

ANTON MASON

BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE



Anton Mason was born Anton Meisner on April 21, 1927, in Sighet, Romania, to Maximillian and Sarah Meisner. He had one younger brother, Samuel. His father was a fur merchant. Anton was in

the same religious school class as Elie Wiesel, who went on to become a renowned author and activist. Anton also attended a public school, which was taken over by a Catholic order in 1940. Although there were quotas placed on the number of Jewish students allowed in the school, Anton managed to continue his education. Anton noticed significant changes in 1942 when the Hungarian government passed anti-Jewish laws and confiscated radios from the Jews. Anton's father lost his business as a result of these new laws.

In early 1944, when German forces occupied Hungary, conditions worsened for Anton and his family. Jews had to wear the yellow star, were made to abide by a curfew, and were forbidden to travel. In March 1944, the Sighet ghetto was established, and the family was forced to leave their home and move into a large room with eight other people. Three months later, in May 1944, the ghetto was liquidated and everyone was deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau. At the time, Anton was seventeen years old.

Upon arrival at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the family was separated when Anton's mother and younger brother were taken to the gas chambers. After a couple of days, Anton and his father were selected for forced labor and transferred to Auschwitz I. In the camp, Anton was reunited for a short time with his friend Elie Wiesel.

In June 1944, Anton and his father were transferred to Auschwitz III-Monowitz. In January 1945, they were forced on a death march to Gleiwitz, a camp in Germany. From there, they were put in cattle cars and transferred to Buchenwald. Anton's father grew weak and died during the transfer.

In Buchenwald, Anton was reunited once again with his friend Elie Wiesel. Together, they were liberated by the U.S. Army in April. Through an organization called Oeuvre de Secours aux Enfants (OSE), Anton, Elie, and hundreds of other young survivors went to France. Anton was given a French identity card and lived in Paris for over two years. Then, in 1947, Anton immigrated to New York with the help of an uncle who lived there. He maintained contact with many of the young people rescued by the OSE and in 1995, they met in Paris for a 50th reunion.

Anton attended The City College of New York and graduated in 1954. He married his first wife, Leslie Kowne, in 1954, and they had a daughter, Sarah, in 1958. At the time of his interview in 1998, Anton was living in Manalapan, Florida, with his second wife, Betty, whom he had married in 1974.



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