

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:07,840

2

00:00:07,840 --> 00:00:10,630

This is a recording for  
the United States Holocaust

3

00:00:10,630 --> 00:00:11,980

Memorial Museum.

4

00:00:11,980 --> 00:00:15,370

An interview with  
Mr. Fritz Schonbach

5

00:00:15,370 --> 00:00:21,730

by Margaret Garrett on July 23,  
1996, in Arlington, Virginia.

6

00:00:21,730 --> 00:00:25,870

tape number three,  
side A. Mr. Schonbach,

7

00:00:25,870 --> 00:00:28,510

you were talking  
about how you felt

8

00:00:28,510 --> 00:00:32,770

about being in the labor unit.

9

00:00:32,770 --> 00:00:38,620

Well, I think I was not  
alone in feeling somewhat

10

00:00:38,620 --> 00:00:42,100

reconciled with the fact  
that we were not allowed

11

00:00:42,100 --> 00:00:46,660

to join a fighting unit.

12

00:00:46,660 --> 00:00:52,540

Because we knew that at  
that particular point

13  
00:00:52,540 --> 00:00:54,620  
where we worked, we  
were quite essential.

14  
00:00:54,620 --> 00:00:57,100  
And I think what I  
was talking about

15  
00:00:57,100 --> 00:01:02,440  
was the break of gauge which was  
a place within the Commonwealth

16  
00:01:02,440 --> 00:01:06,460  
of Australia at the  
border of two states,

17  
00:01:06,460 --> 00:01:14,260  
where the railroad gauge changed  
from small to large or vice

18  
00:01:14,260 --> 00:01:19,360  
versa and where goods had to be  
trans-shipped from one railroad

19  
00:01:19,360 --> 00:01:24,710  
truck to another in order to  
help the troops up north, well,

20  
00:01:24,710 --> 00:01:26,770  
in New Guinea or wherever  
it was, later on,

21  
00:01:26,770 --> 00:01:32,590  
the American troops, who had  
a lot of supplies in our area.

22  
00:01:32,590 --> 00:01:36,910  
So by transshipping-- by  
doing this manual work

23

00:01:36,910 --> 00:01:40,090  
and rather heavy work,  
incidentally, and some of it

24  
00:01:40,090 --> 00:01:42,790  
done in a very hot climate.

25  
00:01:42,790 --> 00:01:46,150  
And only the youngest and  
strongest could do that.

26  
00:01:46,150 --> 00:01:48,790  
By doing that, we  
felt that we were

27  
00:01:48,790 --> 00:01:51,460  
helping the Allied  
cause sufficiently

28  
00:01:51,460 --> 00:01:56,380  
to make us a valuable  
part of the war effort.

29  
00:01:56,380 --> 00:01:58,450  
And I thought that was quite--

30  
00:01:58,450 --> 00:02:07,940  
I think that applied to many  
of us in that particular unit.

31  
00:02:07,940 --> 00:02:12,280  
You asked me about  
some of the people

32  
00:02:12,280 --> 00:02:18,370  
that I described  
earlier on our voyage

33  
00:02:18,370 --> 00:02:23,950  
to Australia and the  
fact that I was together

34  
00:02:23,950 --> 00:02:27,205

in a group with some  
German political refugees.

35  
00:02:27,205 --> 00:02:29,770

36  
00:02:29,770 --> 00:02:33,940  
As I said, they  
were a good group

37  
00:02:33,940 --> 00:02:38,770  
to be with, because to them,  
to be deprived of freedom

38  
00:02:38,770 --> 00:02:40,360  
was not a new experience.

39  
00:02:40,360 --> 00:02:45,040  
They had been in German  
jails, some of them.

40  
00:02:45,040 --> 00:02:50,200  
And they felt that  
this was just one more

41  
00:02:50,200 --> 00:02:51,860  
thing that happened to them.

42  
00:02:51,860 --> 00:02:57,190  
And what I also  
feel is that somehow

43  
00:02:57,190 --> 00:03:01,300  
in some of the descriptions  
of our subsequent life

44  
00:03:01,300 --> 00:03:08,170  
in internment, they weren't  
really given enough credit.

45  
00:03:08,170 --> 00:03:13,480  
The mere fact that the entire  
population of those internment

46  
00:03:13,480 --> 00:03:16,120  
camps was not 100% Jewish.

47  
00:03:16,120 --> 00:03:18,130  
I don't know what  
the percentage was,

48  
00:03:18,130 --> 00:03:21,250  
but it might have  
been 80%, 85%, or 90%.

49  
00:03:21,250 --> 00:03:25,060  
But there was a strong  
residue of people

50  
00:03:25,060 --> 00:03:34,840  
who were just German  
and politically, feeling

51  
00:03:34,840 --> 00:03:37,930  
sufficiently strongly  
about the Nazis

52  
00:03:37,930 --> 00:03:42,035  
to have left their  
own country and gone

53  
00:03:42,035 --> 00:03:48,340  
into become immigrants.

54  
00:03:48,340 --> 00:03:51,310  
First, actually, most of  
them went to Czechoslovakia.

55  
00:03:51,310 --> 00:03:57,346  
And of course, when the Germans  
took over Czechoslovakia,

56  
00:03:57,346 --> 00:03:59,080  
they got a chance  
to go to Britain

57

00:03:59,080 --> 00:04:02,290

and ended up in-- a lot of  
them ended up in London.

58

00:04:02,290 --> 00:04:05,110

But I think it needs  
to be emphasized

59

00:04:05,110 --> 00:04:09,790

that they were genuine  
political refugees, who

60

00:04:09,790 --> 00:04:13,680

were genuine anti-Nazis  
and who ended up

61

00:04:13,680 --> 00:04:16,089

in the internment camp.

62

00:04:16,089 --> 00:04:20,290

Their position became  
gradually more,

63

00:04:20,290 --> 00:04:26,140

let's say, tenuous because  
some of the Communists

64

00:04:26,140 --> 00:04:32,440

didn't quite know how to  
deal with the situation.

65

00:04:32,440 --> 00:04:36,200

Of course, we were allies  
of the Soviets at the time,

66

00:04:36,200 --> 00:04:39,400

especially after  
the Germans started

67

00:04:39,400 --> 00:04:42,160

invading the Soviet Union.

68

00:04:42,160 --> 00:04:44,080

But there was some--

69

00:04:44,080 --> 00:04:47,110

there was a little bit of,  
let's say, a little bit of--

70

00:04:47,110 --> 00:04:48,910

they kept to themselves.

71

00:04:48,910 --> 00:04:53,320

And later on, of  
course, their situation.

72

00:04:53,320 --> 00:04:58,600

A lot of them ended  
up in East Germany,

73

00:04:58,600 --> 00:05:01,720

and some went back to Austria.

74

00:05:01,720 --> 00:05:06,550

But I think it needs to be said.

75

00:05:06,550 --> 00:05:11,050

There also, incidentally,  
were some Catholic clerics

76

00:05:11,050 --> 00:05:11,920

in our group.

77

00:05:11,920 --> 00:05:13,390

That was another thing.

78

00:05:13,390 --> 00:05:20,140

We had people who were Catholics  
and who simply were anti-Nazi.

79

00:05:20,140 --> 00:05:24,580

That was another part of  
the internal populace.

80

00:05:24,580 --> 00:05:26,410

So I think the  
whole population was

81

00:05:26,410 --> 00:05:31,930

more varied than is given  
credit by some of the people who

82

00:05:31,930 --> 00:05:37,800

have later written about it from  
a purely Jewish point of view.

83

00:05:37,800 --> 00:05:43,210

Of course, admittedly, the great  
majority of the camp population

84

00:05:43,210 --> 00:05:43,900

was Jewish.

85

00:05:43,900 --> 00:05:46,510

86

00:05:46,510 --> 00:05:51,220

Can we move on to the  
end of the war and you're

87

00:05:51,220 --> 00:05:52,600

leaving the army group?

88

00:05:52,600 --> 00:05:59,950

Yes, well, we were, I said,  
employed in various capacities

89

00:05:59,950 --> 00:06:01,540

at the break of gauge.

90

00:06:01,540 --> 00:06:05,980

The Americans particularly,  
but also the Australian Army,

91

00:06:05,980 --> 00:06:13,750

had large deposits of what you  
call material in Melbourne,



92  
00:06:13,750 --> 00:06:15,340  
where we were stationed.

93  
00:06:15,340 --> 00:06:20,170  
And a lot of that had to be  
stacked, loaded, unloaded.

94  
00:06:20,170 --> 00:06:23,800  
There was a lot of movement  
of material going on.

95  
00:06:23,800 --> 00:06:28,510  
And whatever had to be done was  
done by those auxiliary troops,

96  
00:06:28,510 --> 00:06:30,220  
which we were part of.

97  
00:06:30,220 --> 00:06:37,120  
So when the end of the war  
came, it was rather interesting.

98  
00:06:37,120 --> 00:06:39,760  
Our captain, Captain  
[? Broadner, ?]

99  
00:06:39,760 --> 00:06:42,400  
who was this Maori,  
was replaced eventually

100  
00:06:42,400 --> 00:06:45,130  
by an Australian major,  
who had been a taxi

101  
00:06:45,130 --> 00:06:50,320  
driver in civilian life and  
who led a rather pleasant life

102  
00:06:50,320 --> 00:06:55,360  
as major in charge of  
this group of people.

103

00:06:55,360 --> 00:06:59,120  
No danger of being transferred  
to any active duty.

104

00:06:59,120 --> 00:07:03,610  
And when the war ended,  
there was really no end

105

00:07:03,610 --> 00:07:08,620  
to the movement of  
goods and supplies.

106

00:07:08,620 --> 00:07:15,880  
And we were simply  
considered essential, where

107

00:07:15,880 --> 00:07:18,670  
our commander made it quite--

108

00:07:18,670 --> 00:07:22,570  
made a point of considering  
us essential to stay on.

109

00:07:22,570 --> 00:07:24,320  
And we stayed on.

110

00:07:24,320 --> 00:07:27,850  
We were kept on as troops  
for quite a long time

111

00:07:27,850 --> 00:07:30,820  
before we were allowed  
to become civilians.

112

00:07:30,820 --> 00:07:35,630  
And I believe that I was  
in the army for a year

113

00:07:35,630 --> 00:07:37,630  
past the end of the war.

114

00:07:37,630 --> 00:07:40,600

And that was another  
very depressing time.

115  
00:07:40,600 --> 00:07:43,870  
I mean, we felt  
enough is enough.

116  
00:07:43,870 --> 00:07:47,620  
I spent, what, almost  
two years in internment

117  
00:07:47,620 --> 00:07:54,490  
and four years in the army in a  
not very stimulating capacity.

118  
00:07:54,490 --> 00:07:58,600  
In all my time in the  
army, I was never promoted.

119  
00:07:58,600 --> 00:08:01,840  
I was always a private,  
which is almost a record.

120  
00:08:01,840 --> 00:08:05,110  
But you know, that's  
the way it was.

121  
00:08:05,110 --> 00:08:07,060  
Were others in  
your unit promoted?

122  
00:08:07,060 --> 00:08:09,310  
Yes, yes.

123  
00:08:09,310 --> 00:08:14,260  
Our captain, our  
first captain made

124  
00:08:14,260 --> 00:08:16,360  
a point of promoting  
people who were

125  
00:08:16,360 --> 00:08:18,970

unable to do physical work.

126

00:08:18,970 --> 00:08:22,240

He said why waste?

127

00:08:22,240 --> 00:08:25,360

He gave them-- he made them  
into non-commissioned officers.

128

00:08:25,360 --> 00:08:27,400

Later on, he  
promoted some others

129

00:08:27,400 --> 00:08:31,420

who were very good workers,  
but some people were promoted.

130

00:08:31,420 --> 00:08:37,750

There was a strict limit as to  
what you could be promoted to.

131

00:08:37,750 --> 00:08:40,600

Nobody ever attained  
officer status.

132

00:08:40,600 --> 00:08:43,720

The highest we ever got was  
non-commissioned officer--

133

00:08:43,720 --> 00:08:50,290

sergeant, corporal,  
and that was all.

134

00:08:50,290 --> 00:08:53,980

As I said, the  
non-commissioned officers

135

00:08:53,980 --> 00:08:57,100

consisted of people  
who were older and not

136

00:08:57,100 --> 00:08:59,230

able to do the work

and some young ones

137

00:08:59,230 --> 00:09:01,030

who are very good workers.

138

00:09:01,030 --> 00:09:03,250

But people, yes,  
they were promoted.

139

00:09:03,250 --> 00:09:04,760

I was not promoted.

140

00:09:04,760 --> 00:09:05,310

I don't know.

141

00:09:05,310 --> 00:09:09,040

I probably was too much of a  
rebellious spirit or whatever.

142

00:09:09,040 --> 00:09:12,220

A couple of times I  
was court martialed

143

00:09:12,220 --> 00:09:18,520

for going AWOL, Absent Without  
Leave, and once for insulting

144

00:09:18,520 --> 00:09:20,320

a non-commissioned officer.

145

00:09:20,320 --> 00:09:21,910

As I said, I was a  
rebellious spirit.

146

00:09:21,910 --> 00:09:26,350

I was not really cut out to be  
commanding troops or anything

147

00:09:26,350 --> 00:09:26,950

like that.

148

00:09:26,950 --> 00:09:30,310

149  
00:09:30,310 --> 00:09:36,280  
Finally, in, well,  
when did the war end?

150  
00:09:36,280 --> 00:09:39,910  
1946, I think, I was  
discharged from the army.

151  
00:09:39,910 --> 00:09:49,000  
And I was allowed to receive  
the benefits of the equivalent

152  
00:09:49,000 --> 00:09:52,240  
of the GI Bill of  
Rights here, which

153  
00:09:52,240 --> 00:09:55,840  
was called Commonwealth  
Reconstruction and Training

154  
00:09:55,840 --> 00:09:58,630  
Scheme, which simply  
meant that people were

155  
00:09:58,630 --> 00:10:03,545  
to be rehabilitated, to be--

156  
00:10:03,545 --> 00:10:07,720  
how can I say-- prepared to take  
their part in civilian life.

157  
00:10:07,720 --> 00:10:10,900  
And if you could  
prove that you had

158  
00:10:10,900 --> 00:10:16,900  
certain aspirations or certain  
previous, I'd say, talents,

159  
00:10:16,900 --> 00:10:18,910  
you were allowed to study.

160  
00:10:18,910 --> 00:10:22,660  
And I was able, after some  
struggle and some help

161  
00:10:22,660 --> 00:10:28,930  
from friends in Australia, I was  
able to enroll in art school.

162  
00:10:28,930 --> 00:10:32,680  
Now how did you make  
friends in Australia?

163  
00:10:32,680 --> 00:10:40,450  
Well, let's see,  
well, one of the--

164  
00:10:40,450 --> 00:10:41,090  
I don't know.

165  
00:10:41,090 --> 00:10:45,310  
Actually, the person most--

166  
00:10:45,310 --> 00:10:49,720  
well, let's see,  
with the artists,

167  
00:10:49,720 --> 00:10:53,680  
I was friendly with artists  
in my group, in my unit.

168  
00:10:53,680 --> 00:10:59,500  
And on one occasion, I left  
Sydney on a trip, on leave,

169  
00:10:59,500 --> 00:11:02,410  
and I went to Sydney.

170  
00:11:02,410 --> 00:11:05,050  
And in Sydney, I  
made the acquaintance

171

00:11:05,050 --> 00:11:08,830  
of a couple of Australian  
painters, who were interested

172  
00:11:08,830 --> 00:11:14,740  
in us, who saw these young  
artists, who were in the army

173  
00:11:14,740 --> 00:11:17,260  
and who would come out  
eventually and become artists.

174  
00:11:17,260 --> 00:11:19,210  
So I made the  
acquaintance of those.

175  
00:11:19,210 --> 00:11:22,360  
And well, then, I had a  
girlfriend in Melbourne,

176  
00:11:22,360 --> 00:11:24,040  
and her father was in Sydney.

177  
00:11:24,040 --> 00:11:25,750  
There were a number  
of things that

178  
00:11:25,750 --> 00:11:32,020  
happened that sort of made  
another friend of mine who

179  
00:11:32,020 --> 00:11:38,440  
was a sergeant in an Australian  
unit and who was a musician,

180  
00:11:38,440 --> 00:11:40,660  
I made friends with.

181  
00:11:40,660 --> 00:11:42,430  
I can't remember  
the individuals.

182  
00:11:42,430 --> 00:11:44,770



But eventually, of  
course, all of us

183  
00:11:44,770 --> 00:11:48,670  
got integrated somehow  
into Australian society

184  
00:11:48,670 --> 00:11:50,500  
while we were still in the army.

185  
00:11:50,500 --> 00:11:55,730  
So when I came to  
Sydney, I, after a while,

186  
00:11:55,730 --> 00:11:57,940  
I decided I wanted to study.

187  
00:11:57,940 --> 00:12:01,120  
And I had some--

188  
00:12:01,120 --> 00:12:03,400  
I made the acquaintance  
of a very prominent

189  
00:12:03,400 --> 00:12:07,120  
Australian painter at the  
time, who apparently helped me

190  
00:12:07,120 --> 00:12:08,090  
with that.

191  
00:12:08,090 --> 00:12:11,260  
And after six months  
or so, I enrolled

192  
00:12:11,260 --> 00:12:14,680  
in a Sydney technical college,  
together with a friend

193  
00:12:14,680 --> 00:12:17,215  
of mine, who was a painter.

194

00:12:17,215 --> 00:12:18,580  
He wasn't a cartoonist.

195  
00:12:18,580 --> 00:12:21,130  
He was a real painter,  
bonafide painter.

196  
00:12:21,130 --> 00:12:25,900  
And the two of us  
joined this art school,

197  
00:12:25,900 --> 00:12:28,150  
together with another  
couple of veterans,

198  
00:12:28,150 --> 00:12:32,140  
Australian veterans,  
young men, who

199  
00:12:32,140 --> 00:12:37,540  
also had obtained  
permission to join,

200  
00:12:37,540 --> 00:12:40,070  
to enroll in school  
at government expense.

201  
00:12:40,070 --> 00:12:43,930  
So, as I said, it was the  
equivalent of the GI Bill.

202  
00:12:43,930 --> 00:12:47,110  
And then we studied for  
three years in Sydney.

203  
00:12:47,110 --> 00:12:48,760  
I transferred to Sydney.

204  
00:12:48,760 --> 00:12:50,740  
I lived in Sydney at the time.

205  
00:12:50,740 --> 00:12:53,680  
I never wanted to see

Melbourne for quite a while,

206

00:12:53,680 --> 00:12:57,580  
because I had seen  
nothing that interested

207

00:12:57,580 --> 00:13:00,950  
me very much in Melbourne,  
and I loved Sydney.

208

00:13:00,950 --> 00:13:03,460  
Sydney was just a  
beautiful place.

209

00:13:03,460 --> 00:13:06,700  
It reminded me of the  
Mediterranean and of Europe,

210

00:13:06,700 --> 00:13:08,050  
somehow.

211

00:13:08,050 --> 00:13:13,330  
So I felt at home in  
Sydney, and I lived there.

212

00:13:13,330 --> 00:13:16,840  
And I met my wife in my  
second year in school

213

00:13:16,840 --> 00:13:17,890  
or third year, I think.

214

00:13:17,890 --> 00:13:19,240  
She is Australian?

215

00:13:19,240 --> 00:13:20,820  
She's Sydian, yes.

216

00:13:20,820 --> 00:13:22,690  
Yes, from Sydney.

217

00:13:22,690 --> 00:13:26,960

And shortly after,  
I finished school.

218  
00:13:26,960 --> 00:13:29,290  
I got my diploma.

219  
00:13:29,290 --> 00:13:30,550  
I left for Europe with her.

220  
00:13:30,550 --> 00:13:35,300

221  
00:13:35,300 --> 00:13:38,660  
And you went to Europe to live?

222  
00:13:38,660 --> 00:13:40,400  
No, no, no.

223  
00:13:40,400 --> 00:13:44,870  
My parents had managed to  
go from Italy to Argentina,

224  
00:13:44,870 --> 00:13:47,780  
and they were getting  
very impatient.

225  
00:13:47,780 --> 00:13:52,286  
And even I wanted to see them  
again after all that time.

226  
00:13:52,286 --> 00:13:56,420  
So they were very  
unhappy when I enrolled

227  
00:13:56,420 --> 00:13:57,890  
in this three-year course.

228  
00:13:57,890 --> 00:14:00,470  
I mean, that was a terrible  
disappointment to them.

229  
00:14:00,470 --> 00:14:03,480

But I said I owed  
it to my career.

230  
00:14:03,480 --> 00:14:08,240  
And it was part of my  
struggle for emancipation,

231  
00:14:08,240 --> 00:14:12,620  
and I never regret  
it, of course.

232  
00:14:12,620 --> 00:14:16,940  
So I had to put them off  
for another three years,

233  
00:14:16,940 --> 00:14:19,800  
and by that time, I really  
felt they had deserved it.

234  
00:14:19,800 --> 00:14:21,680  
The reason we went  
to Europe was simply

235  
00:14:21,680 --> 00:14:24,920  
because I had learned so much  
about Italian painting, which

236  
00:14:24,920 --> 00:14:29,840  
was a major part of  
my studies, and I

237  
00:14:29,840 --> 00:14:32,900  
wanted to see those  
paintings in the flesh.

238  
00:14:32,900 --> 00:14:35,150  
So we decided we'd  
hitchhike through Europe.

239  
00:14:35,150 --> 00:14:35,660  
No sweat.

240  
00:14:35,660 --> 00:14:36,350

No problem.

241  
00:14:36,350 --> 00:14:39,650  
Well, as it turned out, we  
were hungry most of the time.

242  
00:14:39,650 --> 00:14:43,490  
We had practically  
no money and I

243  
00:14:43,490 --> 00:14:45,930  
don't want to go into the  
details but we did hitchhike.

244  
00:14:45,930 --> 00:14:46,430  
We did.

245  
00:14:46,430 --> 00:14:49,860  
We had to because we couldn't  
afford any transportation.

246  
00:14:49,860 --> 00:14:55,160  
And we did see a lot of  
the Italian paintings.

247  
00:14:55,160 --> 00:14:56,810  
But that's another story.

248  
00:14:56,810 --> 00:15:00,350  
In any case, we finally  
ended up in London,

249  
00:15:00,350 --> 00:15:02,990  
where I had a cousin who  
put us up for a while.

250  
00:15:02,990 --> 00:15:05,420  
And my wife took a job.

251  
00:15:05,420 --> 00:15:14,450  
I tried to work for local  
magazines and papers

252

00:15:14,450 --> 00:15:18,470

as a cartoonist I was  
completely unsuccessful.

253

00:15:18,470 --> 00:15:21,440

Never paid a penny.

254

00:15:21,440 --> 00:15:24,020

And eventually, my father  
said enough is enough,

255

00:15:24,020 --> 00:15:28,550

and he sent us tickets on a  
ship to come to Argentina.

256

00:15:28,550 --> 00:15:32,030

And in the beginning of--

257

00:15:32,030 --> 00:15:34,190

what was it, gosh--

258

00:15:34,190 --> 00:15:36,020

in the beginning of--

259

00:15:36,020 --> 00:15:41,670

no at the end of 1950,  
we boarded a ship

260

00:15:41,670 --> 00:15:43,160

for Buenos Aires.

261

00:15:43,160 --> 00:15:49,700

Arrived in Buenos Aires in  
1951 and lived in Buenos Aires

262

00:15:49,700 --> 00:15:54,330

until 1959.

263

00:15:54,330 --> 00:15:56,360

And then you came to the States?

264

00:15:56,360 --> 00:15:58,790  
We had two children  
in Argentina.

265  
00:15:58,790 --> 00:16:00,570  
But I never made a  
decent living there.

266  
00:16:00,570 --> 00:16:04,940  
It was always touch and go  
with help from my parents.

267  
00:16:04,940 --> 00:16:09,410  
And the country was  
simply not livable, as far

268  
00:16:09,410 --> 00:16:10,520  
as I was concerned.

269  
00:16:10,520 --> 00:16:12,890  
It had several revolutions.

270  
00:16:12,890 --> 00:16:16,580  
And finally decided  
I'd try the States.

271  
00:16:16,580 --> 00:16:21,050  
I had an aunt in New  
York, who chewed me out.

272  
00:16:21,050 --> 00:16:21,890  
She said you idiot.

273  
00:16:21,890 --> 00:16:23,390  
You should have  
come here years ago.

274  
00:16:23,390 --> 00:16:25,970  
What are you doing in  
that impossible country?

275  
00:16:25,970 --> 00:16:27,770  
So I stayed with



her in Long Island

276

00:16:27,770 --> 00:16:31,790  
and eventually ended  
up in Washington.

277

00:16:31,790 --> 00:16:34,100  
Found a job and  
got my green card.

278

00:16:34,100 --> 00:16:37,130  
My wife was still in  
Argentina with two children,

279

00:16:37,130 --> 00:16:39,140  
and she joined me eventually.

280

00:16:39,140 --> 00:16:44,930  
And the rest, that was,  
she came here in 1960.

281

00:16:44,930 --> 00:16:47,600  
So that's 36 years ago.

282

00:16:47,600 --> 00:16:51,550

283

00:16:51,550 --> 00:16:54,820  
Is there anything else  
that I should have

284

00:16:54,820 --> 00:16:57,340  
asked you or anything else?

285

00:16:57,340 --> 00:17:00,400  
I don't know where  
the emphasis is.

286

00:17:00,400 --> 00:17:05,170  
The emphasis is clearly on  
the war and the Holocaust.

287

00:17:05,170 --> 00:17:10,089  
And well, my family.

288  
00:17:10,089 --> 00:17:17,349  
All the part of the family on  
my father's side, almost all

289  
00:17:17,349 --> 00:17:19,720  
the family perished  
in the Holocaust.

290  
00:17:19,720 --> 00:17:24,579  
Poland, anybody in Poland,  
just didn't survive.

291  
00:17:24,579 --> 00:17:29,260  
One brother of my  
father's went to Romania

292  
00:17:29,260 --> 00:17:31,540  
after the First World War.

293  
00:17:31,540 --> 00:17:35,770  
He survived with his  
wife and two daughters,

294  
00:17:35,770 --> 00:17:41,290  
and one of his daughters was  
here, what, three years ago.

295  
00:17:41,290 --> 00:17:42,910  
She's my age.

296  
00:17:42,910 --> 00:17:46,330  
And it was a wonderful  
thing to have her here.

297  
00:17:46,330 --> 00:17:51,100  
And then her granddaughter  
also came here.

298  
00:17:51,100 --> 00:17:53,020  
And she'll probably

end up in the States.

299

00:17:53,020 --> 00:17:54,610

She just finished  
her doctorate there.

300

00:17:54,610 --> 00:17:56,770

She's a physician.

301

00:17:56,770 --> 00:18:00,850

So that part of the  
family was saved.

302

00:18:00,850 --> 00:18:06,310

Romania was probably  
nowhere near as bad

303

00:18:06,310 --> 00:18:09,550

as Hungary and  
Poland and Russia.

304

00:18:09,550 --> 00:18:13,150

It was not taken over,  
well, Hungary wasn't either,

305

00:18:13,150 --> 00:18:15,520

but it was not taken  
over by the Germans.

306

00:18:15,520 --> 00:18:19,120

It had a heavily  
fascist government.

307

00:18:19,120 --> 00:18:26,180

But some-- a large number of  
the Jews saved themselves.

308

00:18:26,180 --> 00:18:28,150

They did kill a lot of  
Jews but some of them.

309

00:18:28,150 --> 00:18:33,130

And my uncle was one of

them, and so that part.

310  
00:18:33,130 --> 00:18:35,710  
But my father had other  
relatives, of course,

311  
00:18:35,710 --> 00:18:42,010  
in Poland who never  
moved and they all died.

312  
00:18:42,010 --> 00:18:45,760  
My mother's family, which  
was also quite large,

313  
00:18:45,760 --> 00:18:49,840  
her mother who  
lived with us died

314  
00:18:49,840 --> 00:18:54,430  
and some of her brothers  
and sisters, the older ones.

315  
00:18:54,430 --> 00:18:55,730  
It was sort of divided.

316  
00:18:55,730 --> 00:18:56,890  
It was mixed.

317  
00:18:56,890 --> 00:19:03,490  
But her sister, one sister  
who was close to her,

318  
00:19:03,490 --> 00:19:04,840  
ended up in the United States.

319  
00:19:04,840 --> 00:19:06,850  
She was the one  
that got me to stay

320  
00:19:06,850 --> 00:19:09,310  
with her when I left Argentina.

321

00:19:09,310 --> 00:19:12,610  
And another one ended  
up in Switzerland,

322  
00:19:12,610 --> 00:19:14,650  
and they were relatively--

323  
00:19:14,650 --> 00:19:16,450  
they saved themselves.

324  
00:19:16,450 --> 00:19:18,340  
So it was a mixed thing.

325  
00:19:18,340 --> 00:19:22,210  
I recently rediscovered  
or reestablished

326  
00:19:22,210 --> 00:19:24,850  
connections with two  
of my cousins, which

327  
00:19:24,850 --> 00:19:26,560  
is quite wonderful--  
one cousin who

328  
00:19:26,560 --> 00:19:31,070  
lives in Florida and another  
one who lives in Canada.

329  
00:19:31,070 --> 00:19:35,560  
So the family is still  
somewhat together.

330  
00:19:35,560 --> 00:19:37,810  
As far as the name  
Schonbach is concerned,

331  
00:19:37,810 --> 00:19:45,790  
that's gone, because none of the  
people of that name survived.

332  
00:19:45,790 --> 00:19:49,750  
And our two sons are not

likely to have any children.

333

00:19:49,750 --> 00:19:51,890

It's only our daughter  
who has a child.

334

00:19:51,890 --> 00:19:53,950

She's Canadian and  
married a Canadian.

335

00:19:53,950 --> 00:19:58,330

She still goes under the name  
of Schonbach professionally,

336

00:19:58,330 --> 00:20:02,320

but her daughter is a Richards--

337

00:20:02,320 --> 00:20:05,530

Canadian, Canadian born.

338

00:20:05,530 --> 00:20:06,250

So there it is.

339

00:20:06,250 --> 00:20:07,000

That's the family.

340

00:20:07,000 --> 00:20:09,460

That's as far as the  
family is concerned.

341

00:20:09,460 --> 00:20:12,130

I still have little  
remnants left over.

342

00:20:12,130 --> 00:20:16,460

343

00:20:16,460 --> 00:20:18,540

Is there anything else  
that you'd like to say.

344

00:20:18,540 --> 00:20:20,670

Not really, no.

345  
00:20:20,670 --> 00:20:22,310  
If you have any  
questions, fine but,

346  
00:20:22,310 --> 00:20:24,150  
but I think that's about all.

347  
00:20:24,150 --> 00:20:29,270  
OK, well, thank you very much  
for telling us your of story.

348  
00:20:29,270 --> 00:20:31,580  
I hope It's not too jumbled.

349  
00:20:31,580 --> 00:20:33,950  
No, I think it's  
not too jumbled.

350  
00:20:33,950 --> 00:20:36,080  
It was very important  
and interesting.

351  
00:20:36,080 --> 00:20:36,660  
Thank you.

352  
00:20:36,660 --> 00:20:38,042  
Yeah, I'm glad to do it.

353  
00:20:38,042 --> 00:20:39,500  
And I don't know  
how-- how do you--

354  
00:20:39,500 --> 00:20:42,510

355  
00:20:42,510 --> 00:20:46,490  
I mean, what criteria do you  
use for interviewing people?

356  
00:20:46,490 --> 00:20:48,050

We'll talk about  
that in a minute.

357  
00:20:48,050 --> 00:20:49,010  
OK.

358  
00:20:49,010 --> 00:20:52,310  
This concludes the interview  
with Mr. Fritz Schonbach

359  
00:20:52,310 --> 00:20:54,470  
for the United States  
Holocaust Memorial

360  
00:20:54,470 --> 00:20:58,270  
Museum on July 23, 1996.

361  
00:20:58,270 --> 00:21:01,000