



*Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens:
Memories of World War II*
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Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of World War II ***Remembering June 10, 1940*** **71st Anniversary Event**

On June 10, 1940, following Italy's declaration of war against Great Britain and her allies, Prime Minister Mackenzie King authorized the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) to intern Italians and Italian Canadians considered a threat to Canada's security. Around 700 were interned in camps and roughly 30,000 were listed as enemy aliens who were then fingerprinted, photographed, and ordered to report monthly to the RCMP.

On Friday, June 10, 2011, *Italian Canadians as Enemy Aliens: Memories of World War II*, commemorated the 71st anniversary of the internments as part of the first-ever celebration of Ontario's Italian Heritage Month. The public event, held in the Carrier Gallery in Columbus Centre of Toronto, acted as a preview of the final exhibit scheduled to open in April 2012.

Around ninety guests attended including the children, grandchildren, and other relatives of those interned or designated as enemy aliens. Also in attendance were a few former enemy aliens who live to tell their stories. Their video histories were featured in a short documentary shown that evening. The reaction of those directly affected by the internment and enemy alien designation was apparent during the screening and proves how vivid these memories are even decades later.

Seven feet high free-standing banners featured profiles of three Italian Canadians who were arrested and interned on June 10, 1940. These men were Dr. Luigi Pancaro of Sudbury, business mogul Leopoldo Mascioli of Timmins, and prominent Fascist Ruggero Bacci of Toronto. The remaining banners, *10 June 1940 Timeline*, *Canada's Response to Italy's Declaration of War*, and *The War Measures Act and the Defence of Canada Regulations*, highlighted key historical events leading up to and including June 10 1940. In addition, a small table-top display showcased a selection of photos and documents from the time period, as well as wooden ornamental objects carved in Camp Petawawa, all donated by the families.

Project Update

To date the project has completed interviews in Vancouver, Timmins, Sudbury, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, and Montreal. Interviews in Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Windsor, and Nova Scotia will be completed by the end of August. Though many oral histories have already been recorded, the project is still looking for those who are willing to participate.

About the Project

Funded by the *Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP)*, *Citizenship and Immigration Canada* fund, this national project will collect the personal memories of surviving Italian internees in Canada, their family members and others that were also affected by the internment. The project is also seeking stories of personal resilience and community initiative during this period.

These video histories will form a national archive, along with related print, photographic and other resources. The resulting archive will be shared with the Italian community and general public through a permanent exhibit housed at Columbus Centre, an online archive and virtual exhibit, and a publication.

Contact Info

For more information on the project, or to share a family story or object, please contact call 416 789 7011; Melina De Guglielmo (Researcher/Writer), ext. 332, mdeguglielmo@villacharities.com.

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