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Summary

Jack Krauskopf, born March 1, 1927 in the town of Jaworzno, near Katowice, discusses his parents Lype [PH] and Bluma Krauskopf, describes: an older brother, Moishe, and younger sister, Hanyah [PH]; moving at about age 8 to a village where his mother was raised; his father coming from a very religious family in Lodz; being raised in a very religious home; speaking Yiddish at home; attending both public and Jewish (*heder*) schools; the public school being very anti-Semitic; the Jewish families being somewhat more prosperous than his classmates'; moving back to Jaworzno in about 1937 or 1938; when the war broke out, the family leaving their home and walking to Krakow; his family having unspecified fears over the fate of the Jews in Poland; the family returning to Jaworzno and resuming a mostly normal life; the Germans' arrival in Jaworzno, seeking laborers for road projects; having to wear the yellow star; his brother being taken to a labor camp; German creation of an (unarmed) Jewish police force for the town; having trouble finding sufficient food; being ordered on work details; not knowing what was happening elsewhere in Poland; this existence continuing until 1942, when all the Jews in the town were, without warning, rounded up and taken to a marketplace; being separated from his parents and sister; not having a chance to say goodbye to his parents and never seeing them again; the Poles of the town being very anti-Semitic and welcoming to the Germans ("always hated us" and hating them in return); being taken by normal passenger train and arriving after a few hours in a large camp called Blechhammer; encountering Kapos and being assigned to a barracks of about six people; being afraid and hungry; lining up outside for food; being assigned to ride a horse pulling out tree stumps; having freedom to walk around the camp; encountering a distant relative who was a Kapo and receiving preferential treatment; the Kapos being worse than the Germans; being taken by cattle car to a large transit camp a few hours away called Brandi [PH], and then on to a small camp, Zvitavy [PH] [possibly Svítav, Czech Republic], where they worked in a textile factory; being interrogated and beaten for bartering for bread, but warned to resist confessing to avoid being sent to Auschwitz; finding out his brother was still alive in another camp; being constantly afraid then, and still having feelings of fear; being transferred by cattle car to Faulbrück, a large camp in Silesia; being taken to work in an ammunition factory; until approximately late 1944, working for a German civilian who treated him very well and who intimated that Germany would soon lose the war; being transferred to his final camp, nearby, Reichenbach Sportschule, which was a "real" concentration camp with Hungarian guards who were worse than the Germans—the "worst experience of my life"; being sent out to various work assignments; the biggest problem being hunger; waking up to find the guards gone; the gates being opened and the Russians arriving; finding the German who had been kind to him to ensure the man was protected when the Russians arrived; walking to Reichenbach and taking food; feeling free and wild, and not hesitating to push around local Germans; some inmates feeling greater hatred for the Kapos than the Germans; beginning extensive travels in search of surviving family; traveling to the American and British sectors and sneaking into Bergen-Belsen to search for survivors; traveling to Munich and finding his brother, who was living with a cousin; returning to the Russian sector; going to Theresienstadt; moving in with his brother in Munich until 1948 and learning to be a dental technician; immigrating to the U.S.; choosing to live in Omaha; enlisting in the army

following outbreak of war in Korea; asking to be posted to Japan but being posted in Germany; returning to the U.S. and settling in St. Louis; marrying a woman from New Jersey in 1959 and having a daughter; immigrating to Australia in the mid-1960s and joining his brother, who had settled there; being reluctant to discuss the Holocaust and wanting to put the memories behind him; attributing his survival to luck; having grandchildren and being happy. Shows photos.