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| Interviewee: | <u>KOWIT</u> , Albert | Date: | November 5, 1993 |
| Interviewer: | Gerry Schneeberg | | |
| Audio tapes: | 3 English | Transcript: | 1 vol. (unpaged) English |
| Restrictions: | None | | |

SUMMARY

Albert Kowit was born July 8, 1920 in Ozorkow, Poland. He describes life under German occupation in 1939, including persecution of Jews. He worked as a slave laborer in the Lodz ghetto and a succession of slave labor camps: Praust, Palemonas in Lithuania (supervised by Operation Todt), Upesgriva and several others. He describes horrible conditions, cruelty and rampant starvation as well as an act of kindness by Latvian guards. He shared his food with others and never lost his decency.

In 1943, as the Russian army approached, the prisoners were taken to Riga, Danzig, Stutthof, Buchenwald and Rehmsdorf. Albert describes everything he witnessed in great detail. Those who survived the British bombardment of Rehmsdorf were rounded up and forced to dig up the live bombs. In 1945 they were sent on a death march to Theresienstadt to again live under horrendous conditions.

Albert relates his postwar journey to his home in Poland, through the Russian, French and English zones to a Displaced Persons Camp in Bergen-Belsen. After an aborted attempt to go to Palestine as part of *Aliyah Bet*, Albert and his fellow survivors were taken to the American zone and smuggled into Italy where they lived in a Kibbutz in Rome. The Joint found a sponsor for Albert, his wife and new born son. They flew to the United States in February 1950.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

Holocaust Jewish (1939 - 1945) Poland
Holocaust Jewish (1939 - 1945) Personal narratives - Male
Poland - History - German occupation, (1939-1945)
World War (1939 - 1945) Concentration camps
Jewish ghettos (Poland) Lodz
Slave labor
Atrocities
Death march - from Rehmsdorf
Slave labor camp - Praust
Slave labor camp - Palemonas
Slave labor camp Upesgriva
Concentration camp - Stutthof
Concentration camp - Buchenwald
Concentration camp - Rehmsdorf
Concentration camp - Theresienstadt
Concentration camp guards
Refugee camp - post war – Bergen-Belsen
Post liberation life