

Interviewee:	<u>BAKER</u> , Morris	Date:	April 22, 1985
Interviewer:	Lynn Hoffman		
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SUMMARY

Morris Baker (Moishe Piekavitz) was born on January 10, 1926, to an orthodox family in a small, predominately Jewish town, Zambrow, Poland. He describes his town pre-war including his schooling, Zionist youth groups, and good relations between Jews and non-Jews. He discusses the Nazis brief stay (2 -3 weeks) in 1939 and how the Soviets came and occupied the area until 1941 and the effects on businesses. Morris describes the atrocities committed when the Germans re-occupied in June 1941. Morris' father was taken and murdered. In two *aktions*, the *Einsatzkommandos* shot and killed over 2,000 Jews from his town, buried them in ditches in the outskirts of the town, and made a ghetto of the remaining Jews in the town. Morris also describes the daily life in the ghetto and the work of the *Judenrat*.

Toward the end of 1942 the ghetto was liquidated and Morris describes the deportation in cattle cars to Auschwitz, the arrival, selection and receiving a tattoo. Morris was in Auschwitz from January 15, 1943 - September 19, 1944 and became a prisoner of Birkenau. Morris' mother, grandmother, and two younger brothers perished. Morris describes the "hellish" conditions there: cold, starvation and death. He adds that the Polish underground and the Ukrainian Soviet partisans were antisemitic. Morris recounts that under Adolf Eichmann he worked on goods confiscation from trainloads of Jews from the Lodz Ghetto and from Hungary.

Morris describes his friends' escape from Auschwitz and how he gathered gold from dead Jews to aid in their escape. In September 1944 Morris was sent from Auschwitz (because the Russians were coming) to Kaufering (in Germany), a satellite camp of Dachau. In spring of 1945 Morris was forced on a death march for weeks with the retreating Germans. He describes the brutality and Jews being abandoned along the road. On May 8, 1945 the Americans arrived and liberated Morris and those remaining alive.

Morris was placed in a displaced persons camp and later in 1945 he left Germany (with the help of a Jewish brigade from Palestine) for Italy with the hope of going to Palestine. However, his American relatives wanted him to come to the United States. Morris waited in Italy in a displaced persons camp in the south of Naples near Bari, for three years. In 1948 he went to an aunt in Canada and in 1950 finally arrived in Baltimore. There he married and had children and grandchildren.

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SUBJECT HEADINGS

World War 1939-1945- Jewish - Personal narratives
Auschwitz-Birkenau
Einsatzkommandos
Eichmann, Adolf
Kaufering- slave labor camp near Dachau, Germany