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Summary

Ted Kenig (née Günter Königsberger), born in July 1922 in Berlin, Germany, describes growing up in Steglitz; his parents divorcing when he was 8; not knowing he was Jewish until he was 11 in 1933, then joining Zionist organization Habonim and becoming bar mitzvah when he was 13; his father coming from a wealthy family from Frankfurt and living in New York until WWI; his mother's five brothers all leaving Germany when Hitler came to power, while she and her four sisters stayed behind; his mother, Frieda Königsberger, getting remarried and his step-father having two older daughters; receiving draft notice from the Germany Army when he turned 18, being examined and tested, then told he couldn't serve; having to wear a yellow star with the word Jew; being called to the German employment office after WWII started and getting a night job for two years oiling machines at airplane gyroscope maker Deuta-Werke in Berlin; receiving a note from the company saying he was irreplaceable for the war effort; in 1942, the Gestapo coming to arrest his father, mother and him, but he showed the Gestapo his company's note, so they left; hearing on BBC radio that Jews were being taken east and gassed to death; discovering that the factory where his mother worked was empty and learning she was taken to an assembly camp at the Große Hamburger Straße school in Berlin; going back to his company to see if could get his mother out, and SS agents there arrested him; Nazis taking away his citizenship and in February 1943 sending him in a railroad car to Auschwitz concentration camp in Poland, then to Jawischowitz subcamp to work in a coal mine with 1,200 inmates; trading a piece of his bread for a piece of soap to shower with after work in the coal mine — workers who weren't properly cleaned were murdered; fracturing one of his fingers and being told by a Jewish doctor that he had to amputate it, which would require having his finger pulled out or going to a hospital in Auschwitz I for an operation, so he picked Auschwitz; how after recovering from surgery in Auschwitz, he was transferred to the Union factory where he served as a messenger; asking a woman to find out if his mother was in Auschwitz and learning his mother was in Theresienstadt ghetto in Czechoslovakia, so he and his mother secretly exchanged messages; his mother being gassed to death on March 11, 1944; being sent to Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria, then to Melk subcamp; upon arriving to Melk, the camp commander telling nine SS men to shoot nine prisoners, and the SS men refused; being liberated by U.S. troops on May 5, 1945; in November 1945 recognizing SS-Rapportführer Wilhelm Clausen in front of a hotel in Bad Ischl, Austria, and reporting Clausen to police, who arrested Clausen; moving to the United States in March 1947.