



Prisoner of War Camp at Indian Township

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A Brief History of the Prisoner of War Camp at Indian Township

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In the spring of 1944, the federal government began to turn the CCC camp into a Prisoner of War Camp. Many of the former CCC buildings were converted into dormitories and storage, and the officer's buildings.

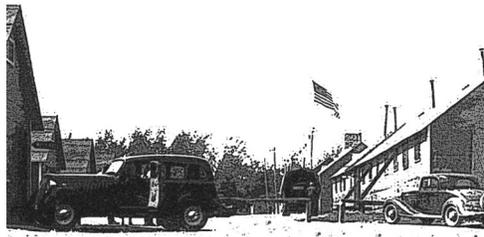
A 6-ft. electrified barbed wire fence was installed around the entire camp and outside of the electric fence was another 12-ft. fence and an 8-ft. fence. Historic records indicated the presence of buildings where the debris was and former field investigations confirmed that the debris is construction material and associated debris that originated during the 1940's with the POW Camp.

After the Princeton POW Camp closed, the land remained unused until it was taken into trust for the Pas-

This task consisted of qualified Tribal personnel removing easily accessible debris from the surface and clearing the area to allow unimpeded access for the GPR survey instrumentation.

The removal and disposal of the debris was conducted in a

samaquoddy Tribe of Maine 1975. Mr. Donald Soctomah, the Passamaquoddy Historic Preservation Officer and the Curtis history both indicate that following formal closure of the POW Camp in 1946, it remained abandoned for about 8 to 10 years after which much of the structures and surface soils were then bulldozed into the woods, but still within boundaries of the POW Camp site, to the west of the site by an unknown government entity.



The buildings were left standing and some were sold to people in Princeton and moved off-site. Currently there are two build-

Site Preparation and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) Survey

manner that meets all Tribal and Federal laws and any applicable state laws.

A Removal Action Plan was submitted to the United States Army Corp of Engineers (USACE) detailing the location of debris and the manner in which it will be removed.

ings still standing, the former POW Camp hospital and the officers' or cooks' quarters; both are occupied by Tribal members. Mr. Soctomah states that the State of Maine then sold the area to private individuals who were not tribal members. In 1980, Congress passed the Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement Act which provided funds to the Passamaquoddy Tribe to purchase land in specific settlement areas which would then go into trust status. The Tribe purchased the land that included the POW Camp from the private landowners in the 1980's as part of the settlement act. Current land use of the site is for residential purposes, as a watershed, and for wildlife habitat along Lewey Lake.

Historically, the area of the former camp was used for subsistence food gathering, hunting and ceremonial purposes by the Tribe.

Northeast Geophysical Services was contracted to conduct the GPR Survey.

The POW guard towers were located at the four corners of the site and were chosen for survey areas due to possible munitions and debris.

Tetra Tech/Munitions Support Services

Tetra tech has prepared a Munitions Support Services Work Plan to advise where ammunitions and/or handguns are likely to be buried at the Princeton POW Camp site, based on results of a geophysical survey/Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) by Northeast Geophysical Services, and how to safely investigate. Munitions and Explosives of Concern (MEC) are not expected but direction is included as a conservative measure.

The subject work plan for Munitions Support Services will focus on the same 4 to 5 acres addressed by the GPR Survey.

Only small caliber ordnance is expected, although none has been encountered to date. As per the oral history, buried handguns may also be present. No visible small caliber ordnance has been observed to date on or adjacent to the



Handcuffs found near a manhole at the POW Camp site

Princeton POW Camp site. However, the potential risk cannot be excluded given the site's use history. The guards would likely have been armed with rifles and/or handguns to guard the prisoners, and it is unlikely that large caliber ordnance would have been used or stored on the site. The camp would have the most potential for ammunition around the former lookout towers, although because these structures were bulldozed into the forest, small caliber ordnance could be located anywhere on the site. Accessibility is frequent, as the site is only 500 to 600 feet from Route 1.

"Land, then, is not merely soil; it is a fountain of energy flowing through a circuit of soils, plants, and animals." --- Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

Supplement Soil Contamination Assessment

The objective of the sampling program is to conduct a targeted soil characterization of heavy metals and PAH contamination around the bulldozed berm, degraded 55-gallon drums, vehicles, and machinery to fully characterize the extent of contamination at the site.

During the Step III Site investi-

gation, field sampling results indicated levels of arsenic and benzopyrene on the site along the earthen berm. However, the investigator was unable to confirm the source of the contaminants.

Supplemental soil sampling will be completed to determine the nature of the contamination, to attempt to identify potential

source(s), and to define the lateral extent to determine if it is present beyond the berm and area where the debris pile was removed.

The assessment at the Princeton Prisoner of War Camp will be conducted by Northeast Geophysical Services Inc. Bangor, Maine and C.A. White and Associates LLC. Yarmouth,

Archaeological Survey/Nutalket Consulting

The Passamaquoddy Tribal Historic Preservation Office is hiring the Nutalket Consulting to draft an archaeological research design and work plan for field testing a World War II German Prisoner of War Camp located on tribal lands.

Some of the work will include, drafting a research design and work plan for archaeological testing of a former WWII German POW camp based on

ground penetrating radar and munitions reports associated with the site, plan, implement, and supervise archaeological



Archaeologist at

field testing, complete analysis on archaeological materials, draft a final report on results of archaeological testing of the former WWII German POW Camp site U.S. Route 1, Indian Township, Maine, and throughout the duration of the project, Nutalket Consulting will serve as a professional mentor to Passamaquoddy tribal members pursuing archaeology as a career.

German Prisoners of War In Maine WWII

Josphine A Dicenso/Lincoln Historical Society

According to Down East Magazine, during the war years, the shipment of German POWs to the United States was simply a matter of supply and demand.

In 1942, England began shipping prisoners to the States. By the war's end, nearly 400,000 of them were stationed at camps scattered around the country.

Prisoners didn't arrive in Maine until the middle of 1944, and even at its peak, the main camp in Houlton housed only 4,000 prisoners. Smaller facilities at Bangor, Augusta, Presque Isle, the Great North-

ern Paper Company's camp at Seeboomook and Spencer Lake, and the former CCC Camp in Indian Township/Princeton each had a capacity for between 250 to 500 prisoners.

When they had time to relax, they spent their time with crafts, such as wood working and painting. Some of the camps had radios, and these were regularly checked by the guards to make sure they hadn't been rigged to transmit. Even among the non-English speaking Germans, Bing Crosby's "Don't Fence Me In" was one of the most popular songs of the time.

In Princeton, several of the POWs learned to drive a caterpillar tractor, and operate other lumbering and logging equipment.

Most of the German Prisoners found themselves in the heart of potato and lumbering country were ill prepared to work. At home, some of them were bankers, engineers, students, journalists, bartenders, opera singers—anything but lumberman and farmhands. One farmer's wife made soups and doughboys and would eat with the prisoners. At first, the prisoners weren't sure what to make of the offering, but when the farmer's wife sat down with them, and ate some of it first, the prisoners knew they weren't feeding them something they wouldn't eat themselves...

German Prisoners of War in Maine WWII

Living in Maine must have seemed very far away from the war, but there were some grim reminders of what was going on in other parts of the world.

One such incident was significant—some POWs were handed shovels and ordered to dig a cesspool. One fellow prisoner started to cry. When the guard asked him what ailed

him, he said he thought they were digging their own graves...

According to the Bangor Daily News, July 19th, 1944, a drag-net was thrown out over three states by the federal Bureau of Investigation seeking the apprehension of six German war prisoners who escaped from the camp near Princeton/Indian

Township. Four of them escaped Tuesday before noon from the project where they were working in the Talmadge area near Topsfield. They were from the Princeton Prisoner of War Side Camp. All were under 24 years of age, and one spoke excellent English. Their names were: Robert Kirschner, Sigfried Schober, Fritz Steininger, and Eckard Schnitzer...

German Prisoners of War in Maine WWII

All branches of law enforcement in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts had been notified of the break of these men.

Again, according to the Bangor Daily News, July 26th, 1944, two of the escaped Germans were captured. The men were both from the Crawford Side Camp of the Princeton Internment Center camp owned by the Maine State Fish and Game

Commission, in the woods about nine miles west of Wesley, by State Trooper Adelbert Sargent.

Officials then announced that the search for four remaining escapees would be intensified in the area.

Fritz Steininger was the next prisoner caught in Enfield. While three remain at large.

Bangor Daily News, August 2,

1944: "Last Three German Prisoners Rounded Up Near Enfield After Two-Week Search."

FBI agents, game wardens, and trackers took up the trail. Following a four-mile trail along the Maine Central tracks south of Enfield, the wardens spotted the three prisoners near a deserted camp, and took them into custody without resistance. All were former African Korps soldiers...

"Even among the non-English speaking Germans, Bing Crosby's "Don't Fence Me In" was one of the most popular songs of the time."

*German Prisoner of War in Maine WWII
Josphine A Dicenso
Lincoln Historical Society*

*Passamaquoddy Historic
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Passamaquoddy Tribal
Historic Preservation
Office

What are Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPO)?

Tribal Historic Preservation Officers are officially designated by a federally-recognized Indian tribe to direct a program approved by the National Park Service and the THPO must have assumed some or all of the functions of State Historic Preservation Officers on Tribal lands. Tribal historic preservation has emphasized the importance of the oral tradition, as well as consulting Tribal elders and spiritual leaders with special knowledge of the Tribe's traditions. They also have given emphasis to the importance of protecting "traditional cultural properties," places that are eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places because of their association with cultural practices and beliefs that are rooted in the history of the community and are important in maintaining the continuity of that community's traditional beliefs and practices. Incorporating Tribal cultural values into the historic preservation program has been consistently cited as a priority. Finally, the need for assuming the responsibility for reviewing Federal undertakings that may affect historical properties and the importance of archaeological survey work was consistently mentioned as essential. Tribal Historic Preservation Officers advise Federal agencies on the management of Tribal historic properties and strive to preserve their Tribes' cultural heritage and preservation programs.

Donald Soctomah, THPO

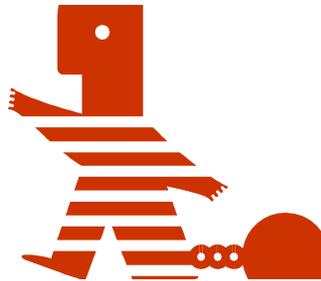
German Prisoners of War in Maine WWII

The news went on to say that the hunt in the Maine woods for the final four men from the Princeton camp nearly came to a conclusion, when two fisherman Maynard Clay and another man from Lincoln, entered an abandoned cabin in Upper Pond and found four young men sleeping on the floor. The two men returned to Lincoln to notify police. When the officers returned, they found that the prisoners had made a hasty departure.

During the next 72 hours, there was a huge concentration of federal, state, and county law enforcement men in the Lincoln area, in which scores of abandoned cabins were searched, all suspicious trails run down, and many citizens interviewed for leads in the

case.

The recapture of the prisoners revealed that they concealed themselves deeply in the Maine woods, and came out near railroad tracks in a last desperate effort to jump a freight train. In an attempt to allude their pursuers, the trio had walked on the tracks, jumping from side to side and into the bushes. The



Escaped Prisoners!

game wardens were able to keep to their trail in spite of the camouflage.

In two weeks of their freedom, these prisoners of war had traveled 40 miles, according to Agent Soucie. They had subsisted sparingly on provisions hoarded from their daily meals at the prison camp. In making their progress west, they had been able to cross bodies of water through the use of crude rafts which they had constructed out of rough timbers.

In one of the abandoned camps where the men had hidden out, the searching officers found a homemade map which was left by the Germans. This allowed the police to see their intended route, and was of great value in narrowing down the search area.