to tell us.

M: – how you left the camp and – and –

A: And you believe it?

Q: Yes.

A: You're naïve.

Q: Probably. That's why I want to talk to you so you would tell me the truth.

A: Yeah, I want to tell you, smart people don't take the truth.

Q: Oh, they don't, huh?

A: What is to do? It's gone, poof. Don't – don't – who needs to repeat the business?

Q: Did you ever tell your kids about any of this?

A: No.

Q: Why not?

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A: I [indecipherable] that life should be so low, and so degrading. Let them think that life is good, and they will be big, and they are. And my grandson who has a big mouth is up there. Oh, you hear him? He's very bright, talented –

Q: Yes, he is.

A: – and successful man.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Yeah. So I don't complain. Everybody said my wife is where she belongs, in bed, and you live until you die, it's – it's gone [indecipherable] it's gone. Don't repeat it, don't cry. Baby don't cry, it's nothing to cry. Is gone. Yeah, it was not very pleasant to be kicked around, this was not pleasant. But you went it through. It's – sitting in a place, you try to make a nice living, with nice family. They are very nice, my family is very nice. Can't complain. Very nice grandchildren. I can't [indecipherable]. They live quite nice, they settle down. So my life is gone. Still a little bit, and goodbye **Charlie**. What else?

Q: Oh my.

A: Not my, all what else?

Q: What else? [technical discussion]

A: Before war, or after war?

Q: During war, when you were there. When you were there and they let you –

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A: Remember, I was a slave, what do you think it was [indecipherable]. I don't have any life. Are you crazy, or what? And I am a slave.

Q: And –

A: Especial [indecipherable] army, they didn't like Polish like hell.

Q: Yeah.

A: Polish and the Russian hate each other. And Jews in between.

Q: So when you say you were a slave, did that mean that every single day, you were controlled, when you –

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: I [indecipherable] a slave physically, you work, that's all.

Q: Okay. When you – when they released you, you know, th – you say you were in this camp for about three years.

A: Yeah.

Q: And do you remember the place that it was, what the name of it was?

A: Ah, who cares.

Q: Okay.

A: Go away, so.

Q: Was it in **Siberia**, was it in the **Taiga**, or was it –

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A: No [indecipherable] **Siberia**, but I went to **Asia**, real short traverse to **Asia**.

Q: How did you – how did you get back to **Poland**? That's a long way away. What – how did you do it?

A: It's – I sa – I have something tell you. In this train –

Q: Yeah.

A: – [indecipherable] in direction were riding so many women. So when they see a man, you are sure all right.

Q: I see. So some ladies helped you get on the trains, take a ride.

A: I helped them too.

Q: Okay. Do you want to tell me how?

A: You can't even – in your – in your age, you have to know.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: So, what we are – we are [indecipherable] my darling, let's go something, to other place.

M: Did you want to tell – how did you get out of the camp?

Q: How did you get out of the camp?

A: They let you go.

M: They let you go?

A: Yeah [indecipherable]

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M: How were you able to board a train?

Q: Yeah.

A: Boarded a –

M: You got – you traveled by train, right?

Q: You traveled by train. How did you get from the camp to the train?

A: You go and then go in the train, that's all.

M: Well, you didn't need papers, or –

A: They don't had so much papers. They know it's the – it's ending.

Q: Oh. Did you have to walk by foot from the camp to the train station?

A: You went by foot, by this, by that. Whenever you can, you walk.

Q: And were you alone when you left, or did everybody leave at the same time?

A: No, I was alone, all the time alone. I was never alone when any car is a woman

[indecipherable] always – women help me a lot. They give me food.

M: Which cities did you travel through?

A: Sure a lot of food.

Q: Which – which cities did you travel through?

A: Did what?

M: From –

Q: From which –

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M: – **Russia**, from **Poland**.

Q: – from – yeah, from where the camp was to **Poland**. You said you went through **Asia**, which cities did you travel through?

A: No, don't give the funny questions, what city? A girl [**indecipherable**] about city, what city, whose train you go? This is not such a conventional stuff.

Q: I believe it. I believe it. Is there anything you'd want young children to know about these times?

A: No.

Q: Is there anything you'd want young adults to know about these times?

A: No.

Q: No, huh?

A: No. You don't need it. You are having quite a life, you don't need this crazy stuff, to know, to enjoy, to discuss, or look. You look normal life. This what you look. Don't look for crazy stuff. You can get crazy. It's it – it's not normal. So let's forget about it.

Q: Okay, Mr. **Bach**. I – I agree with you. I agree with you.

A: And drink coffee, so –

Q: And let's drink coffee and enjoy – enjoy things.

A: Who cares to know?

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Q: Yeah.

A: It was nothing pleasant, there was – okay –

Q: Thank you.

A: – we're here, everybody's happy [indecipherable] family. They're marrying, they're not marrying, they do what they want. Good luck. We old people, we are falling back. By us it's only one question, when. When we will die. Nothing – all other are funny question. [indecipherable] We – we don't count.

Q: Oh, you count.

A: No.

Q: But thank you for enjoying all of my questions.

A: Yeah.

Q: The naïve ones, and the dumb ones.

A: No, they're not naïve, they're dumb – less ex – less experience it, you – you – you are in a normal time.

Q: That's right.

A: You don't know what this crazy time.

Q: No, no.

A: This is it.

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Q: This is it. I appreciate that you've told me. I appreciate that you've shared it with me.

A: **C'est la vie.**

Q: Okay. This ends the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mr. **Joseph Bach**, on December 12th, 2015. Thank you again.

A: Where you put it?

Q: It will be in our museum, and you will get a copy. And **Matthew** will get a copy.

A: Where – where you put this stuff?

Q: It's gonna be our archives, in our archives.

A: Archive, no, it mean nothing. Okay, good.

Q: Yeah.

Conclusion of Interview

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