HAIGAS BONAPART
BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

ECHOES & REFLECTIONS
TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST. INSPIRING THE CLASSROOM.

Haigas Bonapart was born in 1899 in Malatya, Turkey (historical Ottoman Empire). After graduating high school in 1914, Haigas attended the famous Euphrates College in Harput, Turkey, which was directed by American missionaries.

Haigas was only a teenager when the events of the Armenian Genocide unfolded. In April 1915, the College was forcibly closed by Ottoman gendarmes and all students were dismissed. Haigas left to the nearby town of Mezireh to work at the pharamacy his brother and brother-in-law owned. However, within days, the pharmacy was confiscated. Haigas' brother-in-law was arrested along with all Armenian professors from Euphrates College, teachers, merchants and other professionals in Harput and Mezireh. They were killed by the gendarmes.

Haigas evaded deportation by hiding for 6 months. He was eventually adopted by non-Armenians and took the false name of "Rifat". He remained hidden under this name until the Russians had occupied the town of Dersim where he was hidden. He eventually reunited with his brother in the Russian Empire.

Haigas lost his parents, sisters, brothers and uncles during the Armenian Genocide. He was interviewed by the Armenian Film Foundation on February 14, 1975 in Los Angeles, California.