

# Documenting Detainees: Recovering Records of Hastings Park Japanese Canadian Internment

The Japanese Canadian Hastings Park Committee

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The Japanese Canadian Hastings Park Committee is composed of Japanese Canadian organizations and individuals whose mission is to ensure there is public education about the 8000 Japanese Canadians who were incarcerated in Hastings Park from 1942 until 1943. In early 2017, the Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens Association (GVJCCA), a member organization of the Japanese Canadian Hastings Park Committee, was awarded a \$20,000 B.C. | Canada 150 grant to locate and document the records of Hastings Park Japanese Canadian detainees.

Despite the tragic discovery that official RCMP Hastings Park Detainee records were destroyed in 1962, the goal to document most Hastings Park detainees was achieved. Following the advice of detainee elder Ruth Takemura who suggested

reviewing the Redress Secretariat's archives of Individual Redress applications, researcher Linda Kawamoto Reid obtained access to the Redress Secretariat files in the Library and Archives Canada (LAC).

In total, our project reviewed Redress Secretariat files, archives from 18 Government departments, UBC Special Collections, and 466 Volumes at LAC. Remarkably, by March 28, 2018, approximately 6000 detainees were able to be identified and documented thanks to the efforts of the LAC, Linda Kawamoto Reid, and volunteers from Ottawa National Association of Japanese Canadians.

Today, detainee names are being recorded on a site attached to the [HastingsPark1942.ca](http://HastingsPark1942.ca) website. This site will also invite unrecorded detainee families to provide their names, and can be used by Japanese Canadians, teachers, students, and the general public as a family history and education resource.

The ultimate purpose of this project is to present detainee names in a future commemorative interpretive display in a Hastings Park Livestock building that is scheduled for redevelopment in the next 5 years. This will provide broad, impactful public education about Canada's historic Japanese Canadian detention at its authentic site. Presenting detainee names will honour and commemorate all those who were uprooted and incarcerated in Hastings Park from 1942-1943. The interpretive display will not only provide history and lessons in human rights, it will also fulfil the wishes of elder detention survivor, Mary Ohara who stated, "I like to pass my learning on to young kids so they grow up understanding that innocent people can be hurt by the actions of a few. It's up to us to teach our kids to keep Canada as a peaceful, good place to live."

**WEBSITE:** [hastingspark1942.ca/](http://hastingspark1942.ca/)

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**– Mary Ohara, detention survivor**

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**Top:** Lisa Uyed, National Nikkei Museum archivist, displaying a small suitcase used by a Hastings Park detainee.

*Photo credit: Photo by Wendy Matsubuchi-Bremner*

**Bottom:** Joyce Oikawa and Judy Hanazawa at the Hastings Park 1942 Community Forum held at the Nikkei Centre.

*Photo credit: Photo by Wendy Matsubuchi-Bremner*

