

## Sam Reselbach

### Wartime Experience: Camp Survivor

I was born in Lodz Poland on December 27, 1919. We were seven children, three brothers and four sisters. My mother's name was Sarah. I had two brothers, Schelomo and Pesach and four sisters, Rifka, Anna, Tauba and Luba. All were gassed in Auschwitz and their names are now written on a tombstone in California. I am the only one who survived.

My father Abraham was a painting contractor before the war in Lodz. When I was fourteen years old I was a journeyman painter. When I was seventeen, I had my license. I lived in Lodz until the war broke out. In the middle of the year 1941 the Germans took me from the Lodz Ghetto to the train and transported me to Posen the war camp. There were about two thousand people. They took us to work in the fields with farmers. After a month of work, they transported about 100 people to a camp near Frankfurt, Germany where we worked dragging out tree stumps to build a highway. After six months being in that camp, they needed two painters in a nearby camp. So we walked about seven kilometers to the other camp in the cold. There we were painting for about two months. We finished painting the barracks and I was sent back to work on the highway building railroad tracks, loading wagons with dirt and carrying sacks of cement. After about nine months of the heavy work, one day Lager Ahteste came to the barracks and said that he needed seven people to go to work. He picked me and six other men. When we arrived at the railroad station, there were 2,000 men. They transported us in cattle cars to a labor camp near Berlin in the cold.

The labor camp Eberswalde was a factory producing munitions. It was hard work in that camp. We were working on heavy machinery and the graphite ate the lungs up. Lucky for me I worked at a smaller machine. We were there about eighteen months and an order came that all Jews must be evacuated from that factory. That was September 1943. They took us on trains for five days. In the meantime there were bombardments on the way.

Finally we arrived at Birkenau near Auschwitz. We were undressed and everything was taken away. They gave us a bath. They kept us 24 hours in a barracks for horses on a cement floor. We were supposed to be gassed. From the 2,000 people there were 205 left. At the last minute they spared us 205. We were tattooed, my number is 144118, then they brought us to Auschwitz. There we were kept in quarantine for one week. After a week we were transported Buna. Work there was for IG Farben manufacturing. At the end of 1944 we were evacuated from the camp and we marched all night in the snow for 35 kilometers. In the morning we came to an empty small camp. We were there two days and then we were transported by train to Camp Dora. That was deep in Germany. That was in winter and we were working in tunnels where the V1 and V2 rockets were produced. After two months, I was transported to a death camp. In the beginning of April that camp was evacuated and they brought us to Bergen-Belsen in April 1945.

We were liberated by the British Army. Afterward I lived a little town called Cele by Bergen Belsen. For a very short time in 1945 I moved to Hanover Germany. There I met my wife Phyllis and we got married in 1947. She had survived Theresienstadt.

I immigrated to the USA in 1949 to Stockton, California. I lived there ten years then I moved to San Francisco in 1960. I have two children a son and a daughter. I worked as a painting contractor and I am now retired. Phyllis died in 1986. I married Tauba Weiss in 1987. We had known each other for thirty years.

In my portrait I am wearing the jacket I wore in Auschwitz. It was my shield. I put a cement bag under the coat so the water would not seep through. When we were liberated I kept the coat.