

## FELIX GARFUNKEL

Born 7/17/31 in Cernauti, Romania, an only child. Father, Marcus, in the coal business. Mother Frieda (Blumengarten). Spoke mostly German as area had previously been part of Austria. Forty-60,00 Jews in city. Family "modern Orthodox." Some antisemitism among local children and occasional fights. Parents not political. Russians took over city in 1940 and father's business nationalized. He then worked for the sanitation department. Family had to leave their apartment and schools switched to teaching in Russian, including political indoctrination. Russians moved some people, not just Jews, east to allow other Russians to move into Cernauti. "Exploitation Class" given menial jobs. In 6/41, city bombed by Germans and Russians retreated while troops from Ukraine surrendered to the Germans. Certain amount of anarchy reigned and many were shot by Germans. Jews were "panicky" as they had nowhere to go. Jews denied civil rights by Germans and were moved into a ghetto where Garfunkel lived with an aunt. Jews put in boxcars and shipped across the Dneister R. into Ukraine, Mogilev-Podolski. Garfunkel, father, uncle and a cousins ran away from the crowd being herded into the town and hid an abandoned house. Mother and another cousin escaped and joined them (unclear how). Remaining Jews marched elsewhere and apparently killed. Several families in the house. Later they rented another house and bartered for food with silver and jewelry they had brought with them. Ate potatoes and pig fat. Area administered by Romanian troops. They got along with the Ukrainians who were Greek Orthodox. In 1944 (?) they were rounded up and sent to a military garrison in Skassinets for three months where they were often threatened with death. They again escaped (easier as they were guarded by Romanians, not Germans) and went back to Mogilev-Podolski which was ~12 miles away. Father was taken to perform slave labor on a bridge but still lived with them. Many Ukrainians escaped and became partisans, sabotaging the Germans. At some point in 1944, Germans pulled back as Russians approached. An SS officer moved in with the Garfunkels briefly. He heard about the Germans lining up Jews and shooting them and burying them in trenches, as many as a 100,000 Romanian Jews. The Russians came and the family left the ghetto while his father was drafted into the Russian army in the medical corps. Family moved back to Cernauti in a train car filled with live ammunition. There, his mother got a job making ice cream and he had his Bar Mitzvah while working making artificial limbs. When the war ended, Cernauti again part of Romania but subject to the USSR. They moved to Bucharest with aunt for two months. When father returned, they moved to Timosoara for 2 years. Then an uncle in the US found they were alive through HIAS and helped them get to Ecuador after spending 2 years in France waiting for an Ecuadorian visa. Went first to Ro de Janeiro for 2 months and then to Quito where father operated a clothing business for 22 years. 3000 Jews in Quito. Garfunkel ended up in medical school, married in 1954 and moved to Ohio in 1958. With wife, Erika, he has three children, David, Janice and Michael. Citizen since 1963. No longer religious himself, family belongs to a Reform synagogue and his daughter is a Reform rabbi. Father, still alive in 1981, joined an orthodox synagogue.