

## Roman A. Braunfeld

Wartime Experience: Camp Survivor

### BEFORE THE WAR

I was born on October 1, 1925, in Stary-Sanch, Poland. My fathers name was Beno Braunfeld, and my mothers name was Rachela Liebler Braunfeld. Later my parents had two other children; my brother Lalak and my sister Gisella. My sister died when she was only one year old. My family had a restaurant/hotel (called a pensionat) and also manufactured matzos. The whole family of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins were about 30 people. When I was a young boy we moved to the town of Rabka-Zdroi, which was a resort town. My family had another pensionat there. This is where I went to school and had a great life. In the summers we played and swam, and during the winters we skied. Then the Germans came in 1939.

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### DURING THE WAR

Beginning in 1939 I was forced to work for the Sicherheit POLIZAJ Schule or the SD doing manual labor. This continued until the year 1942. In the fall of 1942, my family was taken to Belzec where they were murdered. I was sent to the Cracow ghetto. From Cracow I was transferred to another forced labor camp called Cracow Plaszow. Our job there was to work on building barracks for the inmates.

From the labor camp at Plaszow I was sent to Ostrowiec in 1943. There I worked in a factory that produced freight cars for Herman Gorring Werke. After working here until 1944, I was transferred again; to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Here I was tattooed with the number B 4776. After one week I was sent to work in the chemical factory, Buna I.G. Farben Industries at Auschwitz-Buna. Here I mixed the chemicals that were used to camouflage factories so that the Allied bombers could not find them. I stayed here until January of 1945.

In January 1945 I was part of the forced march to Gleiwitz where many died. I was then transported by open railroad car to Buchenwald. It took 10 days to finally reach the camp. During this trip many in the car froze to death. When we arrived at Buchenwald I was very ill with tuberculosis and not able to work. Not many of us survived the journey that begun from Auschwitz-Buna.

On April 11, 1945 I was liberated by the American Army. I weighed between 60 and 70 pounds and I was barely alive. Because I had tuberculosis I was sent to a sanitorium at Blankenheim Germany, and later to another sanitarium in Gautin. Finally in the beginning of 1946 I was sent to Davos Switzerland where I spent the next 2 years recovering.

## AFTER THE WAR

After I recovered at Davos I went to Geneva, Switzerland. I went to dental technician school here to learn the profession. In 1950 I met my wife Mimi. We were married in 1951 in Geneva. Our daughter Danielle was born in August of 1952. In 1953 we immigrated to the United States. We came to San Francisco from New York. In 1954, our son Michael was born.

From the years 1953 to 1970 I worked as a dental technician for a large dental laboratory. In 1970 I opened my own business; Far West Dental Laboratory. I continue working there today. I have a wonderful family. They are all living in the San Francisco area. Our daughter Danielle and her husband Eddie have 2 children. A boy Sean and a girl Noelle. Our son Michael and his wife Gretchen also have a son whose name is Nathan.