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Jacob Bresler

Jacob Bresler is an inspiring Holocaust survivor who showed determination during his imprisonments at various concentration camps. He was transferred to four different camps in about one year. Even though his family members passed away, he fought for his life.

Jacob was born to Chaim and Rachel Bresler in the small town of Uniejow, Poland, on July 3, 1928. He lived in a small one-room apartment with his five siblings. As a child, he studied at a public school and a *cheder*, which is a Jewish school for elementary students. Starting at age nine, he made shoes and boots for his uncle.

In 1941, two years after the Nazis invaded Poland, the Jews in the town of Uniejow were forced into a ghetto, and then to the Jewish Colony Ghetto. Jacob's family lived in a dirty room, and he was only allowed to make boots for the German Army. While in the ghettos, his sisters were forced into a concentration camp and murdered, and his father was sent to a labor camp for refusing to help the Germans. Meanwhile, Jacob and the rest of his family were relocated at the Nowy Swiat Ghetto. Jacob left his mother's section to stay with his younger brother, Josef. After the Nowy Swiat, Jacob and Josef were transported to the Łódź Ghetto to chop wood.

In August of 1944, the Łódź Ghetto was liquidated, and Jacob and Josef were on their way to Auschwitz in a crowded boxcar. After arriving, all of the male prisoners were forced to strip naked and sleep on the cement floors. Life was brutal in the camps. Back-breaking jobs Jacob performed were carrying one hundred pound cement sacks and constructing roads. In a matter of months, Jacob and his brother were transported to Kaufering VII and Kaufering IV. "Three months later, Josef was transferred to Kaufering I, the first time since 1941 the brothers were separated" (Ulman). Shortly after liberation, Josef passed away. After Kaufering, Jacob was taken to Landshut and Muhldorf, both in Poland.

In May of 1945, United States soldiers had come to save Jacob and the remaining victims. Jacob mentioned, "When I was liberated by the Americans we crawled on our bellies, because we could not walk, and kissed the tracks of the tanks" ("Tracing the Children of the Holocaust"). Afterwards, Jacob spent two years in Germany at the Landsberg Displaced Persons Camp. In 1947, some friends of his parents, Sam and Dora Samuels, had seen Jacob's name in a list of survivors, and brought him to America later that year. Jacob spent the rest of his life serving for the U.S. Army, studying opera, and working as various job owners. He married his wife, Edith, has one daughter and two grandchildren, and is currently ninety-two years old.

Jacob is one of millions who survived the Holocaust. He faced difficult challenges, especially losing his whole family to the Nazis. He didn't surrender when his family members were taken, but he was determined to stay alive. This idea makes me realize how our society has changed. Thousands of people today want to kill themselves because they think they aren't good enough, or think they don't matter. Every single person matters in this world. Even though the Nazis attempted dehumanizing him, Jacob stayed strong and never backed down. Because of his motivating actions, I have realized that we shouldn't give up on our only life.

Jacob Bresler used his determination to survive the Holocaust. He inspired me to live your life to the fullest, even if you face tough challenges.

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Works Cited

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