

SONYA BEGELMAN

Marsha Baranov, the mother of Sonya Begelman, was born in Vilna, Poland on June 27, 1919. She was one of seven children born to Sonya and David Baranov, who was a successful businessman. Marsha studied to become a nurse and midwife, and during the war, functioned in that capacity in the Lodz ghetto. Just a few days before the liquidation of the ghetto a Polish doctor with whom she worked before the war successfully petitioned the Germans to transfer her to a Polish hospital in Lodz. Marsha became the chief midwife at that hospital. Her skills saved her from deportation to Auschwitz, where, with the exception of one brother, the rest of her family perished. With most Polish doctors assigned to the front, Marsha's services as a midwife were much in demand in the local Polish hospitals in Lodz.

After the war Marsha went to a DP camp in Munich, Germany where in 1946 she met and married Louis Schwindelman, another survivor who spent the war years fighting as a partisan. Louis was born in Russia on November 10, 1919 and worked as a Hebrew teacher before the war. The couple had twin daughters in the DP camp and finally immigrated to New York in 1951 and settled in the Bronx. Upon entering the US, Schwindelman became Schin. Louis and his wife opened a jewelry store on 138th Street in the Bronx, and tragically in 1968, they were both shot in a robbery. Only Marsha survived, but medical complications disabled her for more than a year.

Only 49, a widow with two children, Marsha once again demonstrated her courage and strength by eventually re-establishing her store on 47th street in New York City and continuing on.



This photograph with the caption "Nurse feeding child in the Lodz ghetto" was found on Twitter by the Begelmans in March 2020. The unidentified nurse is Marsha Baranov.



Marsha Baranov's traveling midwife case