

 **Nikkei**
national museum
& cultural centre

NIKKEI IMAGES



Skating Gals, Tashme, BC
1944
NNM 1993.40.19



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WERE YOU IN TASHME?

COVER IMAGE: SKATING
GALS, TASHME, BC, 1944
NNM 1993.40.19

You might be interested in participating in the Tashme History Project! A group of dedicated volunteers at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto – including two former Tashme residents – have discovered a large map of Tashme, and they are now attempting to identify anyone who lived in Tashme during the internment and relocation years. Working with the community and in collaboration with the Nikkei National Museum, a questionnaire has been developed, and the results will be entered into a searchable database. In doing some background research, the group has already established some interesting facts: that some cabins held two families, larger families overflowed into other cabins, and after repatriation some families whose intention was to leave for Japan moved into residences vacated by the families who were moved to other holding centres. The realization quickly dawned on the volunteers that each cabin and room has its own story.

If you, or someone you know, was a former resident of Tashme, please contact either Jan Nobuto (JCCC, Toronto) at jnobuto@sympatico.ca, or Linda Kawamoto Reid (Nikkei National Museum, Burnaby) at lreid@nikkeiplace.org.

More about the cover image:

Skating in Tashme was done on the Sumallo River. During the first year of internment, skating happened helter skelter but by the second year, the community felt that it was too dangerous and purposefully overflowed an area to create a safe skating rink. The kids from Vancouver were the lucky ones, whose families could afford to bring their skates and lacrosse sticks to the camps. Other kids from the north and coast had to make do with gliding around in their shoes; some being pulled by the Vancouver kids' lacrosse sticks. Can you help us identify these girls?

Information received from Jean Kamimura



MANY THANKS...

by Beth Carter, Director-Curator

It is the time of year to feel thankful! As I listened to the haunting bugle at the recent ceremony at the Japanese Canadian War Memorial in Stanley Park, I was really struck by how lucky we are in Canada, and how great it is to be part of this close-knit *Nikkei* community.

At the Nikkei National Museum, we are so thankful for the many people, community members and organizations that support us every day. We count on our volunteers, donors, collaborators, summer students and funders to help us expand our collections and help us do our work to the highest professional standard. We are always looking for volunteers interested in history – for identifying photographs, helping with translation, oral history transcriptions, educational presentations or other general duties. Let us know if you would like to help. We couldn't do it without you!

Funding is especially important. For 2012, I would like to thank the following funders: Nikkei Fishermen's Reunion Committee, Museum Assistance Program of Canadian Heritage, BC Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, G&F Financial Group, NNMCC Auxiliary Committee, IK Barber BC History Digitization Program, Audain Foundation, Deux Mille Foundation, City of Burnaby, National Association of Japanese Canadians, the Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs programs, and the Burnaby Arts Council. Thank you as well to all our members, and those people who have given individual donations.

I am pleased to announce we have just received wonderful grants from the Telus Vancouver Community Board and Metro Vancouver to support our new *Taiken* educational outreach program – watch for more details in 2013.

Call for Stories!

Our next issue of *Nikkei Images* will focus on the contributions and experiences of *Nikkei* women. Do you have a story to share? Can you suggest someone we should interview? We are especially interested in a story about the role of the *fujinkai* (Women's Associations) in Japanese Canadian communities. Please contact Beth at bcarter@nikkeiplace.org or Linda at lreid@nikkeiplace.org or phone our main number (604.777.7000).

Nikkei Images is published by the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre

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Subscription to **Nikkei Images** is free with your yearly membership to NNMCC:

Family \$25 | Individual \$20

Senior/Student \$15

Senior Couple \$20

Non-profit Association \$50

Corporate \$100

\$1 per copy for non-members

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95 YEARS SINCE VIMY, 70 YEARS SINCE WE WERE DECLARED ENEMY ALIENS

by Linda Kawamoto Reid

This year, a pilgrimage of 1600 Canadian high school students visited Vimy Ridge, as an initiative of the Vimy Foundation. The message of Vimy Ridge is one of bravery and sacrifice. The battle, which took place on April 9, 1917, is commonly highlighted as a turning point in Canadian history, where four Canadian divisions fought together as a unified fighting force for the first time. While 3,598 Canadian soldiers were killed during the battle, the impressive victory over German forces is often cited as the beginning of Canada's evolution from Dominion to independent nation.

To underscore the sacrifices made by Canada, that suffered 60,000 fatalities during the First World War, France granted Canada 107 hectares of land at Vimy to build and maintain a memorial. That iconic site is today considered one of the most stirring of all First World War monuments, and certainly Canada's most important war memorial, designated a Canadian Historic Monument. In honour of the Canadians who fought and died there, maple trees were planted and line an avenue to the monument. (Source: Vimy Foundation)

In 1920, Japanese Canadians who fought at Vimy erected the cenotaph in Stanley Park to honour the memory of all Canadians, but especially the Japanese Canadian soldiers who proved their loyalty to Canada by volunteering in spite of the racism directed towards them. Fifty-four Japanese Canadian soldiers did not come back. The veterans organized the all-Japanese Legion #9 Branch, whose flag stands alongside the Canadian flag every year on Remembrance Day. Those veterans led by Sergeant Masumi Mitsui successfully lobbied for the Veteran vote in 1931.

This year, as we remember significant events of WWI, let's also remember that 70 years ago in 1942, while at war with Japan, Canadian-born Japanese were not authorized to enlist. On January 3, 1942, *Nisei* that were enrolled in the Canadian

Officer Training Corps at UBC were dismissed. Cadet Hajime Kagetsu, president of the Japanese Students club at UBC and Tom Shoyama, editor of the New Canadian were outspoken about their disillusionment of this digression of democracy.

Of the 32 Japanese Canadians enlisted in the army before the war started, only three of them were from BC, outside of the racist Vancouver area; the rest enlisted in points east. Two of the early recruits died serving in Europe.

As the war progressed, the British and Australian Governments saw a desperate need for Japanese-English translators and urged the Canadian government to enlist *Nisei*. The code named S-20 Japanese Language School, Japanese Military Intelligence Division, Canadian Army was formed in 1943. S-20 graduates joined *Nisei* in uniform in Burma, India, Australia, South East Asia, Japan and the Pacific Military Research section in Washington, DC, USA & Canada. Some were posted in the SEATIC (South East Asia Translation Interrogation Centre) and were required to interrogate Japanese high-ranking officers in the War Crimes tribunals. In total, 119 Canadian *Nisei* were enlisted as linguists and many others were still enrolled in S-20 at the cessation of hostilities in 1945 and the last S-20 school in 1946.

The annual Remembrance Day ceremony and reception at Stanley Park pays tribute to these proud, loyal, hardworking, dedicated men who were willing to lay down their lives for the future of Japanese Canadians as a whole in their struggle to gain the same rights and civil liberties as other Canadians. Veterans like George Tanaka who, after his discharge from the Army lobbied successfully for the removal of 29 Federal and Provincial Regulations discriminating against Japanese

Canadians in 1949, are to be remembered and honoured. Tom Shoyama, an outspoken editor of the New Canadian throughout the war period and an S-20 vet, was awarded the Order of Canada for his public service to Canada as a whole. Private Roger Obata fought for civil liberties from his time at UBC to his tireless fight for redress, a span of 40-50 years. Sargeant Buck Suzuki fought for the rights of fishermen to return to coastal fishing post war and challenged the Soldier Settlement Board for the same rights as other returning soldiers regarding his land.

The Japanese Canadian War Memorial Committee is dedicated to remembering all those who made a difference in our community. As we come up to the 25th anniversary of Redress, it's a good reminder of how long the battle for Japanese Canadian liberties has gone on in Canada. The committee is planning a national fundraising campaign in order to repair, restore and reseal the 92 year old cenotaph - a symbolic monument to our collective history.

Linda Kawamoto Reid is the Chair of the Japanese Canadian War Memorial Committee and can be contacted at lreid@nikkeiplace.org or linda_reid@telus.net.

A version of this article was previously published in the Nikkei Voice.

PHOTO 2: Founding Group Of Japanese Canadian Association 1920, Stanley Park Japanese Canadian Cenotaph. NNM 1994.41.14

PHOTO 3: Sgt. Masumi Mitsui relighting the lantern on top of the cenotaph at Stanley Park, 1985. NNM 1992.23



PHOTO 1: Unidentified, Thomas Shoyama, George Tanaka and Roger Obata at the S-20 Japanese Language School, Ambleside, West Vancouver, c.1945. NNM 2012.55.2.4 Courtesy of Minoru Yatabe



PHOTO ON PAGE 4: A group of Vets and the JC War Memorial Committee 70th anniversary of the cenotaph, Nov 11, 1990. NNM 1992.30.1



VICTORIA'S JAPANESE TEA GARDEN

by Ann-Lee & Gordon Switzer

Victoria was Canada's first Japanese community, the first immigrants appearing in the mid-1880s. Over the years it never grew much beyond 300 people and its size was surpassed by Vancouver in the mid-1890s. However, its influence was felt in the wider community to a greater extent than in Vancouver.

Of all the contributions the Japanese made to life in Victoria, none was more celebrated than the Japanese Tea Garden. Located on the Gorge Waterway that snakes out of the Inner Harbour for about 2 km, it was set in the midst of an amusement park. In its heyday, from 1907 to the mid-1920s, it was the place to be and be seen.

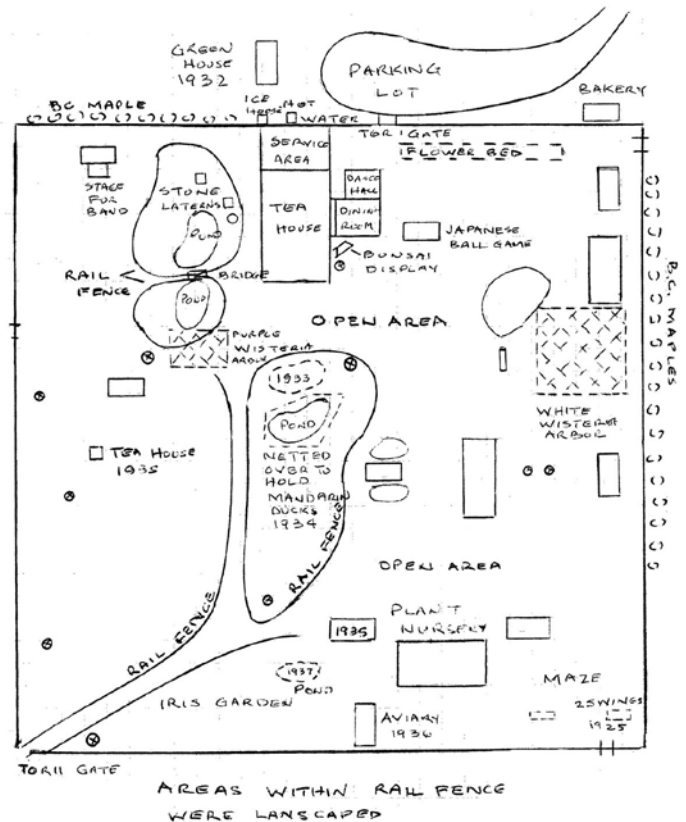
The B.C. Electric Railway Company (BCER) built the first hydro plant on the coast beside Goldstream River. Besides providing electricity to homes and businesses the company's tram lines allowed people to get around without horse and buggy. In 1904 the BCER bought 20 acres of land at the Gorge from the Hudson's Bay Co. for an amusement park.

It was not long before Japanese businessman Mr. Yoshitaro "Joe" Kishida saw an opportunity for himself at Tramway Park. A tea garden would fit right into the pleasure park on the Gorge and help draw visitors, as Kishida pointed out to Tramway Company manager Albert T. Goward. Next, Joe Kishida pitched his idea to his business acquaintances, one of whom was Hayato "Harry" Takata. By January 1907, a consortium of six partners had raised \$5000. The enterprise was assigned one acre of forest in the middle of the park, not far from the shore. Kishida got busy right away carrying out their business plan.

As for the design, Kishida just happened to have someone special in mind: his father Isaburo, a garden designer employed by the Yokohama Nursery in Japan. The 65-year-old travelled in steerage aboard the CPR ship, *S. S. Tartar*, arriving April 19, 1907. Work had already begun clearing the acre of sloping land, using a ready supply of wintering Japanese sealers and carpenters from the Japanese community. Isaburo was in his element, able to communicate easily with his workers.

The horticultural design, the buildings and all the supplies flowed quickly into the landscape. The pace of the work was all the more amazing considering that plants, ornaments and materials had to be ordered from across the Pacific. Ponds were created along an existing stream, bridges placed, low bamboo-and-branch fencing set in to outline the beds of shrubbery. A main teahouse was built with a smaller private dining room and dance hall next to it. Outbuildings and rustic benches were interspersed among the trees. The whole was enclosed by a board-and-bamboo fence. Many of the native firs and cedars were left in place, providing a structure for the new planting. Paths winding through the strolling-style garden gave the visitor an impression of a much larger garden. On Thursday July 11, 1907, the Japanese Tea Garden opened, attended by 786 curious holiday-ers. By the weekend, attendance grew to thousands. It was a hit!

For the next three and a half decades, the Japanese Tea Garden would open to the public on the Queen's Birthday (Victoria Day), May 24th, and close after the September weekend following Labour Day—outlasting the Gorge amusement park by many years. The Garden opened daily to meet the first tram in the morning, closing just before the last tram at



● REPRESENT ORIGINAL NATIVE TREES
 Sketch map of Japanese Tea Garden, drawn by George Takata. The garden changed over time as structures were added. Courtesy of the Takata family.

midnight.

Entering the arched *torii* gateway, the visitor was greeted by a shady grove of delights, with shape and texture, rather than colour. Paths led strollers to fresh vistas of pine, maple, wisteria and drew the eye to lily-pod ponds rimmed with rocks and plants. Bordered by rustic fencing of curved sticks and bamboo, pathways were surfaced with crushed rock so as not to soil the ladies' skirts. Ponds swimming with carp reflected stone lanterns and irises. Bridges over streams led to benches, tables and tea pavilions in the forest.

The Tea Garden may have been Japanese in landscape and plantings, but it was unlike anything that existed in Japan. No *o-cha*, *o-sembe* or *sushi* was served. The cuisine was strictly Canadian, including beverages: tea, coffee, milk, soft drinks, cocoa. Customers could select sandwiches, toast with poached eggs, ice cream, cake and even "Spaghetti A La Milanaise." This Japanese Tea Garden was unique: unlike anything Victorians had seen before.

Rustic benches strategically placed invited visitors to pause and admire the scenery. Eight numbered oilcloth-covered tables and two larger tables could accommodate families or social groups of all sizes. Orders were delivered by waiters in white jackets and ties. If patrons preferred to bring their own picnic, no problem. For five cents the waiters would happily fill their kettles with boiling water for tea. Maybe next time they would order toast, who knows? Others would choose to dine in the elegant teahouse with its bamboo furniture, perhaps sending the children off to play or swim on their own. The adjacent dining room building could be rented for dinner parties, and there was even a small dance floor; the use of a gramophone for music was included.

Originally about nine structures were scattered around the site, gradually added to over the years. The most prominent building was the main teahouse, measuring 30' x 20'. With four-foot-high bamboo lower walls, *shoji* (sliding paper shutters) and a shingled roof, it was open to the breeze—and the mosquitoes. Inside the teahouse, the bamboo furnishings, all imported from Japan, were finished in a dark lacquer. On windy days the paper lanterns that hung along the eaves would sway and rattle and sometimes blow down. The tea house was a pleasant respite from the summer heat, to the accompaniment of tinkling of wind chimes.

One of the most popular entertainments, and part of the original plan, was the Japanese Ball Game, located just north of the teahouse complex. A prominent sign beckoned from atop the shed in bold capital letters, "Japanese Ball Game Take Home a Souvenir." For ten cents, customers received six wooden balls, just smaller than a baseball. The object was to roll the balls into nine numbered shallow holes, the numbers representing the number of points. A former customer, Jack Frampton recalled in 1954, "The wooden balls went smash-bang against the end of the board, making a heck of a racket. Joe [Kishida] was a friendly fat little fellow, who was a great favourite with the kids . . . Joe would let us accumulate our tickets. One summer we . . . saved tickets until we had enough for one of the Japanese stunted pine trees, complete in a blue pot." Prizes, all from Japan, included anything from pop guns and fans to dolls, to the coveted tea sets, vases and inlaid trays that sat on a shelf at the back for the rare and lucky winners. Four alleys could accommodate several customers at a time. The Ball Game was at first run by Joe Kishida, and when he left, Kensuke took over, earning the



The main tea house, strung with lanterns, served afternoon tea to thousands of visitors every year from 1907 to 1942, between Victoria Day and Labour Day. Courtesy of the Takata family.

..... Continued on next page

name "King" for that position.

After construction, the Tea Gardens had a need for waiters, cooks and gardeners. Most employees were drawn from the Japanese community, but in busy times, some Chinese help was hired. There were as many as 20 on staff during the Tea Garden's heyday, especially in late spring and early summer. A cook would be brought in from Vancouver for the season.

The growing *nisei* population headed to the Gorge along with other children of their age. "Any Japanese who learned to swim learned at the Gorge," according to George Takata, who added that his father built a tent with a floor for a boys' change room, used by him and his friends. Girls could change inside the Takata house.

Over the years, plants matured and filled in the beds, new ones were brought in, stone lanterns and ornaments added. Kensuke Takata joined his older brother Harry in the running of the enterprise, providing financial support and raising five children with his wife Misuyo, whom he had married in 1918. As the children grew they were able to lend a hand as well. In 1922 Joe Kishida moved back to Japan to rejoin his wife and child who had returned earlier and sold his share in the business to Kensuke. Kensuke took over maintenance of the garden, while Harry managed the finances. Later, Toyo Takata, the eldest of Kensuke's sons, helped in the ordering of plants and garden accessories. He remembered being instructed by his uncle to buy only the best provisions. After clearing customs in Vancouver, the plants would arrive in February in large wooden containers, their roots wrapped in protective moss. Souvenirs, prizes and even postcards were also ordered from the Japan.

The original BCER lease included a house by the entrance to the park. This proved too distant to be practical, so it was rented out to the Stancil family. The rent received covered the Takatas' \$50 annual lease payment to the BCER (later doubled to \$100). The Takatas moved into a former bunkhouse in the forest just outside the south end of the garden—originally built to house sealers and other workers clearing the land. The rambling single-story dwelling was expanded as the family grew. Bedrooms for the two Takata families extended on either side of a central hallway. A Japanese bath (*ofuro*) was constructed onto the house, the wooden tub sitting atop a metal sheet. The firebox opened to the outside and wood was fed into it to heat the water from beneath.

Also beyond the fence, almost directly behind the teahouse, a large glass greenhouse was constructed in 1932 where Harry Takata's brother, Kensuke, raised plants for the garden and later for his nursery business. The greenhouse was situated close to the road and parking lot to expedite deliveries. In that same area a chicken coop sheltered the source of meat and eggs both for business and family use. Kensuke's son George mused, "It was always chicken!" Because hens stop laying in the short



Japanese Tea Garden Gorge Park

Bill of Fare

Tea, Coffee or Cocoa with	Cake	-	-	-	-	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	25c
"	"	"	"	"	"	30c
Cream Tomato Soup with	Cream Sodas	-	-	-	-	20c
Vegetable Soup with	Cream Sodas	-	-	-	-	20c
Tea, Coffee or Cocoa with	Fresh Boiled Eggs	-	-	-	-	
"	"	"	"	"	"	35c
"	"	"	"	"	"	35c
"	"	"	"	"	"	35c
"	"	"	"	"	"	35c
"	"	"	"	"	"	45c
"	"	"	"	"	"	50c
Ice Cream	-	-	-	-	-	10c
Ice Cream Soda	-	-	-	-	-	15c
Ice Cream with Cake	-	-	-	-	-	20c
Soft Drinks or Glass of Milk	-	-	-	-	-	5c
Ice Cream Sundae,	Cherry	-	-	-	-	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	20c
"	"	"	"	"	"	20c

WE CATER TO PRIVATE DANCING PARTIES

MARGISON BROS., PRINTERS

(OVER)

This menu gives an idea of what was served in the tea room. No *o-cha* or *sushi* here! Patrons could also order and be served under one of the many pavilions scattered throughout the garden. Courtesy of the Takata family.

days of winter, some summer-laid eggs were stored in a waterglass (sodium silicate) for winter use, but only used for baking. Uncle Harry reminded his nephew on occasion, "If you want to know if a restaurant serves fresh eggs, order sunny-side up!" At the Tea Garden, eggs were always fresh, poached and placed symmetrically on perfectly toasted bread. "We all took turns collecting the eggs," George Takata told us, "The hens were locked up in a restricted area, but some would get out and hide, and then out came a little flock of chicks following the hen." A vegetable garden was also planted nearby, providing the family with basics such as carrots and beans (but no Japanese vegetables).

Three ponds were dug in the original garden. A fourth one was added by Kensuke and stocked with Mandarin ducks, kept safe from raccoons by chicken-wire netting. Unfortunately the net was no barrier for rats, who dined on many of the ducklings. Still, enough Mandarins survived to paddle around the pond until the end. All garden features were interconnected with pathways. Dust tended to stir up during the dry summer months, so a handy barrel on wheels was put into service. Water was pumped into the barrel directly from the Gorge and someone's chore would be to pull it along the path.

The Tea Garden was very much a family-run business, and that helped keep it going. Harry and Kensuke found themselves in charge of the whole park, having taken over from manager Al Fielding in 1926. Harry continued to manage the finances, maintaining his habit of not rising before 10 or 11 a.m. On the other hand, Kensuke was forced



A typical pond at the Japanese Tea Garden. The lantern was imported from Japan, as were many of the trees and shrubs. Courtesy of the Takata family.

to start his day much earlier. After setting up the Ball Game and other operations first thing in the morning, he would go out and garden for others. When not in school, and after he graduated from high school, eldest son Toyo would assemble plant orders from catalogues, shop for Uncle Harry and help his father sell nursery stock. All the Takata children had chores to do: chopping and piling wood for the stoves, feeding the chickens, weeding the garden.

The decline came gradually, but was certainly noticeable. By 1940, Kensuke began to make plans for some of his horticultural treasures, digging up and selling a few choice camellias and maples. When the restrictions started raining down on those of Japanese descent, he relocated potted plants and his precious *bonsai* as well. The Vaio family was one of the recipients of the potted plants. After evacuation looked inevitable, rather than see them destroyed, Harry asked Arthur Lahmer to please remove shrubs, trees and plants from the garden and use them in his gardening business, Lahmer Landscape. Many ended up in nearby homes and gardens.

Hong Kong attacked! Mass firings of Japanese from employment! Then the call came for all Japanese Canadians to leave on April 22, 1942. The Takatas stored their heirlooms, and any possessions they could not carry in the very restricted luggage allowance, inside their locked house. Later the buildings were torn down, and anything that had not been stolen by vandals was sold at auction for a paltry sum. The two families, interned in the Interior, were sent a total of \$440.89 for personal possessions they had left behind.

"As I think about it now," remarked George Takata, "Maybe it [exile] helped my father save face, the business would have further declined anyway. The health department would have come in, because there was no way with the narrow water pipes to control any fires. Then the war came along. If they hadn't had to move, the place would have shut down."

The site of the Gorge Park was taken over by the city of Esquimalt in 1955. Fast forward to the 1980s and '90s. The Takata family had made new lives in Ontario, and the *nisei* were raising families of their own. Yet the pull of their birthplace was strong. Toyo in particular returned to Esquimalt regularly to visit friends and attend high school reunions. He had become interested in Japanese Canadian history and promoted the centenary of Japanese in Canada in 1977. In 1983 he published *Nikkei Legacy*, still one of the few comprehensive histories of the Japanese in Canada. The Takata family name rose once more to prominence. Could not a garden be far behind?

Sometime around 1985, a series of discussions took place between Esquimalt alderman Floyd Cowan and Dick Nakamura, then-president of the Vancouver Island Japanese Association, along with a few other people. The Redress movement had started, along with a possibility of funding

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for projects reflecting Japanese culture. What could be more Japanese than a Japanese garden, and why not exactly where a garden had been from 1907 to 1942?

Eventually the Takata Garden Society was formed in 1986 in Victoria, run by a dedicated group of *nisei* and non-Japanese. Active in the society were Dick Nakamura and Kay (Kiyoshi) Shimizu (wife of Kunio Shimizu, who was raised in Victoria). Bob Clarke, a gardener and builder, later joined the group, keeping the flame alive, and he continues to do so tenaciously today. Their mandate: to rebuild the garden in the spot where paths, bridges and camellias once flourished on the banks of the Gorge Waterway.

After much fund raising, many newsletters, contention with bureaucracy and frustration, the Esquimalt site was rejected by the Esquimalt Parks and Recreation branch in 1994. The Society then resolved that most of the \$50,000 raised would be used to develop a location at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific, in Saanichton, about 12 km north of the Gorge. Toyo Takata, from his home in Toronto and on occasional visits, encouraged and informed the process, and gave the new development his blessing.

The Takata Garden at the Horticulture Centre of the Pacific (HCP) was begun in 1995 on a third of an acre of sloping Douglas fir woodland. Two ponds were created connecting a natural stream. Bridges and stepping stones cross the creek at several points. Two paths lead from the upper to the lower pond, with benches and a gazebo along the way. The Takata Garden opened in 1999, attended by members of the Takata family and local dignitaries. In 2003, a Zen-style viewing garden was added with a traditional plaster wall, raked gravel, feature rocks and plantings. The Zen garden is overlooked by a traditional Japanese-style teahouse. The whole garden is maintained by a loyal group of volunteers, co-ordinated by Bob Clarke. Events, tea ceremony and even weddings are occasionally held there.

One of the most exciting additions to the Horticulture Centre Takata Garden happened in 2008, when two of the cut-leaf maples originally located at the Japanese Tea Garden, by now 100 years old, were dug from their second home at the former Blair family residence on Goldstream Avenue and successfully replanted in the Japanese garden.

Today at Esquimalt Gorge Park, all that remains from the original garden are a few red pines towering over the site. A stone marker was unveiled by Toyo Takata on September 23, 1995. Following that, the original stream, which had been buried underground, was uncovered and a Japanese style bridge built over it.

Slowly a garden took form as funds allowed. A traditional Japanese wooden gate was built and dedicated in 2009, with the Takata family crest on the gate post. In 2010 another bridge and more Japanese style plantings were added. The park now has a large stone lantern, two small waterfalls and winding paths leading from the gate down to the parking lot. In 2012 a stream, pond, bridge and many new plants were added in commemoration of Esquimalt's 100th year of incorporation.

Times have changed. The Japanese Tea Garden of summers gone would not be suited to the 21st century. Ironically, multiculturalist sensibility demands a much more authentic product. Thus resurrected and transformed, the legacy of Isaburo Kishida and the spirit and dedication of the Takata family, displayed in two Victoria area gardens, will remain for the enjoyment of coming generations.

The rock garden at Horticulture Centre of the Pacific in nearby Saanich is part of the Takata Garden, honouring the family that for so long developed and ran a major Japanese institution, the Tea Garden, in the Victoria area.
Courtesy of the Takata family.



QUOTES ABOUT THE JAPANESE GARDEN

The Japanese Gardens at the Gorge, that was a place—something quite wonderful to be seen and to be enjoyed. The Japanese Tea Gardens were visited by tens of thousands of people. I can recollect how proud the Japanese waiters were. They would pile up on the trays the most enormous stacks of dishes and vie one with another as to who would carry the greatest load in one hand.

- Mr. Justice Wootton

We had great fun finding our way along the paths and around fish pools. I was particularly impressed by the bonsai style trees and shrubs as well as the little potted trees that were sold. A highlight of the day was lunchtime, when we had poached eggs on toast, prepared in perfect circular symmetry. Colourful Japanese lanterns decorated some of the buildings, giving a festive atmosphere to these “special treat” days.

- Mrs. Delver Thyer

We always stopped on the bridge over the lily ponds to count the goldfish, then to run to the Tea Room to give Harry the number of our picnic table which had a pagoda shaped roof decorated with Japanese lanterns and wind chimes. Harry, in his spotlessly white jacket, would deliver the tea in a beautiful china teapot decorated with a picture of Mt. Fujiyama, tea cups to match. As our parents would be setting up the dinner table, we'd run to the building where the older kids would be playing a ball game operated by King. There were beautiful prizes of vases, dolls dressed in bright feathers, parasols and fans.

A new garden has been constructed in Esquimalt, near the site of the old Japanese Tea Garden. This new area was added in 2012 to the gate and other structures. Courtesy of the Takata family.

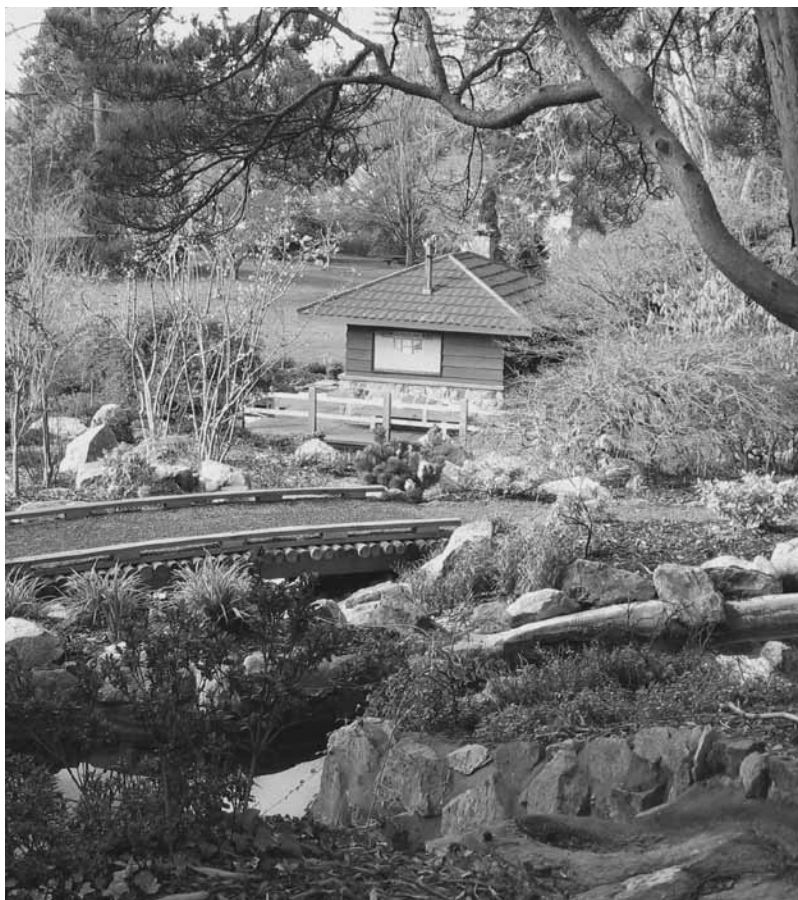
- Murial (Ash) Lockhart

The greatest attraction of the Gorge Park was the Japanese Tea Gardens. Enclosed by a bamboo fence and Torii gate were the gardens of true Oriental grace. Flowering bushes bordered the tidy paths leading to quiet places: a simple secluded corner with stone seats placed on the sculptured gravel floor where one could rest and find serenity beside a mystical carved stone lantern; a hidden pool where one could walk on the stepping stones to view the flashing goldfish darting among the flowering water lilies; or the picturesque little curved bridges by which one could cross a sparkling stream with another stone lantern reflected in the quiet pool below a playful little waterfall.

- Mildred Robertson Seymour

We thought the Tea Gardens would be there forever and our Japanese friends would never move, but alas! War and Pearl Harbor!! My sister and I strolled through the park shortly after the Pearl Harbor disaster. The gates of the Tea Garden were padlocked and their dwelling house behind the gardens was boarded up. The wood was stacked neatly in the woodshed with the axe still in the chopping block. Even the hip waders were hung in the shed ready for use as though the family would soon return. Two months later we returned and much to our dismay the place was completely vandalized. The fence around the gardens was torn down, shrubs were [removed and our dear little miniature garden smashed. The dwelling house had been broken into—chopping block and gumboots had disappeared. It was complete destruction. We sadly and silently said goodbye to the Japanese Tea Gardens and our old friends.

- Murial (Ash) Lockhart



BIRCH SHINAI

Stories by people who practiced Kendo in Canadian POW camps

by Canadian Kendo Federation, History Compilation Committee



Kendo Tournament participants, c.1944:
Kimoto, Tsubouchi, Yamamura, and Okazaki.
NNM Courtesy of Curtis Okazaki.



Moto Matsushita sensei in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan c.1947
NNM 2011.68.1.71

Shinai is a bamboo sword traditionally used in *Kendo*. Since bamboo was not available in Angler, a Canadian P.O.W. Camp, people practiced Kendo with birch wood swords.

Angler Prisoner of War camp was also called #101 Camp and was located outside the village of Angler, about 200 km northwest of Toronto. The temperature sometimes reached 50 degrees Celsius below zero during the winter. Over 700 men were arrested and interned there at different periods from 1942 - 46, when the camp closed. These men were mostly either on the government's highly suspected list to be a security risk as Japanese Nationals, or they had protested the splitting up of families in the early months of the evacuation. The protestors were mostly *Nisei* organized by the Nisei Mass Evacuation Group.

In the camp, many hobby groups were formed such as *judo*, music, *kendo*, calligraphy, *tanka* and *haiku* poetry. The Canadian Kendo Federation (CKF) recently researched and contributed to "Kendo in Canada to 1946" which was edited and published by the CKF in 2011. The articles were translated by Professor T. Wakabayashi at York University in Toronto. I think the following stories are great examples of the *kendo* group that is called *Shoko kenshi* (samurai). The excellent stories of Mr. Shigeru Kuwabara and Mr. Katashi Hibi are detailed descriptions from those who actually practiced kendo in the camp.

- Hirokazu Okusa

Hibi, Katashi

Born: 15 July 1917

People floated the idea of starting a *kendo* club, so those of us with experience got together a few times to talk about how to acquire *bogu* (protective gear) and *shinai* (bamboo swords). Someone suggested that we negotiate with the military authorities to cut white birch trees growing in the nearby hills so that we could craft *shinai*. That wasn't easy, but it worked out. We were able to craft these after much



Kendo Implements used at Angler:

- (5) Tsuba - sword guards made from shoe leather;
- (6) shinai bag made from flour sacks;
- (8) "Shōko paperweight" made from silver foil in cigarette packages;
- (10) Dōgi - made from sugar sacks;
- (11) Hakama made from flour sacks.

NNM 1994.82.10

painstaking effort despite our lack of machines and tools. Those *shinai* made from white birch were unique in the world, and called "*Shoko shinai*" [after the name of our *dojo*]. We also gathered *bogu* from sources here and there, so somehow we were able to begin *kendo*.

Kuwabara, Shigeru

Born: Skeena River, B.C. in 1924

When I began writing my *kendo* history at the behest of the CKF History Compilation Committee, various recollections sprang to mind, but there is much uncertainty in the things I say here because I never kept a chronological record of events. I can't but feel that this project got started far too late. At present, there is no one whom I can turn to in order to link my fuzzy memories into an accurate account because many senior students, acquaintances, and friends from *kendo* are gone. Moreover, I've forgotten many things, but let me relate what I do remember.

My encounter with *kendo* dates from the war (World War II). When the government removed all Japanese-Canadians from the [west] coast, I cast my lot with the *Nisei* group that advocated relocation without breaking up families and refused to do labour in a road camp, so I was apprehended and detained in the [Vancouver] Immigration Building. Later, along with numerous groups of *Nisei*, I was sent to a camp in Petawawa, Ontario and, in mid-July 1942, to the Angler Interment Camp near Lake Superior. I was kept there with as many as 800 other *Nisei* surrounded by barbed wire and sentry posts manned by

the Canadian Army, until the spring of 1946, one year after the war ended.

There were all stripes of people assembled in the camp, including four or five Japanese school teachers. Many types of educational classes were offered, such as Japanese, English, *haiku* and *tanka* poetry, Japanese calligraphy, music, and Japanese military training [under a former Private First Class, Okubo Tanematsu]. I had just turned eighteen. I was raw and bursting with curiosity, so I enrolled in class after class to the extent that time permitted. There is no doubt that my personal development and character benefited immensely from exposure to those rich opportunities for learning.

Ever since I was a child, I had longed to do the martial art of *kendo*, so I joined the *kendo* club first of all, which had been established by head instructor Matsushita Moto Renshi 4th-*Dan* early on. I think I began practicing at his "*Shoko* [Pine Lake] *Dojo*" about a month after it got its start-up, but I'm not sure exactly when. The *judo* club had already been formed, and I think my older brother Tamio must have joined it at about this same time.

A little after it started up, about thirty sets of *kendo* gear, including *bogu* and *shinai*, arrived from out of the blue. We didn't know where these had come from, but probably they had been sent by a *dojo* proprietor in Vancouver at the request of our *sensei*. Now that we had *bogu*, the *sensei* could put these on and hitting drills with *shinai* could begin, but we didn't wear *bogu* [at first] and

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instead were told to practice forward, backward, and sideward footwork for quite a long time. Finally we learned *suburi* (cuts) and practiced it after we returned to our huts, repeatedly coordinating our swings with our footwork in hut corridors, while taking care not to get in anybody's way. That's how we accustomed ourselves to attain *te no uchi* (light but sharp squeezing of the hands and wrists upon impact).

The head instructor at *Shoko Dojo* was Matsushita Moto *sensei*, but Hibi Katashi 2nd-*Dan*, Ichikawa Haruo 1st-*Dan*, Furukawa 1st-*Dan*, and some other *sensei* without *dan* ranking were also there. They looked after *dojo* administration in between lessons too, so they all kept in close contact with us until it came time to leave Angler Internment Camp. Except for Furukawa *sensei*, I got together with these *sensei*, one, two, or three times after our release from that prison (*shusho*). Matsushita *sensei*, who went back to Japan, returned to Canada three times in devoted service to *kendo* in Canada. The ninety-three year old Hibi *sensei* still sends me Christmas cards from his home in Thunder Bay. His *kendo* was really sharp; but not only that, his writing skills were superb, so he served as club secretary, and wrote out the *dan* certificates. His penmanship graces the certificate/report card that I still keep close at hand.

As I recall, internment camp practices took place twice a week in the Recreation Building on the far side of the athletic field. So many people joined the club later on that we had to add a set of night time practices. With this many people using the *bogu*, these were always in need of repair. Our *shinai*, in particular, cracked and broke a lot—which was the biggest headache for members. Someone suggested, “Why not make use of the plentiful white birch trees nearby?” We got permission from camp authorities to go outside and cut down good white birch trees without knots that grew in the mountains. We spliced them thinly, dried them, formed them into something like the shape of a *shinai*, and found that they stood up to heavy use although they lacked the flexibility of bamboo; so, we began to produce “white birch *shinai*.” They were a little heavy [to start with], since we made them thick enough to withstand lots of hitting; but, because our *te no uchi* (grip: lit: hand of inside) was so stiff, we put too much power into our hits and the *shinai* would break a bit above the *tsuba* (sword guard). We refined our production method to attain better balance; and, combined with our improvement in *te no uchi*, we started to make durable yet easy-to-use *shinai*. I'm sure I'm not the only one who felt that hits from *kamae* (styles: types of strikes)

made with these slim, white colored “*shinai*” were lighter and swifter than with the [old] dried-out bamboo *shinai* that we had bound with cloth bandages to keep intact. I had never used this kind of a *shinai* before, which we nicknamed “*Shoko shinai*.” I would take one to practice, which I pursued devotedly, and advanced to 2nd-*Dan* by the time I got out of Angler, a feat that I remain proud of to this day.

After leaving the Angler Camp, I led a rootless life for quite awhile in the postwar era, changing jobs and moving about, but I got married in 1952 and finally settled down with a family in Vancouver. Sometime back then, the Vancouver Kendo Club started up, and I joined it. Together with former *Shoko Dojo* members—such as Kimoto, Kawahira, Koyama, Yoshimaru, and Imagawa, I taught students for about thirty years while training myself and helping to run the club as well. Today, Mr. Kimoto Kaoru is the only member of *Shoko Dojo* left around here; and, sadly, the only others whose whereabouts I know of are Hibi Katashi *sensei* in Thunder Bay and Mr. Takahashi Akira in Toronto. Still, I'd be overjoyed if this poorly composed submission is of even a little help in conveying what things were like in the Shoko Dojo.

Conclusion

Proudly, the Canadian Kendo Federation celebrated their centenary in 2011. The Steveston Kendo Club celebrates 50 years after the war in 2012. The *sensei* from the Steveston club instructed *kendo* in interior camps such as H. Hyashi in Kaslo, K. Kobayashi in Slocan, M. Hayashi in Sandon (BC.) and Y. Akune in Raymond (Alberta) during the war. Some of the *Shoko kenshi* in this article became the founders of the post war Vancouver Kendo Club soon to celebrate 50 years. *Kendo* pioneers in Canada kept practicing during the war time despite of hard times. The legacy of Canadian Kendo is long and continuous.

Hirokazu Okusa
CKF President

THE KAMIYA FAMILY RELOCATION EXPERIENCE IN OAK BLUFF, MANITOBA

by Frank Kamiya

In 1942 when all persons of Japanese origin were ordered to move out from the BC Coastal areas, our young family decided to move to southern Manitoba. A sugar beet company agent from Manitoba came to Pitt Meadows to recruit carpenters to build accommodations for the many hundreds of Japanese families who would be working on the sugar beet farms. My father and his friends, the Yamadas, felt that this was their best option rather than work on a road camp or work on the sugar beet farm. My father had just finished building his 3-bedroom house on a 10-acre lot in Pitt Meadows which was confiscated with most of his possessions and sold, for which he received about \$800 net. Also at this time, my mother had an appendectomy and the hospital bill was over \$1200 which they paid with borrowed money. With two young boys, ages 3½ and 2½ years old, they took whatever they were allowed and boarded the train to Winnipeg.

In Winnipeg, the sugar beet company sent my father and the Yamadas to Oak Bluff, a farming community just outside of Winnipeg, where they initially built 10 houses for the relocated Japanese families. My father and the Yamadas built in total about 30 houses in Oak Bluff and were asked to build more houses in other Manitoban communities. However, when my father asked for a vehicle to get to and from these towns, he was denied so they had no other option but to work on a sugar beet farm. The houses were partially pre-fabricated in 4 foot sections of floors, walls and roof. The houses were to accommodate two or more families and measured 16 x 24 feet which had two 8 x 8 foot bedrooms on either side of an 8 x 16 foot common kitchen and living area that contained a wood burning stove for heating, wood burning kitchen stove, a table and chairs. One of the bedrooms was used for storage while other possessions were stored outside against the house covered by a canvas tarp. In the first

year, 3 families lived in this house - our family of 4 and the two young Yamada couples. For sleeping arrangements in our house in the first year, I slept between my parents and my brother slept between one of the Yamada couples.

There was no electricity and lighting was provided by kerosene lamps. The outhouse was a long cold walk in the winter. The house was not insulated, therefore, in the winter the walls were all frosted in the cooler bedrooms and the bed sheets froze to the walls. To remove the sheets my parents had to superheat the house. The laundry was done in a large metal tub. Water for laundry and bathing was brought in from Mr. Erb's pond which was also used for his animals. The pond water was very alkaline which made it difficult for soap to be effective. The laundry was hung outside on a clothes line and in winter my mother would take a broomstick and knock the ice off the laundry before she brought it inside the kitchen to complete the drying. Everyone took baths in the metal tub which provided very little privacy. Initially, drinking water was kindly given to us by the Erb family who trucked it in from Winnipeg. Later with the help of the Yamadas, water was trucked in from Winnipeg and stored in a 40 gallon barrel in the kitchen. In the winter they bought blocks of ice and melted it in the water barrel.

The sugar beet company leased land from the Erb family in Oak Bluff and my parents and the Yamadas were allocated a total of 100 acres. They were assigned 10 acres per adult and were required to sign a 5-year contract to farm sugar beets. Farming began in the spring with thinning and weeding which took about 4-5 weeks. With two young children, my parents would leave us at the start of the rows and working two rows at a time return back in about 3 hours in time for lunch. Having worked on her sister-in-law's strawberry farm in Pitt Meadows, my mother was very fast and efficient and often had to help my father. My

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father would ensure that their hoes were always sharpened with a file to provide better weeding and thinning. My parents often completed their section a week or more before the other families so would go and help them out. In the summer weeding was done again as often the mustard weed would grow back if not properly weeded in the spring. In October and early November the sugar beets were harvested. The sugar beets would be dug up with a tractor and plow and piled up in rows. The beets were topped with a special large knife with a hook on the end to pick them up and then piled up in rows where men would come along in a large truck and pitch fork them onto the truck to be delivered to the sugar beet processing plant in Fort Garry.

Besides this commitment to the sugar beet company, my parents were free to find other work. My father sought carpentry work in the neighborhood and he initially went to job sites on his bicycle carrying his tools. As soon as he was able, he bought a used car which enabled him to seek work further away as well as providing some shelter for us children from the hot sun or inclement weather when working on the sugar beet farm. Many of my father's clients provided lunch and dinner and often if the weather was too difficult to drive home in the snow, he would sleep over until the roads were cleared. My mother also sought work in the neighborhood doing farm work or domestic work with us kids tagging along. She was also provided lunch and sometimes had dinner with the families. My father was able to line up enough carpentry work for the whole year and was able to schedule the work so that he would do finishing carpentry in the winter months. His workmanship was deemed to be superior and done faster than the local carpenters and even though he was charging 15-20 cents per hour more, he had plenty of work. Together with the Yamadas they built new houses and barns as well as additions and renovations.

In the second year, the Yamada families were able to move into their own house and my father upgraded our house by insulating the walls and finishing the inside walls. He also built an underground concrete well 9 x 9 x 6 foot deep to

store fresh water for drinking and cooking which again was trucked in from Winnipeg. This well provided cool water in the summer and kept the water from freezing in the winter.

As children in Oak Bluff, my father commented how well we played with the neighbouring Erb boys even though we spoke Japanese and they spoke English. I remember carrying pails of water on a wagon with them and trying to flush out the gophers. We also caught fireflies in a bottle but the most enjoyable activity was riding the Erb's pony and cart built by their father, all around the farm. We also swam in the pond and occasionally we would have bloodsuckers sticking onto our body which had to be removed with a hot needle or salt. Occasionally Mr. Erb would allow us older boys to drive the tractor and taught us how to plough. In the winter the drifting snow enabled us to dig tunnels and we played outside for hours oblivious to the cold.

After the 5-year contract was complete, our family was asked to work on the sugar beet company's research farm in Fort Garry where they would plant the beets at different spaces, such as in 8", 10" and 12" centres to determine the optimum spacing. In Fort Garry my father was able to build a new house which was 16 x 24 feet but still did not have electricity, running water or indoor plumbing, however there was a water tap about two blocks from the house. My mother would take a wagon with a metal tub and fetch the water regularly. My father did some carpentry work for the grocery store so we did not have any problem obtaining rationed staples or obtaining a full sack of rice which was discretely loaded into his car.

We played the games of the day which included kick-the-can, "ali ali oop over" (throwing the ball over a building and running to the other side to catch the other team with the ball) or playing "sticks" where you would hit a small 4" stick up and try to hit it with a longer stick or bat and run to a base. We also played with BB guns shooting at each other and it is a wonder there were no serious injuries. In the winter in Fort Garry we would slide down the banks of the Red River on a piece of cardboard. My father also took us to



Joe, Nobe Yamada and Jiro Kamiya harvesting
sugar beets near Winnipeg, MB, 1944.
NNM 1994.82.10

Lockport where we rented a boat and caught some nice 16"-18" fish which was a treat for the family. We visited friends and relatives on some weekends going as far eastward as Whitemouth visiting the Hayakawa family.

In the winter of 1947, my father was working on a house installing storm windows which required him to go outside to adjust the windows and he would sometime go outside without wearing a coat and developed an ear infection which resulted in a mastoidectomy in his left ear. He was in the hospital for 4 months and also had to recuperate at home for 2 months. In July of 1948 after recovering from his ear operation he decided to move to a warmer climate and with the help of his nephew, Mush Saito, who was studying Engineering at the University of Manitoba, he applied and was granted a special permission by the BC Security Commission to move west to North Kamloops where his sister's family were farming. If it were not for an unfortunate ear infection our family may have stayed in Winnipeg much longer. For us kids, growing up in Oak Bluff and Fort Garry was a memorable experience. My father was able to pick up enough English working with his Caucasian clients which helped him in later life. The Erb family in Oak Bluff were very helpful to our family and in return my father did some carpentry work for them.

*Warm and dark...
Snuggled cozily,
Asleep between my sisters.
There is a commotion!
Voices fraught with fear and worry...
The door is closed...
Then SILENCE!!!*

*The next morning...
A jack knife stuck on the gate post.
He could not take it with him.*

Midnight, December 7, 1941! Our father, Zeiji Etsuji Teramoto was taken into custody by the R.C.M.P. as he went out to stoke the greenhouse stoves for the night. He, his older brother Shoji Saga, his wife's cousin Shintaro Sasaki, and Mineichi Minamide were all family men and of all the Japanese men on Mayne Island, were taken as "enemy aliens" who could give aid and direction to the Japanese invasion!

Mayne Island- Etsuji's salmon catch



MEMORIES ... FROM THE 1930's TO THE 1950's

by Mitsuko Shirley Teramoto



Mayne Island- Yoneko and Sho going to school

Our mother, Tsune was left with seven children from the ages of 13 years to 9 months to manage the greenhouses and to look after the domestic animals. Yuzo, Yoneko, and Sho shouldered heavier chores at home along with their school lessons. The rest of us, Emiko, Mitsuko, Masako, and James were too young to understand what had happened except that father was no longer there!

All efforts to grow a tomato crop were abandoned with the federal order-in-council of February 24, 1942 based on Canada's War Measures Act, which authorized the internment of "enemy aliens" within a 100-mile radius of the Pacific coast. With the help of her cousin, Setsu Kadonaga, and his wife, Tomiye, mother walked her family and their luggage (150 pounds for her and 75 pounds per child, but I doubt that we could have carried that much!) to the Active Pass wharf.

Yoneko remembers that Miss McBride, the United Church missionary who had held Sunday School classes at our house, had pinned 'forget-me-nots' on the lapel of each of the remaining 50 Japanese people, the young and the old, leaving the island that day! As the CPR **PRINCESS MARY** pulled away from the wharf on April 21, 1942, we left behind not only the fertile soil of the island, the bounty of the ocean, and the peaceful island life, but took with us the memories. Many memories: of playing under the shade of the pear tree, the salty tang of Bennett's Beach as we splashed along the shore, feeding the chickens and milking the cow, the happy grunt of the pig in the sty, father's salmon catch, the sound of the axe splitting firewood, the boys fishing, Emiko's broken leg, seeing our faces reflected from the many sealed jars of bright pink salmon, the wool from the island sheep drying in the sun, cousin Sumiko baking the island *dungo* cookies, the companionship of the cousins and friends, new clothes to wear on New Year's Day, and the three-day marathon session by the grown-ups playing "gaji" (*hana fude*)!

The Assembly Centre of Hastings Park was confusing to us with people and noisome stalls and blankets draped over the upper bunks for privacy! Thirteen-old Yuzo along with a cousin of similar age was quartered in another building with the other youths and men. Mother's constant insistence on cleanliness kept us from succumbing to the outbreaks of measles, chicken pox, mumps, and dysentery. I heard that there were school classes but I'm not sure where they were held... on the benches in the arena, someone said?

We didn't have the manpower in our family to go to the sugar beet farms in Alberta or Manitoba or the financial resources to travel to a self-supporting camp where the internees paid for their own relocation and the leasing of farms, so mother waited for placement in one of the camps in the interior. This turned out to be a tent in October in Slocan City as the cabins were not yet ready in Lemon Creek. To this day, the smell of institutional stew instantly brings to Mitsuko an enclosed feeling within a cold and damp environment!

We were thankful to have a large family as that meant that we did not have to share our next shelter, a 14' by 28' hastily erected wooden cabin! Since it was built at the bottom of a slope, the front part of the cabin was supported by stilts so that there were steep steps to climb to the door, not the safest for young children, but we managed! There was good storage space for

firewood under there and what a good place for playing hide-and-go-seek! But to mother, anything was better than the unhealthy tent so we moved in!

Again, the older siblings took on the responsibilities of the household chores. The arrival of father's home-made spinning wheel and the treadle sewing machine added to our quality of life. Mother cooked, spun yarn from the wool in the comforters, knitted, and sewed. It's amazing how creative she became when our food supplies were low! I always enjoyed the *shoyu* dumplings not realizing until much later that they were served when our rice supply was low! From the other ladies in the camp she learned to cook dandelion leaves, to gather the tips of wild ferns, and even which bush had tender green leaves to dry for a green tea substitute! Although Yuzo and Sho went fishing, I don't recall too many fish meals. The kindly Doukhobors, who understood persecution, brought vegetables to sell. But you had to have money to purchase them. I'm not sure just exactly how the rationing system worked but I know that there were meat tokens and coupons for other supplies.

You always hope that your relatives will support you when adversity hits. One relative asked for payment of a business debt soon after father was taken away. Another pressed a large sum in mother's hands saying that she would need it to feed the children! Bless his heart! He was small in stature but a giant in thoughtful generosity! The Commission doled out a monthly sum from father's bank account but when the statement arrived following the unauthorized sale of our household and farm goods, the balance was \$0.00! We know that there was a brand new huge cooking stove, tools, and a farm truck, and more, but...?

If 'cleanliness was next to Godliness', mother was way up there! The communal bath house was two doors away. She would take us early as soon as the women and children's hour began and then if we got dirty playing after that, we went again! The neighbourhood pump was at the top of the incline: Sho and Yoneko recall the slippery difficult climbs during a snowy winter.

The school was in front of the next row of houses. It was the site not only of our daily classes but also of social events, concerts, and film nights. It was a special treat for us to attend one as there was an admission fee. I can still hear the chatter of the reels as they spun around and around from one reel to the next. The

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teachers must have worked hard to put on the many concerts and various presentations that I recall. In one such concert, I was thrilled to be chosen for the role of Miss Canada from the play at the end of the Book Two Reader!

There were sports days, Maypole dancing, baseball and other games. The United Church missionaries held Sunday School and kindergarten classes. Masako started a year early as I was too timid to walk there on my own. I recall that Miss Hurd and her staff made graduation mitre boards and certificates at the end of our year there. Such kindly people! The three of us, Emiko, Mitsuko, and Masako would cross the boardwalk over the low-lying marshy area to go back to the last row of houses for our Japanese lessons with Mrs. Uyeno. We used to hold our noses to get past the odour of the skunk cabbages along that wet area!

'Kick-the-can', 'Red Rover', fishing, baseball, and other games were pastimes. Watching the train go by and waving to the passengers was something else to do. We slid wildly down Anderson's Hill with loud shrieks on cardboard sheets when the snow fell. The cardboard wasn't much protection but it was a lot of fun! Yuzo made skis out of two planks of wood. He soaked one end with hot water and then tied twine on the ends to curl them up. How he made them stay on his feet, Yoneko does not remember. But he must have had a good time!

In the summer, mother would pack a lunch for us and Yoneko would take us to the local swimming hole on Lemon Creek. She must have looked like Mother Goose with the four of us following her across the huge log

to the other side of the creek. On one occasion she looked up and spotted 3-year old James with his face in the water. She sped over, pulled him up spluttering and heaved a sigh of relief when he laughed and laughed! He thought that it was great fun! Poor Yoneko could not enjoy swimming there after that as she kept an eagle eye on all of us!

Behind the Commission House was a building where they kept the ambulance. We know this as Masako needed to go to the Slocan City Hospital when she became ill. Brave Yoneko walked the seven miles along the dirt road through bush and fields to go and visit the Sasaki cousins at Bay Farm. She didn't worry about the wild animals like bears and cougars!

The arrival of a surprise parcel from father was an occasion to savour sweet treats. His letters and postcards to let us know his whereabouts would arrive with blacked out censorship. From the Immigration building on Dec. 7, 1941, he had gone to a road camp in Kananaskis, Alberta, then to Ontario...prison camps in Petawawa and Angler, and then to a lumber camp in Schreiber. From there he came south to Toronto and finally found work in a greenhouse in Islington.

When he first arrived in Toronto, he could not find a place to stay as hotels and rooming houses were very "picky"! He had the name of the Matsumoto family from Lemon Creek from mother so he looked them up. With a large and much older family, Mrs. Tsuyako Matsumoto had been able to find a house for her family. It was so full of family and acquaintances that she placed a mattress under the kitchen table for him. As mother always said, a friend in times of need is a

Lemon Creek
- Sports Day





Lemon Creek
- Masako's kindergarten graduation

friend indeed! And so to this day, we have kept up the ties of friendship! Father then moved to Brampton where Shintaro Sasaki had already found work in the greenhouses of Walter E. Calvert.

By this time the extension of the War Measures Act in early 1945 decreed that all Japanese older than 16 had to decide to either “repatriate” to Japan or move east of the Rockies. A letter to father brought his decision for the family to go east as there was nothing left for them on Mayne Island. 16-year old Yuzo travelled east accompanying a man whose destination was, fortunately, Toronto! The rest of the family awaited the return of Yoneko from a C.G.I.T. (Canadian Girls in Training) camp which she had attended after school finished for the summer, before making the next move. Yoneko returned enthused about her experiences in the camp and related one of the many stories that she had heard there! This particular one about “Tikki Tikki Tembo” caught my interest and I retold it many times to delighted classes during my 40-year teaching career!

Our accommodation in Kaslo, the next stop before being transferred east, was a room above a drugstore. There was one cooking stove for several families to share but there were indoor facilities, gas, and electricity. A most memorable night was VJ Day. Fireworks were lighting up the night sky above Lake Kootenay. The older folks warned us that this was not a night for us to go outside! And so we huddled behind the windows and peeked out at the scene below not really understanding the significance of it all! We soon found out when we started school in the fall as we were spat upon and

called names. To keep us safe, Yoneko and Sho would take us through the deep gully with bushes and trees and up the steep hillside to the school. Kaslo had huge delicious cherries and a super abundance of *matsutake* (pine mushrooms) but they did not make up for the harassment. Irrepressible four-year old James found a boon companion and one day they decided to hop on the back bumper of a slow moving car. Luckily for them, the driver slowed down before climbing the steep hill and the two jumped off. No fear and no idea of danger, that kid! No wonder mother's hair turned white early!

On November 27, 1945, the family was on the move again! This time we boarded the **S.S. MOYIE** for a ferry ride south to Nelson where we took the eastbound train for Toronto. Mother's cousin, Kwanichi Sasaki boarded the train at Lethbridge, Alberta, to say farewell and travelled with us to Medicine Hat, where he disembarked. Mother was overjoyed to find her two cousins, Midori Saga and Some Kadonaga (Some had been midwife to Tsune for her last five births) who had gone to a sugar beet farm from Hastings Park, waiting for her here. They had come to wish us all a safe journey! The cousins had known each other from birth, lived in close proximity on Mayne Island, and it would be another 20 years before they saw each other again! Another stop in Winnipeg brought her cousin Matsuji Shinyei and his wife Toshiko bearing the most welcome and delicious *onigiri* (rice balls) in the world! Railroad sandwiches in those days were not the most appetizing meals.

At last, after four years, the whole family was reunited

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at Toronto's Union Station on December 1, 1945! The journey to their new home west of Brampton seemed interminable and ended in an old, wooden frame farmhouse with no amenities at the end of a quarter mile country lane. It was the best that father could find as no one wanted to rent. And space for a vegetable garden was a priority with such a big family to feed. The source for water was a spring in the cow pasture several hundred yards away. Once again coal oil lamps provided light and the stoves were fueled by wood and coal. Mother made the best of things and once again we were the cleanest kids in town...a bath every night and laundry every week, come rain or come shine! Father and Yuzo drove, walked, or biked to work each day, depending on the vagaries of the old car. In winter, mother would rise earlier than usual to stoke the stove and heat hot water which father took out to thaw the radiator. If it had snowed, then all hands were required to shovel the snow from that long lane! No easy task when the snow drifts were over three-feet deep and you could barely see over them!!

School was one and a half mile walk away in Norval. It was a two-roomed building with bars still on the windows from its former reincarnation as a jail. But it had the best teachers (Margaret Roszel and Gladys McCrea) in the country and the friendliest children! We were encouraged to develop our talents and skills and to learn to the best of our abilities. Once again, James showed his independence by riding his brand new tricycle on his first day of school with us older ones making sure that he did not ride on the road when a car was coming! Thank goodness it was only that once! When a heavy snowstorm prevented the Gray Coach bus from bringing our teachers from Georgetown, we whooped with joy and slid on sheets of cardboard down the steep hill behind the United Church!

There were Arbour Days and Field Days and Christmas concerts to brighten the school year. We attended Sunday School at the United Church in Norval and joined the Brownies and Guides, Cubs and Scouts. The Christmas concerts opened our eyes to "Christmas" which we had not celebrated in B.C. What a wonderful surprise at Christmas in 1946 to have Yuzo purchase presents for each of us...a tea set, paper dolls, a toy car, a game, some jewellery and even a tree! Oranges and nuts were a special treat! I can still remember the year that the Hiko Hamada family lived with us and Mrs. Hamada had a candy treat for each winner of a bingo game!

James, when he grew older, played lacrosse and hockey. In later years father drove James to his games when he played rep hockey and lacrosse. The girls played softball in Georgetown getting there on the back of an open flat bed truck driven by the coach. Yoneko played hockey in Brampton. We would take our sleds and skis to the hills on the neighbouring farm and skate on the frozen fields. In those days we could play outdoors all day in the fields and fish or swim on our own at the Credit River and the parents did not worry about us.

Times were still tough. Even though bread and milk could be purchased for pennies, the vegetable garden and the henhouse were major food sources. Mother made pickles, jams, and preserves, soap, *konyaku*, *miso*, knitted, and sewed. Yoneko added her sewing skills and I can remember the thrill of attending a Christmas concert with the three younger girls dressed in fuchsia taffeta trimmed with lace and sewn to her design!

When we were old enough, Emiko and I joined Yoneko and Sho as part-time workers at the greenhouses. Friends of the family came to stay for the summer and to work at the greenhouses too. In my first pay cheque, I earned 17 and

Norval, Ontario
- picking strawberries





R.R.#2 Norval, Ontario
- Teramoto Family.

back row
- Masako, Mitsuko, Emiko, Yoneko

front row
- James. Sho, Tsune, Etsuji, Yuzo

a half cents an hour. We worked from 7 in the morning to 5 in the afternoon and were happy to add to the family's finances. What a thrill when Yoneko and Sho purchased a new treadle Singer sewing machine for mother! Yuzo continued to work at the greenhouse. We worked at the local orchards and strawberry fields in the summer and early fall. Mother did housework in the area.

When father decided to rent land and become a market gardener, our lifestyle changed. We learned to hoe the weeds and to harvest the crops. During the summer, Emiko looked after Masako and James. She took on the household chores, walking to Norval to shop, cook, wash, and replenish the water supply. Mother and I walked to the fields approximately 3 miles away. Father would pick us up on his way home from work. After supper and on the weekends, the whole family pitched in. Small time market gardening was labour intensive in those days! But our crops were of A-1 quality! Whenever relatives or friends came to visit or stay for the summer, they usually pitched in, too! When Sho left school, he joined father to work on the land. A bonus legacy from our Lemon Creek days were the many families who came to Ontario and visited often, like the Matsumoto, Koyanagi, Matsui and Abe families. No matter how primitive our living circumstances, there always seemed to be people staying with us and mother was able to stretch her meals to feed everyone royally!

But life was not all work! Summer excursions were made to various beaches with picnic meals. Niagara Falls and Midland were popular destinations. I can recall one particular Sunday outing with father driving the new 3-ton truck and the rest of us sitting in the back with some

cousins, a tub of ice, and a couple of watermelons. It was peaceful just to sit beside a river and throw out a fishing line. It didn't matter if you caught anything or not. And the Canadian National Exhibition was not to be missed each summer! Weiner roasts with singsongs and ping pong games on the flat bed of the trailer added to the summer fun!

Once property was purchased adjacent to the rented fields and the family moved, father decided to become an independent grower and left the greenhouses. By then, except for the youngest two, we were all out working and with a new brick house, times changed again for all of us. We lost James in a car accident and totally appreciated the support of the *Tottori-ken Doshikai*. We added in-laws and the family grew! With *gambari* we came through, and as the Director of Education for our board said at my retirement, we were "not just survivors but conquerors" of our circumstances! And so here we are today...

Was it true as father often remarked, "Did moving east open up more opportunities for us in education, work, and life choices than if we had been able to remain on Mayne Island?"

-Written with input from family: Yoneko Edith Takeuchi, Sho Teramoto, Emiko Teramoto, Masako Ryujin

Postscript

On September 27, 2012, John Hutton, Huttonville's local councillor, announced the naming of Teramoto Park. The family is being recognized as pioneers in the area and for their contributions as volunteers in the community. The new large park with a cricket pitch and a gazebo, is adjacent to a secondary school in the new development and is located in Brampton at the northwest corner of Queen Street and Chinguacousy Road.

TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTION

THE NIKKEI ORAL HISTORY PRESERVATION PROJECT

Before the Nikkei National Museum was founded, there was a Historical Preservation Committee. The Committee formed in 1981 under the auspices of the Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association, with the aim to 'preserve Japanese Canadian history'. It set about recording people's histories before they disappeared. The committee believed these memories would benefit the community and help people in the present increase their understanding of what it means to be Japanese Canadian.

This collection of oral history tapes became the foundation of the Nikkei National Museum's collection. Its collecting led to the gathering of historic photographs and later to the amassing of significant artefacts.

Over the years the oral history tape collection has grown to over 300 taped interviews. The audio tapes have also become very fragile as the years pass, and it was a very high priority to make sure that these important *Issei* and *Nisei* stories were preserved. So in 2009, when Professor Andrea Geiger of Simon Fraser

University approached the museum with an offer to help digitize the tapes, the museum was over the moon. With the help of students on work grants, the ongoing project has digitized over 200 interviews, which are now accessible through the internet.

We invite you to take a dip into some of your Japanese Canadian memories by visiting the SFU library website (www.lib.sfu.ca) and placing 'japanese canadian oral history collection' into the search field or searching your Nikkei National Museum's collections database (nikkeimuseum.org).

Happy swimming!

