

The Seamstress Who Came Back

Regina Lazerowitz née Olszewski · Sarah Rivka bat Yaakov

Brooke's grandmother · Lazerowitz line · 1912 – 2005



A seamstress from Sosnowiec, Regina survived Auschwitz-Birkenau as prisoner 72216, lost her first family in the Shoah, and rebuilt a life with Moses Lazerowitz in Bayreuth, Cincinnati and New York.

Regina Olszewski was born in Sosnowiec, in the Zagłębie region of Poland, on 12 January 1912, the date her Social Security and death records carry; her post-war papers keep the same day but give the year 1918. Her parents were **Yankel (Yaakov) Olshevski** and **Chaia Feigel Olshevski, née Szajewicz**, and the surname is also written Olszewski and Olshevsky. Her matzevah names her Sarah Rivka bat Yaakov; **Moses Lazerowitz** called her Sura Rivka in his testimony, and in his memoir 'Rivtcha, the Olshevsky girl'. From about the age of fifteen she sewed for the Lazerowitz family's clothing store, and her own DP file records her as a seamstress for Leizerowicz from 1936 to 1939, living in August 1939 at Szklana 1.

Before the war's end she had married a man named Silberstein, the name she carried through the DP years; he was very probably **her first husband**. From 1939 to 1943 she laboured in a ghetto workshop. In 1943 she was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where she was held as prisoner 72216 from 1 August 1943 until 18 January 1945. Her first husband and their baby daughter, **Malka**, did not survive. Regina lived through the evacuation of the camp: Ravensbrück from 20 January to 25 February 1945, then Malchow and Leipzig, where she was liberated about 26 April 1945. That same year she registered in Sosnowiec as a survivor, under her married name, Regina Zylbersztajn.

Three of her brothers had also survived: Maks (**Mendel**) and the twins Josef and Aleksander (**Alter Yechiel**). On 3 August 1946 she registered as a displaced person in Bayreuth, living with them at Badstrasse 13 and hoping to reach Palestine; later she lived at

BORN	12 Jan 1912, Sosnowiec, Poland (1918 on her post-war papers)
DIED	11 Aug 2005 (6 Av 5765), aged 93
HEBREW NAME	Sarah Rivka bat Yaakov (Sura Rivka)
ALSO RECORDED AS	Olszewska, Olshevsky; Silberstein / Zylbersztajn; Leizerowicz, Leizerowicz
AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU	Prisoner 72216, 1 Aug 1943 to 18 Jan 1945
LIBERATED	About 26 Apr 1945, Leipzig, after Ravensbrück and Malchow

MARRIED	First, a man named Silberstein; then Moses Lazerowitz, 1947
BURIED	Wellwood Cemetery, West Babylon, beside Moses

Parsifalstrasse 55, the ‘Partzufal Strasse’ of Moses’s memoir, and a December 1946 town list records her as an Auschwitz survivor with no children. In Bayreuth she and Moses, who had known her before the war, found each other again. They married in 1947 on Lag b’Omer, and their ketubah was issued by the Jewish Committee in Munich. Her IRO certificate, made at Würzburg on 4 November 1948 with her photograph, describes her as 158 cm tall, fair-haired and blue-eyed, with one identifying mark: ‘C.C. 72216’, her Auschwitz number. By then she held a baby son, **Jack**, photographed with her in Bayreuth in 1948.

A JDC card shows the couple planning in April 1948 to emigrate to Paraguay, a plan closed in June 1950. Instead, on 13 October 1949, Mozes, Regina and baby Jakob Lejzerowicz flew from Bremen to Idlewild on a Transocean Air Lines flight, bound for 1430 Central Parkway, Cincinnati. Regina and Moses became US citizens there on 22 May 1956, on consecutive petitions. From Cincinnati, in 1959 and 1963, she filed restitution claims in Berlin for what had been taken: bank balances, gold, silver and jewellery, fur coats, and machines for leather-working; the catalogue enters her as divorced from Silberstein. Moses’s memoir does not mention her first marriage. She later named a daughter for her own mother, Chaya Feige.

Regina died on 11 August 2005 (6 Av 5765), ‘at 93’, and was buried beside Moses at Wellwood Cemetery, West Babylon, grave 14-L. Their footstones there memorialize both murdered families by name. Her story comes from her own Arolsen DP file and IRO papers, the Bayreuth registration lists, her JDC card, the 1949 air manifest, her Cincinnati naturalization card, and her 2005 New York death certificate, which names her father Jacob; her mother’s maiden name comes from the 1901 Miechów birth act of her brother Mendel. Moses’s USC Shoah Foundation testimony preserved her portraits and their ketubah, and his memoir, Zeidy’s Book, and the Sosnowiec yizkor book hold the rest.

FROM THE ARCHIVE

DP questionnaire (Bayreuth, 3 Aug 1946), p.1: address Szklana 1, Sosnowiec; brothers

DP questionnaire pp.2-3: Auschwitz 72216, Ravensbrück, Malchow, Leipzig

Moses & Regina's ketubah / marriage certificate, Jewish Committee Munich (shown by Moses in his USC Shoah Foundation testimony 27036, tape 5, ~20:35)

IRO eligibility certificate with photograph, Würzburg, 4 Nov 1948



Air passenger manifest, Transocean Air Lines flight from Bremen to Idlewild, New York, 13 Oct 1949, lines 17-19: Mozes, Regina and baby Jakob Lejzerowicz, bound for 1430 Central Parkway, Cincinnati

Cincinnati naturalization card, 1956 (pet. 21121)

Find a Grave memorial 253515153: Regina Lazerowicz, d. 11 Aug 2005, Wellwood Cemetery, West Babylon, sec. 2, block 14, row 5, grave 14L, Agudist Ben. Soc. (screenshot)

Read online, with every record: https://ouryichus.com/featured.html#lz_regina · Family tree card: https://ouryichus.com/tree.html#p/lz_regina
Ben Soffer (Goldberger) Family Archive · ouryichus.com