

Rosalie and Sidney Simon Biographical Text

Sidney Simon was born on August 15, 1925 in Belitza, Poland (Today Belitsa, Belarus). Sidney was one of five children born to Samuel and Czerna Shimenovich.

Before WWII, Sidney Simon went to public and religious school. He had a happy childhood and loved to fish with his older brother, Moishe. Like any kid, he had chores in the garden and the restaurant. In his memoir, he stated, "I often got into mischief in Hebrew School..." For example, Sidney and his friends were caught smoking inside a synagogue by a rabbi who was their Hebrew teacher. As he got older, he had to transfer to public school because Hebrew school didn't have teachers for the higher grades. All of the Jewish boys got tormented at the new school and would run home early everyday because Jews weren't supposed to fight back.

In 1939, the Russians occupied the eastern part of Poland where Sidney's family lived. In 1941, Nazi Germany attacked the Soviet Union and occupied eastern Poland. On June 28, 1941 the Germans began to burn Jewish houses in Belitza which resulted in Sidney and his family moving into his grandfather's house until they later moved again. Sidney's brother Moishe was caught by the Germans after leaving Belitza. During the war, there was even a time where the Germans surrounded his family as they were on the floor with machine guns pointed at them. Sidney had to constantly be alert and was mostly in hiding. His family was sent to Zetel Ghetto, but they eventually escaped. Joined the partisans, irregular armed groups who fought the Germans, until the Soviets pushed the Germans back and liberated Eastern Poland in 1944. Sidney was eventually separated from his parents⁵.

The day after the war ended, on May 9, 1945, flags flew and everyone celebrated. Sidney knew his parents were somewhere in Lida, but didn't know exactly where, so he started walking and found their house on a Friday. He was still wearing his uniform and was scared walking around, so his father gave him two suits to wear instead. The surviving family members walked west. They were picked up in Vienna by American trucks and sent to a Displaced Persons (DP) camp. According to Sidney, "from 1945 to 1952, more than 250,000 Jewish Displaced Persons, *Sh'erit ha-Plaah* (the surviving remnant), lived in camps and urban centers in Germany, Austria and Italy. In 1946, his family was in Munichholz DP camp near Steyr, Austria for a short period of time. This specific DP was for Partisans. Then, they were transferred to Braunau DP camp in upper Austria, where "a highlight of my time there was performing in the theatricals." They were transferred again, this time to a much bigger DP camp in Ebelsberg, Austria.

There Sidney learned a number of skills and held jobs that helped him later in life, He trained in judo and driving, and worked as a mechanic, a chauffeur, and a camp policeman. He was elected president of ORT, which offered vocational training classes in this camp. After some time, his father's uncle who lived in the US found out they were all still alive and told them to come to Baltimore. He even sent them documents, but had to make up all of their birthdays. Sidney was hesitant about going because he didn't want to leave Shulamit, a girl he met, but he eventually knew he had to. His family sailed on the USS Marine Flasher, which arrived in Boston on April 13. They were put on military trucks that brought them to Baltimore. His father's uncle had an apartment that had a cellar full of goods for them. They also had jobs waiting. Sidney didn't speak English, so it was difficult for him. He went through many different jobs until he found one he liked in the scrap metal business. He met Rosalie Lebovich, a fellow Holocaust survivor from the same hometown; they married in 1952.

Rosalie Lebovic was born on July 25, 1931 in Velka Kriva, Czechoslovakia, which was occupied by Hungary in 1940. On April 14, 1944 Hungarian police knocked on the door of Rosalie's family, ordering them to pack their things; the next day, the family was sent to a ghetto in Mateszalka, Hungary. After eight weeks there, Rosalie was put on another train and deported to Auschwitz, where her mother and brother were sent to the gas chambers. Later Rosalie was transported to Dachau. After spending some time in Dachau she was put on a train that was liberated by the United States army in May 1945. After liberation, Rosalie returned to her home in Czechoslovakia, but decided she wanted to immigrate to the United States. In November, 1949 Rosalie moved to New York with an uncle, but then moved to Baltimore, where she met her husband Sidney Simon.

Rosalie and Sidney had three children, two sons and a daughter. Their names were Majshe (Mitchell), Ruthie and William. After their first son was born, they moved to a poultry farm in Atlantic City. They moved again in 1962 to Margate before their youngest son was born. In 1980, they took a trip to their hometown, which was by then Belitsa, Belarus and part of the Soviet Union, and they returned there again in July 1999, after the Cold War when Belarus had become a sovereign country. Sidney and Rosalie built a good life for themselves after the war, despite the obstacles they had encountered. They worked hard for everything they accomplished and, according to Sidney, their "greatest joy" is their "children and their grandchildren."