

Night Watchmen in Berlin (c. 1840)

Abstract

Night watchmen were an important presence on Berlin's nighttime streets during the 1840s. These four, however, have just been caught napping by their sergeant, who wants to enter the supply station the group is supposedly guarding. In 1843, 160 night watchmen and 10 night sergeants were registered in Berlin. Each night watchman was assigned to a specific station. Their most important responsibility was to provide early warnings in the event of fire; for this purpose, they were equipped with a whistle and two signal horns. The sounding of a high-pitched horn indicated a fire on the right bank of the Spree River, whereas a low-pitched horn indicated fire on the left bank. After the introduction of gas streetlights, which needed to be lit every evening, many night watchmen also began working as lamplighters. Lithograph, c. 1840.

Source



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