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## **INTERNMENT OF TURKS IN CANADA DURING WWI**

### **Abstract:**

Early years of the twentieth century had witnessed an Ottoman influx into North America. Empire for economic as well as political reasons. In Canada, the destination for Ottomans was Brantford and Hamilton, Ontario, which were famous for their iron foundries. A considerable number of Turks had migrated with the intention of returning to their homeland after spending a couple of years and earning enough to buy land upon their return. However, when WWI broke out, and the Ottoman Empire took sides with Germany, they had to undergo the challenges of the war. At the onset of World War I, the War Measures Act was implemented as a result of an Order in Council by the Canadian Government. This resulted in the internment of "enemy aliens". Among thousands of people of Ukrainian and Eastern European descent, who were interned in concentration camps across Canada during 1914-1920, there were also 205 Turks.

Internment of Turks in concentration camps during WWI still remains as an underresearched area as the Canadian government, in the years after the Second World War, destroyed the official records of the First World War internment operations. However, a report exists that states that in 1914 when Great Britain declared War, 8,579 men who originated from opposing nations were interned. Of those, 205 were from the Ottoman Empire. The story of what may well have been the first Muslim community in Canada, and what happened to it at the hands of a fearful government and populace at a time of War, was almost entirely forgotten. This paper will examine the internment Turks in Canada during WWI in the light of Ottoman and Canadian archival documents.

### **Keywords:**

Turks, Canada, Internment, World War I