

**WORLD WAR, 1939-1945,
GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMPS AND PRISONS COLLECTION**

ADDITIONAL CONCENTRATION CAMP DOCUMENTS – 1941-1945 – 9 items.

The additional documents are arranged alphabetically by name of camp.

All descriptions were compiled by Michel Brisebois, the collector of the documents.

Box Number and Item Numbers

Box 15 – 2828 to 2836

AUSCHWITZ

2828

Postcard: postcard sent to a civil worker in a camp in Auschwitz dated April 12, 1945. This was after the liberation of Auschwitz concentration camp and this worker may have been confined by the Russians.

BUCHENWALD

2829

Message on handkerchief: a message written in capital letters in ink on a piece of handkerchief. The message is in Czech or Polish (translation into German included) and seems to originate from a prison in Berlin. It mentions the fact that the person is being sent to Buchenwald. It was probably smuggled out by a friend. These items are often forgeries but this one was bought from Erik Lordahl and is pictured in one of his auction lists. He thinks it is genuine.

2830

Death certificate for Wilhelm Bendau, prisoner no. 1230, typewritten, signed and dated July 23, 1941.

RAVENSBRUCK

2831

Prisoner transfer form: a printed document with blanks filled in dated Litzmannstadt, November 1944. It sends notification to the commander of Ravensbruck that a particular prisoner (named) will be sent from Litzmannstadt prison to Ravensbruck.

The Irena Matusiak journal, recipe books, and realia: A very important archive from Irena Matusiak, prisoner no. 7250 in Ravensbruck, consisting of:

2832

- **Recipe book:** one small oblong booklet (5 x 6.5 cm) of newsprint sewed together with newsprint covers. 19 pages of writing in pencil in Polish. These are recipes.

2833

- **Recipe book:** one larger booklet sewed together with a small rope and flexible corrugated card cover (8 x 9 cm). 64 pages in pencil in Polish. More recipes.

2834

- **Journal:** one rectangular booklet on French paper (7 x 9 cm). 2 pages of names and addresses and 6 ½ pages of a journal in pencil in Polish. The rest is blank.

The journal is dated between April 28 and May 2 1945 and is a partial rendering of the evacuation of Ravensbruck. It was translated into English by a Polish friend of mine. It tells of a march on a road led by the Germans, of shelters in the forest, bombings killing prisoners, and the sense that the Germans were trying to force the prisoners towards the advancing Russian army. This journal was probably written in the field as the events happened. The other two booklets contain recipes which seems at first a bit odd but many books by former prisoners tell of women in Ravensbruck spending time exchanging recipes. These three booklets were obviously carried by prisoner Matusiak as she lived through the evacuation of the camp.

Translation of the journal by Elizabeth Onyszko of Ottawa

Page 1 :

28.IV.1945 – 2 :45

After a long time of anxious waiting, the camp's gates are behind us – evacuation – nothing pleasant. The last transport around 6.000. The camp is over, but it does not look that good – we are being escorted by the SS towards the front line or close to it. On top of that, most of us leave without any food provisions, all without warm food.

Page 2:

Many among us without bread for as long as a week. We are marching in the Name of God – the road to liberty – to Poland. After only a few km it's impossible to go further, they say that the roads are being blown up. We enter a young forest to wait through the night. There, a house with soldiers, not at all to our liking, we continue a few steps further and suddenly an explosion, the terror disperses us all, and drives us into the forest in all

Page 3:

Directions, and every other moment pushes us to the ground. Explosions continue, and falling to the ground I devote myself to St. Anthony. At last it goes away and dies down, but then it continues all through the night. Sitting somewhere in the bushes, clinging to each other, we wait through the night, hearing constant explosions and desperate calls for each other. We are also in despair because our Kostia and (illegible) are lost – found again with help from St. Anthony.

Page 4:

It barely dawns, when they start to gather us to continue our march on to Malechow and further. We want to separate and keep on going on our own in a

small group, but we do not succeed. They keep an eye on us and we have to continue together. The group is now smaller – many died.

29-IV And again further, horror-stricken, along the road full of army supply columns and refugees.

Page 5:

It was a terrible passage, especially in the afternoon, airplanes and fire from them at the road, and no place to hide; so in the ditch in greater fear than before.

There are also casualties of the shooting. The planes fly away and we pass quickly through a town full of soldiers and the army supply columns. And again a bit further and against planes and shooting. A terrible day. And again help from St. Anthony.

Page 6

I believe it miraculous, escaping unhurt from this horror. Now only small groups of several people each are left. Our patrol stationed at the road directs us into the forest for the night, where our group's guards are already waiting. There are (crossed out: "about") 40 of us. We are laying down to sleep, and suddenly again planes and shooting for the third time. Our nerves can take it only by miracle, it seems. The night in the woods on the straw ends this horrible day.

Page 7:

30,31,IV. 1.V. and 2.V

Forced march to the west, that is further away from our destination. The SS guards are afraid of the Bolsheviks and direct us towards the Allies as if to surrender us into their hands.

- **Realia:** These booklets were accompanied by:

2835

Prisoner badge: a white cotton rectangle with the number of the prisoner (7250) in ink and, sewed on it, a small red triangle with a large "P" (for Polish). This was worn by the prisoner on her frock.

2836

Prisoner armband: There is also a large black cloth armband with the large letters "R.W." and the smaller letters "G.M.B.H." in yellow tread sewed on it. These letters stood for the factory where the prisoner worked either in the main camp or in a sub-camp. This type of archive is very rare and valuable.