International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
Protokol extract (Translation from French)

USA
New-York State
28.08.1945 Camp Hamlin Beach

General and living: This camp used to be a CCC camp It was occupied in June 1944 with German prisoners of war. It is located in the village of the same name.
For sanitary condition there is no criticism.
The camp consists of 5 accommodation barracks and one barrack each for kitchen and dining room, for washing and toilet, for canteen and for theater. The infirmary is outside the camp. The men live in wooden barracks with bunk beds, 40 men per barrack. The facilities are the same as elsewhere and meet all requirements.
At present, these barracks house 50 to 55 prisoners; a number that slightly exceeds the normal limit. The heating and the electric lighting are good. On the other hand, the ventilation in the summer does not seem to be sufficient
13 standard-size square tents were recently built in the outskirts of the camp to serve as temporary accommodation for about 40 men. Since they are temporary, these tents are not electrically lit, but they are adequately equipped.
Medical service: The infirmary outside the camp consists of a consulting room and a sickroom with 6 beds, which were not occupied on the day of our visit.
There are enough medicines, instruments and dressings. A German medical sergeant (who is not a doctor) is present every day. An American military doctor comes once a week and is available to the camp for emergencies. All serious cases are immediately evacuated to the main camp. There is also the dental treatment.
The health and the morale of the prisoners are good and do not allow for any special remarks.
Food: The food is considered sufficient, except for a small group of prisoners doing hard work in steel construction. The menus are the same as elsewhere.
On the day of our visit:

Breakfast: milk soup, 4 or 5 slices of bread with jam or other topping, coffee
Lunch: 2 sandwiches (1 with cheese, 1 with sausage) or soup, potatoes, vegetables, possibly cake, coffee
Dinner: (see lunch)

Sanitary installations: The toilets have 24 sinks, 24 showers with hot and cold water and 40 toilets. The supply of drinking water and the pipeline system are not subject to criticism. There have never been any vermin in the camp.
The residents of the camp can regularly play ball on a sports field. They have enough sporting goods.
Dress: Overall, the condition of the clothes is satisfactory, but most prisoners only have 2 pairs of socks. It was difficult to get them in the last few weeks. Every man has 2 pairs of shoes. Repairs and laundry take place.
Entertainment: A theater company and a small string orchestra give regular performances and concerts. Cinema takes place twice a week.
Library: The library has 400 books.
Education: 50 men participate in English lessons.
Summary: It is a good labor camp.

International Committee of the Red Cross Inspection of the Hamlin POW Camp - Further Evaluation and Reading the Clues Regarding the POW Sanitary Installations

Ed Evans - May 2025

According to a plot of the POW population in the Hamlin camp (using recently declassified data supplied by the U.S. government), the number of POWs in the camp on the August date at the top of the French report was about 350. The French report puts the population figure at about 250. That was the population in the camp between April and May. I therefore assume that the date at the top of the French report is the report's filing date, not the date of the inspection tour.

The description of the camp is correct. Five barracks, one building (not barrack) each for the kitchen and mess hall, washroom/toilet, and the store/recreation.

The number of tents (13) does not match the figure I have read (17).

Some of our POWs (mentioned under Food) did go to work near Alexander, NY, in a foundry and they did work harder than other POWs.

"Sanitary Installations:" Remember, we do not have a photo of the POW camp, but we do have a cement floor record. And we know that the original (small) latrine burned down, and something was constructed to take its place and increase the capacity. 24 sinks sounds okay. In 1958 the CCC newspaper says 20 small sinks replaced the eight big kitchen sinks. The new construction would probably have some too.

24 showers would mean that the 12 original shower stalls were rebuilt and 12 more sounds right for what we see on the new cement floor.

The condition of the CCC latrine and the contents of the toilet pit in 2009 indicates that the CCC latrine was in use during the WWII prisoner's use of the camp. Obviously, when the CCC latrine burned down shortly after the first POWs arrived it was rebuilt using pretty much the same blueprint as was used for the original latrine. In 2009, the washroom and shower room were easy to locate. The toilet pit, however, was obscured for a while because it had been deliberately destroyed because of environmental concerns--probably by a bulldozer-after the camp closed.

In 2009, the new POW washroom and shower were easy to locate once the brush obscuring it was hacked away. Features preserved by the cement floor poured over the gravel in what used to be the CCC 13-bay garage helped confirm some of the inventory figures in the French report. 24 sinks were entirely possible combining the number of sinks in the CCC washroom and the new POW washroom. 24 showers were also entirely possible combining the showers in the CCC shower room and the new POW shower room. The mention of 40

toilet seats, however, was a complete mystery until I visited the site again today for the umpteenth time and Nick finished probing where we thought a toilet trench would be.

Most of the people studying the Hamlin CCC/POW camp refer to the building that housed the sinks, showers, and toilet seats over a long cement trench as The Latrine. Photos of that building are even captioned, "The Latrine." The dictionary says that a latrine is a toilet facility used by many people. However, it does not mention sinks or showers.

The Historical Record of the CCC Camp Buildings kept in Washington lists our building as a "Latrine 40x44" in 1938 - the 40x20 building plus a 24x13 wing running to the north. In July of 1939 it lists a "Lavatory 40x20" and then lists a "Latrine 24x13." For some reason, the 24x13 wing off the 40x20 building that contains the toilet seats is broken away and is now listed separately! It appears that "Latrine" will hereafter be referred to the part of the building, or a building, that housed toilet seats over a toilet trench.

Mary Smith interviewed two former German POWs who lived in the Hamlin camp, but they made no mention of "The Latrine." I was a pen pal to two former German POWs who lived in our camp, and I came right out and asked them both about "The Latrine." Both said there was only one "Latrine", and one POW pen pal added that "he had the best bed in the camp because it was the one closest to the Latrine." He had the bunk closest to the back door of Barracks #3. "It was a 60-foot walk from there to the toilets," he said. I think my two POW friends were using the dictionary definition of latrine and were referring to the entire building with the toilet seats in it.

When you unravel the broken English in the French translation of the 1945 International Red Cross Inspection Report filed after they visited the camp, it mentions that the camp had "toilets" [more than one building] and they contained "24 sinks, 24 showers with hot and cold water, and 40 toilets." The Red Cross statement is a little confusing, but I think they are trying to say that there was more than one sanitary installation housing a total of 24 sinks, 24 showers, and 40 toilet seats (over a toilet trench). Hmmm.

Finally, on May 6, 2025, Nick Kramer finished probing the site of the new POW shower room. That was the building quickly built over the gravel floors of five bays of the CCC 13-bay garage after the CCC latrine burned down (shortly after the CCC camp became a POW camp). He and I ended up agreeing that the last 15 feet of the yet to-be-restored cement floor (the grassy area next to the pile of cement pieces waiting to be put in place) does NOT contain hidden evidence of a second set of toilet seats over a toilet trench. Therefore, the "40 toilets" mentioned in the French translation of the 1945 International Red Cross inspection of the Hamlin POW camp is either a mathematical error or a typo.

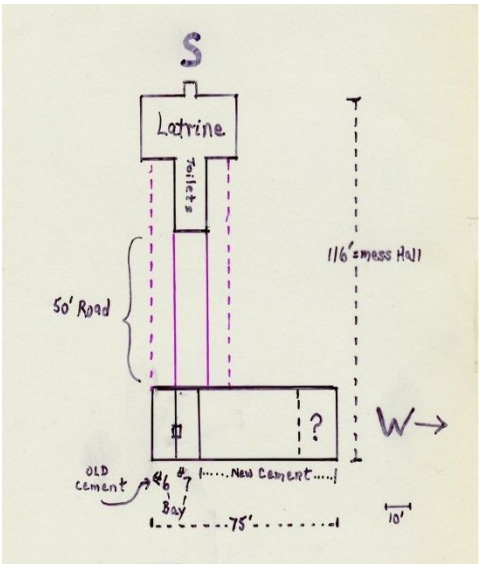
Furthermore, there is no evidence ANYWHERE in the camp of another toilet trench other than the one Nick dug out in 2009 - the "16 holer" sketched by a former CCC inductee. If all the other possible flush

toilets in the camp are added to the 16 seats in the building referred to as the CCC latrine, you still can't reach 40.

e.g. Maybe two in the Army Officers Quarters, two in the infirmary, two or three in the Department of Interior Building, a possible chemical toilet in the WWII Supply Building, and a couple more flush toilets in the undocumented locker room for the guards stationed in the CCC Education Building we discovered, the total might come to 10 more to add to the 16.

And maybe the toilet seats were moved closer together when the toilet area of the latrine building was rebuilt after the fire - making it an 18 or "20 holer." The 20 added to the 10 other possible toilets in the camp would make 30 and the person who typed the Red Cross report could have missed the 3-key and hit the 4-key by mistake! That's really stretching it! But the cement floor record of the camp grounds can't be typoed or denied.

Before Nick probed the grassy area, we were trying to justify Heinrich's and Gottfried's one latrine with the French report's mention of more than one latrine. That would require connecting two buildings with a closed-in tunnel of some kind. But Nick's finding no additional toilet trench changed our thinking.



Rough sketch of the possible joining of the CCC latrine and POW washroom across the 50-foot-wide road. The connection between the two is long and skinny, not very pretty. To alleviate this, a wall might have been built along the long, dotted line. The two buildings together are about as long as the CCC Mess Hall.

Joining the two facilities with walls - the old CCC latrine building and the new POW washroom - would be way too expensive and would take too long to make happen. Just building a second washroom was time consuming enough! I can envision them putting some kind of porch on the gravel road in front of the new building. It might have been necessary. But then again, maybe the two post holes in the gravel road in front of the new washroom (that were later taken over by trees) were not for support posts under a porch. Instead, the trees might be marking two posts that held a large sign to direct the steady stream of new POWs to the extra shower facility and laundry room!

I was amazed from the start that the growers association (the farmers) and the canning factories had to foot the bill for building the entire camp. It wasn't until I did a close re-read of the French eyewitness report of the camp and Nick finished probing of the grassy area at the end of the washroom and found nothing new that I focused in on the idea that MONEY always motivated what went on in the POW camp. There was a depression going on!

The new POW washroom had to be a bare bones operation because the government would have nothing to do with it. The association and the

factory owners used CCC garage gravel already packed down as a base and there was, for free, 18 feet of old cement already in place with a big drain in the center for sending gray water out of a bonus laundry room. A lot of money could be saved by making do with a rebuilt building over the CCC toilet trench and a couple more toilet seats. Cement toilet trenches were expensive and very plumbing intensive because they had to be built according to government specifications.

The French report agreed that there were two facilities and Heinrich and Gottfried said only one of them had a room with toilet seats in it. That's what I should have heard and that should have been the end of the story. As for the number "40" in the French report, we'll never know where that came from.

I am satisfied now that I have the whole story. An aerial photo of the camp would still be nice, but I think I have things pretty close to what our POW camp looked like.