

## SAM RESELBACH

Sam Reselbach worked as a slave laborer at camps in Nazi Germany and occupied Poland. He was the only one of seven children in the family to survive.

*“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.”*

Sam Reselbach was born in Lodz, Poland, in 1919. His father was a painting contractor, and Sam began working as a painter when he was fourteen. In 1941, the family first to the Lodz Ghetto, Sam was transported to the work camp at Posen, then to a camp near Frankfurt, Germany, where he did heavy labor dragging tree stumps and heavy sacks of cement to build a highway.

He and about 2,000 other men were transported in cattle cars to a labor camp near Berlin, where they worked producing munitions for eighteen months. It was dangerous work on heavy machinery and the graphite ate the lungs up. In September 1943, all of the men working in the factory were deported to Birkenau. The train journey in a cattle car lasted five days. Of the original 2,000, only 205 remained. Upon arrival, they were undressed, and their belongings were taken away. They were all supposed to be gassed but at the last minute they were spared. Sam was tattooed with the numeral 144118.

After a week, he was sent to Buna to work for IG Farben manufacturing. At the end of 1944 he was evacuated from the camp and forced to march for thirty-five kilometers all night in the snow. He was then transported by train to Camp Dora deep in Germany where he worked in the tunnels in which the V1 and V2 rockets were produced. Finally, Sam was sent to Bergen-Belsen where he was liberated by the British Army.

Sam remained in Germany where he met and married a Theresienstadt survivor. They immigrated to the US, living in California where Sam worked as a painting contractor. When his first wife died, Sam married a longtime friend who was also a Holocaust survivor.

All the other members of Sam's large family were gassed in Auschwitz. The names of his parents Abraham and Sarah, his brothers Schelomo and Pesach and sisters Rifka, Anna, Tauba Luba are all engraved on a tombstone in California.