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Summary

Gitla Borenstein was born November 2, 1916 in a town close to Łódź, Poland. She had four brothers and four sisters with one additional brother dying shortly after birth. Only one brother and one sister survived the war. Her mother's maiden name was Stiferman. Gitla was a good student, going to a private high school and learning politics, library science and economics. Her father was a wealthy tailor with over 300 working for him. Her father was very religious and spoke German, Polish and Russian, as did her mother.

Gitla relates some examples of antisemitic acts by local Poles.

She first saw the German army on Sept. 8, 1940 as they entered unopposed by the Polish army. She and her husband went to Tuszyn and returned within a few days. Their family was able to stay together and had sufficient food at first, while also required to wear Jewish star armbands. Soon, the Nazi commander carried out some beatings and threatened more unless Jews brought him their valuables. Another officer warned them that formation of a ghetto in January, 1940 was imminent and they should run. Her family was able to secure a house together in the ghetto through an officer for whom they made suits. But, food was very scarce and severe hunger was pervasive. Eventually a cooperative was set up that implemented a rationing system to organize what little food (bread, sugar, oil, ersatz coffee, radishes, and sometimes potatoes) was available. Though she had a boss who kept her off the transports to the concentration camp, one brother was sent to Chelmno where he perished. Some of her family were sent to Treblinka, some to Auschwitz. Then, all the children under ten were sent away, then the hospital patients and some nurses. She also references a famous author, name not clear, who was held there.

Gitla relates a number of complicated incidents as she and her family struggled for food while dealing with Gestapo and local police persecution.

(Ends abruptly.)