

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Holocaust Project

Life during the Holocaust

O. H. 479

ARTHUR MARCHIORI

Interviewed

by

Mary Anne Seman

on

April 28, 1980

ARTHUR MARCHIORI

Arthur Marchiori was born in Crenshaw, Pennsylvania on May 15, 1908. When World War II began, Mr. Marchiori joined the United States Army. For his patriotic services he has received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Mr. Marchiori and his wife, Bertha, live in Youngstown where Mr. Marchiori is self-employed. He belongs to St. Christine Church and contributed fifty years to Union Local No. 8. Mr. Marchiori enjoys golf and walking and is very willing to discuss his experiences as an American soldier.

Mr. Marchiori entered the concentration camp of Buchenwald in Germany following its liberation by the Russians. Although most of the Jews and other prisoners that had been interred in Buchenwald had already been removed to other places, Mr. Marchiori did get to know a few who still remained. His own interest led him to record the camp as he saw it through the use of the camera. Mr. Marchiori photographed the ovens that had been used to dispose of bodies, barracks, and even an execution block.

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INTERVIEWEE: ARTHUR MARCHIORI

INTERVIEWER: Mary Anne Seman

SUBJECT: Concentration camps, Buchenwald Camp, American soldiers, liberation

DATE: April 28, 1980

S: This is an interview with Mr. Arthur Marchiori, conducted by Mary Anne Seman, at 3222 Bears Den Road, Youngstown, Ohio, on April 28, 1980, at 7:20 p.m.

Would you tell me something about your present life?

M: I am partly working and partly retired. Most of my interest is in golf.

S: You were in the armed forces during World War II. When did you join the armed forces?

M: I joined in 1942, in March.

S: What branch?

M: The armored division of the Army, the tanks.

S: Can you recall what the mood of the United States was back in the 1940's?

M: It was doing pretty well at that time because of the war.

S: How long were you overseas?

M: About eighteen months.

S: Before you went over had you heard anything about Adolph Hitler that you recall?

- M: It has been so long ago it's hard to remember anything. We heard things about him which weren't nice, but that's about all.
- S: Was the country well-informed about what was going on in Europe at that time?
- M: The only thing I remember about that time was that he was overpowering the other countries and he was getting strong.
- S: Would you say people were willing to go to war because of how involved we were?
- M: At that time when the war was just declared people were naturally willing. It wouldn't be like today. When you were asked to go to war, you went. There was no question of not going. It was a duty to serve your country.
- S: Because this country got little information of what was going on were the people aware, in this country, of what was happening to the European Jews?
- M: From the papers and the radio was the only news they would get. They knew something was going on.
- S: Do you know if there were many Jews entering our country at this time?
- M: I have no knowledge of that.
- S: You told me that you entered a concentration camp after it had been liberated. What camp did you enter?
- M: I entered Buchenwald in Weimar, Germany.
- S: Before you entered the camp did you have any idea of what you would find there?
- M: Yes, naturally, because you heard of these concentration camps all throughout the war. You heard what they were doing to the people.
- S: When you entered the camp can you tell me what you saw?
- M: All I saw were the ovens that people were burned in.
- S: Were there still people in the camp when you entered?
- M: There were people in the camp, Jews and non-Jews. They

took me around to certain areas where they made things like field glasses. There were also certain Italians where there were Italians.

There were a lot of prisoners there, and when it came time to eat they would line up beside us. If we had any scraps left in our mess they would scrape it off and put it into cans and they would gobble it up.

S: Were there any Germans in the camp?

M: There were only a very few. There were a few young boys and some men.

S: Who was in charge of the camp then?

M: I wouldn't know. I wasn't interested at that time.

S: You weren't the first forces then to go in there?

M: No. I have a picture that shows a truckload of Russians leaving. The Russians were there when we moved into there.

S: In what condition were the Jews in the camp?

M: At that time they were not too bad.

S: When you say the camps were being cleaned up, were there bodies?

M: I'm not sure. People that lived in the town of Weimar didn't know what was going on there; we got to talk to them.

S: Were there a lot of ovens there?

M: Without counting them I would say there were at least six.

S: Was your outfit helping the prisoners in any way?

M: Not to my knowledge. The war was over, so no one was in need of anything at that time.

S: You said you were acquainted with some of the survivors, were any of them tattooed?

M: I can't remember. They did have scars though.

S: How did you feel about this whole experience?

M: It was a sad thing. Anybody with any feeling, when they walked in there they knew they weren't going to any picnic.

S: Did this affect you?

M: No, I don't think so. It gives you something to think about because it is really a bad thing.

S: Can you tell me what some of your pictures are?

M: I took pictures outside the ovens. I talked with some German boys and they would show me how they would be so anxious to eat that they would try to be the first ones in line. Most of my pictures are of the buildings and ovens. I was fortunate to take pictures at that time.

S: Why did you take pictures?

M: I like to take pictures. I'm a souvenir man; I just pick up everything.

S: When you say you took pictures of outside buildings, were these buildings barracks?

M: Yes.

S: Did you enter them?

M: Yes.

S: When you returned home to the States did you tell people about what you saw?

M: Sure.

S: Do you speak Italian?

M: Yes.

S: Did you speak to any of the Italian P.O.W.'s?

M: Yes.

S: Thank you for talking with me.

END OF INTERVIEW