

Pows held in Canadian camps

Escape From Canada!: The Amazing Untold Story Of German Pows In Canada 1939-1945 by John Melady.

During the Second War, 25,000 German enlisted men and officers were captured on African and European battlefields, and incarcerated in prisoner of war camps across Canada for the duration of hostilities.

In *Escape From Canada*, Trenton secondary school vice-principal and historian John Melady records their experiences and memories of this neglected incident of our history.

The inmates were housed in some 30 isolated facilities scattered around the nation. In Ontario, they were held in Red Rock, Chatham, Gravenhurst, Espanola, Monteith, Angler, Bowmanville and Kingston. Melady describes the breakouts that occurred at Kingston's historic Fort Henry, the bloodshed and scandal of the mass escape from Angler, the shackling riots in the Bowmanville officers' camps and the grizzly Nazi executions at the Medicine Hat post. He also includes graphic descriptions of the numbing routine of the prisoner's daily lives, isolation, loneliness, frustration and monotony that led them to schemes of manufacturing illicit booze, building forbidden radios, smuggling out forbidden memorabilia, romancing local schoolgirls and generally con-

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founding their guards.

After being sent back to Germany after the fighting, many opted to returned to Canada as immigrants. Tony Kleimaker and Siegfried Bruse, former Luftwaffe and U-boat officers, returned in '52. They are now successful realtors in North Bay. Their decision to come was influenced by their time in Bowmanville's facility.

When interviewed about his decision for this book, Bruse stated, "I came back to Canada for the large, empty spaces. There was also the feeling here that you could achieve what you wished in this land."

Kleimaker expresses his thoughts in these words "I and a lot of others wanted to stay in Canada when the war was over. We had grown so attached to this country that we had no wish to leave it." Authorities wouldn't let them stay. But as soon as possible, he "applied to return."



War camp

Many German Prisoners of War were stationed in Monteith during the Second World War from 1939 to 1945. The prisoners lived in small quarters at the edge of what is now the Monteith Correctional Centre. The property was cut off from the rest of the village by a large, thick wire fence. This picture of the POW camp was taken during the 1940s. *Aug. 12/87*