

Concentration Camps Oranienburg and Hammerstein 1933 and 1934

Immediately after taking power in March 1933, Nazi SA storm troopers began mass arrests of their political opponents. They imprisoned approximately 50,000 of their enemies and victims in 70 small, hastily established, improvised concentration camps – so-called “wild camps.” One was the Alten Brauerei (Old Brewery) at Oranienburg, converted into a camp to confine about 1,000 communists and Jews arrested in and around Berlin, who were put to work at hard labor. Within a year, most of the prisoners had been released. An empty military training camp at Hammerstein, West Prussia, existed as a “wild camp” only until summer of 1934. After the war began in 1939, Hammerstein was reborn as a prisoner-of-war camp.

The Oranienburg release document shows that Alfred Wäsch was held captive there from July 7 to September 30, 1933.

The envelope bearing the Hammerstein camp commander's imprint, posted May 18, 1934, is the only recorded mail from its “wild camp” period.



Out-of-town single letter postage was 12-pfennigs, paid by two official stamps.



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