

Interviewee:	<u>CUKER</u> , Albert	Date:	June 11, 1985
Interviewer:	Carole Bailis		
Audio tapes:	2 English	Transcript:	1 vol. (unpaged) English
Restrictions:	None		

SUMMARY

Albert Cuker was born September 15, 1911 in Lodz, Poland. When he was 5 years old his father was drafted into the Russian army and was killed, leaving a wife and five children. Albert's family was very poor; at age 8 he was sent to an orphanage and out to work at age 13.

Albert describes the German occupation, violence against Jews, the creation of the ghetto in the poorest area of the city and the addition of Jews from surrounding towns as well. Albert describes the deplorable conditions of the Lodz Ghetto: overcrowding, food shortages, hunger, sickness, and death. In 1941 Jews from Vienna, Hamburg, Dusseldorf and Berlin were brought in. In the early days of the Lodz Ghetto there were Jewish organizations: fire, police and schools and theaters. According to Albert, Jewish leaders (under Rumkowski) did the bidding of the Germans ordering roundups for deportation and he knew of no organized resistance.

In 1944 Albert and his wife were deported to Auschwitz and separated. They did not see each other until they were reunited in Lodz after the war. Albert described Auschwitz: bare barracks, severe work duties, starvation and dying. He described the sadistic guards: Ukrainians and Italians, as well as Jewish *kapos*. Albert credits his survival to his will to live.

He was liberated by Polish and Russian armies on May 9, 1945. From November 1945 to August 1949 he and his wife were in a Displaced Persons camp near Bergen-Belsen and their daughter was born there. Aided by the Joint Distribution Committee, they, along with one of Albert's brothers, came to the United States in August 1949. His daughter suffered from emotional problems, which Albert and his wife attribute to their war experiences.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War II 1939-1945 - Jewish personal narratives
Lodz, Ghetto - Poland
Rumkowski
Auschwitz
Holocaust Jewish (1939-1945) psychological aspects