

## ERNEST AND ERWIN LEVY

Brothers Ernest and Erwin Levy were both imprisoned in Auschwitz and other camps. Neither knew the other had survived until after the war.

*“Beginning in 1934, I was the only Jewish boy in my class and it became impossible for me to study. My teacher was an active Nazi and I was beaten and kicked on a daily basis.”*

The Levy brothers were born in the small German town of Waldbreitbach (Erwin in 1921 and Ernest in 1925). Their parents were well educated and for several generations, the family had made a good living as cattle dealers.

In 1938 one week before Kristalnacht the family moved to Cologne, a large city and Erwin, who had been working on a farm, rejoined the family. Their sister Ruth was in Belgium. In 1941, the family was sent to the ghetto in Lodz, Poland and shortly after arriving they were all separated.

Ernest was taken in a cattle car to Auschwitz. From there, he was sent to Dachau doing heavy labor unloading railroad cars digging ditches and building railroad tracks. Just before the liberation of Dachau, Ernest and all the other prisoners who were still able to walk were sent on a Death March into the Alps to be traded for German prisoners of war. Only a handful managed to survive

Erwin was sent to Posen and then to Auschwitz where he worked as a mechanic and labored in the coal mines. Near starvation he stole oats from the horses to have some food to eat. He was sent death march from Auschwitz on and was liberated by the American Army a week before the war ended.

The brothers had been separated all during the war each fearing that the other had died. They had a joyous reunion when Erwin traveled to a hospital in Cologne for returning deportees and found Ernest there recovering from typhoid fever. Their parents did not survive, and their sister Ruth had disappeared without a trace.

Ernest and Erwin each married and immigrated to the United States. Both eventually settling in California. Each married continuing their education, worked and creating their own businesses.

Once they were reunited, the two brothers remained very close for the rest of their lives.