

## RG-50.031.0166

### Summary

Sol Shindel (né Salomon Schindelheim), born on February 10, 1923 in Rudnik nad Sanem, Poland; September 1944 photo of Sol imprisoned Auschwitz-Birkenau, taken in secret by a Kapo named Franz; father exports baskets around world; kosher home, parents/sister; public school, when priest arrives for Christian training, Jews taken out but spat on returning to classroom; father had been WWI officer; further antisemitism endured or witnessed; September 1, 1939 Russia invades, family flees to Sokołów Małopolski, Poland to live with family they knew; Jewish boys 12-16 ordered to labor, Sol works for two Germans/railroad; 1940 ghetto forms in nearby Rzeszow; family lived in one room; 1941 ghetto conditions worsen; Sol among 20-30 Polish children ordered to dig pit in wooded area, 6 hours later 4 big trucks arrive, unload more children, witnesses gasoline dumped on children; May 1942 older persons picked up in ghetto - while Sol was working, father shot in his doorway; horse/buggy transfer of 500 Jews to another ghetto; 600 children sent to a camp, Jeshanka [PH]; others were sent to Belzec; Sol was among the 200 sent to a camp called Żeżów [PH], which had miserable conditions, sleeping on planks, caught stealing bread, receives 25 lashings; hearing news that the ghetto had been liquidated and his sister, mother, relatives were taken - of 40,000, only 3000 remained; Sol among others ordered to jump in water, anyone who couldn't swim, shot, told "Anyone healthy goes to Russian front, anyone sick goes to sanitorium" but actually the sick were ordered to dig "self-holes" (graves) then shot; later on, Sol shot at in responding to pleas, screams from prisoners in freight car begging for water; ghetto population grows again to 8000, "A side" went to work, "B side" cleaned ghetto or other slave labor; mayor was in charge of selection (person's skill dictated who survived); being a mechanic; 5500 of 8000 selected to die, of remaining 2500, 500-600 killed in march; Sol ordered to remove cemetery monuments (recycling marble for bricks), Sol witnesses 5-10 people brought in daily that had been outed by Poles, shot; further ghetto liquidation, many sent to Pustkow, Sol sent to Szebnie where 90,000 had been kept outside in winter, froze to death, the aged taken to wooded area, burned; the head of the camp hanged his son by his feet after son attempted to run-away; Sol among those lined up, ordered to give over valuables to survive—woman hands Sol piece of bread that has diamonds & money in it; Sol arrives to Auschwitz with diamonds, 3500 in Sol's group, Sol among 800 selected by Mengele; uniformed, wooden shoes, ordered to carry rocks back & forth; Sol tries to use diamonds to buy favor but caught by the SS (Greenberg) who puts Sol in chokehold; Sol among 600 boys and young men taken to coal mine, ordered to load 36 cars in 8 hours or starve, couple days later, unable to meet load, assaulted with wood; selection/100 prisoners sent to Birkenau; Sol so sickly, decides to give up but Czech Kapo refused to kill him; Dec 1943 Sol ordered to kitchen peeling potatoes; Sol taken to crematorium but driver has car trouble so instead taken to hospital, advised by friend working in hospital to tell Mengele he is healthy, Mengele allows Sol to stay couple days but hospital worker is concerned Mengele would select Sol for death so friend assisted quicker exit for Sol to crematorium work digging holes; a pole who assigned the work; Sol maintains fasts on Jewish holidays but in witnessing Auschwitz crematorium, he gives up on God; Sol's participation in Auschwitz uprising, false rumors of liberation, Sol caught, beaten, ordered to move the dead among 300 bodies; 2 half day train transfer to Stutthof, kept there 5-6 weeks, transferred to Hailfingen, freezing conditions, many

die, Sol becomes so sick, unable to work, assaulted to near-death; forced labor in salt mines, witnesses shootings; march to Dachau, stealing dough from woman baking bread; liberation, many Jews flee to Alps but Sol is so sick, unable to flee, witnesses Russians kill "few hundred"; encounters Amer Army; witnessing attack on SS officer where his hand was cut off, Sol steals his jewelry; living in Munich; Sol "lived for revenge" on Hitler; post-war, Sol still believes in being a Jew; Sol returns to an early escape jumping from 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to flee Gestapo; Sol's confusion that America did not bomb Auschwitz crematorium; immigration to America because family was located in US; reticence to start a family because of what he had experienced; Sol recalls "three times" being marked for crematorium, contributes his survival to his generosity of giving.