

Yaffa Edelman Fingerman

About my family in Skala on the Zbrutz river in Galicia

Skala where I was born, the hometown of my grandfather, my father, my brothers, my sisters, my uncles and my cousins. Skala, in your land the members of my family sleep eternal rest. Skala is a beautiful and clean town with forests and groves around. On one side the 3 forests and on the other the grove by the train, to which I would run in the mornings in romantic moments to witness the beautiful sunrise sneaking through the trees, warming my heart.

Skala with the ruins of the fortress which was destroyed in the Russo-Japanese War (Der Schloss). Skala (and the Altstadt) the old city where my uncle Fischel lived with his family, the Lachman family, Herscher and possibly two other Jewish families.

Skala in you I first saw light. With you I grew up, with you I lived the best years of my life, with you I went through the greatest grief of my life at the death of my dear late father.

Fate summoned Motty Fingerman to you, in order to meet me, be personal and give me a life of happiness and love for the rest of his life with me. My town to remember you without a tremor in my heart, Skala my hometown.

My parents' house Rebetsia/ Regina and Yerahmiel Edelman

My parents - both beautiful and weighty people. My father used to be called - Zisya Breitbard, named after the Jewish hero who used to break iron with his hands, drive nails by hand and other such heroic deeds. I won't forgive myself because I don't have a picture of my father. I remember in our house there was a picture of my father as a soldier (Ulner). This picture is always in front of my eyes. My mother, whose picture here speaks for itself, was an educated woman. Was knowledgable in Polish and German literature. She loved to recite Schiller, Heine, Mickiewicz, Slovatzky and more to us. She

was a clerk in the town of Turylce, her village. My husband used to say: "When I remember your beautiful mother, she is always before my eyes with a book in her hand" When my husband met her she was already a widow with 8 small children.

When I put these things in writing, pictures appear in front of me and memories arise of the street where he stood, the city hall, Pulaski Dom, the Wasserman house, the Fruim Zelinger house, the Levner house, the Mushka der Butcher house - that's what we used to call it, the house of my uncle Aharon Edelman - my father's brother, On the other hand, in front of Beit Finzilker, there was a hotel (I forgot the name of the hotel owner), the great synagogue, the Raales family, and more.

Every afternoon the houses would be emptied of people. The owners were at work. The children would go out on the sidewalks, who at work and who just sitting and looking or saying something. Memory follows memory; ; ;

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And here I came to a soul-warming scene: Shabbat night in our house - a large table set for 10 people - 8 children and the parents. The big candelabra with many candles on the table. Wine: 10 glasses, each with a glass, everyone is in Shabbat clothes waiting for Father to come from the synagogue, and here Father enters. I see him right now in front of my eyes and I feel with what love and pride I smile at him.

He is dressed in a silk kapota that is trimmed, says: Gut Shabbat Mein Weible, Gut Shabbat Kinderleach, looks around at his kingdom, beckons to lower the curtains and this is for fear of the evil eye, puts two thumbs into the vest and begins to sing: Shalom Aleichem, angels of peace and we chant after him, after the Kiddush , and everyone answers Amen, bless the challah and the meal begins.

What can I say - my mother's meatballs - they tasted like heaven, all the years since I've been running a house, I've been trying hard to get meatballs out of my hands that would taste like my mother's balls and in vain (I'm not exaggerating this to be honest).

And I remember - it was a long time before my father's murder, I used to burst into tears on Shabbat night by the table, many times I had to leave the table and run to a second room, I sat and cried and didn't know how to

answer or understand what was happening. I felt my heart constrict. Only after my father's death did my mother say: My poor Shindeli foresaw the disaster that was about to come upon us.

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And I remember that many times merchants and shop owners (not necessarily poor) would come to us and would sit and wait until my father arrived (because my father was always on the road on his business) to ask for favors. And my father would always give and blessing - may it be successful.

And I remember, and remember, here stands before me again the day when my father was mortally wounded.

My father comes home as always in the evening but is limping on one leg and blood is flowing from him - and he says "Rabetzia, on the Sabbath prepare a big kugel for the synagogue, I need to bless Gomel.

Bandits chased me and didn't catch me, so they shot me and now, with God's help, I got home - a miracle happened to us.

He didn't know that he would no longer go to the synagogue on Shabbat to bless Gomel.

He got blood poisoning, they took him to a hospital in Chortkov where he had his leg amputated and the next Saturday morning he died.

My mother traveled with him and we children didn't know about it, but suddenly on Sunday at noon I see through the window unusual traffic on our street. The townspeople from big to small, from poor to rich, came to pay their last respects to my father.

And the voices and cries of the poor reached the heart of heaven: God, what have you done - how could you do this to us? To take away our breadwinner, who will send us meat and bread for Shabbat and to whom will we turn in times of trouble.

And only then did it become known that my father ordered meat every week from the butcher and challa from the baker to send home to those who need it.

And I remember that after the funeral I approached my grandfather and said: Grandfather, you say that there is a God and He is good and he rules the world - how could a good God do such a thing? Did you hear the

voices, the cries of the poor and what he did for them? And how can a good God take a father from eight children and leave them orphans. Eight little children, eight mouths to feed. The situation was critical.

One day, a neighbor called "Froim Klinger" came into our house and said to my mother: "Rebzia, I want to offer you something, I know that you are in a difficult, very difficult situation. Many refugees from Russia are coming now. There are some of my acquaintances, merchants. Maybe try to prepare lunches for some acquaintances of mine and see how much it will bring you."

And so it was, Klinger brought us some of his acquaintances and more and more people started coming, among them a boy named Motty Fingerman.

Mordechai Fingerman my late husband

Appeared at Skala in 1921 along with many other young refugees who fled Russia. He became a well-known figure in Skala where he spent 5 years. He was involved in all areas of public life and especially in the Zionist movement. He was a kind-hearted, energetic and imaginative man, a public businessman and multi-tasking, not in order to receive a reward. He worked a lot and helped establish the People's House in Skala, organized the pioneers and I remember the first group of pioneers that went to work in the forests and cut trees - the parents came to our house shouting to look for Fingerman to decry the insult to their children that he made them into woodcutters (At that time it was already known that he was my man).

And I remember the drama club he organized, in which I also participated. We presented Shalom Aleichem's "Hafamilia Zvi" (The Zvi Family), "Mezel Tov" by Shalom Aleichem, and the literary evenings (Yetararische Urbanden") and the dance parties - I was dressed as a gypsy and I dressed the palm of my hand, and for that they put money into the Keren Kayemet coffers. And I remember the first gathering of The pioneer that Motty Fingerman organized. They came from Burshtov, Kuroyovka, and other cities. We were the center. The gathering ended at the People's House.

The house was decorated with all kinds of things from the Working Israel Foundation, they sang songs in Hebrew, danced a hora and moved on to the discussions. Makael Nachman was the secretary, after they signed the document and needed when they were to put the seal, he found out that the seal had been at the "Schloss" and it was already three in the morning, He said that he was ready to go get it on the condition that one of the girls accompanied him.

None of the girls wanted to go so I volunteered and we went to Shelos to get the seal.

At the same time, Fingerman received an order from the pioneer center in Russia that he must handle the transfer of pioneers from Russia to Lviv and from there they went to Israel (illegally crossing the border - was liable to a death sentence). I would help him arrange them among the friends in Skala until they were transferred to Lviv. At the same time, Mordechai informed my family that he intended to marry me and take me with him to the Land of Israel (in Skala he was undocumented).

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I can't help but admit this, because after my father's death it was Mordechai Fingerman who restored our home to normal condition. Taking on a heavy burden, he entered a family of 8 orphans, took care of clothing not only for me but also for the other children, took care of education.

They were talking in the city because I had cast a spell on him and even wrote to his mother that he had fallen into the hands of a sorcerer. I remember a letter that his mother wrote to him that fell into my hands because she found out that he fell into the hands of a "magician" and oh and woe to her. I cried a lot.

He asked that his mother or father come to see me. His father came and after a few days he started calling me 'my daughter'.

At that time I was very much in love with Mordechai and I waited thinking that if he didn't marry me I would kill myself.

One night the police in Skala caught one of the guys (Bronstein was his name) that Mordechai had transferred from Russia. They tortured him until he found out that Fingerman was transferring them from Skala to Lviv and from Lviv they were going to Eretz Israel. The police raided our house (fortunately Mordechai was not at home) they searched the whole house.

I saw with my own eyes that a policeman was putting a sheet of paper into a book - I tried thinking what he meant by that. He seems to start flipping through the book and then he seemed to find some suspicious page printed in Russian and read: Comrade Fingerman - the information you gave us about the recruitment is not correct and so on and so forth, and he turned to me: Do you see who your fiancé is? A Russian agent. I told him sir, I saw you insert the page - he laughed at me. They took Mordechai's picture, made copies and sent them all over the country.

We managed to inform Mordechai about this.

That night he left Skala on his way to Chortkov and from there to Lviv and since then he did not return to Skala.

I went through severe torment until I couldn't walk on my feet, until the family had to let me go to Lviv after Motty.

We got married in Lviv. All the pioneers he transferred attended the wedding, my late mother also came and in 1925 we left Lviv and moved to Israel.