

Women's Concentration Camp Auschwitz II (Birkenau) Auschwitz Central Administration

Auschwitz, the harshest of all the Nazi concentration camps, consisted of three main camps and about 45 smaller sub-camps. Auschwitz I, the original camp, hosted the central administration office for the entire complex. Auschwitz II, also called Birkenau, was built in March 1941, 3 kilometers from the original camp. The Auschwitz women's *Frauenlager (F.K.L. Auschwitz)* opened at the original location in March 1942, but moved to Birkenau on August 16, 1942. Birkenau was also the location of the extermination gas chambers and crematoria. Auschwitz III (Buna-Monowitz) was principally a synthetic rubber factory that employed slave labor, with other enterprises added as time wore on.

Very few letters or cards addressed to Auschwitz prisoners have survived, for obvious reasons, so the March 27, 1943, postal card from a mother in Warsaw to her daughter at Birkenau is exceptional. The postage free official mail parcel waybill from the printing facility of the Auschwitz central administration to the Flossenbürg concentration camp administration probably accompanied a shipment of formular stationery for prisoners.

