

War Memories across Canada Conversation Kit:

Japanese Canadian Internment Hastings Park Pacific National Exhibition Vancouver, BC



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Mary Kitagawa was seven years old when she was detained in a livestock barn at Vancouver's Hastings Park. She remembers the stench of the buildings when she dragged her suitcase through the barn door in April, 1942. Mary and her family spent a month at Hastings Park before they were relocated to the BC interior. They were eventually moved to a sugar beet farm in Alberta until well after the war ended. Approximately 8000 other Japanese Canadian women and children were held at Hastings Park before being sent to farms and camps across Canada.

Today, the barns at Hastings Park in Vancouver, BC, stand as a memorial to the 22,000 Japanese Canadians stripped of their civil rights during the Second World War.

Discussion Questions:

Why do you think there were so many various elements that caused this event to transpire?

What were the consequences for the Japanese Canadian community in the decades that followed? What about for Canada?

This particular event happened over 75 years ago. Looking back in our history, what is significant about this event in the 21st Century?

In terms of singling out a particular group of people in society during a time of emergency such as a war or a terrorist attack, and what has changed or continued in Canada, and in the world since the Second World War?

Activities:

There are several sites you can visit, particularly in British Columbia, where the Japanese Canadian story is told. For example, the [Japanese Canadian National Museum](#). Investigate your local area for sites of memory linked with this story and visit them.

Explore the [photos in the SEDAI online collection](#). As primary sources of evidence, they provide insights into what happened. What do they tell us about Canadian society during the Second World War? What do they tell us, or warn us, about Canadian society in the 21st century?

Take the perspective of the Canadian government during wartime. What approach could be taken to ensure security while at the same time safeguarding the rights of all Canadians? What might be the consequences of your decision for the short and long-term?



Dormitory in Hastings Park (1942)
City of Vancouver Archives / CVA 180-3543

Resources:

Websites

Japanese Canadian Oral History Collection – SFU
Library Digitized Collection

<http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/johc-collection>

Search the database for interviews with Japanese
Canadian internees.

Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre

<http://www.nikkeimuseum.org/>

The Nikkei Centre has an online archive of
internment photos.

SEDAI – The Japanese Canadian Legacy Project

<http://www.sedai.ca>

Includes research guides for youth and adults,
photos, documents and videos.

Videos

Force of nature: The David Suzuki movie, directed
by Sturla Gunnarsson. National Film Board of
Canada, 2010

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/force-of-nature-the-david-suzuki/>

David Suzuki discusses living in a Japanese
internment camp and the impact it had on his
life's work.

Minoru: memory of exile, directed by Michael
Fukushima. National Film Board of Canada, 1992.

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/minoru-memory-of-exile/>

The story of nine-year-old Minoru Fukushima's
experience in an internment camp and his
eventual deportation to Japan.

Books

Obasan, by Joy Kogawa. Originally published 1981.

Redress : inside the Japanese Canadian call for
justice, by Roy Miki. Raincoast Books, 2004.

Righting Canada's wrongs : Japanese Canadian
internment in the Second World War, by Pamela
Hickman & Masako Fukawa. James Lorimer, 2011.

Too young to fight : memories from our youth
during World War II, by Patricia Galloway. Fitzhenry
& Whiteside, 2004.

Included in this book is a chapter by Joy Kogawa
and Timothy Nakayam describing their family's
internment.

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