

A VINDICTIVE SATURDAY MORNING RAID OF ITALIAN FAMILIES IN THEIR HOME BY HUNDREDS OF WINDSOR POLICE AND CANADIAN ROYAL MOUNTED POLICE FORCES.

SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1940

MY MEMORIES

My memories of that entire shameful episode began with the unannounced swift and cruel Saturday morning raid of Italian families in their homes by hundreds of Windsor Police and Canadian Royal Mounted Police Forces. These Italian people were living and working in Windsor, Ontario, and most lived in the downtown nationalized Canadian citizens area for the better part of their



since their emigration from Italy streets of the city. Many were and had lived in the Windsor lives.

I was very young at the time and vaguely recall coming home from playing baseball at the local park and noticing that my mother and father were visibly upset over something I knew nothing about. Later I learned that when the police entered the homes of most Italian families in Windsor, they questioned the husband especially and looked for these items in particular: a picture of then-Italian prime Minister Benito Mussolini, an Italian flag, and especially a gun of any description. As we had none of these items in our home, my father Valentino Daldin was allowed to remain at home, however, he was instructed to report to the main Post Office on Ouellette Avenue, once a month, to sign a registry book. He was greatly insulted by this as he had come to Canada as a young man in 1902, initially to work on the CPR Railway Company roadbed in northern Ontario in a dynamite rock-cut crew. He went back to Italy in 1904 to serve his military obligation and returned to Canada in 1906. In June 1940, he was an employee of The Detroit and Windsor Tunnel Corporation. My father remained in Canada until he died in 195



THROUGH THE YEARS

Italian men that had one of the three artifacts found in their homes were immediately arrested, hand-cuffed, and taken to the Windsor Armories where they were held until further notice. It was immediate and fast – no chance to say goodbye, explain work responsibilities, family financial circumstances or other family plans and needs to their wives and children. The arrest was a devastating blow to the Italian men taken by force from their home and families that morning. Yet the worst was still to come. The men were arrested as Enemy Agents and eventually taken to live in internment camps in Ontario.

Camp Petawawa



Most of these men were charged as Italian Prisoners of War and were sent to Camp

Petawawa situated in the Ottawa River Valley. By October 1940 the round up had been completed. Most Windsor men went to a camp at Petawawa and were held there until the end of the war. This family hardship took its toll on many of their wives and children and a great number suffered through financial and psychological problems and ailments during the five years that the men were imprisoned in the camp



Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King declared war on Italy's Fascist government on June 10, 1940. Days later, the Minister of Justice, Ernest Lapointe, signed the Internment Order that categorized thousands of Italian-aliens, which resulted in the internment of 500 men. Habeas corpus was



Order that categorized Canadians as enemy in the eventual and four women. suspended.

SONS OF ITALY



At the time, a small building on McDougall Street was home to the Sons of Italy Fraternal Association, which was seen as the hotbed of pro-Fascist politics. In some mysterious way, still unconfirmed to this day, the authorities came to have the complete list of the names and addresses of each of the club members, and these became the first group to be arrested that Saturday morning. It was said that one of the sons of Windsor's best known Italian family was the informant of that membership list held by the Mounties that morning.

Today, the Sons of Italy organization, based in Washington, D.C., has a large membership of the most prestigious Italian men of the United States, to which it is an honor and a privilege to belong. It

IN SUMMATION

ITALIAN LIFE AFTER THE RAID

Italian immigrants living in Windsor and area were acutely aware of the low opinion other residents of Windsor had of them. They were careful to speak Italian only in their homes and did not risk speaking Italian in public places. They now lived and worked in a city where anyone heard speaking Italian was considered to be the enemy and an undesirable immigrant.

This historic period of terror began when Italy declared war on England and France on June 10, 1940. Since then tens of thousands of printed literature, books, newspaper articles, films, photographs and on-line accounts of this experience have been produced, demonstrating how this terror was duplicated wherever Italians lived in Canada. The story of these brave Italian men and women and their families will never fade from Canada's history. It is set in fine Italian marble!

Best wishes,

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