

Octav Marcussohn With Gavril Marcuson



This is me, Gavril Marcuson (on the right), together with my younger brother, Octav Marcussohn. The photo was taken at the Baraschy photo cabinet, in Bucharest, in 1925. My brother, Octav Marcussohn, is nine years younger than I am. He was born in 1922, in Bucharest. I used to teach him, kid with him, take him walking in the streets. I would tell him in Dealul Spirii, where we lived: 'Octavica, today I'm going to take you to some streets where you've never been before! You're going to love it!' And I would take him and we would go down the streets leading to Antim Monastery. He loved it indeed. I would show him the houses, and, when we passed by a pretzel shop, I would buy him a pretzel, like the elder brother that I was. I remember Cazarmii St., which turned into a snow sleigh slope in winter; I used to play there. We were close, although we didn't

think alike. I was a left-winger, while he was a right-winger, but we didn't fight each other over this. He didn't think like I did, he was anti-Soviet and a Zionist. He went to the Mathematics Faculty in Bucharest. He was a very good student. He and a fellow-student of his, Halanai, a Spanish [Sephardic] Jew, were the best in their graduation class. The Ministry of Education wanted to send him to Moscow for a PhD. This prospect scared him so much, that he fled to Israel, in the 1950's. He is now a retiree in Tel Aviv. He didn't work while in Romania. In Israel, he was a math school teacher. He has been a retiree for a long time now. He doesn't have children and he was never married. He writes me extraordinary letters, but he never forgave me for supporting the left. Yet he loves me. I keep his letters, they are brilliant. He is so cultivated! Math is not the only thing he knows. The fact that I had a brother in Israel - I never kept it secret. The people I worked with were understanding enough. I was born in Bucharest in the house of my maternal grandfather, an old house on Viilor Dr. Back then, the place was at the outskirts of the city. Today, it's in a semi-central neighborhood, because the city developed so much. We changed our house for a statelier one located on Uranus St., which had belonged to the richest man in the Dealul Spirii quarter, Nita Stere. It was a very nice house, with brick stoves and gas light. Inside there were large rooms with high ceilings. My maternal grandparents lived there with most of their children and grandchildren. Like I said, my maternal grandfather had no less than 16 children, of whom only 7 lived to be adults. Most of these seven sons and daughters lived with us, with my parents and me [in the same house], but they had their own apartments. There were a lot of rooms. Mine had been obtained by dividing a larger room in half by building a wall across. This division was made so that my brother and I may have separate rooms. So a half of the former room was mine, and the other half was Octavica's.