

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

## **Interview with Irena Bach December 12, 2015 RG-50.030\*0859**

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

## 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.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

## **IRENA BACH**

### **December 12, 1015**

Question: This is a **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs. **Irene Bach**, in – on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in **Chelsea, Massachusetts**. Thank you Mrs. **Bach** for agreeing to meet with us today, to talk with us today, and to share your experiences. I'm going to ask a number of questions that start with the – at the very beginning, and we'll talk an awful lot about your pre-war life, in order for people to get a better sense of the world you were born into, the people who influenced you, what you learned, what you saw before it all came apart, and the war and the Holocaust occurred. So my very first question is, can you tell me what was your name at birth?

Answer: In birth was **Irene – Irena Schwettzer**(ph).

Q: **Schwettzer**(ph)?

A: **Schwettzer**(ph).

Q: All right.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me your date of birth?

A: Yes, July 10<sup>th</sup>, 1925 in – in **Poland, Lvov**.

Q: In **Lvov**, okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have brothers and sisters?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: I had one sister who, she was three and a half years younger.

Q: And what was her name?

A: **Janina**(ph).

Q: **Janina**(ph). So she was born in 1928, '29?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. So in Polish that would have been **Janina**(ph).

A: **Janina**(ph), yeah. **Janka**(ph).

Q: **Janina**(ph). **Janka**(ph).

A: We call her **Janka**(ph), yes.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family, with your parents, starting with your parents. What was your mother's name, and her maiden name?

A: Her maiden name was **Paula Scherner**(ph).

Q: **Scherner**(ph).

A: **Scherner**(ph).

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, and my father was **Saul Schwettzer**(ph), yeah.

Q: Okay. Were your – were both sides of your family from **Lvov** for a long time, or had they come there from somewhere else? That is, was your family in **Lvov** for many generations?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. They were born there, even my grandparents were born there, too.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes. Then it was – when they were born, it was **Austria**.

Q: Truly?

A: Yes.

Q: It was **Austria**?

A: Yes, it was **Austria** then, yeah. And then, in that – when it was the first World War, then it came **Poland** again.

Q: I see.

A: Yeah.

Q: I see.

A: When I was born, was **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

A: When **Joe** – my husband was born, was **Austria**.

Q: Isn't that interesting?

A: Yes.

Q: I always thought **Lvov** was part of the Russian empire.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: No.

Q: But it wasn't.

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: No.

Q: Okay. So it was the Austro-Hungarian empire.

A: And then **Poland**, and then wa – 1939, when the war broke out, the second World War, then it became **Russia** again.

Q: Well, you know, it's interesting, in this part of the world, a person could be born in one place, live there their entire place, and end up having lived in four countries.

A: Yeah.

Q: You know? The borders shifted and changed so much.

A: Exactly, yeah, yes.

Q: Tell me a little bit about your family. How did your father support the family?

A: My father was a businessman, and we had a very comfortable life –

Q: Can –

A: – i-in **Lvov**.

Q: In **Lvov**. Can you –

A: In **Lvov**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: – tell me what business he was in?

A: No, I don't remember any more.

Q: Okay.

A: No. But we were very comfortable. I was going to gymnasium, I had private piano lessons. I had – I went to – for gymnastic, special gymnastic because I was a little overweight, yeah.

Q: It doesn't look it at all.

A: No, not now, yeah.

Q: No.

A: Til 1939.

Q: We'll come to 1939.

A: Yeah.

Q: At this point I'd like to still get a sense of what your childhood was like. Tell me a little bit about your home. Did your mother work outside of the family, or was she

–

A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: Sh-Sh – she was home.

Q: And she took care of you.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: All right.

A: Took care of two of us, yes.

Q: Describe your home to me. What – did you live in an apartment, or –

A: Apartment, yes.

Q: Okay, what did it look like? Describe it to me, if you can remember.

A: It – we had separate bedroom together.

Q: The two girls.

A: With – the sisters, yes.

Q: Yeah. Did you –

A: It was a small apartment. Nobody had big apartments at that time

**[indecipherable]** two bedrooms and a kitchen.

Q: Was the building an – sort of like a 19<sup>th</sup> century building, like they often have in  
**Europe?**

A: They're very old buildings –

Q: Yeah.

A: – very old, yes.

Q: Yeah. Many stories?

A: Not – not very comfortable. Didn't have a – a bathroom, separate bathroom.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: That was one of my questions.

A: No, no.

Q: No?

A: No, we didn't have separate bathroom.

Q: Did you have running water?

A: Yes, we had running water, and we had gas, yeah –

Q: Did you have electricity?

A: Yes, we had electricity too, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: We had special coal – coal and – stove for coal an-and wood.

Q: So would that heat the apartment?

A: To – to heat the apartment, yes. In each room – in each room was a special stove

–

Q: I've seen –

A: – built.

Q: Yeah, I've seen some of these stoves that had beautiful tiles on them.

A: Exactly, the beautiful tiles, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: But you have to do it every day, and take the ashes out every day, yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Yeah, yeah. So it was heated by coal, you had gas –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you had electricity. Did you have a radio –

A: No.

Q: – in your home? No.

A: No, it – it – the radio exists already that time, but my parents said, we won't have radio because you have to study. You have to study that this – this will disrupt you, your studying, to listen to radio.

Q: Well, like people said about television –

A: Yes.

Q: – a few generations later.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Did your mother have any help at home with –

A: Yes, we did have help.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes.

Q: What kind of help?

A: She was coming to – to clean the house, because we have – we didn't have carpets, we have – like now, you have plain wood, wooden floor, but beautiful bu –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

beautiful floors. You had to wax them, you have to clean them, it was a very big job, to polish them, to have a nice – nice shine to it, yeah.

Q: Mm-hm. You say that your family was comfortable, yes?

A: Yes.

Q: Did that mean that you also were able to take vacations, and travel, and things like that?

A: We didn't travel outside the country, but we did have vacation in **Poland**, yes, we did.

Q: Where would you go?

A: Wi – we'd – one was **Krynica** –

Q: Okay.

A: – that my – my parents have a – have an picture together. That was **Krynica**, the name.

Q: And is that in the mountains, or by the sea, or was that –

A: No, no mountains, no.

Q: No.

A: But we went to mountains in the **Carpartha – Carpathic** –

Q: **Carpathian** mountains.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah, that was mountains, beautiful mountains. And ye – **Yeremsha**(ph), you call **Yeremsha**(ph). I went for – for the summer, and overnight the **kolon – kona – kolonia**, you call **kolonia**.

Q: Okay, what is that, a **kolonia**?

A: That – o-overnight camp.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: Overnight for g – for girls, for girls, yes.

Q: Okay. Was that a camp associated with a group, or –

A: Wi-With school.

Q: With school?

A: This was from school, yeah.

Q: And did you – what kind of school did you go to?

A: I went to gymnasium.

Q: A public school?

A: After six years, cl-class was re-regular school, we had go to – if you – if you can afford, because you have to pay for gymnasium. That was all private.

Q: It was all private.

A: Private, yes.

Q: Okay. Did your gymnasium – was it a religious place?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: No, no.

Q: No. Was it Polish in the sense of –

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Just – just everybody could –

Q: Could go to it, okay.

A: – could attend it, and I went there for four years –

Q: Okay.

A: – til the – the war broke.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: And instruction at school was in Polish?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And at home, what language did you speak?

A: Only Polish

Q: Only Polish.

A: Always Polish, yeah.

Q: Did you ever speak Yiddish?

A: No.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: No.

A: Never spoke Yiddish.

Q: Did you know any other languages?

A: At that time, no.

Q: Okay.

A: No.

Q: So we were – so it sounds that your par – your parents were assimilated into Polish?

A: Very assimil – yes, yes, very assimilated, yes, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: In – in gymnasium I took German language.

Q: So you understood German.

A: As a second language, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: You can choose English or German. I took the German.

Q: Okay. Did – was your family religious?

A: No.

Q: Not at all, or just a little, or –

A: Just a little. Just a little, yes.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay. All right.

A: Just for high holidays, we observe high holidays, we observe Passover, Passover holidays, but nothing special.

Q: Tell me, what do you remember of **Lvov** itself? Very few people know of it – a city named **Lvov**. Tell me what it looked like, and what kind of a place it was in your childhood, as you were growing up.

A: You mean, how the city?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: The city? **Lvov** is a very big city. I think it's about hundred thousand people.

Q: Okay.

A: And a lot of Jews, a lot of Jewish people –

Q: Okay.

A: – lived in **Lemberg** – in **Lvov**.

Q: **Lemberg** in German.

A: In German, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Were there other nationalities there as well?

A: Yes, **Ukraine**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Ukrainians.

A: Polish, **Ukraine** and Jews.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And were you – in ya – the place where you lived, was it a neighborhood that you could say was either a Polish neighborhood, or a Jewish neighborhood, or was it mixed?

A: No, it wasn't Jewish, it was Polish and **Ukraine** nabe – neighborhood, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: And now it's **Ukraine**.

Q: Yeah.

A: **Lvov** is **Ukraine**.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Now it's called **Lviv**.

A: **Lviv**, they call **Lviv**.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you have friends when you were growing up?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Oh sure, yeah, from school.

Q: From school?

A: School friend, yes. We have –

Q: Who were not Jewish?

A: Yes, they were Jewish –

Q: Oh, they were –

A: – Jewish girls, yeah, I ha – I have one very close Jewish girl – girlfriend. And we have a very small family, I had my mother's sister, yeah.

Q: So, from both sides of your family, tell me a little bit about your mother and your father's families. That is, did they have brothers and sisters? Did your mother have brother –

A: My mother has two sisters.

Q: Okay.

A: One lives in – in **Lvov**, and one lives in **Kraków**, yeah.

Q: So that's clear across the country.

A: Yeah.

Q: To the other side.

A: Yeah, it was five hours by train –

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: – to go to **Kraków**. My father, I don't remember any family from his side.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: No grandparents, no –

A: I don't know.

Q: – nothing.

A: No grandparents. I have a grandmother yes, a very nice grandmother.

Q: From your mother's side.

A: Yes, mother's side. She lived with us for a while too.

Q: Did your parents ever tell you about their own childhoods, and how they were growing up, and what –

A: No, no.

Q: No?

A: It was a very difficult life for them, so they – they didn't want us to – us even to know or talk about it.

Q: Really? How did you know that it was difficult, then?

A: Because I – they – they didn't want to talk about it. So I figured out, must be difficult.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay. Okay. Did you remember as you were growing up what kind of – what kind of conversations would take place around the family table?

A: My father was reading the papers from – from beginning til end, and we will always have discussion, politics.

Q: Really?

A: A politics discussion and – and si-since **Hitler** came to power, so we always talk about the – about what's going on in German – in **Germany**, what's going on in **Europe**, yeah.

Q: Well, that's –

A: We talk about that, and we talk about our school.

Q: Okay.

A: About the school, what we're going through.

Q: Well, you anticipated one of my questions, because I often ask people, did events in **Germany**, which is in another country, were they of interest to you? And I'm interested to learn that way over on the eastern side of **Poland**, in **Lvov** –

A: But – but we were our neighbors.

Q: Yeah.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: They were our neighbors, so we know about the war, the first World War, with the – was going on. It was on the same place, on the same grounds, and my parents remember that.

Q: Did they tell you about the first World War?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: No.

Q: Okay. But they would remember about –

A: Yeah, well, they remember, yes. And so we knew, special when he came in the 30s, **Hitler** to the power, so it's something to talk about.

Q: Do you remember what you would be saying, what your parents would say?

A: First – the first thing was the – the Jewish problem. That was the first problem in – in **Germany**.

Q: Mm-hm, what to do.

A: And then the refugees are start – started to come in.

Q: Were there any refugees that came to **Lvov**?

A: Oh, a lot of German is – yes, a lot of – we helped them a lot, too.

Q: Really?

A: Yes, we did.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay. Because I remembered speaking with some German Jews who would say, we lived in **Germany**, but we had Polish passports, so we were forced to leave, and go to po –

A: They were forced to leave, yes.

Q: Yes, and go to **Poland**.

A: Yes.

Q: In what way did your parents help them?

A: They – they lived with us for a few – few months or few days. They were relatives, but far – far rel – rel – related to us. So I – I never knew that I have them.

Q: Okay.

A: But didn't last too long because they went to **Siberia**.

Q: They were deported to **Siberia**?

A: Yeah.

Q: And do you know why?

A: A lot of them –

Q: Okay.

A: – because they were refugees.

Q: Because they were refugee –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Because they were refugees, yes. They didn't have any p – si – papers, what do you need the papers for, the Russians. And they couldn't survive.

Q: Okay. So they had come to **Poland** because they, at some point, had had a Polish connection, had Polish citizenship –

A: N-Not only because of – because that – the closest country that they could run away, because they were deported. They said, go whatever you – you want to go, at that time.

Q: Right.

A: At that time. That was in 1939. We were occupied by the Russian in '39.

Q: I understand. I – and we'll come to that. What I am talking about now is before, when **Hitler** comes to power in 1933, that's about six years earlier. And your parents – your father reads the paper, and at the dinner table you discuss both politics, and what's going on in school, and things.

A: Yeah.

Q: When did you – was it – did refugees start coming soon after **Hitler** came to power? Or did it – was it later on?

A: A little later on.

Q: A little later on?

A: Yeah, late – yeah, before – before the war started.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: Before the war they – in '39, they came maybe two, three years before.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Now what about the Polish – Polish politics. Was that of interest at home?

Was somebody like **Pilsudski** someone that your parents would talk about?

A: Yes, we were very interested, yeah, we were very interested what's going on –

Q: Okay.

A: – what's going on in **Germany**, yes.

Q: All right. What about in **Poland**, in **Poland** itself? Did your father read and talk about the leadership in **Poland**? About **Pilsudski**, about when he died, wh-who came into power?

A: Yes, yes, yes. But it was quiet, in **Poland**, was very quiet. We didn't have any demonstration at that time. It was quiet, yeah. Everybody was busy with their own business.

Q: Did you – did you ever experience anybody saying or doing anything to – that was disparaging because you were Jewish?

A: Before the war?

Q: Before the war.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: No, no, it's – not any demonstration against je – Jews in **Poland**, no.

Q: Okay. Did you feel at home in **Lvov**?

A: Yes, til – til it's started in **Germany**, so we s – we s – we felt a little, too. We felt a little –

Q: In what way?

A: – not – not very – very comfortable to be Jew in **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

A: I felt it in school.

Q: You did?

A: Yes, I did felt in school.

Q: How did that express itself?

A: It didn't bother me at all, it didn't bother me at all, this – but I didn't like that, most of what was there.

Q: But this was still a Polish school?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And it was a private school, if it was gymnasia.

A: Private – private school, yes.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: And how did it expe – how did – what happened, that you felt it from –

A: Di – di – nothing happened, nothing happened. But I didn't like it when we have a subject religion.

Q: Okay.

A: That was our subject too. So we have to divide the room. The Jewish girls – they're only girls.

Q: Okay.

A: Jewish girls in one room with – with the rabbi, and they teach us our religion, and move to another room with the priest with the other girls.

Q: The Catholic girls.

A: Catholic girls have a religion, and that's what I don't li – didn't like it.

Q: Why not?

A: I didn't like it because I felt the – the division was dividing. They're dividing already Jews and non-Jews.

Q: Okay. It became a point of sensitivity.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Did you have girlfriends who were not Jewish?

A: We were friendly, but they were not close friends, we were not close friends, no.

Q: Okay. Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: That was a – the separation already then.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did your parents have – have a social circle that included –

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Just a family and some friends, yeah, some friends, who never survived, yeah.

Q: But were – yeah, but they're all Jewish?

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Okay. You said that you weren't very religious, but you did – you did go on holidays.

A: Yes.

Q: To –

A: The high holidays, yes.

Q: The high holidays.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Did you belong to any youth groups?

A: No.

Q: No?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: We didn't have any that time.

Q: Okay.

A: No.

Q: Tell me about the **kolonia** that you went, because you say that was associated with your school.

A: Yes.

Q: So what kind of – what kind of experience was that?

A: Oh, it was very pleasant, very pleasant, yeah. We went hiking, we went swimming. Th-The air wasn't as air in the city, was very, very different. And the s-see – the scenes was just beautiful, this is a very nice part of **Poland**, beautiful part of **Poland**, yes. The **Carpathi**(ph).

Q: Yeah. So it sounds like it was like a summer camp.

A: Yes, it was a summer camp, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: After school, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And it was for boys and girls together, or just the girls?

A: No, no, just sep – everything was separate, yeah.

Q: All right. Did you have a chance to finish gymnasium?

A: If I have what?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Did you finish your gymnasium studies?

A: If I finish my education?

Q: Yes, your gymnasium education.

A: No.

Q: No.

A: I couldn't finish, no, I had only four years.

Q: Okay.

A: Four years of gymnasium.

Q: And how many years should it have been?

A: Six.

Q: So two more years?

A: Yeah. Yes.

Q: Two more years. Tell me a little bit about your parents' personalities.

A: About what?

Q: Your – the personalities of your parents. What kind of a person was your mother, what kind was your father?

A: Yeah, it was difficult, because I was still a child, you know, when a 14, 15 in

**Europe**, you're a child, not like here.

Q: Yes, I know, I know.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: I know.

A: Yeah. So –

Q: Well, were they outgoing?

A: You don't think about that – their personality.

Q: I know, I know. And I know it's a bit of a strange question. But what I'm trying to get a sense of is what kind of people were they? Li – what kind of interests did they have?

A: Yeah.

Q: Your mother for example, did she have any hobbies that she particularly liked?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

A: No, no. Her hobby was just home. Just home. And my father was the business – business he –

Q: Were they extroverted, or introverted people? That is, were they people who were open and gregarious, and –

A: No.

Q: No?

A: No.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: They were more quiet?

A: They were quiet, yeah, that's right.

Q: And what are some of your earliest memories from your childhood? Some incidents? You know, we all have something from when we were little that we remember. It may not be significant, but we remember it.

A: Yeah, I remember very well when my aunt lost her husband.

Q: The one in **Kraków**?

A: And I – and I liked them a lot, and I – my uncle. And I liked them a lot, and I – they – they kept quiet, they didn't – didn't tell me that he passed away.

Q: Okay.

A: But through other person I found out, and I felt very, very badly about it, as I didn't go to the funeral. That – that time the children didn't go to funeral.

Q: Okay.

A: They kept themselves quiet, not to tell bad news. Don't say bad news to a child.

Q: Yeah, yeah. So that was a shock.

A: So I don't – I still remember that, yeah.

Q: That was a shock, yeah. Now, was there – was there talk outside of your family as well, about the growing unease in **Europe**? For example, when **Germany** took over **Czechoslovakia**, was that something that people remarked upon in **Lvov**?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: That was – well, wit – first they took **Poland**, and then **Czechoslovakia**.

Q: No.

A: In – in '41.

Q: No, no, no. It wa – first **Czechoslovakia** was taken, I believe in '39.

A: Oh yes, I remember, that par – part of czecho –

Q: Yes, that's right.

A: Yes, now I remember, yes.

Q: Yeah. Was that something that –

A: Yes, the f – of course, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: They di – what – that's why they were talking on a – that they gonna spread this  
– **Hitler** always say, we need l-**lebensraum** –

Q: Yeah.

A: – **lebensraum**, the – it mean that they are – they are too small, they have to  
spread around. We are gonna take the whole **Europe**.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, that's what he was talking about. His speech was terrible, his speech was –

Q: You had heard it?

A: Ye – no, I didn't, we – we didn't have radio, no.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Oh, of course not, of course not.

A: No, but from the pa – newspaper.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: So the newspapers would reprint his speeches, or at least part of those speeches.

So the summer of 1939, you were then 14 years old?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. Do you remember that last summer before the war?

A: Yes, wi – I still will – when the Russian came over, I went to school. We were going still to school, the two years –

Q: Okay.

A: – the two years we were going to school, to '31.

Q: To '41, you mean.

A: '41, yeah.

Q: Okay, but let's start with the day the war begins, you know? The war started on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939.

A: '39.

Q: Do you remember how you found out about it?

A: Yes, the bombs are falling on our head, and we were running to cellar.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: That's how.

Q: Whose bombs were these?

A: The ba – what bombs?

Q: Yeah.

A: German bombs.

Q: They were German bombs.

A: German bombs are falling, yeah. Fallish – in tre – in three weeks, German took over the whole **Poland**.

Q: Okay. Did they come –

A: It wasn't – there wasn't an army. It was a – it – it – they call army, but it wasn't army. We didn't have any ammunition, we didn't have any plane, we didn't have anything to defend ourselves –

Q: Okay.

A: – in **Poland**. So the German took over **Poland** in three weeks.

Q: Did you see German soldiers in **Lvov**?

A: Of course, yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: They came to our apartment.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: In 1939?

A: Yeah – no, '41.

Q: Okay. I'm talking about 1939.

A: '39.

Q: Y-Y-You say ger –

A: The Russian.

Q: It wa – okay, so this is something I'd like to make clear. The war starts on September 1<sup>st</sup>, '39, with the Germans attacking **Poland**, on September 1<sup>st</sup>, '39.

A: No.

Q: No?

A: The Russian came from one side, and the German come in from the other side.

Q: Okay.

A: But in '39 the Russian came over to – to **Lvov**.

Q: Okay. Do –

A: They divided **Poland**.

Q: Okay. All right.

A: Yeah.

Q: How did – do you remember when you first saw the Russian soldiers, and the Russian forces?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: N-No.

Q: No.

A: No, we don't remember that.

Q: Okay.

A: They were coming so slowly, yeah.

Q: Okay. But you were going to school.

A: Yes, we were going still to school by ru – Russian, yes.

Q: And did your lessons change? Did the lesson plan change when –

A: Everything changed, every change – yeah, my father lost the business. The – they were talking already that, who had money, who has ra – rich people. They – they will have to leave your place where you live, and go on some small villages. I know my good – not friends, but people that I know, they lost every busni – everything, everything, their homes, everything.

Q: So the businesses were taken away, the homes were taken away.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And your father's business was taken from him?

A: Yes. He lost everything, yeah.

Q: And what about your home? Were you kicked out of your own home and –

A: No, this not was my home, we lived in an apartment, but we staying there.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay, okay.

A: That – we were not rich people, but we were comfortable people.

Q: Okay. How did your father – how was he able to earn a living when he lost his business?

A: For about two years –

Q: Yeah.

A: – I tell you the truth, I don't remember.

Q: Okay.

A: But I know I'm still going to school.

Q: Okay. And did they talk at home, your parents, when the Russians came, what – about that, about –

A: No, we – we were not – that was very unexpected. We didn't expect them to come – to take over the pole – par-part of **Poland** –

Q: Okay.

A: – that they gonna take. Mo-More prepared that the German will come over, but then –

Q: So you were surprised to see them?

A: Yes, we were surprised to s – the –

Q: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: I have to learn Russian language in school.

Q: Okay. So that was one way that school changed, is that you were starting to –

A: Yeah, school changed. No Polish language any more in school.

Q: Okay.

A: You can talk to each other, but we had a subject, Polish wa-was a subj – no Polish, no Latin. We had Latin in gymnasium, you know, that we had. They stopped, too.

Q: What about the religious studies that you mentioned?

A: No religious study either, no.

Q: No?

A: Because they don't believe in anything.

Q: Okay.

A: No religion at all.

Q: Was there political subjects you had to study?

A: No, no.

Q: So you didn't have to study marx –

A: No politics, no pol – the one politics is the ru – Russian motherland, that's what's impo – was the most important –

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: – is the Russian –

Q: Motherland.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you learn – did you learn Russian history? Is that –

A: Oh yes, actually Russian history, Russian songs, Russian poets.

Q: Okay.

A: All the poets you have to know by heart, yeah.

Q: And the classes were taught in Russian, then?

A: Russian and **Ukraine**. We had another language, **Ukraine**, which was – I was very surprised, what we need **Ukraine**? But with so many Ukraines on that side of – of **Lvov** specially, and then surrounding **Lvov**, that we learn. It's a very similar language.

Q: Did you learn it?

A: It was difficult. It was – not Russian, but **Ukraine** was more difficult than – than the Russian.

Q: Well, there was tension between Poles and Ukrainians.

A: Always. Yeah, they hate each other, yeah.

Q: Did you sense that before the war, there wa –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Before the war? Ye – no, I ha – I knew they're talking about it, but not – no s – any special incident or something like that, no.

Q: And what happened, did it change when the Russians came?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Not that I know of. I – I was really not interested in that, so –

Q: Okay, okay. But did more Ukrainians come in to offi – positions of some influence or power, as far as you knew?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No, no.

Q: Was it all Russian then?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: That was all Russian, yeah.

Q: Okay. And who ran the city then, was it Russians from abro – or did they find local collaborators to help in the – you know, the authorities?

A: Yeah, tha – on the – or Russian, yes. Everything a – that's was – that – it seems like they gonna stay forever there.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: All the Russian came over, the Russian people came over. They were buying everything what you – you can see in the stores. The stores were empty shelves, they were buying so – everything what you can see.

Q: Was – that must have been surprising.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah. Did you hear much about – about the Germans during this time?

A: Yes, there were – from the newspaper, everything. and then after a while you see – you – you saw the refugees coming.

Q: So –

A: The refugees coming from the –

Q: So there – okay, so there were refugees coming during the Soviet occupation.

A: Oh yes, yeah, yeah.

Q: Did you meet or talk to any of them?

A: Oh sure, yes, I – I knew s – I knew some. Yeah, I knew a lot. But they were, like I said before, they were not too long there, because they deported them, almost all of them departed there to **Siberia**.

Q: Okay. So these –

A: In a cattle – cattle wagons.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: All right. So pretty soon then y – explain this to me, because some people will not know what this is, what – why would they have been deported? What were these deportations? What was happening when the Soviets came?

A: I really don't know why they did it, because they were homeless people?

Q: Were there other people who were being deported as well, not just the refugees?

A: Yes, some Polish people, some Jewish people, yeah. From – like my husband was deported.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Were you –

A: Or some – some were deported who were very, very rich.

Q: Did you fear that your family might be deported?

A: No, no.

Q: So even though your father's business was taken away –

A: Yeah, but we – we don't belong to that group –

Q: Okay.

A: – that we are rich people.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay. Did you ever have any interaction with the Soviet authorities?

A: No, no, never, no.

Q: No. Okay. No one came to your home?

A: No, no.

Q: Okay. So your lives changed in the sense that –

A: My life change in – in school.

Q: In school.

A: The most thing was my school, that – because I was only 14.

Q: Okay.

A: So I was interested in my studies. I thought I gonna finish gymnasium.

Q: Yeah.

A: And think what to do after that.

Q: Did your teachers change in school?

A: Yes, teacher – because they didn't know Russian either, so you have new teachers.

Q: Okay.

A: What happened to the teacher from Latin, or– or religion? That I don't know what happened to them.

Q: Was it harder for your mother to feed the family?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Was difficult, yes. Was difficult. We have a beautiful theater in **Lvov**, beautiful theater. And we will – something – and I knew a play, so we went from school to see the play. I don't remember any more the names.

Q: And was this during the occupation time that you were able to go to see the plays?

A: It onl – yeah, at the beginning yes. At the beginning, not later.

Q: Okay. What about the movie cinemas? Were you – were you –

A: That wil – we were private. Beautiful pictures, American picture from **Goldyn(ph) Mayer**.

Q: **Metro Goldyn(ph) Mayer**.

A: **Metro Goldyn(ph) Mayer**, beautiful pictures. And – but was private, I was going every Saturday afternoon.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, every – I had to see some. And – and the ticket was one **zloty**.

Q: One **zloty**.

A: One **zloty**, yeah.

Q: Do you remember any of the films that you saw there?

A: I remember, but I forgot the names.

Q: Oh.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: One I remember tha – with **Tyrone Power**, “**The Suez Canal.**”

Q: Oh real – “**The Suez Canal?**”

A: “**The Suez Canal.**” That I never forget, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. And then was a – another love story, with **Jeanette** –

Q: **MacDonald?**

A: Yes, with **Jeanette MacDonald**, yeah.

Q: Okay. Did you see “**Snow White?**” Did you see **Disney’s “Snow White?”**

A: Oh, yes.

Q: You did? No, you don’t remember.

A: “**S-Snow White?**” Not **Disneyland**, no.

Q: No, no, no, but the very first **Disney** film, “**Snow White,**” came out in the late 1930s.

A: I must have – now I don’t remember, but I’m sure I must have went.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. It’s interesting to hear that in – here in this part of **Europe**, during, you know, such times that one could see those films.

A: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Now, when the Soviets came, did you – were you still able to go to the movies?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Did the films change?

A: They still – yeah, they still have the films.

Q: Okay.

A: A lot of Russian films, but that was mixed in too.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. How did re – did relations between people change after you had, you know, the – the Soviets come in? Did people – were they – did they change how they behaved with each other?

A: Yeah, they did change, because they're not communists.

Q: Okay.

A: The communism was very, very high then, but not people that I know. They were not.

Q: Okay.

A: They were not, no.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay. But di – were people more careful around each other? Were they frightened, were they –

A: Not that I remember.

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: No.

Q: All right. And you had this wave of refugees coming in, Jewish refugees from the German occupied –

A: Oh yes, yes.

Q: – parts of **Poland**.

A: A lot. A lot of them, yeah.

Q: Were they te – you say you knew some of these people.

A: I knew someone, yes, the – and they were deported, yeah.

Q: And they were deported.

A: They were deported, yes.

Q: Did they tell you stories of what they had experienced?

A: They – half of them didn't come back.

Q: I'm not talking about **Siberia**, I'm talking about when they came from **Germany**

–

A: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: – and they were there for a while.

A: They were – they were there whatever they cou-could carry –

Q: Okay.

A: – that were there, on their backs. And – and –

Q: And did they tell you what was going on in **Germany**?

A: Yeah, they just hound them like – like dogs, yeah. Like –

Q: The Germans authorities?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: They came to the homes, they came to the homes and they said, get out, get out, get out, yeah.

Q: And then they come eastwards to **Lvov**, and then they're deported.

A: And they were deport – deported, yes –

Q: Okay.

A: – they were deported. Terrible. They ca – they came always at night, always at night, yeah.

Q: That would be the Soviet soldiers?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Okay. In your building – did anybody from your building get deported?

A: No, no. They were not – not de – that important people –

Q: Okay.

A: – to be deported, yes.

Q: Okay. So this happens, you know the Soviets are there for almost two years.

A: Two year – two years, yes.

Q: Yeah. Then what happened?

A: Then – then the German came over with the terrific bombs over our head. We had go running again to cellar.

Q: Second time.

A: For a few days we didn't see – we couldn't get out –

Q: Okay.

A: – because it was very, very, very strong bombardment, and we saw the Russian running. They running. They didn't – **Poland** didn't – didn't defend themselves, and the Russian was run – just not – not – they were not prepared either.

Q: Okay.

A: They were not prepared because the German with Russian, they were friends at that time.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Strange, huh?

A: Yeah, they were friends. And then, that's what happened, overnight, too.

Q: Okay. So what happened for you –

A: That was, I think, in June.

Q: June 1941.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. June 21<sup>st</sup>, if – if I'm not mistaken.

A: Oh, then we knew what's gonna happen. Then we knew.

Q: You did?

A: We knew what's gonna happen, yeah. And we'll have lines and lines t – f-for the bread, we didn't have. We have – but my mother had a very good – good – not the Jewish look, so she stays in line, because whoever looked Jewish, they throw them out from the line.

Q: So this is one of my questions: when the Germans arrived, how did your life change? What happened?

A: Very, very much so. First, we didn't have anything to eat.

Q: Okay.

A: Especially Jewish people.

Q: There was a distinction made.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yes. And then – so we said – for many weeks we were saying, only my mother staying in line. She was afraid to – for me to stay, that I would be in line.

Q: Did – okay.

A: So she was a – and that's why we're [**indecipherable**] a little sugar, a little that, but it was very difficult to survive.

Q: Okay. What was your father doing during this time?

A: He was hiding. He didn't go out from the room. He didn't room – yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: But he couldn't hide for – o-only a few months. Few months. And I remember that he went to this – I don't remem – but I know that he was caught on the street.

Q: Okay.

A: He was caught on the street with his friend –

Q: Okay.

A: – and deported right away to concentration camp in – in **Lemberg**. Maybe you heard about **Janowska**.

Q: I have heard of **Janowska**.

A: Yeah, he was there, and that was in **Lvov**.

Q: Okay.

A: On the outskirts of – of **Lvov**, yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Did you find – how did you find out about this? How did you find out that he was arrested, that he was taken to –

A: How we found out?

Q: Mm.

A: I – I don't remember how we found out. Maybe because he never came back.

Q: He never came back.

A: No, never came back. He was there [indecipherable] maybe two months. He – he got typhus, the typhus fever, was it – that's how it's called.

Q: Okay.

A: And he died, in the – in – in the camp.

Q: Oh my.

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh my.

A: So we don't know where – how he was buried, where he was buried, we didn't know anything – anything about it, yeah. He was only 42 years old.

Q: And his name again was? Tell me his name again. Your father's –

A: **Solomon**, but we call it **Saul**.

Q: Okay. **Solomon Schwettzer**(ph).

A: **Schwettzer**(ph), yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: **Solomon Schwettzer**(ph). Age 42.

A: Yes. Mm-hm.

Q: What was going on with your mother –

A: Then they throw us else from our apartment, and they were starting to make ghetto, slobdo – putting together as more as possible Jews together. Two fa – three families in one room.

Q: Oh my.

A: We were going from one – one spot I remember, for Jewish section. We were there a few months, they throw us out to another place e – even smaller.

Q: Okay.

A: They catching people on the street that you – they never came back, you never saw them any more.

Q: And so you were starting –

A: And we were hiding, always hiding.

Q: So, when you say you were hiding, you were in the ghetto already, in this three roo – okay

A: Yeah, but the ghetto was open. You could still move around. Get out, come back, get out and come back, til it started – we call it **akcja** in Polish.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: When they catching people on the streets, and going from ho-house to house.

**Raus, raus, raus**, that's what they did that.

Q: Okay. And when they – when you were hiding, does that mean you were hiding in places outside the ghetto?

A: No.

Q: You were hiding inside the g –

A: I was hiding, I remember once –

Q: Okay.

A: – I had the girlfriend, she had some papers –

Q: Okay.

A: – that she write – they didn't touch her, the Germans – Gestapo –

Q: Okay.

A: – they didn't touch her, because she is working for them, she was sewing or something. And she has a layout – we didn't have closet they were built in – in the – in the wall, we have a separate – separate unit. So she has a big, big, from wall to wall a closet, and she covered the whole room. That didn't – no – nobody is bes – behind the closet, that she has only one room and the kitchen, no more. So we were hiding there for a few days, my mother, my sister, my grandmother that time. And we were there for a few days –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: And this was –

A: – hiding behind the – behind the closet.

Q: Okay. And that was outside the ghetto, or inside –

A: That was part of ghetto then, yeah.

Q: Part of ghetto then.

A: Yeah.

Q: A-And if you were in the ghetto, what was the advantage of hiding? Were they rounding people up?

A: In the ghetto you couldn't find. I wasn't in the get – I was in the ghetto open, open ghetto.

Q: Okay.

A: But not – you couldn't hide. It's no room where to hide.

Q: Okay.

A: Or maybe some people did underground, something I don't know.

Q: Okay. All right. Were you found? Did somebody find you, or was it a successful hiding place?

A: No, no, we – we didn't hide. We – were just in that tiny, tiny room, my mother, my sister, my grandma and that's all. We – we were [indecipherable] what's gonna happen – gonna happened.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: I know, but you mention this time when you're in the closet at this friend's house, or this girl who was sewing for the Germans, and you say you were there for a few days.

A: Few days.

Q: Okay. My question is, why were you hiding at that time?

A: Because they were going from room to – from apartment to apartment, catching all the Jews out.

Q: I see.

A: Taking all the Jews, yeah, whatev – specially men. Specially men. But then what – didn't matter who. So we were not in the closet, behind the closet was a room, and

–

Q: So you were in the room.

A: And we were in the room behind the closet.

Q: Closet. I ha – okay, now I understand.

A: Yeah.

Q: So the closet was like a false wall.

A: Yeah, that's – no wall – no apartment behind the closet.

Q: Okay, so there's nothing behind there.

A: Not – nothing behind, yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: I see. And you were in there.

A: Mm-hm.

Q: And when they – when there was no more rounding up of people, then you came out.

A: Then I came out. Then was quiet.

Q: Okay.

A: Then was quiet again for a few days, or for few weeks –

Q: Okay.

A: – so you can move around. And then, you never knew – then, he came, get out, **raus, raus**, this section there that you could live.

Q: Okay.

A: And that should be empty – emptied out in – in some streets –

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: – in – in **Lvov**.

Q: Okay.

A: So we were there again, in the very, very tiny, tiny – it was just one room, we had one room. It's – it – and Polish people were selling – selling the apartments, and we bought that tiny, tiny room with a – with a toilet outside – outside with the open, you know –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: – how was the toilets that time?

Q: Like an outhouse. Like an outhouse.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And flies. And the flies flying around.

Q: Was this on the outskirts of –

A: Outskirts, all – already outskirts of – of **Lemberg**, yes.

Q: Li – okay. But not inside the ghetto?

A: No, not yet.

Q: Not yet.

A: No, not yet.

Q: Not yet.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, so you bought – so people were selling and you bought that tiny room –

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: – with the outhouse and the flies.

A: We – we knew that's only temporarily, only temporarily, that's all.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: All right. So what happened after that?

A: After that, I don't know how that man – a man came around and he said, I can take you out from the – from the ghetto on – on the outskirts.

Q: Okay.

A: You can go wherever you want, but you have to have some papers. And that's why I have those papers. We wrote those papers. The Polish people were making their false **kennkartes**.

Q: Okay.

A: But you have to have papers with your picture.

Q: So it was false **I.D.** cards.

A: Yeah

Q: False identif – okay.

A: A **kennkarte**.

Q: **Eine kennkarte, eine kennkarte**. And this was a Polish man who came around?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And so he was offer –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: No, that was a Jewish guy who knew – who knew Polish people, that's what their business there, they're making a – as a business, they copy. They copy fantastically. Oh, the cop – copied the – how it's supposed to be.

Q: Okay.

A: The **kennkarte** with my picture.

Q: So that meant that you were able to avoid being enclosed in a ghetto, is that right?

A: That's what the – almost closing, almost on closing.

Q: Okay.

A: So I left my – everybody –

Q: Okay.

A: Everybody. My mother, my sister, my grandma, my aunt.

Q: Did – did they get this **kennkarten** as well?

A: No, no.

Q: Why not?

A: They never did, because it was too late already. I just did – left the ghetto with the horse and buggy.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Someone took me with my papers, with my little suitcase, and I was going out – out, I don't know where. We went – I ha – wi-with another friend, with another girlfriend. She had the same papers.

Q: Okay.

A: And we went to kra – took the train, we're going to **Kraków**. Why to **Kraków**?  
I don't know.

Q: Okay.

A: But I had my aunt in **Kraków**, in ghetto. So she went –

Q: She was in the **Kraków** ghetto?

A: Yeah, in the **Kraków** ghetto. She went to warsha – **Warsaw**, my friend, and I went to – to see my aunt in ghetto. I didn't know what to do, where to go. I have a little money with me, of course my mother gave me. And I went to – and I stay with her.

Q: In her ghetto?

A: Yeah. Then we're starting a – a liquidation day ghetto. So, I don't know how – how I moved out from that ghetto. I moved out on the s – ou-outside the ghetto.

Q: So I have a question here. You were in the ghetto – first you have this little house that you – this little room.

A: In l – in **Lvov**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: In **Lvov** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – that you buy, and then your moo – and then you're there for a short while, and then you're moved into the **Lvov** ghetto.

A: Th-That was included. They included –

Q: So it was included in –

A: – that part.

Q: – into the **Lvov** ghetto.

A: Yeah, into the ghetto.

Q: All right.

A: Yes, they did.

Q: And you then get these false papers –

A: Yes.

Q: – but your mother and your sister and your aunt – grandmother –

A: They were there.

Q: – they were there –

A: Yes.

Q: – but they don't have time to get them.

A: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: You leave that ghetto, and you get to **Kraków** to your aunt. How do the two ghettos compare? Did they look the same? Do the same things going on? Same buildings?

A: I don't know how they looked.

Q: Okay.

A: I couldn't tell you how they looked. Ghetto is ghetto, you closed in, you can't get out.

Q: Okay.

A: Ba-Barbed wires – barb wires were all around.

Q: Okay. But the ghetto in **Lvov**, was that in the center of town, or a part of town?

A: No, it's a little further.

Q: It's a little further.

A: No – not – not that much outs – outside, bu-but much, much further, not in the middle of the city, no.

Q: Okay. You see, **Warsaw** was in the middle –

A: It's too nice.

Q: Yeah.

A: It's too nice, the city was too nice to make a ghetto there, yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: And **Kraków**. **Kraków** ghetto is also on the outskirts, or in the center, or where is it?

A: No, it was almost – like **Lvov**, a half and half.

Q: Okay.

A: They – they took half of outskirts, too.

Q: Okay.

A: But I was there on the one day – no, a few days, few days. And I was walking the streets, the streets don't – didn't know where to go. Someone approached me, he n – oh, you see, he told me, I th – I thought you must be Jewish. How would he recognize me, I don't know, because I had – I –

Q: And you were walking on the streets of the ghetto, or outside?

A: Outside. Outside the ghetto.

Q: Okay.

A: I was outside. Then I was already afraid to go back.

Q: Got it.

A: Because I knew I gonna ke – be caught there, and I will never get out.

Q: Okay. Okay. So he approached you and said you must be Jewish.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: And he said, I gi – I will give you an address where I know you're gonna be safe with a Polish woman, because she – not hiding, she didn't know that I am Jewish, but she's renting room.

Q: Okay.

A: Try, maybe she – she will take you in. And that was another couple there, a Jewish couple. She didn't know that they were Jewish. She didn't know that I am – I was there almost half a year with her.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: She was a French – French Polish old – old – old maid. And sh – that's – she made a – a – a living renting rooms. Oh she – oh, she loved me right away.

Q: Did she?

A: She took me in. Yeah, she loved me, yeah. It was a – through – through the winter, I think.

Q: And so you were able to pay because your mother had gotten –

A: And I pay, yeah, I pay her, and she – she told me – someone said, you know, she must be Jewish – on me, on me. So she said, I don't care who she is, I like her so much, so she can stay. Yeah. She was in danger too, you know –

Q: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: – Polish people were in danger when they were caught hiding, even if you didn't know that I am. Because I have papers, perfect papers, everything. And th – I was telling her a story, and lies, I was telling it, but I had to remember those lies, not to – not to say something else.

Q: What was your false name? What was your false name?

A: Is **Irena** – I called **Irena Starzewska**.

Q: **Starzewska**.

A: Yeah. They ask me, if they making my papers, they ask me, what name do you want? So I said **Irena** I like it –

Q: Okay.

A: – and that this was a Polish name. And I have a sweater –

Q: Okay.

A: – with – with my name, **Irena**, which I like very much too.

Q: Okay.

A: So I said, ke-keeping my first name, and I made up **Starzewska**. I made this up.

Q: You made this up. But then you were able to remember these things. You were able to remember it easy.

A: I do.

Q: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: I did. I did remember, I did. I told them [**indecipherable**] with my father it was true that – I told her he was killed, he was killed.

Q: Yes.

A: – having – having this in a concentration camp –

Q: Yeah.

A: – such sickness.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I s-said my mother died long time ago, and I ha – I'm **sierota**. I'm o –

Q: Orphan.

A: All by myself.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Did you feel fear at these times? Were you frightened that you would be discovered? Or did you feel –

A: Oh, oh, frightened all the time.

Q: Okay.

A: That was the worst thing, the fright there –

Q: Yeah?

A: – always, always, yeah.

Q: Okay. Hang on just a second. Okay, all right. It was the noise that I got – I heard.

All right, we can start again.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q2: I didn't stop.

Q: You didn't stop. Okay, sorry. Sorry, I was distracted a little bit. So what was this lady's name? Do you remember, the fri – French Polish lady who liked you so much?

A: No, that – only first name, **Cecilia**.

Q: **Cecilia**.

A: **Cecilia** was her first name.

Q: **Cecilia**.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Would you have stayed with her forever if you could have?

A: No, no, no.

Q: No. Why not?

A: No.

Q: Tell me what happened.

A: No, fi-first, I wanted to go with my – my people, to look for my people after the war, and go t – continue my education.

Q: Okay.

A: I was still too young not to go.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Yeah, but – of course. My question is, you come to her sometime in 1941 or '42, to this lady.

A: No, it was – no, not f – it was end – ending '42, yeah.

Q: End of '42.

A: Yeah.

Q: And you said you stayed with her for half a year.

A: Yeah.

Q: What happened after that?

A: After that, they were catching people, the German people on the street to go to work.

Q: Okay.

A: And deporting them. Mostly they go to factories when the – making bombs, and making something. And they e – English are bombing them, the bombs are falling every day, terribly. So there – the rumors are going that when you go willingly and say you're – I want to go to work in **Germany**, you can choose the name, the city, wherever you want to go, they take you.

Q: So in other words, you have a chance have – having a better situation.

A: Yes, better situation, and ben – between German I had better situation not to – with my papers.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: So you s – by – because you learned German, you were studying German in gymnasium, and because you had those papers, you feel – you – you thought – I – you're in a better position.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. So what did you do?

A: I went to the Polish **arbeitsant**.

Q: Okay.

A: Wi-With – they're taking, willingly –

Q: Volunteers.

A: – I said I want to – I don't have a chance to survive here on the street, because they gonna catch me any day.

Q: Okay.

A: And so they said, you want to go here, there, you know, **Katowice** was the – where they making the – the coal – coals.

Q: Okay.

A: **Katowice**, maybe you heard about it.

Q: Yes, I have, I have heard of **Katowice**.

A: So I said no, I don't want to go there, I want to – I love mountains and lakes, if you have something there. Oh, yeah, we do have. We have **Berchtesgaden**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

**Q: Berchtesgaden. Berchtesgaden.**

**A: Berchtesgaden.**

Q: Did you know at that point –

A: No, I didn't know anything. I loved mountains and lakes, and there's – there's a inn that need help.

Q: Okay. In **Berchtesgaden**.

A: Yeah. And you gonna go without a transport, no transport, no – not cattle – cattle –

Q: Wagon.

A: – wagon. You go by train. You go straight by train, next day. Oh, I was in heaven. I said, okay, I am taking, of course I am taking.

Q: Okay.

A: And then I went by train, passing the border from **Poland** to **Germany**, you had to get out from the train, and showing all the papers. And I knew that some – two guys are watching me in the train, and I right away was shaking. So right away, oh, something is wrong. Then when we came back to the train and he told me, we were sure that you are a Jewish girl. We were watching what papers you're having to show. Then we change our mind. So that was my – my luck, that was my luck again.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: So that meant that – were these Germans or Poles?

A: They were Polish German, Polish German.

Q: So **Volksdeutsche**?

A: **Volksdeutsche**.

Q: Okay.

A: Two of them, I – dressed in black one – black, not uniforms.

Q: So they weren't **SS**.

A: They get another stop, and I were – I were – were – I went my – further. I went further.

Q: So when they saw you come back, then they changed their minds that you're not Jewish.

A: Yes, they changed their mind, because – we were watching you, what kind of papers you gonna have. They knew right away what kind of papers I – my – remember such a pink – pink sheet that I – where I am going, and why I am going, and passing – to see I can pass the border.

Q: And that they even told you this. This is also amazing.

A: That they told me that, yeah.

Q: I don't know how I would have reacted. I mean it –

A: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Yeah. So you went on. You – you then – they got off the train?

A: They got off th – off the train much, much before me, I went further.

Q: Okay. And what did you find when you got to **Berchtesgaden**?

A: I didn't go to **Berchtesgaden**, I went a little before **Berchtesgaden**, it was **Traunstein**.

Q: **Traunstein**.

A: **Traunstein**, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: The city. And over there I waited for my – my boss to come in –

Q: Okay.

A: – and take me to her place.

Q: Okay.

A: And I saw right away a beautiful place. Even **Traunstein** was beautiful too, yeah. And she took me, she told me, this is your room, I had my room. That was a inn. There were maybe 15 rooms there.

Q: Okay.

A: And I was a housemaid. And I was helping in the kitchen.

Q: Okay.

A: And I was cleaning, and that's –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: You were there from '42?

A: And every month I had to go to Gestapo to show my face and my papers. That was another t – trauma for me.

Q: Of course.

A: Is a – I was – I was afraid and – and there were other Polish people too. I was afraid for the Polish people too.

Q: You were afraid of them? That the Poles would say something about you?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Could they tell that you weren't Polish?

A: They could, if they – if they really knew for hundred percent, they would do it. But I – I looked good, I sp – I spoke perfect Polish, maybe better than they over there, who was with me.

Q: Okay.

A: And I knew all the – the whole religion, Polish religion, Polish Christmas songs. I knew everything perfect.

Q: Okay. Okay, so –

A: So every – every month I had to go to the –

Q: Gestapo.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: – Gestapo. It was a Sunday – Sunday excursion, walk. I – maybe five miles I had to walk to the Gestapo there.

Q: Would you walk by yourself?

A: Yes, I wa-walk – Polish people couldn't – couldn't have – couldn't take a train, they couldn't go anyplace without permission.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. And always wear the **P**, a yellow **P** on your lapel, always. I was caught once without, I was wearing under my **pel**, and I – because I didn't want to show, because I look – over there, I look like a German peop – a German girl. I was wearing always a **dirndl**, you know what a **dirndl**?

Q: A **dirndl**, uh-huh.

A: Yeah, because my boss gave it to me, the old one.

Q: Okay.

A: And my hairdo. My hairdo was the best hairdo. Til today I say my hairdo saved me.

Q: Tell me how.

A: Because I look like a Bavarian girl. This **Bavaria** in **Berchtesgaden**.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: And I didn't know that his – **Hitler** has his summer good – summer home few miles away.

Q: You didn't know?

A: No, at that time I didn't know, no.

Q: When did you find out?

A: After.

Q: After the war?

A: Yeah.

Q: Really?

A: Really, yeah.

Q: So at this inn, you weren't the only Polish – Polish person there?

A: No, it was another one with me.

Q: And was this –

A: A – a very short time though was with me, because the bo – my boss didn't allow to keep two – two helpers. They took her away, and tha – someplace -- someplace else.

Q: Okay.

A: But not in **Berchtesgaden**, far away.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: To work.

Q: But there were other Polish people in the area?

A: In the area, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. They were of east – east fro – from – they were in east – the ost wi – ost, **o-s-t**. They knew the Russian people.

Q: Oh, so Russians were **o-s-t**?

A: Yes. Very – very few.

Q: Okay.

A: Because this was a s – a little village on a – with hotels –

Q: Okay.

A: – that people come for – for vacations.

Q: Okay.

A: But at that time you didn't see men there, you saw only women.

Q: Now you –

A: Women and children, that they come. Some of them hiding from bic – **Berlin**, when there were bom-bombardments every day, every day. So they were running away from those places.

Q: You arrived there in 1943, was this like –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yes, '43, I was to the end.

Q: Okay, so this was in late '43, or in early '43? You said you were with **Cecilia** for about half a year.

A: Yes, that was already '43.

Q: '42? Okay, '43.

A: At the beginning – beginning in – in May.

Q: So in May –

A: Yeah.

Q: – you had left by her. You had left her and gone to **Berchtesgaden**?

A: I – I came to **Berchtesgaden**, yeah.

Q: **Berchtesgaden**, May '43.

A: Yes.

Q: Okay. And you're there for another two years, til May '45.

A: Til – til the end, yeah.

Q: Til the end.

A: Til the end. Til American came.

Q: So let's talk a little bit before then. What – you mentioned a little bit about the clientele, you know, the people who came to the inn.

A: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: How did they behave to a Polish girl?

A: They're nice. They were very nice.

Q: Yeah?

A: They know me. They know me. I did my job.

Q: Okay.

A: And they know me, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And ah – I was – she had the radio, my wo –

Q: Yeah.

A: – boss had radio. But when they left dining room, the radio was in the dining room, and I supposed to be in the kitchen, I was always running and listening what's going on, because she left radio going. And there were German already losing the war – the war. **[speaks German]** You know what that means? **[German]**

Q: **[speaks German]** Tell me what that means.

A: That means **[German]** by – by – we – we cleaning – we cleaning this place by plan.

Q: So it means in some ways of evacuating by plan.

A: Exactly, yeah.

Q: And when you hear someone say evacuating by –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: **[German]** So of course I was in heaven again, hearing this.

Q: Of course, of course.

A: And I was listening like that til – til they came to **Lvov**. I knew that **Lvov** is –

Q: **[German]**

A: **[German]**

Q: **[German]**

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. So it's been evacuated, which means they're retreating, they're running.

A: They're running, yes.

Q: They're running.

A: And they are running, yeah.

Q: So – now back in the inn, how did the – how did your bosses treat you?

A: Very good.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. Very good, yeah. I ate what they – because I have the same – the same plan of what I – every German has.

Q: Okay, you had a ration card then –

A: Yes, yes.

Q: – or something. Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: So I – I ate by myself in the kitchen. No, it's – she was from **Prussia**, so she know Polish people.

Q: Uh-huh. Okay.

A: **Prussia** was Polish, yeah?

Q: Yeah. So you ha – didn't have a bad experience there?

A: No, no.

Q: Okay.

A: I worked very hard, though. I had to go shopping every day. They didn't have refrigeration. I had to – big, big rucksack.

Q: Backpack.

A: Yeah. With two cans of milk.

Q: Oh my, mm-hm.

A: And that was a little up the hill.

Q: Okay.

A: So I – she left me. I pretended that I knew very, very little German, I was afraid to – to tell her that I understand everything what she talked – shud – what she tells me. I was a – a big actress in front of her.

Q: Well, that takes some effort.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Pretending, always pretending, and that was the worst part, pretending, yeah.

And so, once it was so hot, and I came, I thought the – with the – with the loading this wa – I have on me. I thought I gonna faint.

Q: Okay.

A: So she said to me, remember that **ich kann nicht**, that word doesn't exist in German language.

Q: **Ich kann nicht**.

A: **Ich kann nicht**. You know I remember that word, and sometimes I – I am so tired that I said, that word doesn't exist, you ha – go, you have to do it.

Q: Interesting. Interesting.

A: Yeah.

Q: But in two years, your German must have really improved a lot.

A: Yes, yes, it did, it did.

Q: You know?

A: Yeah.

Q: And so by the end did you have to pretend any more?

A: I pretend that I – I am – when I left I didn't tell her that I am Jewish. Even when I left. It's such a fear on me, that I didn't say that. And I left with – when I came to

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

**Poland**, I was looking for my family, so I will – in **Kraków** again. So I found my mother and my – my sister. Then –

Q: We'll come to that, we'll come to that. I want to now go back to still this inn.

Were there any other incidents that stick out in your memory from the time you were working there? Did you hear people say things that were surprising, unusual?

A: No, not really. Only when her sister came from **Berlin**.

Q: Okay.

A: Her sister run away f – she had two little children.

Q: Okay.

A: Sh-She came to live with her.

Q: Okay.

A: So, I was glad tha – that she's running away from the bombs, I was glad.

Q: Okay.

A: Now – now you'll – you'll lo – you lost everything like we did.

Q: Yeah.

A: And when we were talking about it and I – stupid of me, butt in and said in the – between talking, **neby**(ph). And she said, what, what is that? This is a Jewish word, **neby**(ph).

Q: The sister said this? Oh my.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: That was enough for me.

Q: Okay.

A: I said that – that's not. I didn't know that. I didn't – never heard that, that it's a Jewish name. I have to make up something and apologize for it.

Q: Yeah. So –

A: So that was – was another – one incident. Now, I have another incident, yes. A – one Gestapo man came – one Gestapo man came, and – to her part of apartment.

She has a nice dining room for herself. I came right away, listening, being near the door, what he was talking. Of course he said in German, a-are you sure that she's a Polish girl? So then I se – heard her answer, what do you think she could be?

Maybe she's from east, that I am a Russian girl. No. Okay, that was a little better.

Q: So there was some kind of – if not about you maybe in general, but there was – you were never safe, even with these papers, or with how you looked –

A: Never, never, no.

Q: – or – or something like that.

A: No, never. Someone will pointed at you, someone will recognize you, someone will say – will – bad words. Some Polish man that he was – they're working outside

–

Q: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: – said that I am walking like a Jewish girl.

Q: You're walking?

A: Walking as a j – like a Jewish girl. So I said to that person who told me that, said, how Jewish people walk? Don't they walk with two legs?

Q: Yeah.

A: How they walk? The Polish people have such a nose. Special nose like a dog's, for Jewish people, to find Jewish people.

Q: That sounds quite bitter.

A: Yeah. Yeah, that was – that was another one. I have star – few of – a few of those, like – like you – you remind me.

Q: Did you see many army people come through? Did you see any German army come through there, or was it a town empty of any soldiers?

A: No, no soldiers, no.

Q: No soldiers.

A: Only – only women, children, no.

Q: And the Gestapo.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: You know, police – **polizei, polizei**, yeah. Very few.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach  
December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, that – that was nice about it.

Q: Did you ever overhear anybody say something critical of **Hitler**?

A: No.

Q: No.

A: No. She wasn't Catholic, she was Protestant –

Q: Uh-huh, the innkeeper, okay.

A: – my boss. So she never went to church, no. I never heard from her **heil Hitler**. I never heard from her.

Q: Okay.

A: No.

Q: You never heard one or the other?

A: No, that's right.

Q: Okay.

A: That's right. We have an – an able – an older – older guy, old guy who lives with the – with the woman, with the wife. So he always when he saw me, **griesgut(ph) fräulein, griesgut(ph) fräulein**, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: With **lederhosen. Lederhosen.**

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So tell me then, what was – how did – did you have a sense that the war was coming to an end?

A: Yes. We knew it took – gonna be sooner or later, it has to be. When I heard those on the radio [**speaks German**] I knew it was gonna be ending.

Q: Okay.

A: It's gonna be ending, yeah.

Q: All right. And then after that, how did – how did you experience this liberation? What happened?

A: Experience what?

Q: Th-That is, how were you liberated?

A: How?

Q: Yeah.

A: Very simple, the – the American came to the city.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. Once was a bomb, once.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Few months ago – few mo – few months before the ending. They bombing – maybe they knew that the **Hitler** has the – the summer home there, maybe they were looking for – for that, for his place.

Q: Okay.

A: But maybe two, three bombs fell, that's all.

Q: Okay. And were these –

A: So –

Q: – army – army – unit – **U.S.** Army soldiers? Was this **U.S.** military that you saw in the town?

A: The German?

Q: No, no, no, American.

A: No, no, it – American, yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. Then I – then a – I – I knew I'm liberated. I didn't say that I am Jewish to anybody, that was a big secret. Big secret in my life. But I knew – then I was quiet – th-then my nerve was quiet down. Then I knew I – you don't have to be afraid any more. That was in May 1945.

Q: Did they come to the inn?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yes. They threw her out. They threw her out, they say, we need – you need – we need you villa. We need that place. They didn't what to live. She has a little tiny home w-were – where I live summertime, because there was no heat there.

Q: Okay.

A: With one big room, and one big room upstairs. So she came to that, to live with me –

Q: Okay.

A: – in that little tiny home. Was very cute. And they – they took her whole villa. Yeah, they threw her out.

Q: Did she say anything. Did she show her –

A: No, she didn't say anything to me. But then I thought, my God, they gonna be maybe a few weeks on the – they gonna ruin everything, and I have to go and clean everything what her after – imagine soldiers leaving –

Q: Right, right.

A: – leaving place, how it's gonna look.

Q: An-And did they do that?

A: I left before they left.

Q: Did you say goodbye to her?

A: Yeah, I said goodbye. I still didn't tell her that I am Jewish, now.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay. Did you say, I'm just going home to **Poland**?

A: I'm going home, but with – they were transport a lot of people together.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: And we went with very so – maybe two – two, three days, we were back in **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. And I have papers that they ca – I have a pla – the trains and buses, everything for nothing, because –

Q: Oh really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Because you had been a – a forced laborer.

A: Yeah.

Q: Even if voluntary, yeah. So you go to **Kraków** to look for your family, and you – tell me, what did you find, how did you look?

A: How I look? I – I knew someone that was my aunt's – my aunt's friends, a lawyer.

Q: Okay.

A: And I knew where – where he lived – where his office was, so I went there first – first, and then he told me not about my mother, that – that my aunt survived –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

survived, and he gave me the address where she is. And I went there. So she wasn't home, only her daughter was there. So her daughter told me, oh you know, your mother is here, your f – your – your sister is engaged. My sister was only 18 years old when she married. She – you know sh – right away she says – says she's engaged.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: I was the older one.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: What news though, after so many years, what news.

A: Yeah. It's – and she gave me the address.

Q: Okay.

A: And I – I knew a little **Kraków**, so I – I [indecipherable] bus, that was bus or train – no, not train.

Q: Tram.

A: Tramway.

Q: Street – yeah, tramway, streetcar.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: And I was afraid how my mother will react when tush – becu – sh – they didn't know that I sur – will survive, they didn't know that.

Q: Yeah, they didn't know what happened to you.

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: And I was afraid, I was standing there near the door, what should I do? No, of-of course I – I knock, and I came in. Can you imagine? Yeah.

Q: I can't imagine.

A: And my sister wasn't home that time, yeah.

Q: So what did your – what did your mother do when she saw you?

A: Started to cry and to scream and cry and scream and hugging and kissing and yeah. She is dead already 25 years.

Q: Had she changed? Did she look different, your mother?

A: No, no.

Q: No?

A: No, bu – how many – it was only four years that we didn't see each other.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Tell me, what had happened with them? When you had left them in the ghetto in

**Lvov** –

A: Yeah.

Q: – what would their destiny been? What had – where had they been taken, or what happened with them? Your grandmother – your mother and your sister.

A: You – my – yeah, my sister –

Q: And your grandmother, yeah.

A: Yeah, my – no, they couldn't take my grandmother, but that os – the guy who told me about – about the papers –

Q: Okay.

A: – that I could have those papers and leave, he – they ha – he has a – a Polish family who a – how would [**indecipherable**] – if you have a lot of money, they gonna take you in.

Q: Okay.

A: And so he took them out, the ghetto wasn't closed yet, it was still open.

Q: Okay.

A: So he took my mother, my sister, and my mother's mother, my aunt.

Q: Your grandmother, mm-hm.

A: Those three people, he took them out –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: – to that Polish people, outside po – **Lvov**, outside **Lvov**.

Q: Okay.

A: They have a local single home. They couldn't do it in an apartment, but –

Q: Of course.

A: – single home, nobody was around.

Q: And did they spend the war there?

A: They spend almost two years with them.

Q: Oh.

A: That's how they survive.

Q: Oh.

A: But they were not very nice to my mother, but I didn't – I don't blame them, because they were afraid, too. Because they thought that war will finish few months. In few months will be over, and it took them two years, not two mo – few months. And they were saying, it's time, you can go. Just leave me – leave us alone. They feed them. They didn't have bathrooms, they had the pail. So they were afraid too. If someone will catch them, they all will go. So I didn't – they didn't blame them, but wi – they said, what the ou – we leave, so everybody will ask, where – where were you til now? How – how you – how – what you doing here?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: How did you –

A: They all gone.

Q: Yeah.

A: And you're here? So –

Q: You're stuck [indecipherable]

A: They will be catch anyway.

Q: Yeah.

A: Whatever you say, it's wrong. So they had to stay.

Q: And were they then liberated by the Russians?

A: Yes, by the Russian. A year before the war ended, in '44.

Q: I see.

A: Yeah. Before that, they came out, everybody was pointing, oh Jews are coming, the Jews are coming, because they were so pale. The legs were swollen. They were hardly walk because they – no exercise. They hardly walk. So they knew they be recognized right away that the Jews are coming.

Q: So they decided to go to **Kraków** after the –

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah. Polish people were leaving that part of – of **Poland**. They were leaving on the – to go to the other side. Maybe they knew it's gonna be divided again, I don't know, because it is **Ukraine** now. So maybe they knew about that na – then. So they go to **Kraków**, that's how we – how we managed to meet again.

Q: And how long did you stay in **Kraków**?

A: Less than a year.

Q: Okay.

A: Less than a year. They started with the – **Israel**. They talking – the English didn't want to – her to send. When you move, move, go, go, the more the better, the more the better. We knew that **Poland** wasn't the same what it was before. It wasn't the same. So I moved with my mother. My sister had already papers to go to **Argentina** with her husband, because he has the family there.

Q: Okay.

A: And we didn't know what to do. We were going to **Israel**.

Q: Okay. So where did you –

A: So we came to **Austria** to –

Q: Was that on the way?

A: – to **Czechoslovakia**, to – by t – everything by buses, yeah.

Q: Okay, that's true, okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: N-Now where I see myself seeing those refugees from **Syria**, I see myself, I was a refugee like that too, exactly the same.

Q: Yeah. So you went by buses?

A: By buses we came to – to **Vienna**. We were saying – staying in **Vienna** for three weeks. And then from **Vienna** they say you have to go to – to – a little further. They didn't want to have refugees in **Vienna**. Didn't look good. So we went to **Salzburg**.

Q: A very pretty place.

A: Very pretty. We got stuck there for five years.

Q: Really?

A: Five years we lived in o – in **Salzburg**.

Q: So tell me –

A: Yeah, he wa – he was there.

Q: So tell me, what happened in **Salzburg**? How is that you stayed –

A: I met my husband on the bus, on the German truck, passing from **Poland** to **Austria**, passing the borders: **Czechoslovak** – th – **Vienna**. We met each – well, 20 people on the bus.

Q: Okay.

A: Wa – with my mother, with me. And we got married in **Salzburg** after two years.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: So you met on a bus. You were –

A: On a truck, on a germ –

Q: On a truck.

A: Military truck.

Q: You met on a military truck going from **Germany** to **Austria**.

A: From **Poland**.

Q: From **Poland** to –

A: **Austria**.

Q: – to **Austria**. And –

A: And I didn't know that we gonna get stuck in **Salzburg**.

Q: Yeah.

A: But we liked it, we he – liked it. We – we was in a **DP** camp. **DP** c –

Q: And – and were there more people from **Lvov**, or were you the only one –

A: A lot of people, there were three camps. Three camps in **Salzburg**.

Q: Okay. And –

A: And then we – we found an apartment where was – where we lived outside the  
camp.

Q: Okay.

A: A German woman, we have – we had the – a room.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: So we were staying there, we were married, and I – and I had my older daughter there.

Q: Tell me –

A: And we waited for papers.

Q: Tell me –

A: Now til my – oh, I'm sorry, I interrupt you –

Q: It's okay, no, no, no, no, I'm interrupt – I'm ask – I want to find out now, when you met your husband, yeah, did he tell you about what his story had been?

A: Yes. Yeah, of course. Yeah.

Q: Can you tell me that? Can you – do you remember how it is he told you what his story had been?

A: Yeah, he – he went through a lot, yeah, a lot, yeah. Yeah. He was working for the **Metro Goldyn(ph) Mayer** pictures, after his studying in – in **Paris** and in **Italy**, he was studying.

Q: He was studying in **Italy** as well?

A: Yes.

Q: And so when he was working for them, what happened after that?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: S-So, the Russian people – for them, every other person is a spy. When he works for the **Metro Goldyn(ph) Mayer**, he must be a spy.

Q: Okay.

A: Because this is American industry. So they came at night, like he was dressing on a – in a – in his suit and in – in shoes, and took him away. To the parents, they gi – the **NKVD** said, oh, he'll be back in the morning, he'll be back – back in the morning. He never came back, of course. They took him, but they ki – to **Siberia** with the cattle –

Q: With a cattle car.

A: – car, yes.

Q: Okay. Did he describe the journey to you?

A: Oh, he described everything, yeah.

Q: I would –

A: Then he –

Q: Yeah.

A: – sa – a – a woman – he was there – I don't know how long he was there in that, in the camp, but a woman gave him a – you have to have papers to move, you couldn't move anyplace. She gave him papers to leave the place.

Q: How interesting. Can we cut just for a second. **[break]**

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah, but I – I know what they say, they dig nothing. They were digging frozen earth with the shovel. For what? What the – never knew what they do. For nothing.

Q: Okay, so this was the work he was doing while he was in this labor camp?

A: Yeah, yes.

Q: The earth was frozen.

A: Frozen and dig there with the shovel, doing something. And people were passing by, passing by from hunger.

Q: Oh, so they were dying from hunger.

A: They dying from hunger. There was a lot of snow. Sometimes snow, sometimes wet snow.

Q: Okay.

A: When they were falling down, no – nobo – even look at them, because they were dying in the – in the snow.

Q: He would tell you these things?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: They were eating bark from the trees, from ho – that was so hungry. But he was never hungry. My husband said, I was never hungry. And I knew those people will get sick, and I – I kept myself not to do what they doing.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach  
December 12, 2015**

Q: Not eat –

A: Or the oil. They have oil sitting on the soup.

Q: Yeah.

A: That wasn't real oil. I don't know, it was black – black rings around. But some people are terrible, when they were hungry, they're in pain. It's painful to be hungry.

Q: Yeah. So he would talk about that.

A: Yeah.

Q: He would talk about how he saw that.

A: Yeah. And then – then he – what he got, the typhus. Did he tell you he got the typhus, typhus fever?

Q: No.

A: He got typhus, he went to the hospital. They gave him a ice cold water to take a bath first. We won't go to the bath before you don't take a bath. He was there a few days. He was there a few days, and then they took him back by open buggy, horse and – horse and buggy. They didn't have cars. He had the water –

Q: Let's cut. **[break]** Okay, so he had typhus, and it was under those conditions that he was taken to a place to –

A: **[indecipherable]** back where he was before.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: And then he decided, I won't survive, I won't survive here.

Q: Okay.

A: So when he – she gave him the – the papers –

Q: Now why would she have given him these papers?

A: I don't know why.

Q: Okay.

A: He's – because, he said, he liked me. He was joking. I don't know why. It was dangerous for her to do that.

Q: So she was like a camp commandant, or –

A: Yeah, something er – a working person that cou – that could do it.

Q: You see, one of the reasons I ask is because when **Germany** attacked the **Soviet Union**, of course they weren't friend any more, you know, after that attack.

A: Of course, yeah.

Q: And – and the Polish government in exile negotiated with **Stalin** that the Poles who are – the Polish – the Poles and the Polish citizens who are in Soviet custody in camps and prisons and labor camps all over the country, can be released. And they were released, throughout 1940 – late '41, '42. So it was throughout this time. And I'm wondering whether or not –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: I never her – I never heard that.

Q: Yes.

A: Never heard it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Never.

Q: They were – yeah, they were released –

A: No. There were a lot –

Q: – now – there were a lot.

A: A lot of those labor camps, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And some made their way – some were able to leave the **Soviet Union**. So I'm wondering whether or not this permission that she gave to him, had anything to do with that.

A: No, no.

Q: No. It was personal.

A: Yeah.

Q: It was personal, okay.

A: Yeah. No, it has nothing to do –

Q: So she gave him papers, and what did he do then?

A: He wanted to go to **Palestine**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: He went to **Asia** – **Asia**?

Q: **Asia**.

A: **Asia**. Yeah, he went to –

Q: Soviet **Asia**.

A: – by train, by – by a-any means.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah. Russian, yeah, Russian issue. And then il – then, it was within – when the women wa – women are against the window that he – here we are, he was on the – on the train.

Q: Okay.

A: He was on the train, and only women was there, no men in. They were very nice, those Russian women. They gave – they knew right away that – that he is from – from east, or from –

Q: From the west.

A: From west, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: From west. How he looked, how he was dressed, how he looked. So they gave him food. They gave him cheese, they gave him some – some food. Then, I think he

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

didn't have this – those papers expire, he didn't have papers any more. And the **NKVD** was approaching –

Q: The secret police were coming, yeah.

A: – to train, and asking for papers. Papers, papers, and he didn't have it. So he said to the woman, I gonna hold on – or the woman told him, you go – can you hold on outside the w – the wed – the train, on the window, outside the window, and I'm going to stay back to the window, cover you. I don't know, one woman, or two women were there. And that's how it happened. He wa – he came out the – the train, holding on –

Q: Okay.

A: – outside, and the train was moving, train was moving. And all of a sudden the **NKVD** gay – guy was smoking, he wanted to put the ashes at – outside the window, outside the window. So she said to move – move away. And when he saw that, he jumped out from the car. He jumped out. He said, I was so lucky that was only grass, that I fell on the grass. He said, I was unconscious, I don't know for how many hours, lying down, touching myself if I have still my – my legs and my arms.

Q: Oh my goodness.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: That's what he has once. And then he start moving again. He didn't know – I didn't know what – he didn't have any – anything to go by which way to go, where to go. He was going, he was walking.

Q: Do you know some of the places that he traveled through as he was – a-after he left this camp? Do – you know, you say it's Russian **Asia**, but what would be the place names? Did he mention this?

A: It – was it to **Tushkant**(ph)? Yeah, he went to **Tushkant**(ph).

Q: Okay. Okay.

A: That was because he thought he gonna go through **Iran** to **Palestine**.

Q: That's the way that many of the Poles –

A: Yeah.

Q: – were leaving the country.

A: Yeah.

Q: You know? They were joining the Polish army.

A: That's – that's where he – he wanted to go to **[indecipherable]** to the –

Q: Polish –

A: Did he tell you about that?

Q: Tell me. You tell me about that.

A: He went a few places and they didn't accept him because he was Jewish.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Mm-hm. I see. Okay.

A: He was Jewish, he didn't say we don't accept. They tell him straight, we don't.

But someplace – one place he found that they – they did accept him, they – because he went to the army.

Q: Oh, I see, so he went to the army then?

A: Yes, he went to the army.

Q: And was that the –

A: He was going with the Russian army. Russian army together with Polish army, they were going together.

Q: I see.

A: Towards **Poland**, towards **Poland**.

Q: Okay.

A: Slowly, slowly, I don't know how many months he was in the army; that I don't remember.

Q: All right. Did he ever get then to – back to **Lvov**?

A: Yes, he went to **Lvov**.

Q: And he was already in the army by the time he did?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: But he le – that’s what – how far he went. He didn’t go any further.

Q: Okay.

A: And he – that – of course, he was starting to look – because they were talking they’re killing Jews, they’re killing Jews, the Russian, but he never believed, because they said all – all propaganda he was talking about.

Q: Yeah.

A: He never believed in that, they were –

Q: Yeah.

A: – that six million will – will go. So he was looking for the parents and for the brother. He had only one brother. And when they came to the – where they live. So the – the janitor from that building couldn’t believe, just – he said, he was yelling and yelling, his is alive, he is alive. You know who is alive? The – then he found out the **[inaudible]**

Q: What did the janitor tell him?

A: Pardon?

Q: Did the janitor tell him any details, did the janitor know what –

A: They took him. They said, I don’t know tha – they came and they took him. The

**NKVD.**

Q: Okay. The Germans.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Gestapo.

Q: The Gestapo.

A: They took him. That's all.

Q: All right. And then what did he do?

A: So he was in – in **Lvov** for – for I don't know how long, few – few weeks. And then like everybody was leaving that part of **Poland, Lvov**.

Q: Okay.

A: So he went to **Wroclaw**. Did you ever heard about that city –

Q: Yes.

A: – **Wroclaw**?

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah?

Q: But I don't remember where it is. Is it south **Poland**?

A: Yeah, that – that part was Ger-German, but after the war, they became Polish.

Q: Got it, okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: That was Polish.

Q: Okay. And – and then –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: And then who he did like we – like we did. They were leaving f – going for is –  
to **Palestine**.

Q: Okay.

A: We going to **Palestine**.

Q: And that's where you met?

A: Yeah.

Q: And you ended up there five years. Why – why – why there, and why five years  
in **Salzburg**? You met, you married, why did you stay there?

A: Oh why we didn't go to **Israel**?

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I have an aunt who [**indecipherable**] survive, she is for **Israel**, always for  
**Israel**.

Q: Okay.

A: She was married too, in – in **Salzburg**, and her husband too, very much for  
**Israel**. And they were the first one that **Israel** exists by – by **Truman**.

Q: Okay.

A: She loved it, she loved it, she couldn't stand the – the climate. They lived in the  
tent on the sand. We have sand and they open up a tent and her – that – that's the –  
the beginners, they lived like that. So she wrote – and I had already the baby, so she

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

wrote to us, don't you dare to come here. You won't survive the climate. It's so difficult life. It's so terrible. Don't come here.

Q: I see.

A: So that was enough not to go. That's why we – we decided to go the only place was left is **United States**.

Q: And how did you get here? And by what **[indecipherable]**

A: We didn't – we didn't have any sponsors, nobody.

Q: All right. Okay.

A: No – not even a familiar face. So they said that we – we'll have to wait for Polish quo-quota to come to the **States**. So that's why we waited five years in **Salzburg** to come to the – to **America**.

Q: And what year did you finally arrive?

A: Finally we came, I'm thinking in '51.

Q: Okay.

A: I think was '51.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah, my daughter was born '49, she was two years old, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: '51.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: And then, when you got to the **United States** –

A: We got to **Revere**. Oh, you don't know the place.

Q: No, so tell me – tell me, did you enter through **New York**, or did you enter through **Boston**?

A: To **New York**, not to island, no, not the s – no, to **New York**.

Q: Through **New York**.

A: Through **New York** and the – we came by ship.

Q: Okay.

A: Took us 10 days to come here.

Q: Okay.

A: This is my toy, I'm playing with it. By – yeah, took us 10 days. We one – we came here in February.

Q: Okay.

A: We went through English channel. Do you know where the English channel go – by ship? I thought we gonna drown there.

Q: Really? It was –

A: Unbelievable.

Q: Yeah?

A: It was so terrible, and **Joe** was –

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: High waves?

A: – and **Joseph** was so sick, you can't believe it. He was 10 days with the grapefruits on the head, and – and lemons. That's how he lived in – on the ship.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: Yeah, and my daughter was eating apples. I was sick too, and she was sit – she was all right. She was with me in the bed. They separated men from women. So she was sitting and eating apples, and that's how she survived. Thank God, we were – went through **Halifax**. Through **Halifax** we went through to **New York**. And in **New York** I saw people who are – someone is waiting for them, relatives, some friends. They hugging and kissing and happy. And I was sitting on my – on our baggage –

Q: Your suitcases.

A: – and – and crying. And crying, I want to go back. I said, I want to go back to **Europe**. I don't know the language, I don't know anybody. What we gonna do with the – no money, no language, no – no relative.

Q: So what happened?

A: The worst thing is no language. He knew five languages, but not – not English.

Q: Yeah.

A: This is when you are deaf and dumb, it's – it's unbelievable.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: So tell me what happened.

A: So he said, you can't go back, nobody will take you back. So we – we went through the fil – Jewish philanthropy.

Q: Okay.

A: It used to be Joint, calling Joint.

Q: That's right. Okay.

A: So, I said, I want to stay in **New York**. So he said, no, you can't stay in **New York**. Don't you know your papers saying you're going to **Boston**? That's what your de-destiny is, **Boston**. Be happy, because this is a European – a European city, more than any other.

Q: Who told –

A: More than any other.

Q: Who told you that, the Joint representative?

A: No, s – in – even in **Salzburg** they were –

Q: Even in **Salzburg**, yeah?

A: – in **Europe** they were telling, yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: They – they don't have the special accent what others south – south of **States**. So we have no – no – I had to go to **Boston**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: And was it true? Was it true that it was more a European city?

A: I don't know. I can't compare with the other cities, so I don't know.

Q: Okay.

A: But it's a nice city.

Q: And you've lived here ever since.

A: I fo – I could – I c – I wish that the winter won't be so strong, but this winter is beautiful.

Q: So far it is, yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: So far it is.

A: So far wa – I have – I'm afraid we're gonna pay for it in January and February.

Q: You never know. You never know. So when you got here then, how did you set up your lives, how did you raise your children?

A: So the Joint – the Joint said, you ha – this is the address, this is the address in wi – you have a room there. And yeah, we went there, we'll have a room. The – we didn't have a bed for the baby, the be – she was bed – double bed that she was sleeping between. And because I – later people come and they have apartments, and they have for the children prepared things. Okay, we didn't have it. And then right away the next day, they have office, the Joint office, to come in. They gave him the

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

paper to look for the job. This is the paper, go here, there, here, you see it, they –  
who get it – who get it – who will –

Q: Hire him.

A: Fire you.

Q: Hire you.

A: Fired you, yeah.

Q: Hire, hire, hire, yeah.

A: In the – one month. That's all what they gave us 27 dollars a week to survive.

Q: Wow. Wow.

A: And he found a job, wa – jumping from one job to the next, from one to the next  
til he found one that he was in charge of a shipping department. He was there for  
10 years. And I went to – we have a daughter – another daughter. And after – after a few  
years, I went to work too. I was a salesgirl.

Q: Where?

A: Maybe you – no, you are not from **Boston**, so you don't know the name.

Q: What?

A: Do you know **Filene's**?

Q: Of course I know **Filene's**.

A: You know **Filene's**? I was there 40 years.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Oh my. Oh my.

A: Yeah, I retired from **Filene's**.

Q: **Filene's** was an institution.

A: Now **Ma – Macy's**, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And what are the names of your children?

A: **Naomi**.

Q: Okay.

A: **Naomi's** my older one, and **Anita** is the younger – or – she is **Anita**.

Q: **Anita**. And then your husband worked for 10 years in the shipping department?

Did he ever go out on his own, or did he have another job after that?

A: No. He will try real estate, he made the license for the real estate, but was very difficult – difficult to – with that.

Q: Okay.

A: He was from one job to another one.

Q: Okay.

A: We survived. We survived. Wasn't ris – wasn't easy, but we survive.

Q: Did you ever go back to **Poland**?

A: No. I-I wouldn't go back to where the – to **Lvov** anyway.

Q: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: And that's the first. And secondly, I don't have anybody.

Q: Yeah.

A: I don't have anybody to go to.

Q: Did you tell your children about your story, about what you went through?

A: Yeah, my – my grandson knows from – not my – my story he didn't go – know too much, but my husband yeah, he t – he tell them.

Q: Yeah. Your grandson, he told your grandson. But what about your girls as they were growing up, did you tell them?

A: Very little. Very little, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: They knew that we were newcomers. Th-They knew we're newcomers, yeah.

Was – I spoke to my older daughter German because we were in **Austria** five years.

Q: That's right.

A: So I spoke German to her, and she caught up very quickly English, she answered English to me.

Q: Yeah.

A: So we learn a lot from the kids.

Q: Yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: And from television, too. We – I didn't go – I went to evening school to learn the – for citizen, for ci – to –

Q: Uh-huh, for citizenship.

A: – to – for citizen. So I knew the history very, very well, I was very interested. Now I forgot everything, but I knew everything, really was very interesting. And after five years, to the date, we became citizen.

Q: That's wonderful.

A: Yeah.

Q: That's wonderful.

A: And after that I started to learn driving license.

Q: Uh-huh. Well the – we have to have your priorities.

A: Yeah.

Q: First the citizenship.

A: Yes, the citizen, that was the – from the beginning.

Q: Yeah. Is there anything you'd like to add to what we've talked about today, that you think is important for us to know?

A: I don't know if it's important of – to me it's important that –

Q: Please.

A: – I love the country.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach  
December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay. Thank you. That is very important. Thank you for saying that.

A: It's very important to me, because it's such a freedom.

Q: That's what you have felt here. Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. Thank you. Thank you Mrs. **Bach**. And with that, this concludes the **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum** interview with Mrs. **Irene – Irena Bach -- Schwettzer(ph) Bach**, on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2015, in **Chelsea, Massachusetts**.

A: Okay, thank you. Thank you.

Q: Thank you very much.

A: Thank you very much. Nice meeting you. **[break]**

Q: Okay, so Mrs. **Bach**, tell me, what is it that you are holding up right now, what is that?

A: Those are my papers wh-when I was in **Germany, Germany**. I – I bought those papers there. Not – not my real name.

Q: Okay.

A: And that's how I – on those papers are very important, for almost three years.

Q: Okay. So were these papers produced in **Poland** by that man?

A: Yes, yes.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Okay.

A: They're produced by Polish people.

Q: By Polish people for you –

A: Yeah.

Q: – and – and they saved your life.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Okay, okay. And that is a picture of you as a young – as a young girl, and it has your name down as **Irena Starzewska**, and that you are a Roman Catholic.

A: Yes, Roman Catholic, yes.

Q: Okay. Okay, thank you. All right. Okay, so Mrs. **Irena**, tell me, what is this document here?

A: This is what I got when I was working already in **Germany**.

Q: Okay. I see that it has a different birthdate, it makes you three years older.

A: Yes, yes, because I – I was too young, afraid that they won't take me to – or – or allow me to work, and I want – I wanted to be work – to be working, o-otherwise I don't think so I would survive.

Q: Okay. Yeah, you needed to be – make yourself older –

A: Yeah.

Q: – in order to be able – yeah.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: To – to su – yeah, to work and to survive.

Q: Okay. Thank you. Okay, Mrs. **Irena**, tell me, what is this piece of paper. It says military government of **Germany**, and can you describe it to me?

A: I cou – I don't remember.

Q: Okay. It – your – you're seen as a displaced person, and you still have your false name, **Irena Starzewska**, in August of 1945.

A: Yes.

Q: Why would you still have kept your false name?

A: Because I was still in **Germany**, I was still in **Berchtesgaden**, so I didn't want to openly say that I am Jewish. I wanted to go back to **Poland**, and in **Poland** I would tell everybody the truth, and ask for – for papers with my real name.

Q: I see.

A: So I wanted to – to keep that til the last minute.

Q: I see. And yes, it's dated 13<sup>th</sup> of August, 1945.

A: '45.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, I think I came to **Poland** about Oc-October.

Q: Okay. And I see, it's **Landcries**(ph), in German it says **Berchtesgaden**, and that's where it's given out.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: Yeah.

Q: By the **U.S.** military authority. Captain **William Gilson**(ph). Okay. Thank you very much. Okay, so tell me, what is this photograph of?

A: This is my uniform when I went to gymnasium.

Q: In **Poland**?

A: In **Poland**, yes, in **Lvov**.

Q: Okay, I see it's dated 1941.

A: '41, yeah.

Q: And that was the uniform that you would have for school?

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Your hairdo is also very beautiful. Did you have long hair?

A: Very long, to my waist.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: And was this the kind of hair that you had when you were working in

**Berchtesgaden**?

A: Exactly, yes, yeah.

Q: Okay. And tell me – what did you tell me that it did? You –

A: They saved my life.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Yeah. And tell me how.

A: My hairdo be – because in **Bavaria**, the women are wear – having that hairdos.

Q: Okay, so you looked like a – a local girl.

A: Yeah, I looked, yeah.

Q: Okay. Thank you. Okay, so Mrs. **Irena**, who is this in these photographs?

A: Yeah, this is my husband **Joseph**.

Q: And his middle name?

A: **Steven**.

Q: So it's **Joseph Steven** –

A: **Steven Bach**.

Q: All right.

A: **B-a-c-h**.

Q: And thi – it looks like they're taken at different times.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: All right.

A: Yeah, here he was much younger, he is in college, and here is already in his 30s.

Q: All right. And you met him when he was in his 30s?

A: Thirties, yes.

Q: All right. So he wa – how old were you when you got married?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: I was 22.

Q: And he was – how old was he?

A: I was 16 years different.

Q: He was 38. Okay. All right, thank you. So Mrs. **Irena**, tell me, what is this photo about. Tell me what is this photo.

A: This is our wedding reception.

Q: Tell me, what was your wedding date, when did you get married, the date.

A: I don't remember. **[laughter]** That was – that was in February, that I **[indecipherable]** February on a religion – religion wedding.

Q: It was a religious wedding.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: And – and in June, we went for the papers to – in c – city hall, for city hall papers.

Q: Okay. So was this in 1947 or '48 that you got married?

A: '48.

Q: 1948.

A: Yeah.

Q: In **Salzburg**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: In **Salzburg**, yes.

Q: All right. All right.

A: [**indecipherable**] remember the name, **Mer-Merterstrasse – Mertenstrasse**  
**sieben**, seven

Q: Okay, **Mertenstrasse** seven.

A: Seven.

Q: In **Salzburg**. Okay, thank you. And tell me, what is this photo?

A: I think this is the same – the same one. A little more people were in it.

Q: I see you and your husband in the distance, in the place of honor.

A: Yeah.

Q: And are these mostly survivors, who would have also been at the wedding?

A: Yes, they were survivors, yes.

Q: All right. Thank you very much. Okay, so tell me, who is in this photo?

A: There is my mother with her sister [**indecipherable**] my sister, my sister's  
husband, my aunt and my nephew.

Q: Okay. I'm going to go from left to right, and it looks like your aunt is the most  
on the left. What was her name?

A: **Toni**(ph).

Q: **Toni**(ph). And her last name?

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach  
December 12, 2015**

A: **Toni Harcovy**(ph).

Q: **Toni Harcovy**(ph) was your ma –

A: **Harcovy**(ph), yes.

Q: And then your sister's husband?

A: Husband was **Lucic**(ph) **Nathan**(ph) – **Nathan**(ph) **Shuman**(ph).

Q: Okay. And your mother's name?

A: My – p – **Pearl** – **Paula** – **Paula Schwettzer**(ph).

Q: And your sister?

A: My sister was **Janina**(ph) **Shuman**(ph).

Q: **Janina**(ph) **Shuman**(ph). And down below, the little boy?

A: He is now a doctor, na – ri – **Ricardo**. **Ricardo Shuman**(ph).

Q: So he wa – th – her son?

A: This her son, yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: He lives in **Argentina**, in **Buenos Aires**.

Q: Okay. And this photo I think was taken in 1953? Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay.

A: Must be. Yeah, '53.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.

**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

Q: Thank you. Thank you for showing that. Okay, tell me what is this photo of?

A: The wa – my parents in ro – in **Poland, Lvov**.

Q: And about what year do you think it would be taken?

A: That was before the war, maybe 1938.

Q: So soon before the war, not – not – not very –

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay. And who is – it's your mother, **Pearl**?

A: **Pearl**.

Q: And your father –

A: **S-S-Sol – Solomon**.

Q: Uh-huh, **Solomon Schwettzer**(ph).

A: He was a very sharp dresser, he loved to get dressed.

Q: They both do. They both look very, very dapper.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. Do you know where it was taken in **Poland**? It looks like it's in a park.

A: It was in – in **Krynica**.

Q: Ah, the place that you used to go for vacations.

A: Yes, yes. Yeah.

Q: **Krynica**.

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.



**Interview with Irena Bach**  
**December 12, 2015**

A: And she was drink – she always wanted to lose weight, so she was drinking some special water.

Q: Okay. Okay, thank you.

**Conclusion of Interview**

The following transcript is the result of a recorded interview. The recording is the primary source document, not this transcript. It has not been checked for spelling nor verified for accuracy. This document should not be quoted or used without first checking it against the interview.

The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Information about access and usage rights can be found in the catalog record.