

John's grandparents, Abraham and Rachael Levy were born in Katowice, Slaskie, Poland. Abraham in 1848 and Rachael in 1853. They married in 1873 in London City and their eldest daughter Rebecca was born in 1874 in Mile End. The 1881 census shows the family living at 38 Dunk Street, Tower Hamlets. They have four young children and Abraham is working as a tailor. They also have a servant living with them.

By 1891, the family has grown to eight children and they have moved to 54 New Road, Mile End Old Town and are still employing a servant whilst they run their tailoring business. In 1895, Abraham became a naturalised British citizen and the paperwork states that he now has ten children and is still living at New Road. Interestingly, Abraham has marked the paperwork with a cross which shows he could not read or write.

John's father Sidney Solomon was born 22 August 1893 in Mile End and attended Settles Street school in Tower Hamlets. At the age of seventeen in 1911 he was working as a clerk and living with his parents in New Road. His father Abraham died in February 1920 and four months later Sidney married Sarah Brashinsky in London City.

Their first son John Joseph was born in 1921 and a second son Ralph was born in 1927.

In 1939, John's father Sidney was living in Harrow and working as a map curator.

Records state that John Joseph enlisted into the RAFVR at Euston in 1940. He was posted to 100 Squadron from 1662 Conversion Unit on 8 May 1943 as a navigator in the crew of Pilot A.R. Gersekowski. John flew his tour of 26 sorties plus 2 more cancelled between 13 May 1943 and 23 August 1943. He was then posted to 18 OTU on the 7 October 1943. He was awarded a DFC along with his pilot Gersekowski and they were listed in the London Gazette on 12 November 1943.