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Summary

Frances Gelbart (née Francesca Immergluck), born in 1929 in Krakow, Poland; lived near the Wawel castle; one of seven children and from a large conservative family; mother's side was Orthodox; In 1939 her father was summoned to serve in the Polish Army as an officer against Germany; when Germans arrived in Krakow she was no longer allowed to go to school or visit public spaces (ie. libraries, theaters); experienced ration lines where her family was frequently sent to the back of the line because they were Jewish; had to wear a band with the Star of David on her left arm; when father returned from the army he had to hide temporarily; at around age 11 she and her family had to move to the ghetto where four families were assigned to a single room; German army would force them to gather in circles and select who would be chosen for labor camps; father worked with Jewish police in the Ghetto and was able to secure her and her older brother with work, which meant she received more rations; was separated from her family and sent to Plaszow ghetto where she worked at a paper factory; from Plaszow she was marched to Auschwitz, her brother was sent to Dachau; at Auschwitz she was tattooed and segregated to a part of the camp where she sorted through items from other countries (ie. Hungary, Czechoslovakia); food was brought in large garbage can, it was called soup but was mostly water, received a small piece of bread, and occasionally some margarine; was located close to the medical experimental block and could hear those tortured by the Nazi doctors; eventually was marched to Bergen-Belsen; on the trip two of her toes froze and another prisoner who was a doctor helped her heal; next she was sent to Mauthausen where she was liberated by the American army; after liberation she and an uncle traveled to Czechoslovakia and then back to Poland; reunited with her mother, father, and older brother; father walked to the other camps to find the other children but they did not survive; with the help of UNRRA, about four years after their liberation, she and her family moved to the United States and lived in Detroit, Michigan; she got married in 1952 and has three sons