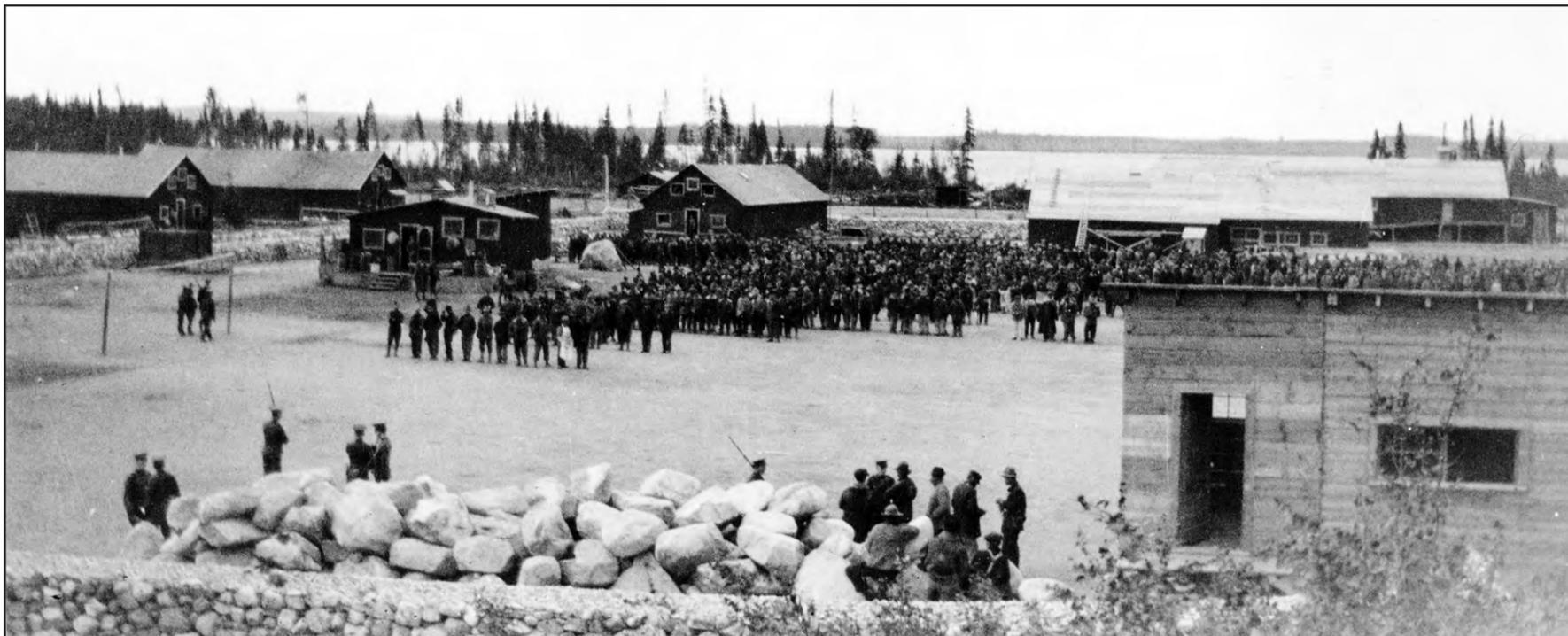


## PRESS RELEASE

## Educational Tours In High Demand at Spirit Lake Internment Centre



Spirit Lake site, circa 1916, with original barracks, soldier-guards, lake in background, camp enclosure-wall chiseled by internees, from the documentary "Freedom Had A Price".

■ **LA FERME, QUEBEC:** The award-winning Spirit Lake Internment Interpretative Center now in its seventh successful year, has expanded its ever-popular educational school program at the Centre. The guided school tours of the internment museum offered for the elementary, high school and CEGEP level throughout the Abitibi area and the province are already booked for the months of April, May and June.

The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. to accommodate schools and the general public. Many thousands more will be visiting the Centre this year.

School buses that arrive at the museum, are divided in two groups of 15-20 students in the museum. As one group with their teacher and museum-guide tour the exhibit area upstairs, the second group of 15-20 students enjoy their lunch in the downstairs room and view two documentaries on the internment, "Ukrainians in Quebec 1891-1945" in French or English, or "Freedom Had A Price". During warm wea-

ther, students tour the original Spirit Lake internment grounds around the Centre. Busloads of students will also be arriving from Montreal, Ottawa, Gatineau, Laval and other areas over the next months.

The Centre reaches out by doing presentations at various schools, in turn, the teachers book visits for students to see the actual internment museum with its unique artifact collection, photos from the interment period and other related historical items.

Because the Centre has wheel chair accessibility, teachers with special needs students are welcomed and able to book tours.

Last year, Spirit Lake Centre applied for and was approved to join a newly established special Quebec Government cultural- educational school program, in which the provincial government reimburses schools 50% of their expenses for bus tours visiting a recommended Quebec museum. As a result, Spirit Lake Centre's unique focus on the internment story has increased

its school visits even more. "The museum needs more days to accommodate the high demand", stated James Slobodian program co-coordinator, "our efforts and hard work to make this the leading internment museum in Canada is bearing results."

Recently, James Slobodian, chairperson of the Centre, was interviewed by Radio-Canada, the French national television station. The 9-minute television program about Spirit Lake internment aired across Canada further reaching out to the large francophone community in all provinces. The television program included many original internment photos discovered in the 1970's by Yuriy Luhovy which he called the Palmer Collection after the name of the photographer-soldier. This remarkable photo collection was later donated by Yuriy and Zorianna Luhovy to the National Archives of Canada for public use. The Spirit Lake internment photos were first used in the making of Luhovy's documentary film "Freedom Had a Price".

The official 2017 Quebec tourist booklets has included full page coverage of Spirit Lake Centre/museum as one of the recommended museums to visit. The booklets are distributed across Canada informing visitors beyond Quebec.

The Centre is continuing its successful bike rental program this spring and summer called "Heritage on a Bike", which includes a free rental, a visit to the museum and a bike tour around Spirit Lake and its expansive internment grounds.

Spirit Lake Centre is the largest internment museum in Canada, which tells the story of the unjust internment at Spirit Lake (1915-1917), Canada's first national internment operations 1914-20 and the early history of Ukrainian immigration to Quebec. Spirit Lake was the second largest of twenty-four internment sites with the majority of the 1,200 internment being Ukrainian. Many were taken from the Montreal area. The Centre effectively brings broad public awareness of the internment story.

Spirit Lake Centre launched its first nation-wide fund-raising campaign marking the 100th anniversary of Spirit Lake internment to help ensure the Centre's on-going programs, especially its educational programs.

The Centre, which is non-profit, provides income tax receipts.

To help support the Centre's internment awareness programs visit

[www.campspiritlake.ca](http://www.campspiritlake.ca)

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