

Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

P.O. Box 25506, San Mateo, CA 94402

Name of interviewee: Flek, Izik

Date of interview: 3/25/1992

Summary: Izik Flek was born on June 5, 1915 in Odessa, Ukraine. He was the youngest of three boys in the family. He was an orphan most of his life since both of his parents died before he turned two years old. When he was young, he lived with his older brother, David, who worked to provide a living for the family. At twelve years old, Izik began working in order to earn a living. He loved learning and taught himself how to read, however was unable to get a formal education because he had to provide for his family from a young age.

Izik was in Odessa when World War II began. Unlike his brothers, Izik was not drafted into the army because of his poor eyesight. Furthermore, he was unable to evacuate because he was sick at the time. On October 16, 1941, the Nazis entered Odessa. The next morning an order was issued for all of the Jewish residents in Odessa to report for registration. Later an order was issued that all of the Jewish residents were to report to the city jail. Izik did not report to the jail realizing that a massacre would occur. He had nowhere to go and spent the next few weeks living on the streets. Soon after, another order was issued for all Jews to report to a meeting spot and those who reported were put onto a train which was then set alight killing all those Jews on board. The next order issued by the Nazis was for all Jews to report to Slabodka and having no alternative, Izik reported. In Slabodka, Izik witnessed daily murders. Izik testifies that the Nazis would take away 1,000-1,500 people at a time. Within a few days, Izik was taken away with a group of other Jewish residents of Slabodka. The group, many of whom were sick, was forced to walk in the freezing weather to a 'sorting station'. Those who could not walk were shot along the way. Upon arrival at the sorting station, the people were pushed into cattle carts and taken to Hooter-Chiglin, where the murders continued. On the third day, Izik was one of the men taken away by the Nazis. He along with other men was forced to walk to a ditch outside of Hooter-Chiglin. He and a group of men were lined up and the Nazis began to shoot at each man individually. Izik was shot at, however, the bullet did not hit him and he purposely fell into the ditch so the Nazis would not realize he was still alive. He lay in the ditch until the Nazis left and when it was safe he crawled out and returned to Hooter-Chiglin.

Soon, an officer came to Hooter-Chiglin looking for a few men who were be able to sew, Izik volunteered and got the job. He along with other men was transported to Berezovka where they worked and were able to eat the soldier's left over food. After Berezovka, Izik was transported to a ghetto in Damanevka. There again he witnessed daily cruelty. From there, Izik walked to Malachug where he stayed until liberation.

Upon liberation, he returned to Odessa to rebuild his life. He met his wife, Ida, in Odessa. They now have a son and two grandchildren. Izik immigrated to the US in 1987 with his family due to increased anti-Semitism in Ukraine.

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