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Summary

Henryka Wieser Septimus, born 1928 in Lvov, Poland (now L'viv, Ukraine), discusses her mother Leah and father Stanislav (Milek) Septimus; her maternal grandparents Regina and Hersch Rephund [PH] living in the countryside three hours by train from Lvov, owning a brewery and 35 cows; her paternal grandparents Klara and Hermon Septimus; her father's brother Edmund; her mother's sisters Rose and Cecilia and brother Edmund; being the only child; her father having a truck company; going to Catholic public schools with Jewish and Catholic students; not experiencing antisemitism in school, but in society 1936-1937; her father and his firm not having Jewish names, not looking Jewish; her father almost being offered a big contract but losing it when they found out he was Jewish; right after the German invasion, seeing her best friend's father, a dentist, being humiliated and beaten on the street; being forced to leave their apartment; having to wear a white armband with a blue Jewish star; Jews having to hand in gold and furs; the Jewish council collecting money for the Germans; Jews not being allowed to use sidewalks and trams; living in the outskirts; taking off her armband and taking the tram when her mother wasn't with her; sitting in the part of the tram reserved for Germans, Volksdeutcher, since there was no control there; her best friend Rela Klapp's father, the dentist, committing suicide with his wife and daughter; with her mother escaping from a group being collected for transport to the concentration camp and being hidden in a basement close by with other Jews; being hidden by another Catholic family during a search (Aktion); hiding in their own basement during a search and her mother being taken by the Germans; not knowing what happened to her mother; her father arranging Catholic ID documents for her; returning the documents to the woman who made them after the war; staying with a former employee of her father's, Lahovic, and his wife who moved to a new apartment not to cause suspicions; not looking Jewish; learning Catholic prayers; the couple hiring her father for their transport company and being able to see him; her foster mother, who was kind to her, passing; the foster father's new wife not liking her and reporting her; a Ukrainian policeman visiting and whispering to her to leave; not knowing where to go; going to the concentration camp Janowska outside Lvov and seeing a truck full of people getting shot and burned; a Jewish policeman outside the camp taking her to a building with Jewish women crocheting; now being in a camp; sleeping two people in one bunk; being the only child in the barracks; witnessing people being beaten and shot, but not being hurt herself; two women being caught trying to escape and being shot in spite of begging for their life; having to step over the dead on her way to the latrine in the morning; a prisoner orchestra playing and being forced to sing while marching to breakfast; not having a cup for the soup; new prisoners who had managed to hide in Lvov until then arriving and being shot; meeting her father in the camp; her father encouraging her to escape, telling her he would follow; being in the camp 7-8 months; escaping on the way to the bath house while prisoners were trading hidden valuables for bread with civilians on the street; using the commotion, tearing off her yellow prison triangles and walking away; going to the woman who made her false documents; the woman telling her about a couple who needed help with their baby; going to the couple and helping them on the fields and in the forest for a month; leaving after seeing the husband beat his wife; the German soldier lodging with the family saying she should work in the kitchen and clean at a German

railroad construction project; being called Sofia by the Germans; not letting them know she spoke German since only Jews knew German in Poland; the head of the kitchen, Frau Friedrich and her husband wanting to take her with them to Germany when war ended; after the war hearing her father had also escaped and took shelter at his former employee Lahovic who reported him to the authorities; her father being killed; knowing her parents thought of her just before dying; her memories never leaving her.