

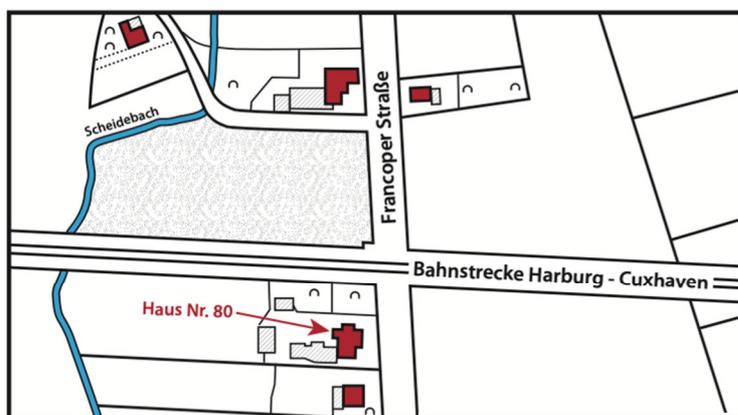
## A "POLISH CAMP" IN NEUGRABEN

### The first find

In 1948, the Neugraben police station reported to the British military government about a camp with about 50 Polish forced labourers who were housed in three barracks fenced off with barbed wire in *Francoper Straße* next to the old house number 80. Nothing is known in local folklore about the location of a camp for Polish forced labourers.

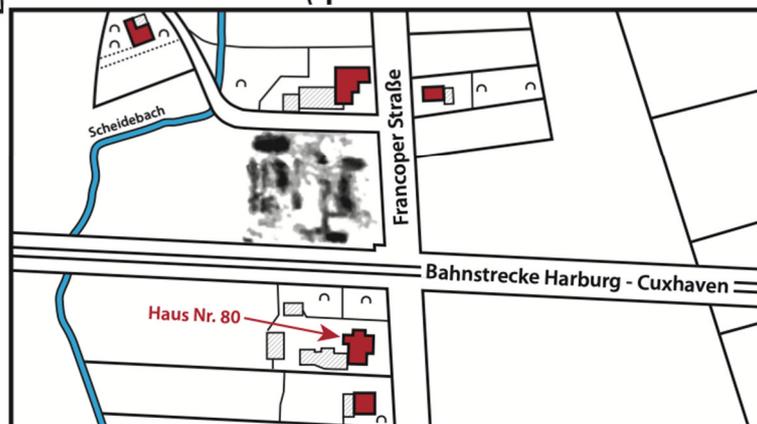
### Localisation

Until the incorporation into Groß-Hamburg in 1937, the houses in Neugraben were numbered according to their date of origin. The house number 80 became *Francoper Straße* 17 after the incorporation and was located south of the railroad line to Cuxhaven. The property next to number 80 must have been north of the railroad line. In an aerial photograph from 1946, traces of a former building on this property are visible, which were not there in the aerial photograph from 1938.



Location sketch of the property north of *Francoper Straße* 80 based on the digital map 1:5000 Hamburg from 1930, with a grain field, according to an aerial photograph from 1938. (Geschichtswerkstatt Süderelbe)

Location sketch on the basis of the digital map from 1944 with remains of foundations from an aerial photograph from 1946. (Geschichtswerkstatt Süderelbe)



### Searching for traces

In the records of the *Arolsen Archives*, lists of forced labourers registered with the health insurer *AOK Hamburg* can be found, as well as discharge lists of the *Harburg Hospital* containing about 50 names of Polish men who were either discharged from the hospital to the *Francoper Straße Camp* between April 1940 and October 1944 or were registered there as workers of the *Heinrich Steinhage* company. This company, specialising in railway track engineering and construction, used Polish forced labourers as trackmen on behalf of the German Reichsbahn.

### **Franciszek Dombzral**

He was born on August 1, 1921 in Lubieniec (Province of Pomorze) and worked from 1938 to 1941 in Kaliska (Leslau district) as a farm labourer. On June 26, 1941, he was registered there with the Labour Office. From then until 1945 he was working as a railroad worker for *Steinhage Company* in Harburg.



From June 26, 1941, he was also registered with the *AOK Hamburg* with the place of residence being the Francoper Straße Camp.

From 1945 - 1951 he lived in the *Displaced Persons* Camps in Wentorf and Sennelager with the wish to emigrate to Canada as an agricultural worker.

After that his trace is lost.

Franciszek Dombzral worked from 1941 - 1945 as a forced labourer for the company Heinrich Steinhage and, among other places, lived in the camp in Francoper Straße (Arolsen Archives)

### **Polish forced labourers under National Socialism**

At the end of September 1939, there were 70 German labour offices in occupied Poland, which had forcibly recruited 560,000 workers by May 1940. By the end of the war, there were probably 2.8 million Poles living and working in the Reich under catastrophic conditions. In March 1941, 930 of the 8,800 foreign workers employed in Hamburg were Polish, and in September 1944, 7,200 of the 63,000 forced laborers were of Polish origin.

