NIKKEI

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Japanese Charcoal Pit Kilns on the Gulf Islands : An untold story of early BC and Japanese-Canadian history

by Stephen Nemtin

Overlooking Georgeson Bay on Active Pass on Galiano Island stand five large tear-shaped rock-walled structures. These Japanese charcoal pit kilns are a testimony in stone to the Japanese settlers that came to British Columbia in the 1890s. There are also known charcoal pit kilns on Mayne, Pender, and Salt Spring islands.

The existence of charcoal goes back to the dawn of time. Wherever there was fire, charcoal would have been produced as its by-product. Prehistoric finds, dating back to 21,000 BC, have revealed fingerprints and small figures of hardened clay in a small pit-like structure. About 15,000 years later, in different places around the world, people made a more conscious effort to use an earth pit as a kiln for the making of ceramics and charcoal.

The key to making charcoal is carbonizing smouldering wood in an oxygen-limited environment without flame. Don't try this at home, but if you filled your oven with wood, turned the dial to 300 degrees and left it for a number of hours, eventually you would have an oven full of charcoal (and a house full of toxic smoke).

Mitsuo Hirano, Jim Tanaka and Steve Nemtin examinng charcoal pit kiln on Galiano Island.. (Mary Ohara photo, 2000)

Once charcoal is made, it can be used as a source of intense heat. Charcoal burns at temperatures from 400 to 700 degrees or more,

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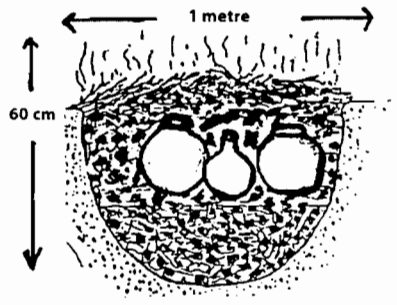

Pit kilm for making pottery.

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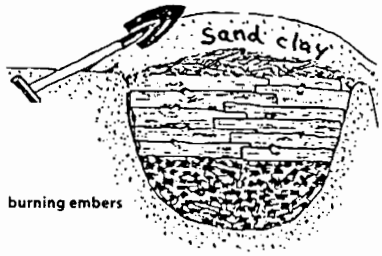


Pit kiln for making charcoal.

depending on the kind of wood used and how the pit kiln or furnace was built.

By about 3,000 BC it was realized that the high heat given off by burning charcoal could be used for melting copper, making bronze alloy, and, about 2,000 years later, for the evolutionary step of making steel.

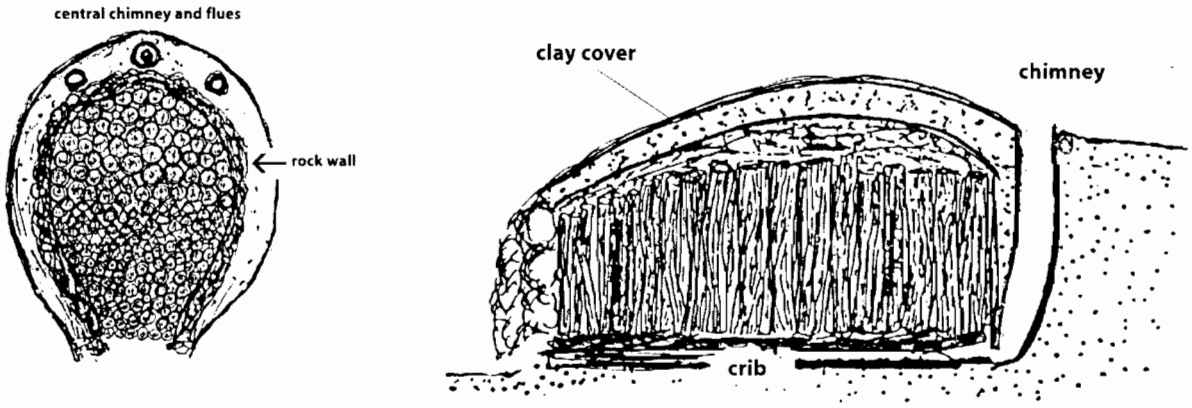
There has been a charcoal-making industry in Japan for thousands of years and it is this technology that has made the Japanese renowned worldwide for their ceramic and sword-making arts. The first Japanese settlers brought this technology with them to British Columbia.

Stories of good fortune that explorers and settlers sent back to Japan about their adventures in North America lured new settlers to Canada. The first documented immigration from Japan to Canada was in the late 1870s. Jobs available to the Japanese at this time were limited. Some immigrants came as fishermen and farmers but most found themselves involved in the logging industry as wood cutters and fallers. In the Galiano cemetery a gravestone states in Japanese that Yasomatsu Oka left Takui village in the Wakayama Prefecture in 1897 at age 17 and died two years later pinned under a tree in a Galiano logging accident. Wakayama Prefecture is well known for its charcoal production; many of the settlers that came to British Columbia, and particularly to Steveston and the Gulf Islands, were from that area.

To make a large charcoal pit, nothing is needed but a shovel and an axe. Two men can build an efficient pit in about a week. The pit is usually dug into a slope so the earth can be used to insulate the carbonizing wood. The average size of a charcoal pit on Galiano Island is about 16 feet long, 14 feet wide, and 5 ½ feet deep. The pit is lined with a rock wall to absorb and radiate more heat, like a furnace. At the back (wide) end of the tear-shaped pit, a small fireplace with a chimney draught is built within the rock wall. At about three feet on either side of this central chimney and halfway up the rock wall are two air holes that extend upward into flues allowing for more efficient adjustment of the heat. Opposite the chimney, at the front, the circular shape narrows to a three-foot passageway for loading the kiln.

To prepare the pit for firing about six large logs, the length of the pit, are laid parallel to one another and spaced so the air is drawn between them and toward the fireplace and the chimney and flues at the back. Across this log-base is placed a base of smaller, six to eight-inch diameter, logs. Onto this base or "crib" the pit is now packed with about two or three cords of logs of relatively the same diameter, stacked vertically side-by-side to fill the pit. Once filled, the pit is first covered with an approximately 20-centimetre-thick layer of branches and leaves and a final layer of soil or sand clay firmly patted down, sealing the wood into a large dome-shaped kiln. It has recently been confirmed from the Wakayama Prefectural Government that the pits on Galiano Island are native to that prefecture---the distinctive feature that sets it apart from others is the use of clay to cover its ceiling to maintain heat during the smouldering process.

The fire is started at the



Top and side view of charcoal pit kiln on Galiano Island.

narrow front end using easily flammable material, twigs and small branches, until there is a strong fire. Once the fire is well established, and smoke starts pouring out of the chimneys, the front end is sealed, save for a small air-intake hole, and the wood begins to smoulder. The smouldering process takes three to five days; the changing colours of smoke indicate the different stages of carbonization. Controlling the air and circulation of the gases is tricky. Too much air can cause the wood to burn or to be totally consumed. If the temperature gets too high, certain kinds of charcoal can break or crumble rendering it less useful as a fuel. A smouldering charcoal pit cannot be left alone. A large tub near the pit is kept filled with water in case it is necessary to cool down the smouldering process. (Omy Tasaka recalled that in 1918 she was 8 years old and one of her responsibilities as a little girl was to keep the tub filled.) When the smoke becomes a translucent purple it is time to end the smouldering by covering the flues and cutting off all the oxygen. The pit then needs to cool down before the kiln is opened to reveal about half a ton to a ton of charcoal. Alder was the main wood used for making charcoal in British Columbia.

Japanese in British Columbia produced charcoal as a fuel for the salmon canning industry. On the tables were tiny wood stoves to heat the irons for soldering the sides of the cans and vacuum-sealing the cans. Henry Doyle estimated 150 bushels of charcoal were needed to make 1,000 cases of canned salmon; charcoal cost 12 cents a pound in 1902. In addition to its use in canning, charcoal was also used in Gulf Islands' explosives industry. Farmlands were cleared using dynamite to blow up stumps and rocks. The gunpowder used in making dynamite is 15 percent charcoal. At the turn of the Twentieth Century, an explosives factory existed on Bowen Island. Charcoal was also used as a fuel for soap making. Isaburo Tasaka had two charcoal pits just outside Ganges on Salt Spring Island. His son Ty remembers being ten years old in 1923 when he helped his father load 200 bags of charcoal onto their fishing boat. They took it to a soap factory in Victoria where they were paid 30 cents a bag. Ty's sister Omy (Angela), remembers sewing the "ears" (corners) of rice sacks filled with newly made charcoal.

There are as many as four known charcoal pit sites on Mayne Island, five on Galiano, two on Salt Spring, and at least two on Pender. Charcoal pits apparently existed on Saturna Island and Prevost Island as well. I recently visited a charcoal pit on Mayne Island that was 7 feet high by 18 feet wide by 20 feet long. For the Skeena canneries, there were charcoal pits located at Port Essington and Port Edward. Most people probably wouldn't recognize the remains of a charcoal pit, and it is likely there are others dotted around the islands and on the mainland. People have mistaken abandoned pits for Native pit houses, Scottish cairns, and garbage pits.

I've already restored one charcoal pit on private land on Galiano Island and I am in the process of restoring another one on the island, located in a public park. If you think you might know of a charcoal-pit site not mentioned here, please let me know by e-mail to jems@axion.net or write me at 2646 West 11th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V6K 2L6.

This article was originally printed in ***British Columbia Historical Review, Vol. 34, No. 2, Spring 2001.***

Stephen Nemtin is an educator, sculptor and musician with a passionate interest in the history and archaeology of Galiano Island.

Mary Ohara, whose family

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roots are in the Wakayama Prefecture, was born on Galiano Island. Mrs. Ohara, along with her family and friends, initiated donations to the ***Wakayama Kenjin Kai*** *for the restoration and preservation of the Japanese charcoal pit kiln in Bluff Park on Galiano Island. On Sunday, September 16th, 2001, the* ***Wakayama Kenjin Kai****, the* ***Galiano Club*** *and the* ***Galiano Museum Society*** *are sponsoring a public dedication of this charcoal pit kiln as a testimony in stone to the courage, determination, accomplishments and perseverance of Japanese pioneers in British Columbia.*

The schedule for this historical event on Galiano Island is: depart Tswawwassen terminal at 11:10 am, arrive Galiano Island at 12:15 pm. Guests will be picked up at Sturdies Bay and driven to the Galiano Hall for a light lunch co-hosted by the ***Galiano Club*** *and the* ***Galiano Museum Society****. At about 1:45 pm everyone will be taken to the charcoal pit site for the unveiling of the plaque and dedication of the restored kiln. After the dedication, there is time to walk or bus to the other charcoal pit kiln sites nearby and the Wakayama gravestones at the cemetery overlooking the beautiful entrance to Active Pass. By 4:30 pm everyone will gather back at the Galiano Hall for tea and desserts. At 5 pm guests will be taken back to the Sturdies Bay Ferry terminal for the 5:45 pm ferry to Tsawwassen.*

If you would like to attend this dedication on Galiano Island, please contact Jim Tanaka (604) 274-4222 or Harry Mizuta (604) 321-1882.

A Family History by Patricia Tanaka

The second son in a family of two boys and one girl, my maternal grandfather Bunjiro Sakon arrived in Victoria, Canada in 1900 at age 17.

Born on May 31,1883 in the small village of Amariko-mura, Saihaku-gun, Tottori-ken on the island of Honshu in Japan, he was expected to make a success of this move to a land of great opportunity. His family had worked the same small plot of land for generations, growing rice and vegetables but made the necessary sacrifices to purchase a ticket for Bunjiro to travel to Canada.

When Bunjiro left Japan, his father had emphasized his duty to succeed in the new land and to make the family proud of him. Bunjiro would of course, send money to his family to ease their circumstances.

Victoria was the entry point into Canada for many of the immigrants arriving by ship. Bunjiro traveled on to Vancouver where he was first employed as a houseboy and then as a server in a men's club where he was addressed as "Boy", which he disliked. He next found employment fishing for the Acme Cannery. Wages at that time ranged from $0.75 to $1.00 per day so it was only by living very frugally that he was able to send any money back to his family in Japan. He worked at a sawmill in Eburne, B.C. for three years. During this time he joined the United Church in order to improve his English language skills.

A logging venture with two partners proved unsuccessful so in 1910 he moved to Mission, B.C to try farming. With financial assistance from his older brother, he was able to buy ten acres of land on Stave Lake Road. After many years of hard work he had cleared enough land to grow berries.

In 1911, a marriage was arranged with Tsuka Okazaki, a young woman from the same area in Japan. Tsuka also had grown up in difficult circumstances as her father died when she was fourteen years old. As the oldest daughter she had to quit school to help care for her brother and sister. Her family had also farmed on their small plot of land and raised silk worms for sale. Tsuka Sakon came by ship arriving in 1912 to begin her new life in a strange and unfriendly country.

By 1921, Bunjiro Sakon owned 40 acres of land on which he had built a house and other farm buildings to operate his mixed farming. Twenty acres had been cleared and he cultivated strawberries, raspberries, loganberries, and rhubarb in addition to some fruit trees. Dairy farming added to the family income.

During the years before they were forced to leave his farm, grandfather experimented with different crops and in 1934 received a certificate of merit from the Japanese government for the successful production of hothouse rhubarb. Hothouse rhubarb became an important winter crop for farmers. He had also spent five years experimenting with the cultivation of Korean ginseng as he felt that there would be an Asian market for such a crop.

By 1942, Bunjiro and Tsuka had five sons and five daughters. My mother, Reiko was the oldest girl born on April 21, 1919. She recalls the long days of backbreaking labour for low prices. Although the farm life was demanding, my mother remembers the rare outings to Vancouver and a visit to White Rock where she now lives. She tells of riding in their model T Ford to White Rock to look at some land, which my grandfather thought would be excellent for growing berries. However the idea of farming in White Rock ended with the outbreak of WWII.

Reiko and her siblings at-

tended school in Mission where she graduated from Mission High School. Although she was a good student and aspired to enter a career such as teaching or secretarial work, the social climate of the time made it difficult for Japanese Canadians to attend post-secondary school to be hired for "white collar" jobs. After graduation she continued to work on the farm until the evacuation of 1942.

When the War Measures Act took effect in 1942, my grandfather made the decision to leave the restricted zone in order to keep his family together. They left their property and treasures under the promised "protection" of the B.C. Security Commission and went to Calgary to live with relatives for a short time while they tried to find work. The Custodian of Enemy Alien Property, another government agency, took charge of the family's farm and sold it without the consent of my grandfather. My grandfather was "compensated" with less money than he had originally paid for the uncultivated and undeveloped land. Their house and its contents were also disposed of, the family valuables never to be returned. The family who had worked so hard to make a success of their farm and to belong to the community were now dispossessed and displaced "enemies" of their native country.

It was a heart-breaking and bitter time for the family. They became itinerant labourers moving from Calgary to Cochran where they rented land and tried unsuccessfully to grow vegetables. They also worked for Harry Hay Farms milking cows. In 1943 they moved to Picture Butte to work in the sugar beets fields. My father was also working in the fields. He had been moved out from Vancouver where his family had been fishermen for the Celtic Cannery.

For nine years my mother worked in the sugar beets fields for subsistence wages. Through four pregnancies, child raising, and regardless of the weather, the sugar beets and other crops had to be tended. She sometimes talks of the pain of topping (hacking off the tough leaves with machete-type knives) the huge sugar beets, which often grew to weigh as much as eight kilograms. It was the worst in the late fall when the temperatures were freezing.

During those years she lived in a succession of small wooden shacks, first with her family and then with her husband and own children. Typically, these uninsulated buildings were heated by wood or coal stoves. The living space consisted of a bedroom and kitchen with a small storage room or pantry. Well water was boiled for cooking and washing as there was no running water. With no indoor plumbing, outhouses were used all-year round. Kerosene or coal oil lanterns provided lighting. Sugar beet tops, cabbage, beans and chicken were the staple foods. In our old family pictures you can see the small wooden buildings which provided housing from 1943 until 1952.

In 1945 my mother married Shin Endo, the fourth of six sons. My father came from a fishing family and was one of the many Nisei (second generation Japanese Canadian) boys taken back to Japan for their education. He returned to Canada at age twenty speaking only Japanese. His English was never perfected as he had no formal schooling in Canada but he learned to read and write basic English on his own. Since he had carpentry training in Japan he also worked on any available construction jobs in order to supplement his farm wages. My parents had four daughters when they were able to move to Vancouver in 1952.

After my father's death in 1979 my mother sold our old house in South Vancouver and moved to White Rock where she still lives today.

When World War II ended, Grandfather Sakon purchased some acreage in Coalhurst, a small town on the outskirts of Lethbridge, Alberta and grew sugar beets and vegetables. Grandmother Sakon died of cancer in 1956. Grandfather Sakon continued to farm until his death in 1975 at age 91.

Japanese Smelt Fishers of Point Grey by Terry Slack

As a kid growing up in Vancouver in a community near the North Arm of the Fraser River called Blenheim flats, I can remember the Celtic Island gillnet shed and the old bluestone net washing tanks nearby.

During our explorations of the waterfront, we would peek through the wooden shuttered windows of this old shed near the south foot of Blenheim Street, to see bundles of square, brown, cork, smelt floats. The linen smelt twine nets hung from the rafters and beams and could be seen by the light coming through the broken and missing shingles on the roof. An old wooden net wagon with rusty cast iron wheels was left next to the door, waiting for a heavy fish net or a cargo of laughing kids. Down on the dock floats, our friend Miki Minoru stopped painting his gill-netter, **SILVER PRINCESS**, to tell the BLENHEIM STREET KIDS the story of the Japanese Canadian smelt fishermen of Celtic Island.

"*The Japanese families of Celtic Island sure loved their spring smelts from Point Grey*", he said. The community each year in June found the time to fix the smelt skiffs and

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repair the nets for the smelt runs. The smelt gillnet fishing took place usually in the evening on the high tides; this is when the silvery little fish spawned on the pea-sized gravel beaches of the point. Miki continued, "*It was a fun family event. We always built a log fire on the beach, cooked a meal, and with lots of help with the nets had a skiff-full of fish to take home by midnight*".

Miki now stopped talking and went back to the task of painting and as we walked back up the dock ramp some kid said "*I wonder what the Japanese people did with the fish when the boats arrived back here on the island*". A question that was never answered!

As a commercial salmon gill-netter in the 1970s, I can remember the last commercial smelt fisherman who fished near Point Grey. Gunnar Andersen had a smelt shack on Spanish Banks and fished the Point Grey run of smelts. By the 1970s, the huge runs of fish, estimated to be 500,000 pounds (British Columbia catch in 1905) were gone.

In the past, fishermen in the Steveston area remembered the surf smelts spawning on the beaches at the mouth of the Fraser River. Sand dredging over many years has covered the smelt-spawning grounds, making it difficult for the fish to reproduce. Today the smelts of Point Grey and Spanish Banks continue to decline in numbers and recreational fishing therefore has been seriously cut back. As a smelt conservationist, I continue to work on behalf of those wonderful smelts of Point Grey.

Fishermen cleaning their gillnet of surf smelts. (JCNM photo, ca. 1930)

Ucluelet: As It Was Before 1942 by Larry S. Maekawa

continued from last issue

Co-op's Successful Progress

All the salmon caught were shipped to Seattle markets by packer boats. There were no banks in Ucluelet, so the fish sale was cash on delivery. U.S. cash brought in by the packers was the skipper's responsibility. One boatload of salmon brought in eight to ten thousand U.S. dollars. Fishermen were paid U.S. dollars. U.S. cash was common currency in Ucluelet until 1926. Then the Co-op realized the danger of keeping huge amounts of cash in the office. They opened an account at the Royal Bank in Port Alberni, and started paying fishermen by cheque. Ucluelet was truly a unique town.

As for the Japanese housewives, they had an easy but unexciting life, as there were no job or stores to shop. Looking through Eaton's and Simpson's catalogues were their only pleasure. One day a reporter from the Japanese daily paper in Vancouver visited Ucluelet and saw the wives' easygoing lives. He declared that this was a housewife's paradise. When he returned to his office, he wrote a front-page article, which read: "If mothers wish to have their daughters married, send them to Ucluelet."

From 1926, the Co-op began increasing its assets:

1926 – Built thirty-ton packer boat, **LOYAL #1**, at a cost of fifteen

thousand dollars, at Hisaoka Shipyard. Also built the Japanese Language School and the teacher's residence.

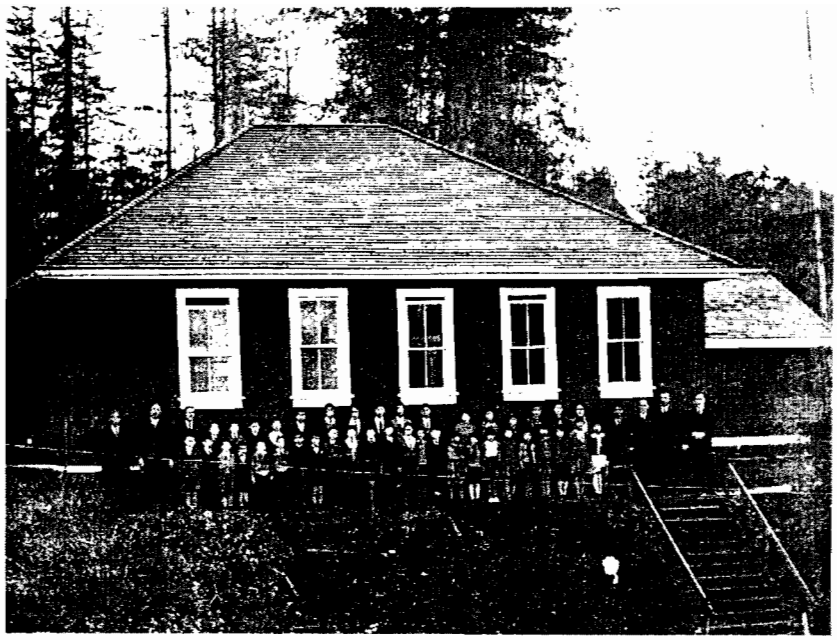
1928 – Built fifty-ton packer boat, **LOYAL #2**, at a cost of twenty-five thousand dollars, at Menchions Shipyard.

1929 – A new floating fish collecting station was built at a cost of ten thousand dollars – a combination of office, bunkhouse and mess hall.

1930 – Fishermen's annual average catch reached two thousand dollars. A number of Japanese fishermen took their families to Japan to visit their parents and relatives for the first time. Some built new trolling boats.

The Great Depression

After the great stock market crash in New York in 1929, the economic slump gradually spread towards the Pacific Coast. Finally in the spring of 1931, the Depression hit the coast like a flash. The price of salmon in Seattle markets plunged to eight cents per pound from twenty-five cents. There was no market for white springs and red springs under fourteen pounds. They had to be thrown back into the ocean.



Students in front of the Japanese Language School and Community Centre. (Larry Maekawa photo, ca.1935)

Fishermen barely made their living until 1935. Around 1936, the economy started to recover, reflected by international complications brewing in Europe.

1936 – Built secretary's residence at Spring Cove.

1937 – Built a second floating station to accommodate the workers.

Emigrants from the Maritimes

Trollers alongside Co-operative fish collecting barge in Spring Cove, Ucluelet Inlet. (Larry Maekawa photo, ca. 1935)

Ucluelet was an exceptional town. The inhabitants of the town were predominantly Japanese- sixty Japanese families to eighteen White families. But they collaborated well. However, at the beginning of the Depression, five fishermen and their families emigrated to Ucluelet from the Maritimes, where the Depression hit the hardest. As soon as they arrived they were startled by the large number of Japanese living in comfort. Their jealousy turned into hatred, and they started to plan measures to expel Japanese out of Ucluelet. They constantly protested to the Department of Fisheries that there were too many Japanese fishermen and they were depleting the salmon population. They were known to the Japanese as the *Gonin Gumi* or the *Gang of Five*. Japanese fishermen were always on their guard against them.

In the summer of 1936, then Minister of Fisheries, J.W. Michaud and his aides came to Ucluelet to make an inquiry into the state of affairs. They came on a destroyer from Victoria. The *Gang of Five* met

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Japanese women and children of Ucluelet. (Larry Maekawa photo, ca. 1935)

them first and made allegations that the Japanese fishermen depleted the salmon off Long Beach and over-fished in the Pacific. Japanese delegates maintained that the absence of salmon off Long Beach was due to the disappearance of pilchards that were over- fished by the seiners operated by White fishermen. Japanese fishermen mainly fished in the International Waters. (In those days the International Waters was three miles off shore). There were three main fishing banks – South West Bank, Ten Mile Bank and the Big Bank. Many Americans fished on these banks. They had much larger boats and better gear. They stayed on the banks two to four days and fished from daybreak to sunset with two men on each boat. The Canadian Fisheries Department was subsidizing the gasoline to the Canadian fishermen by six cents a gallon to encourage them to fish in the deep sea. The Japanese presentation to the Minister had convinced him without doubt that Japanese fishermen were not a threat to the salmon stocks. Consequently the number of Japanese fishermen's licenses were not reduced until the outbreak of U.S. – Japan War in 1941.

In September 1939, war broke out in Europe, and the price of salmon started to escalate. By 1940, the price of salmon climbed to thirty-four cents per pound, and the fishermen were paid twenty-six cents. Their annual catch averaged four thousand dollars. A Ford car could be bought for eight hundred dollars at the time. Fishermen started to build new homes and new and larger boats with high-speed motors. The town of Ucluelet was booming.

World War Two

December 7, 1941 — Sudden attack on Pearl Harbour by the Japanese Navy brought the thriving Japanese life in Ucluelet to an end. Their fruit of eighteen years of sweat and toil was completely devastated. The assets of the Co-op totaled approximately seventy thousand dollars, which is seven million dollars by today's standards.

December 15, 1941 — Japanese fishing boats were impounded. Fishermen were ordered to run their boats to New Westminster Pool. To navigate the rough winter sea was very difficult and treacherous, especially at night. The sky was pitch dark. It was just after a big storm and the swells were over five meters high. The fishermen had never had such a dreadful experience in their lives. They were without food or water for thirty hours until they reached New Westminster.

March 22, 1942 — Japanese families were ordered to evacuate from Ucluelet. They had to pack up and be ready by 10:00 a.m., with only two hours notice. The C.P.R. mail boat, **PRINCESS MAQUINNA**, came to pick them up at the government wharf. No sooner than the ship started to leave, boats were seen dashing towards the vacated Japanese settlement. The men shouted, "There goes the *Gang of Five."* The houses were ransacked and looted in no time. As the ship slipped out of Ucluelet harbour, some men stood at

the aft deck without a word and stared at the entrance of Ucluelet until it disappeared behind the islands.

In reviewing the happenings of the Japanese fishermen in Ucluelet of pre-war days, there are occasions that may offend the White people. I would like to stress clearly that I have not the slightest intention of humiliating the White people, nor am I attempting to bring back the old wounds that have long been healed. I am only writing the conditions as they were to the best of my knowledge. This is a history of Ucluelet as it was before 1942.

Japanese Canadian National Museum Open House

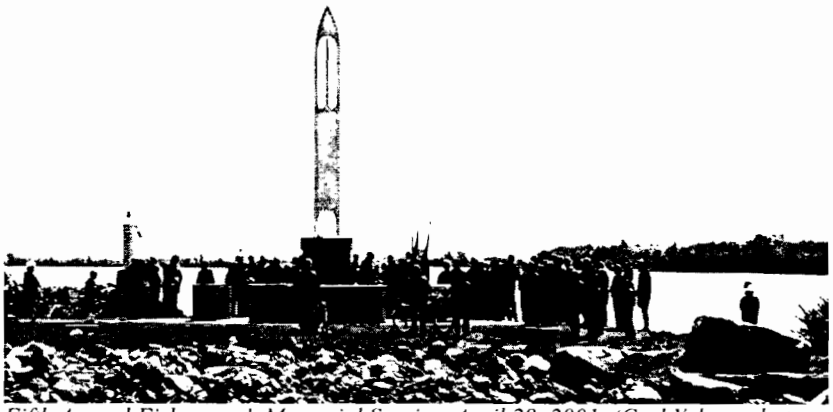
by Frank Kamiya

This year the Open House was held on April 7 with focus on the Family. The Museum displayed family portraits and photographs of ghost town school scenes from our archival collection. Pat Adachi, with assistance from Dr. Midge Ayukawa launched the book "**Teaching in Canadian Exile**" written by Frank Moritsugu and members of The Ghost Town Teachers Historical Society, all from Toronto. Pat kindly signed the few books available to us. More copies are on order and we hope to be selling this excellent book in our Museum Shop.

We wish to thank the following volunteers for providing the delicious desserts: Minnie Hattori, Suni Arinobu, Naomi Kamiya, Kumi Kobayashi, Beverley Yamaura and Hiroko Cummings. We also appreciated the help from David Yamaura, Elmer Morishita, Roy Hamaguchi, Beverley Yamaura, Naomi Kamiya, Kumi Kobayashi, Minnie Hattori and Bev Inouye for the set-up and serving the refreshments. Once again a special thanks to Minnie for coordinating the refreshments.

Lastly, we appreciate the support of the Museum members and friends who attended and also for their generous donations.

A Day of Remembrance by Carl Yokota



Fifth Annual Fishermen's Memorial Service, April 28, 2001. (Carl Yokota photo, 2001)

Nearing 12:00 noon, I quickly made my way down to Steveston's Garry Point Park to attend the fifth annual Fishermen's Memorial Service. This was my first time in attending this special occasion. As in 2000, the memorial service was held on April 28, Canada's national day of mourning for work-related tragedies.

It was an ideal spring day, with blue skies, billowy white clouds, and a light sea breeze to honor those hardy fishermen who perished in pursuit of their livelihood. With a generous gathering of friends, family members and local dignitaries, the memorial service included a formal wreath laying, and several heartwarming speeches, complete with a three-member sea cadet colorguard and two red-uniformed RCMP officers.

The Steveston Fishermen's Memorial is an eye-catching, six fathom-high structure made of cast bronze and aluminum. It is located on the southeast corner of Garry Point Park overlooking the entrance to Steveston harbour and the Fraser River. The cast bronze base's artwork depicts a fishing vessel in turbulent seas, and atop the base sits an enlarged polished aluminum fishermen's net-mending needle. Surrounding the monument and embedded in concrete, is the outline of a ship's compass. Four curved granite sidewalls surround the needle, two of which have displays on their polished black panels of the names of Steveston fishermen and their vessels. There are eighteen Japanese fishermen names engraved on the memorial, one of whom is Masakazu Yokota, my uncle who at age sixteen accidentally drowned

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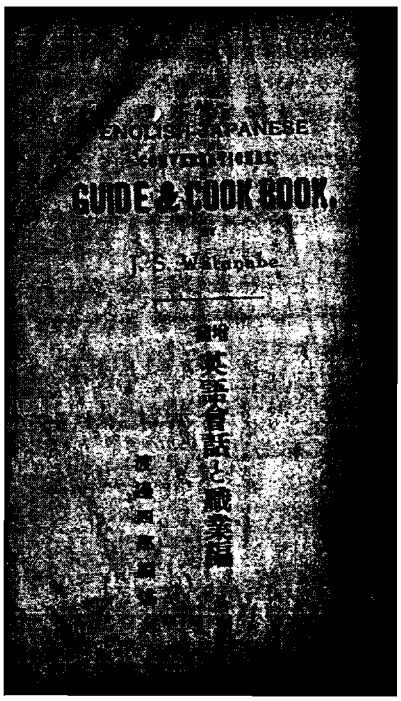
while fishing on the Fraser River in July of 1930.

Nearby is the Kuno Japanese Garden, which was constructed in 1988, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the arrival and contributions of Gihei Kuno who was the first Japanese immigrant to Canada from Mio Village in Wakayama Prefecture. Many descendants of Steveston's Japanese community came from Mio Village. Adjacent to the gardens are a neat row of Japanese cherry blossom trees planted in November, 2000 by members of the B.C. Wakayama Kenjin Kai.

Through the collaborative efforts of many dedicated local groups and individuals, the Steveston Fishermen's Memorial stands as a lasting testament to the courage, skill, and inherent risks associated with commercial fishing. I am glad to have made the time to attend this annual event.

A Guidebook to Living in Canada – 1906 Style!

by Sakuya Nishimura and Susan Michi Sirovyak



Title page of Yotaro Kosaka's guide book. (Mariko Kitamura photo, 1914)

Living in Mie-Ken, Japan in the early 1900s, Yotaro Kosaka often dreamed of moving to "Amerika". From his desk where he worked as a bookkeeper for a large department store, Yotaro enjoyed listening to his employer talk about his trips to North America where he often traveled to on buying excursions. Best of all, Yotaro enjoyed tasting the samples of western style food his employer brought back to the store. Oh, to live in "Amerika" and regularly enjoy the tastes of black tea, coffee and western cooking! This was Yotaro's wish.

In 1907, at the age of 22, Yotaro began his journey to "Amerika", moving first to Hawaii where he worked for 7 years. In 1914, Yotaro caught a boat that was bound for Canada, arriving in Vancouver in 1914. Once in Vancouver, he called over and married his wife, Hisa. Together, Yotaro and Hisa raised seven daughters! There are six surviving siblings who live in Vancouver, Princeton and Ontario.

Yotaro found work at the Empress Jam factory as a labourer. His daughter, Mariko, recalls that it was a hard life for her father. Trained as a bookkeeper, he was not used to the manual labour required of him in the factory. Despite the hardships, Yotaro embraced his new life in Canada. Soon after his arrival to Canada, he registered for night school, studying English, determined to master the language. Extremely literate, Yotaro read 5 or 6 newspapers each evening. His daughter, Mariko recalls that it was often to a crowd who had come to hear the news of the day: "Every night 4 or 5 people would come over and dad would read to them. My sisters and I couldn't go out because we had to serve tea!"

In Canada, Yotaro fulfilled his dreams of eating western style meals. His wife Hisa familiarized herself with Canadian recipes and ingredients. "Every Sunday", Mariko recalls, "Mother would make a western style meal, complete with roast beef, potatoes, and apple pie".

Last spring, the Japanese Canadian National Museum received a donation of books from Jean Okano, Yotaro and Hisa Kosaka's eldest daughter. The collection included a small, well-worn book titled: "**An English – Japanese Conversational Guide and Cook Book**". Its brittle pages enclosed by a brown craft paper cover, the book is a turn-of-the-century guidebook for new immigrants to America. Inscribing his name on the cover and the last page, Yotaro appears to have carried the book everywhere, adding his own notes and recipes and referring to it when he needed assistance.

First published in 1900, the book enjoyed many re-printings; Yotaro's book was the nineteenth edition from the year 1906. It is likely that the popularity of the book was due to the fact that its author, Shiro Watanabe, was very sympathetic to the new immigrant's state of being, often putting himself in the reader's place.

Consisting of 554 pages in total, the book contains short lessons in the English language and a range of useful English phrases to help the newcomer adjust to life in North America. There are various topics of conversation and correspondence including how to talk to immigration officers, how to seek a job, how to shop for groceries, etc. Written in the early 1900s, many of the conversations reflect the language and lifestyle of the era. Some of the

Yotaro and Hisa Kosaka. (Mariko Kitamura photo, 1914)

phrases used are very old-fashioned and many of the activities described are no longer practiced (how to light the kerosene lamp, for example). For each sentence, the author has attached small *kana* letters to the English expression to show the reader the correct pronunciation and to the Kanji, or Chinese, characters in the Japanese expressions for readers who might not otherwise know the meaning. This was an author who knew just what the average reader needed, creating a very "user-friendly" guide.

A second section of the book is devoted to providing occupational advice for the new immigrant. Many sample conversations are aimed specifically for domestic "houseboys" with instructions on making beds, cleaning silver, etc. Some of the English-Japanese instructions the houseboy should learn illustrate the subservient nature of the job many new immigrants were forced to accept: "Come right away when I ring the bell", or "When somebody comes, show him to the parlour". Other work-related instructions for prospective employees include "You will need your own work clothes to harvest fruit or dig sugar beets in countryside jobs", or "Salmon fishing on the Fraser River is a temporary job that lasts only a few weeks during the summer".

A third section of the book contains detailed recipes and general instructions for cooking western style meals. Included is a complete menu for an entire week's worth of breakfast, lunch and dinner entrees. There are recipes for everything from corned beef and cabbage to strawberry shortcake. Interspersed throughout this section are handwritten recipes that Yotaro has added for dandelion wine, root beer and *yokan* (Japanese sweet bean jelly). One such recipe has been scratched onto the back of an envelope dated 1949, indicating that Yotaro used the book for many years.

This little guidebook has opened our eyes to the life of the early Issei and their struggles and joys of adjusting to a new life in Canada. Holding the book with its softly tattered cover, we feel that we have glimpsed into the life of Yotaro Kosaka.

The original donor of the book, Mrs. Jean Okano, passed away in March 2000. She asked Kinue Watanabe, administrator for the New-Sakura-so Senior's residence where she lived, to donate the collection to the Museum. We have since contacted some of the other family members, including Jean's sister, Mariko Kitamura, who currently resides in Vancouver. We are grateful to Jean and her family for their assistance in helping us to piece together the story of Yotaro Kosaka'a 1906 guidebook.

Does Anyone Know?

I am researching boxing in the Nikkei communities of the Pacific Northwest and Hawaii before 1950, and my findings have been published by the Japanese American National Museum and the online Journal of Combative Sport at http://ejmas.com.

Between 1932 and 1948, the Japanese Canadian Katsumi Morioka was among the world's best Nikkei boxer whose (incomplete) professional record includes 55 wins (7 by knockout), 16 draws, and 44 losses (8 by knockout). Newspaper research suggests that Morioka was born in New Westminster, BC, in 1918, under the name of Katsumi Inomata. His father died when he was six and his mother when he was eleven, and so from 1929 until 1940, he lived with the Jack Russell family of Lulu Island, BC. In 1940, he moved to Toronto, where he worked as a carpenter. In August 1941 he enlisted in the Queen's Own Rifles, and he subsequently served with the Canadian Forces in Britain and France. Following World War II, he returned to North America, and was last seen boxing in upstate New York in late 1948.

Unfortunately I have no photos, verified details of his life, or other information. As a result, I cannot write anything sensible about the man, which is unfortunate. Therefore any information or leads would be greatly appreciated.

Please write me: Joseph Svinth, PO Box 1694, Lynnwood, WA 98046-1694 USA or email jrsvinth@juno.com.

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