



Windsor's Serbian Heritage Museum will unveil a plaque Friday to commemorate the Canadian internment of immigrants from the Austro-Hungarian Empire during World War I.

## Plaque to commemorate Canada's First World War internment operations

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A UWindsor archivist had a "horrifying" revelation while researching internment camps Canada set up at the start of the First World War—a personal connection for him.

"I realized that a swimming pool I had swum in as a child at the Cave and Basin in Banff National Park was built by the slave labour of these Ukrainian Canadians," says Brian Owens.

Dr. Owens was looking into Canada's internment of people with Austro-Hungarian passports under the 1914 War Measures Act in preparation for commemorations of its 100th anniversary.

Windsor's [Serbian Heritage Museum](#) is part of a national effort to bring attention to this almost-forgotten part of Canadian history. It will unveil a commemorative plaque on Friday, August 22: one of 100 to be displayed in locations across the country. The Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Foundation is coordinating their installation in public venues such as including churches and cultural centres dedicated to Ukrainian, Serbian, Croatian, German and Hungarian communities.

Anne Dube, administrative assistant in the Centre for Smart Community Innovation, is of Serbian heritage and has been active in local organizations for more than 40 years. She serves on the museum's board and invited Owen to help develop an exhibit on the WWI internments.

"About 8,600 men, women and children were designated enemy aliens and interned in camps in Canada's hinterlands," Dube says. "I knew absolutely nothing about it until it was brought to my attention."

She says it is important for people to understand their human rights can disappear overnight with the stroke of a pen: "We have to remain vigilant in defense of our civil liberties."

The exhibit, which will remain on display until December, will focus on the internment of Ukrainian- and Serbian-Canadians and the subsequent development of civil liberties in this country.

Friday's event will include the screening of the film *Freedom Had a Price* as well as tours of the museum, located at 6770 Tecumseh Road East. It is open to the public and begins at 10:40 a.m.

[Anne Dube](#)  
[Brian Owens](#)

<http://www.uwindsor.ca/dailynews/2014-08-15/plaque-commemorate-canada's-first-world-war-internment-operations>