

Cornel Menzel



This is my son, Cornel Menzel, when he was only one year old. The photo was taken in 1950 in Tarnaveni, where my husband Zoltan Menzel worked. We got married when the war was over, in 1944. I don't know if it mattered so much that he was a Jew, but I didn't like anybody else. We didn't have a religious wedding, that cost money and we were broke, both unemployed. My husband was transferred with work to Bucharest in 1948. He worked at a rubber plant, he was in charge of the financial division of the Ministry of Chemistry, and of course I went with him.

My son, Cornel Menzel, was born in 1949 in Bucharest, and then I stopped work. Cornel didn't have a bar mitzvah. My mother was in Bucharest with us all this time: she had been there for a while; she was raising my sister Angela's daughter, Doina, because she had moved to Bucharest with her husband. Once we also moved there, my mother took care of Cornel too.

After Bucharest we moved to Tarnaveni, because of my husband's work again. I didn't work there, I only took care of Cornel, but the conditions were terrible. We lived in a colony, and we had no running water, I had to keep a servant to help me fetch it and so on. Moreover, the environment was toxic, there were calcium carbide plants all around us. Cornel fell ill, and we eventually had to go back to Brasov.

My son studied for three years at the Construction Institute in Bucharest. He didn't complete the course, because we insisted on having him in Brasov, but in order to attend the courses of the Polytechnic here, he had to take six more exams, and he didn't want to. He stayed at home for a year, but he worked, doing translations from German into Romanian for somebody. He also had a certificate of foreign commerce from Bucharest. He emigrated to the USA in 1975; he had to spend

some time in Paris first, I don't know exactly why, because of emigration regulations, and then he went to Philadelphia. He wasn't interested in religion or tradition at all; he did and he does identify himself as a Jew, but that is all.