

Joseph Feingold

April 25, 2017

RG-50.030.0925

Abstract

Joseph Feingold (né Jozio or Yossel Feingold) was born March 23, 1923 in Warsaw, Poland to Ruchel Leah Yakobosky and Aaron Schlomer Feingold in a working-class family. He had two younger brothers: Alexander (Alex) or Urlach and Henry (Henrush) who was four years younger and did not survive the Holocaust. His father was in the wood trade as he shaped wood with a machine to become a part of furniture or women's shoe heels which he learned from his father, a carpenter. Joseph's father built a house based on an American plan his mother obtained at an exhibit in Posner which influenced Joseph to become an architect. It was a more modern house yet it had no plumbing. Though poor, Joseph attended the opera in Warsaw. His family was not religious. They were Zionists and Socialists. Joseph was interested in the world and read widely. He enjoyed his Jewish Socialist school which he left when they moved to Kielce when he was nine-years-old. He was a good student in the public school and was the first Jew to be admitted into the high school for gentiles in Kielce. On September 1, 1939 a bomb was dropped next to their house. The Polish government ran east and suggested all males follow so Joseph went with his father and Alex and met the remnants of the Polish Army. They returned to Kielce the next day as the Germans had gone further east. The Gestapo took his father hostage for a week and he was let out of jail and later arrested for a day as he was a Socialist. He was warned that he would be deported to a concentration camp the next day so he ran East with Joseph the next day to Lvov. They left the mother and two brothers behind. In July '42 Joseph's mother and youngest brother were deported to Treblinka while Alex remained to take gold from corpses. Joseph lived in a school dormitory in Lvov and liked the Russian soldiers he met. Joseph and his father were sent to Siberia by cattle train because they were from Western Poland with no passport. His father went to one area to make a dam for an electric station and he was sent further east for coal mining. He sawed tree limbs and assisted a Smithy. After June '41 they learned of extermination camps as Russia liberated Majdanek Concentration Camp. His father joined him as they were exiles, no longer prisoners. They received monthly packages of sugar and condensed milk from the US. They got permission to take the Trans-Siberian train west to Bonnaroo (?) where they remained until the end of the war. There Joseph studied weaving and other subjects at a technical college and his father was the director of clothing distribution. In early '46 they were permitted to leave so took a train to Poland and, at the border, the non-Jewish Poles went into a car with a cross on their door and the Poles threw stones at the Jewish car and told them to return to the Soviet Union as they don't belong in Poland. When they got to Lodz, his father remained and he went to Kielce to see their hometown. He went to the house of registration and it was stoned and the windows were broken. Joseph tried to escape by mixing with the violent Poles but they beat him badly and thought he died along with 42 Jews. The police took him to a hospital in Lodz where he recovered and his father found him. He was the only survivor of the Kielce Pogrom and was written up in a book that was published October

2016. They found out that Alex survived Auschwitz and was in a DP camp in Germany so joined him. His father was permitted to join his sister in the US, next Alex went and Joseph went to NY by the ship, the Marine Swallow, and arrived August 8, 1948. He never returned to Poland due to the bad memories but toured the Soviet Union and Germany. His wife's niece, Sheila Kaufman, is helping him update his 1985 memoir including his professional life as an architect.