

# Title Page & Abstract

An Interview with Kazimir Ladny

Part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library  
*Veterans Remember* Oral History project

Interview # VR2-V-L-2008-008

Kazimir Ladny, a WW II veteran who fought with the Polish Army in 1939, and spent the rest of the war as Russian, then German POW, was interviewed on the dates listed below as part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library's *Veterans Remember* Oral History project.

Interview dates & location:

Date: February 11, 2008	Location: IL Information Service Studio, Springfield, IL
Date: March 20, 2008	Location: IL Information Service Studio, Springfield, IL
Date: March 26, 2008	Location: IL Information Service Studio, Springfield, IL
Date: June 5, 2008	Location: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library

Interview Format: Interviews 1-3 in Digital video; Interview 4 in Digital audio

Interviewer: Mark R. DePue, Director of Oral History, ALPL

Technical Support (cameraman, etc): Mark Suszko

Transcription by: Audio Transcription Center, Boston, MA

Edited by: Rozanne Flatt, ALPL Volunteer

Total Pages: 69    Total Time: 1:45+1:52+2 hrs+ 29 min = 6:05 hrs / 6.1 hrs

Session 1: Early life in Poland, service in the pre-WWII Polish Army & capture

Session 2: Surviving a Siberian prison camp, & exchange with Germans

Session 3: Slave laborer in Germany during WWII, & post-war emigration to U.S.

Session 4: Audio interview on Kazimir's 2010 trip to Poland

Accessioned into the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Archives on 4/22/2008 and 6/9/2008.

The interviews are archived at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois.

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# Abstract

## Kazimir Ladny, *Veterans Remember*, VR2-V-L-2008-008

**Biographical Information Overview of Interview:** Kazimir Ladny was born on July 9, 1914 in Kakolewnica, Poland, in the Lublin province. Mr. Ladny discusses being raised by his paternal grandfather during the early years of the Polish republic following WW I, as well as his service with the nascent Polish Army from the time he was drafted in 1936. He received his training as an enlisted man in the Signal Corps, and also clandestinely as a counter-intelligence officer due to his knowledge of the Russian language. He describes the German attack on September 1, 1939, his flight eastward, an attempt to flee to Rumania, and his eventual capture by Russians in southeast Poland. He soon was shipped eastward to a POW camp at Oranki, in western Siberia.

After three months, he was exchanged along with other western Poles to the Germans for eastern Poles. He then was moved to a POW camp in northeastern Germany. Over the next year he was assigned to a series of farms and estates as a laborer, attempted escape two times, and endured several months in a “correction” camp where he was beaten severely. He was then released and assigned to work at the Henkel farm. For the next three years his treatment was humane, but he was nevertheless essentially a slave laborer, with his freedoms severely restricted.

Mr. Ladny spent the last year of the war working in a factory in the Rhine valley in western Germany. As the Americans approached the Rhine River, he again escaped, and while waiting for liberation, met a local German war widow, Adele Libertus, who soon became his wife upon his own liberation. During the years following liberation Ladny survived by scrounging on the black market, and by menial factory work. He also applied to emigrate to the United States, and came to Springfield, Illinois in 1951 to start his new life. In the final (audio) interview, Mr. Ladny tells a story of two Kazimirs, one (himself) a German POW, one, a childhood friend, thought lost at Auschwitz, who found each other sixty years later.

**Topics Covered:** Childhood in post WW I Poland; Polish Signal Corps during WW II; Polish Counter-Intelligence; German invasion of Poland; Brest-Litovsk, Poland; Ukrainians in Poland; Oranki (Siberia, Russia) POW Camp; slave labor in Nazi Germany; religion in camp; torture by Nazis; escape from German POW camps; liberation by American Army; post-war German black market; emigrating to America; Springfield, Illinois

**Note to the Reader:** Readers of the oral history memoir should bear in mind that this is a transcript of the spoken word, and that the interviewer, interviewee and editor sought to preserve the informal, conversational style that is inherent in such historical sources. The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library is not responsible for the factual accuracy of the memoir, nor for the views expressed therein. We leave these for the reader to judge.

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