

Abel Meeropol, a songwriter and composer who adopted the sons of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, died of pneumonia yesterday at the Jewish Nursing Home in Longmeadow, Mass. He was 83 years old and had lived in South Miami, Fla., before entering the nursing home.

Robert and Michael Rosenberg, the Rosenbergs' 6- and 10-year-old sons, were placed with Mr. Meeropol and his wife by their legal guardian, the late Emmanuel H. Bloch, after their parents' execution in 1953 after being convicted of passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union. The Meeropols adopted the boys in 1957.

Mr. Meeropol was born in the Bronx, and was a graduate of City College in 1925, with a master of arts degree from Harvard in 1926. He taught English at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx from 1927 to 1944, when he turned to music full time.

During this period he was subpoenaed by the Rapp-Coudert Committee, a group set up by the State Legislature to investigate teachers said to have participated in Communist activities. Pen Name Was Lewis Allan

Mr. Meeropol, who wrote for the stage, screen, radio and television, under the pen name of Lewis Allan, was the composer of "Strange Fruit," a song made famous by Billie Holiday.

He wrote the words for "The House I Live In," a motion-picture short that won an Academy Award in 1945, and was the librettist for the opera "The Good Soldier Schweik," drawn from the satire by the Czechoslovak novelist Jaroslav Hasek.

Last year, in a letter to The Times, Robert and Michael Meeropol told of their pride in hearing Frank Sinatra sing "The House I Live In" as part of the 100th birthday celebration for the Statue of Liberty.

"We hope that 'The House I Live In' will serve to remind all Americans that patriotism is not limited to the right wing," the letter read. "We hope our father's life and work can help convince people to view with suspicion anyone who would curtail political freedom and limit the range of acceptable political debate in the name of anti-Communism, of anti-terrorism or of some 'higher' morality."

Mrs. Meeropol, the former Anne Shaffer, died in 1973.

In addition to his sons, both of Springfield, Mass., Mr. Meeropol is survived by four grandchildren.