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Joe Weichselbaum b.9/6/1927 Bochnia, Poland (according to Joe, "5K of 13-14K population were Jewish"), Orthodox family, father had flour mill, mother/sister/brother (survivor), public schooling 8-1pm (no lunch break); "Polish hated Jews but had a saying, 'My Jew is a good Jew,'...but in general we got along...I went to their house, they came to my house"; on Joe's bday 9/6/1939, Germans invade, "shooting big canons, horses got scared...temple burned, killed rabbi"; Sept 15, no school for Jews order; by 11/1939 armbands, papers required; by 1/1/1940, ghetto organized; by 3/1940, fence built around ghetto; Fall/1940 mill taken from father, family forced into ghetto; slave labor camp opened (tailoring, shoe repair), Joe worked on "special bomb", father made army sweaters; for yr. & half, "We believed we were going to survive...people started coming into city, believing they would be saved here."; Gestapo invades, 5000 people taken; aunt/cousins taken to Majdanek; receiving tattoo; fleeing/hiding in farmer's loft until he worried his kids would talk or townspeople would wonder why he was buying additional food when he had a farm); after returning to ghetto, taken to camp Dachau, where his father was killed; 9 wks. there, amazed at lice in straw, then learned 10K Russian POW's had been in there before being killed; guard pulled random prisoner to "give up money," after stripping money, shot him as example, "Then everyone gave up their money."; prisoner escaped & to set another example, same guard randomly chose 10 people, including one of two twin sisters, "Other sister said, 'Take me, she has a baby,'" guard said, "Take them both."- machine-gunned total 11 people; another time, "saw guy hanging by his hands, begging to be killed. They let him hang all day....later shot in front of everyone"; as Russian front encroached, loaded on train (separated from father); learning how father died Dachau; not Joe's belief but his father believed superstition that "forefathers had sinned and we were being punished for it."; Joe's tattoo #14, brother's tattoo #15; transported 100 per cattle car to Auschwitz, of their 3000 men (only 950 men processed), 1200 women (only 400 processed), all others "straight to gas chamber"; tattooed (in alphabetical order), shaven, showered, typhus quarantine, entire block killed if only one still infected; carried stones back/forth (thin uniform, clog shoes) in winter, "just to kill time"; transported to Buchenwald; brother sent to Czechoslovakia, escaped/captured, sent to Theresienstadt, weighed 84lbs at liberation; Joe's 6 days/wk march to/from work (coal mine); "Dr. Fisher would come in and select" (weakest); breakfast "square margarine/bread/coffee made from wheat, soup in evening"; "From moment I entered Auschwitz until I left, we were kept clean, I didn't see a lice; guard forced undressing to confirm washups (cold water); guards counting prisoners morning/evening; seeing people suiciding on electric wire fence; as liberators encroached & electricity got turned off, attempted escapees to non-electrified fence hung; Buchenwald's well-known "political prisoners seemed to be treated ok"; Camp Ohrdruf; receiving small package from Swiss Red Cross; encouraging injured friend, "Don't lose hope"; transported to Bavaria; walked 20 miles/day-3 days; "Americans rolled in, throwing food at us, bad idea, half got sick, a lot died"; French nurses/soldiers entered village commanding each farmer to house one survivor; finding brother; mother & sister had died at Auschwitz; immigration to America; brother dies 5 yrs. later from lingering Holocaust injury infection; Joe finds it helpful to talk about his hardships of Holocaust, "I believe it can happen in any country, including this country."