



Calumet County Historical Society Museum

**Open Sundays June-September 1:00 to 4:00
or by appointment**

Prisoners of World War II Chilton Camp 1945

By Ray Mueller

Toward the end of World War II, prisoners of war camps were established in 1944 and 1945 at 34 locations in Wisconsin for members of Germany's military who were captured during the conflict. One of those camps was at the Calumet County fairgrounds in Chilton from June to August 10 in 1945.

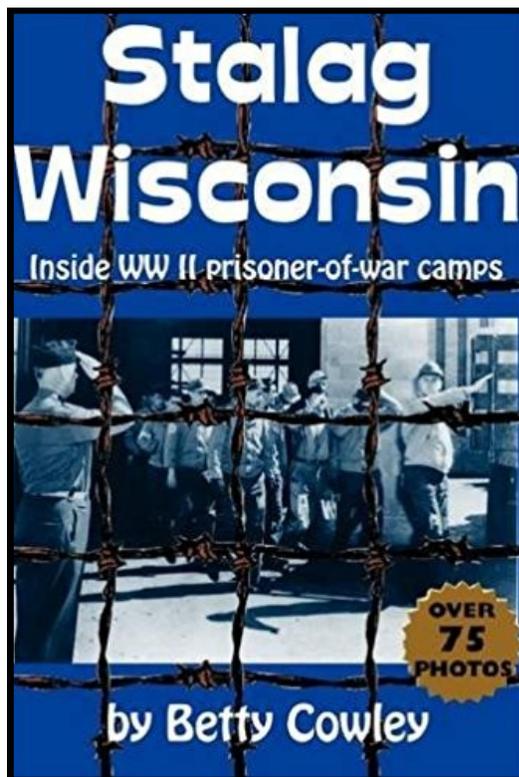
A full overview of the camps in Wisconsin was documented by Betty Cowley in the 2002 softcover book titled *Stalag Wisconsin: Inside WWII prisoner of war camps*. Camp Chilton, which had up to 300 prisoners at any one time, is highlighted on pages 95 to 99 in the book, which is readily available at the public library in Chilton and other area libraries.

As noted in the book, many of the prisoners at Camp Chilton were employed for the green pea and sweet corn harvests at the many local canning factories still in business at the time. This was also true for many of the other camps in the state. Some of the prisoners worked on area farms to harvest summer crops.

In researching her book, Cowley obtained recollections from some area residents who had contacts with the camps. Some photos are included but none for the Chilton Camp.

Primary sources for Cowley's research about the Chilton Camp were articles in the Chilton Times Journal on June 21, July 19, and August 9 (the day before the camp closed) in 1945. These are available on microfilm at the Chilton Public Library.

Other newspaper citations for Camp Chilton are the Manitowoc Herald Times on June 20 and August 2, the Fond du Lac Commonwealth Reporter on August 11, and the Appleton Post Crescent on May 29 (in 1994). The nearest camps to Chilton were at Plymouth, Appleton, Fond du Lac, and Sheboygan.



Camp Chilton

1. "Prisoners Only a Last Resort in Plants Here," *Manitowoc Herald-Times*, 20 June 1945, 1.
2. "War Prisoner Projects Pay Large Return," *Fond Du Lac Commonwealth Reporter*, 11 August 1945, 2.
3. "320 German War Prisoners to be Moved to Fair Grounds Next Week," *Chilton Times-Journal*, 21 June 1945, 1.
4. "An Inside Glimpse of the Fair Grounds Prisoner of War Camp," *Chilton Times-Journal*, 19 July 1945, 1.
5. "Former Nazi Soldiers Help in Harvesting County Pea Crop," *Manitowoc Herald Times*, 2 August 1945, 1.
6. "320 German War Prisoners to be Moved to Fair Grounds Next Week," *Chilton Times-Journal*, 21 June 1945, 1.
7. "German Worker Fractures Skull," *Manitowoc Herald-Times*, 30 July 1945, 1.
8. "War Prisoner Camp Closed," *Two Rivers Reporter*, 11 August 1945, 1.

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9. "Chilton Camp to Close Friday," *Chilton Times-Journal*, 9 August, 1945, 2.
10. "POWs Harvested The Region's Crops in '45," *Appleton Post-Crescent*, 29 May 1994, 1.
11. Hipke, interview.
12. Ronald Tordeur. Family hired PW's to harvest beets. Correspondence and telephone interview with author, Green Bay, February & October, 2000.
13. Elroy Kandler. Personal encounter with PW's. Telephone interview with author, Menomonie Falls, 15 August, 2000.
14. Jeannie Williams. Recalls father riding as a guard transporting PW's. Telephone interview with author, Green Bay, 14 August, 2000.
15. Mary Hipke Frisch. Worked in family canning factory with German PW's. Telephone interview with author, New Holstein, 9 March, 1998.
16. Laverne Hutterer. Personal experience with PW's in Rockwood. Correspondence and telephone interview with author, Manitowoc, August, 2000.
17. Mary Ann Gruber Ignara. Witnessed mother cooking for PW's at Rockwood. Telephone interview with author, Manitowoc, 21 August, 2000.

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