

## Bay Area Holocaust Oral History Project

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

**Name of interviewee:** Fish, Victor

**Date of interview:** 2/26/1991

**Summary:** Dr. Victor Jacob Fish was born on July 24, 1913 in a small town of Zolkiew, Poland. His memories of the Holocaust were quite descriptive, but he had a difficult time recalling some relevant events that occurred. He was raised in an upper middle class family. His father was a judge, and his mother became a teacher during that period. Dr. Fish's experience during the Holocaust was different to that of other Jews. For example, his father wanted him to go to medical school, but he wanted to become a pilot in Switzerland instead. Eventually he was fortunate enough to finish school, although it was difficult in his situation. One major reason why he was lucky enough to survive the Holocaust was because he didn't look Jewish, and the Germans believed he was Polish, and he was able to hide his identity.

Victor witnessed many dramatic events. He recalls by saying that in his town, many Jews were treated less violently, than those living in big cities. Regardless of being considered Polish, his goal was to help Jews as much as possible. He attained many different jobs, such as being a policeman, chef, and physician. The Germans did arrest him on three occasions and he fortunately managed to escape and not get caught again, because he had false papers to prove that he wasn't Jewish.

Dr Fish relates that during the war years he had no idea what was really going on in the concentration camps or about the number of Jews being killed. He says he helped Jews leave Poland where possible.

He served his time in the military in the United States after the war ended. He practiced medicine in Palo Alto, California for over 25 years. One important piece of advice that he had about the Holocaust was that you should never look afraid, and never be afraid.