

MONTREUIL-BELLAY

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Montreuil-Bellay in the Loire, which operated from November 1941 to January 1945, was the largest internment camp for Roma and Sinti in France, with 3,000 inmates. It was neither a concentration camp, nor a deportation camp nor a labour camp. None of the prisoners were sent to extermination camps, but more than a hundred died during their years of detention. There were more than forty such camps in France.

Did you know

... that the camp was guarded not only by French police officers but often also by volunteers from the neighbouring villages?

... that many of the Roma and Sinti held prisoner in this camp were not freed in 1945? They had to wait until 1946, when the war had been over for almost ten months.

For you to do

What might have been the reason why Sinti and Roma families were not released immediately after the end of the Second World War?

The photo

Photograph of a group of children in the Montreuil-Bellay internment camp, probably taken from one of the watchtowers. Private collection of Jacques Sigot, Châteauneuf-les-Martigues, France.