



The Story of Tagami Bros. Lumber by Tom I. Tagami

Even though all restrictions on people of Japanese decent in Canada were lifted on April 1, 1949, when they regained citizenship as equal Canadians, discrimination still existed. I would like to write about how we fought those who opposed us when we decided to bid on a timber sale put up by the government on Crown land, about two miles south of Slocan City. Bidding on timber parcels was something we were restricted from doing before April 1, 1949. This timber was put up for bid in April 1951. At the time, there were still about 25 - 30 Japanese families living in Slocan and slightly more in New Denver. Sale of the timber parcel to Japanese Canadians was strongly opposed by some non-Japanese residents in the Slocan Valley. These people had earned more money than they ever had before, when close to 10,000 Japanese were interned in the old hotels of Slocan and houses built in Lemon Creek, Popoff and Bay Farm. They opened up stores to sell goods to internees, or bought trucks to haul baggage and cordwood for the BC Security Commission. When we decided to bid on the timber sale, we soon found who the true friends of the Japanese were.

Two Swedes owned a small sawmill near Slocan Lake, and they were very cooperative; however, they sold the sawmill to two Slocan old-timers who had lived there most of their lives and figured the timber around Slocan belonged to them.



From the left; Tom, Frank, Yoshiro and Suyeo Tagami, all dressed up for New Years in Slocan, B.C. (Courtesy Tagami Family, ca 1948)

So they were bitterly opposed to Japanese Canadians bidding against them. The mayor of Slocan City and a few other Caucasians who were friends of the Japanese approached me one day and asked me if we would

re-consider bidding on the timber sale, as we were getting people riled up. So I told them that we had to make a living the same as anybody else. We were now on equal footing

Continued on page 2

Contents

The Story of Tagami Bros. Lumber	1
A Search for Kilns in Japan	6
Masako Hori	8
The Saito Berry Legacy	11
Japanese Canadian National Museum Report - Winter 2005	15
Peter Shoji Yamauchi	17
Lest We Forget	18
Things that were Left Behind	19
Nikkei Logging on the North Shore	21
Lumber Industry Material from the Museum Collection	22

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Things Japanese & Garage Sale

May 13, 2006

10:30 A.M.- 2:30 P.M.

Hosted by the NNMHC Auxiliary
Donations of items graciously accepted.

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Stack of logs piled up for start up of sawmill in April at Bay Farm, B.C. (Courtesy Tagami Family, ca 1952)

so we would not change our minds.

As the day of the sale approached, the old-timers started a petition and had a few hundred signatures of people from New Denver and down through the Slocan Valley. They were going to have the local Liberal MLA, Howard Parker, who had taught Japanese students and operated a store in Lemon Creek, take the petition to the legislature in Victoria to try to prevent us from bidding on the timber sale or cancel it. They even went as far as alleging that my older brother wasn't Canadian-born, until they found out differently. As time went on they found out there was no way of stopping us.

By this time, being a seasoned veteran of outsmarting the BC Security Commission, I was ready to take on anybody. Two Japanese businessmen from Slocan City who were Board of Trade members in New Denver were pressured by the President to talk us into backing off, as we were creating havoc and they felt it wasn't good for the remaining Japanese community. So I told them to go back and fight with us instead.

Dr. Robinson from New Denver

came to Slocan City every second week to check on old people and others. I knew him well, as he always came to the house to see how Dad was doing. He talked to me one day and said, "Tom, I know you and your brothers have the right to bid on the timber sale coming up. But there'll be other sales coming up, so let them have this one." I told him it was a matter of principle, and that we had been deprived of our rights until then. But because we finally stood on equal ground, nobody would be able to stop us unless they outbid us. He said, "I don't blame you," and wished us the best of luck.



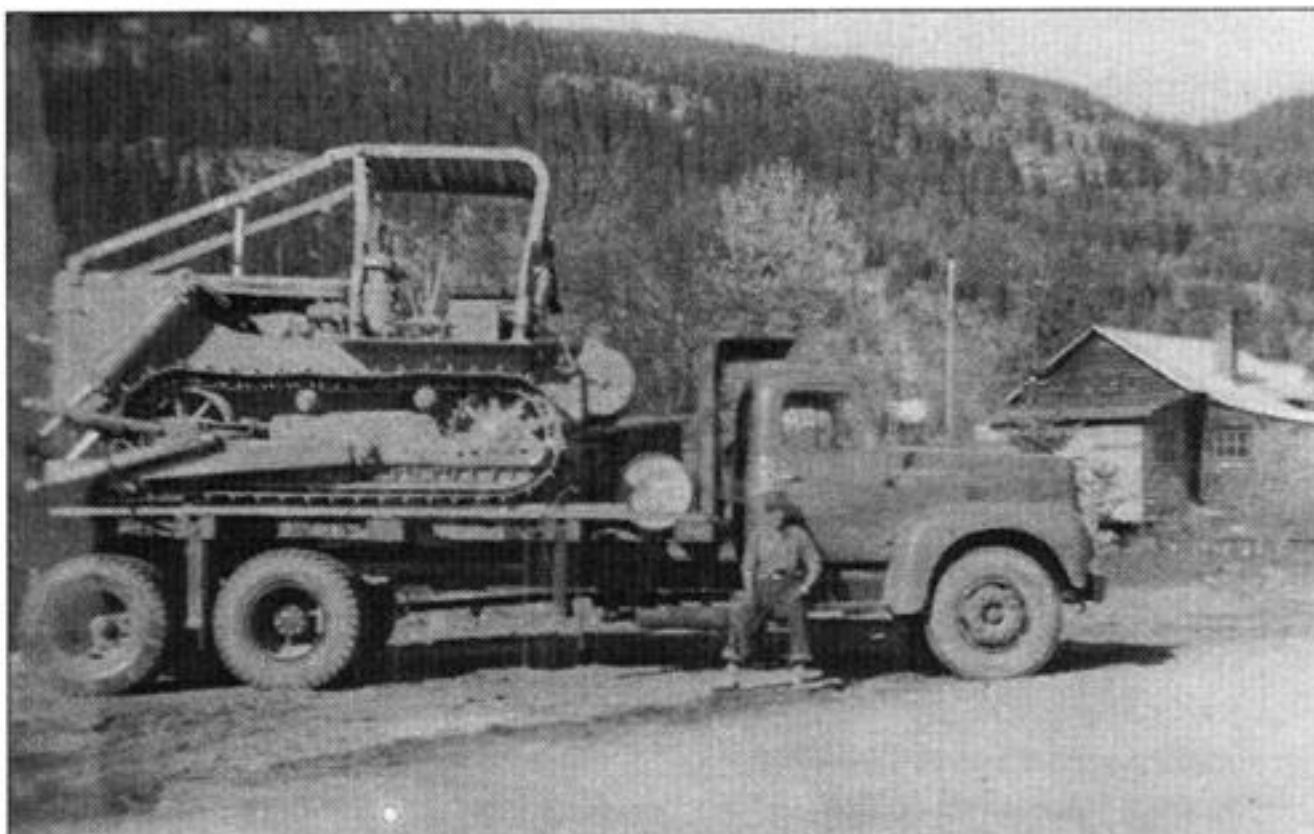
Tagami family's first new 1951 Ford truck with load of logs for their mill. (Courtesy Tagami Family, ca 1951)

Lastly, the head forest ranger from New Denver and the head ranger in Slocan City came to see us and said, "We'll let you have any equivalent parcel of timber you want in the Slocan Valley," if we would not bid on the timber up for sale. I told them, "Thanks but no thanks, we are not backing off for anyone, as there is no law that we are not allowed to bid on any government timber sales." We would be there at the day of the sale and if anybody outbid us, the timber would be his.

We had cut a bunch of cedar poles in the summer of 1949, dripping with sweat amidst clouds of no-see-ums. This hard work made us a few bucks. So the day before the timber sale, I went to our bank in Nelson and asked the teller to give me three thousand dollars in twenty-dollar bills. On the day of the sale we plunked the roll of bills on the desk to show we were ready to bid.

When the ranger announced that the bidding was open, a lot of people were there, but we were the only bidder and purchased the timber at the upset price set by the government. We made a deposit of 10% of the total stumpage that the government would get.

We had little experience at sawmilling, but had worked for gypo* outfits and learned about it, so decided to give it a try. There was an old sawmill near the CPR "Y" in Bay Farm, so we fixed it up and started a sawmill with nothing in our pockets. We bought a new 3-ton Ford truck to haul logs and rough-cut lumber to Passmore, where we sold the lumber to Burns Lumber Co. Ltd., who operated a mill there. We had actually worked for this company in 1948. We five brothers did the falling and bucking ourselves and paid a Caucasian farmer who lived close by to skid the logs with his horse. Three of us worked in our sawmill, along



Tom Tagami with 5-ton international tag axle truck with D6 Caterpillar in Slocan, B.C. (Courtesy Tagami Family, ca 1957)

with hired hands.

About six months later, the old-timers – our competitors – applied for another chunk of timber to be sold. The BC Security Commission had not cut the timber, as they didn't have the equipment to build roads up the steep slope to reach the timber. We let word out that we were going to bid for that timber, too. It was on the opposite side of the Slocan River, near Lemon Creek. The gypo guy we worked for said there was lots of good timber on the property next to his, and that the BC Security Commission had only logged the easy portion on the flat. We took a walk through the timber, and found that it pretty near went to the top of Perry Ridge.

When the bidding price of the stumpage on a particular area came up, we went to see the fellow who owned the adjoining property, and he said he would sell us the timber on the condition that he had first choice of using the road built through his property. When our competitors heard about it, they thought, "Oh! He's my neighbour so I'm going to make a deal for his timber, too." Our competitors had parcels on both sides

of Slocan Lake from which they could get their supply of logs – the timber that the BC Security Commission didn't cut – but they wanted all the timber. Fortunately, we had already made a deal. It was in our favour that they had been next-door neighbours for years, and weren't very friendly. We told our competitors that we wouldn't bid on the timber they put up for sale, but would flip coins with them for it. We lost, so he got the government timber parcel for the upset price, and we didn't have to pay any more than the upset price for the private timber we had a deal with. We kind of outsmarted them by being a step ahead, by dealing with their neighbour.

We had to build a few miles of road, and one of our competitors had part of his timber parcel above the private timber, so we made a deal that he would pay half of the cost of any road we built if he used it, and if we used any road he built, we would pay half the cost. We didn't have a Caterpillar or bulldozer then, so we had to hire one to build roads for us and it cost \$1,800. In addition to the work done by my brothers

Continued on page 4

and me, we also contracted out two horse-powered logging operations to keep our mill supplied with logs. The private timber we logged sparingly, saving it in case we ever ran short.

Once our sawmill and logging operations were up and running, we formed a company called Tagami Bros. Lumber Co. Ltd., Slocan City, BC. It was about 20 miles one way to haul our lumber to Passmore, and we didn't like our truck coming back empty, so we started to buy logs from the farmers along the highway and back roads. At first it went perfectly, but the farmers started needing roads built to reach their timber. Our competitors had a D4 cat, but would only build roads if the farmers sold the logs to them directly. This created a problem for us – if we were going to compete for logs, we needed a cat to build roads also. So we went to Nelson and purchased a used D4 Cat that we could afford, and built roads for the farmers between Passmore and Slocan City. Our competitors had taken advantage of the people down the valley, so when we treated them properly, they were all willing to sell logs to us.

In the meantime, we had become friends with a mining prospector who held quite a few mineral claims here and there. We started logging his claims towards New Denver way, and this didn't go over well with our competitors. The winters were cold and we used to get about four feet of snow in our backyard, so we usually closed the sawmill for four months during the winter. One day, the water line crossing the road to our house froze up. I knew that our competitors had a half share of an electric welder, so I went to ask one of them if he would thaw the frozen water line and restore running water to our house. He was one whom we had argued with, and refused to thaw our water



Ichiro and Suyeo Tagami getting winch ready for start up. (Courtesy Tagami Family, ca 1957)

line, so instead I had to drive fifteen miles to find another fellow with an electric welder. After all that, it only took about ten minutes to thaw out the water line.

Later on, one of the Swedes came back from his holiday and came to apologize to me for the dirty tactics of the other half owner. He said that if he had been there, he would have thawed the water line for nothing, as a person's family life has nothing to do with business. I thanked him and let him know that if our competitor wanted to be that way, I had an "ace in the hole" to get even with him.

Our competitor was contracted to plough the streets in Slocan City when it snowed, and also held the contract to plough about three miles of back roads for the government. One day their TD-14 Cat broke down during a heavy snowfall. The mayor of Slocan asked us if we could plough the city streets instead. I said we would be glad to do it and I took my time to clean the snow away from people's garage entrances and to clear walkways for the elderly people. Our competitor used to plough wet snow against people's

driveways, and it would be solid ice if not shoveled away immediately. I had that experience when their young guys would plough snow. The couple of times I ploughed the streets when their cat was broken down, everybody thanked me for it, so I asked them to tell the mayor they'd sooner have me do the snowplowing than our competitor. The next year, the city gave me the contract.

The farmers who lived three miles out on the back roads had a harder time than those in Slocan City, because they had to shovel about 1,000 feet of snow from their homes to the main road. Our competitor, who held the government snowplowing contract, would not go onto private property. Many of the farmers were in their 50s and older, and it's hard work shoveling snow two to four feet deep. Since our competitor refused to help them, I used to plow snow up to their homes, go in, have a cup of coffee, and then plowed the rest of their roads clean. Another couple lived a little ways off the main road, so I used to do the same for them. They came and thanked me and asked, "Why don't you plow the back roads?" I told them to talk to the guy who was in charge of roads in our district, and they did that, so I was also awarded the contract to plow all the back roads for the government. A little bit of kindness goes a long way.

The day came when I was able to use my "ace in the hole" to get even with our competitors. One of the partners wanted to access their timber parcel close to where we were logging the private timber. This was the timber sale that we had flipped for and lost. There was about 500,000 board feet of good timber in that parcel, and I had built the road right up to it with our own cat. I said, "Just a minute, before you go any further, you'll have to pay for

half of the road we built, which will cost \$900. We made a deal when we started." He was kind of startled and said he'd have to talk to his partner about it first.

When I got home that night, his partner came over to my place and said it was too much. I said, "If the shoe were on the other foot, you'd make us pay our share." He said he would take it to court and went home fuming mad. The next day, the head forest ranger of Slocan came to see me. "I hear you got your opposition over a barrel, eh!" I replied, "They wanted to be dirty, so this is my 'ace in the hole' I kept to use against them." He said, "It makes it bad for me, because if they log off all they bid for, I would have to tell them to forfeit their 10 percent deposit for not completing their contract." He asked, "Why don't you let them use your road?" and I said, "A deal is a deal and I'm sticking it to them now." He didn't know what to do, but I guess they got together with the head ranger in Nelson and let them off the hook somehow.

About a month later, I went to see the head ranger because we got along good. I said I wanted to put a parcel of trees up for timber sale including the piece our opposition didn't log, and he said he would be in trouble, as he gave our opposition their 10 percent deposit back in full. I said, "That's your problem, not mine." He filled in my application for the timber sale and it came through, so we cleaned the merchantable timber to the top of the mountain.

The competitors' kids were used to hunting around the Slocan hills, so they knew little parcels of timber here and there. One winter, 1953, they put a parcel along the New Denver highway up for sale, ideal for



Tagami Bros. Lumber Co. Ltd. sawmill at Bay Farm in Slocan, B.C. (Courtesy Tagami Family, ca 1954)

them to log in the wintertime. One of the boys came to my house and asked, "Are you going to bid on the timber sale we put up?" and I said we might. The next day his Dad came and said, "You haven't even been up to see the timber we put up for sale." So I told him, "Why should we go tramping through the snow in the cold looking for timber? If you can make money logging it, we can too." Anyhow, I felt sorry for the young guys, so I sent two of my younger brothers to New Denver the next day

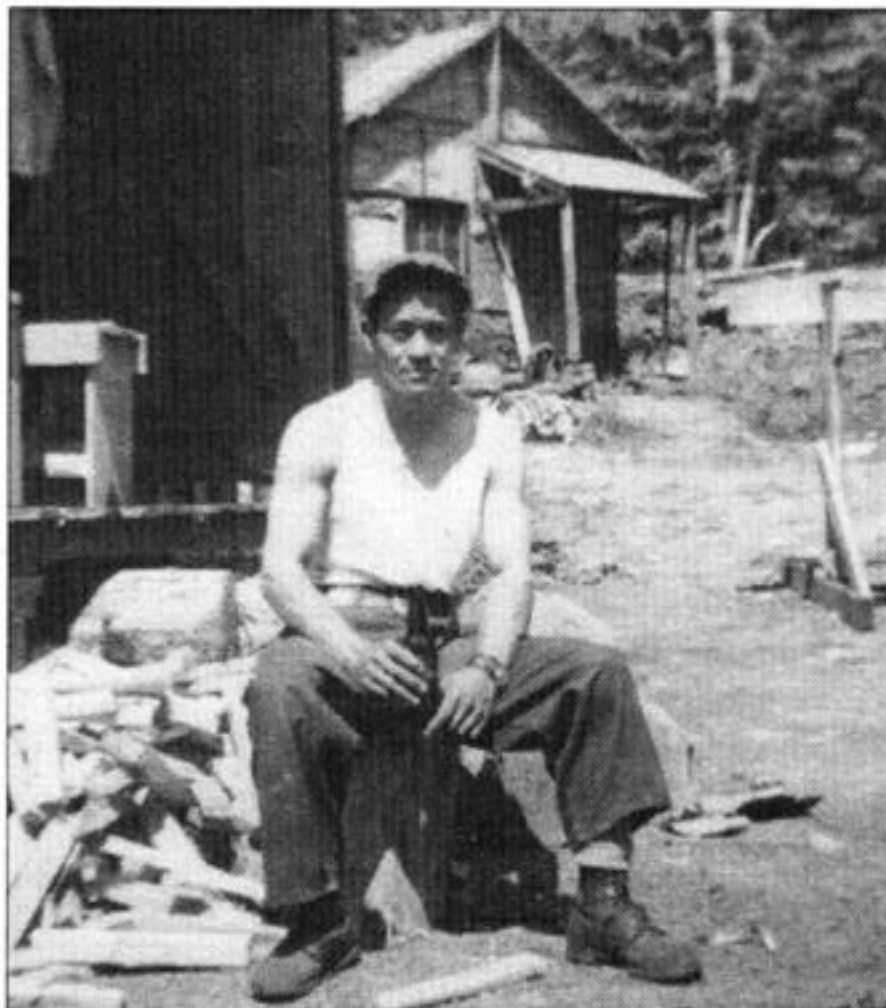
and they talked the guys into flipping a coin for it. We won this time, and when their Dad heard about it, he came over to my house. I told him, "We gave you a chance by flipping a coin for it, and we won this time."

"If you want to give us a bad time," I said, "we'll match you any day. Look for some timber for us. You wanted to play dirty, so we gave you back some of it." They eventually sold out to another fellow and retired. Their kids knew it was a fight between their elders and us, so they respected us and were friendly from then on.

We operated our sawmill from 1951 to June 1960, until our supply of logs was gone. There is never a dull moment when somebody tries to give the Tagami's a bad time. ♦

**Gypo: Independent logger who usually runs small-scale logging operation.*

This article was written by the late Tom I. Tagami and edited by his granddaughter, Reiko Tagami.



Tom Tagami taking five and having a beer at Woodbury Creek. (Courtesy Tagami Family, ca 1950)

A Search for Kilns in Japan – 1996 by Jackson Hirota



*Yukio Yamamoto alongside the Malaspina University College noborigama.
(Courtesy Jackson Hirota, ca. 2000)*

Since I was born in Canada, my desire to visit Japan was not necessarily a priority in my life. What is ironic is that my interest in Japan was cultivated through art rather than through my ancestry.

As children, we were always exposed to Japanese art through prints, embroidery, sculpture and pottery. When my siblings and I grew up we turned to our own professions (my brother, sister and I became teachers).

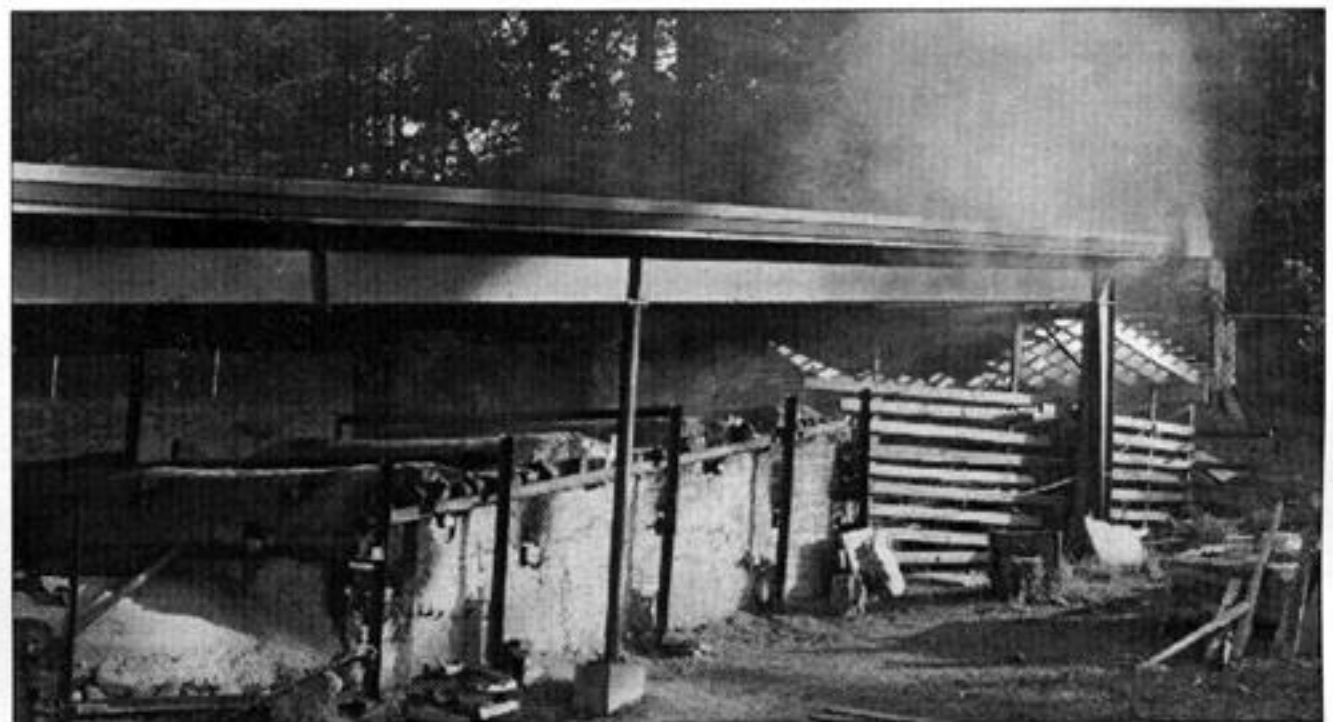
I had a great interest in art - especially in ceramics. When I took a ceramic history course as something to compliment my ceramic hobby, I was hooked into more studies. I was fascinated with Chinese and Japanese ceramic history. Their history of pottery started thousands of years ago. The

Chinese speaking countries, Korea and Japan had clay that could be fired to high temperatures. If all things were equal why did Japan become the modern world class producer of ceramics? There is no doubt China

was the original leading source of pottery; however, China influenced Korea and eventually the source of advancement in ceramics reached Japan.

By 1600, Korea had the superior climbing multiple chambered kiln which economized the heat by passing it upward to the next chamber. Originally the single bottle shaped kiln was dug out into the clay slope (anagama), then the climbing kiln (noborigama) was invented. Both types are still used today. Because of the superior technology of the noborigama, the Koreans were more advanced in ceramics.

Into the above history of ceramics we had a Japanese general in about 1600 who decided to attack Korea to gain fame and fortune. This endeavor was not fully successful; however, the general and other superiors kidnapped many Korean potters and their families and took them to Japan. The motive seemed uncertain but the kidnappers knew what they were doing. In order to win favours from the emperor, the lords of the castles had to have excellent potters to produce quality pots for the emperor's eye.



The Malaspina University College noborigama during firing. (Courtesy Jackson Hirota photo, ca. 2000)

Concurrent to the above motives, there were tea ceremony masters who had keen eyes for asymmetrical shaped tea bowls. It took me about a year to understand and fully accept this irregular "rough" look that attracted the Japanese tea masters. Once I recognized the beauty of such pottery, I was convinced that there was something attractive and spiritual about these types of ceramics. Some people claim that their tea bowls call them to be used for tea.

Thus the Korean technology with their kilns jumpstarted the already existing pottery in Japan. The noborigama fame spread all over Japan and eventually to other countries.

In 1995 Yukio Yamamoto from Himeji, Japan, came to Nanaimo, B.C., to help the Tozan Cultural Society build two kilns on the campus of Malaspina University College. The noborigama (4 chambers) and the anagama (single chamber) were built and fired to 1305 degrees Celsius or 2381 degrees Fahrenheit. We will be celebrating our 10th anniversary this year. Since the college is running out of space, we will move next year to an uncertain location.

Our kilns have the same name as Yukio's kilns in Japan - Tozan Kilns. Prior to 1868 in Himeji near Himeji Castle, there were kilns which made Tozan pottery. Although Himeji is not famous for pottery, it did make blue and white stoneware from imported clay from other parts of Japan. However, since 1868 when Japan was forced to open up the country to the demands of the western world, Japan dismantled the samurai status; therefore, the feudal lords were no longer necessary.

Pottery in Himeji ceased until Yukio Yamamoto introduced it again by building his own kilns in



Interior view of the noborigama after firing. (Courtesy Jackson Hirota, ca. 2000)

1954. As Yukio excelled in his profession, he was asked by the Tozan Historical Cultural Society to take on the "Tozan" name. He accepted the title and in turn we have now received the same name.

In the 1980's Yukio traveled to Flagstaff, Arizona and built a noborigama at the campus of Northern Arizona University. This was the first Tozan kiln outside of Japan. In 1995 Yukio built the second Tozan kiln outside of Japan. In Canada our Tozan kiln is the largest climbing kiln. With all 4 chambers full it can hold over 1500 pots.

In 1996, I was invited to visit Himeji, Japan where Yukio Yamamoto lived. I had the honour of firing with him and later I visited 10 wood kilns and videotaped them. My area of research took me to southern Honshu Island and the southern part of Shikoku Island. Since my grandparents came from Yuge Island, located between Honshu and Shikoku I had a very pleasant experience visiting Yuge and seeing a distant relative who was the only potter on the small island. I also had the pleasure of meeting

some of my relatives.

My journey to Japan in search of wood kilns took me to many areas and the videotaping of kilns was exciting. Seeing the beauty of the countryside in Yuge Island enabled me to understand why my parents had fond memories of their childhoods. Although my parents were born in Canada, they received their elementary school education in Japan. Their lives were influenced by both cultures, whereas with me I was essentially brought up as a Canadian, but indirectly influenced by Japanese culture through my parents. I have the best of two cultures, especially since I have inherited most of my parents Japanese pottery and thanks to Yukio I can still fire the Tozan kiln. ☸

Artist/Craftsman Series No. 7

Masako Hori: Creating an Awareness of Traditional Japanese Art Forms by Nancy Berke and Grace Morissette



*"Stream of Light", a sumi-e painting.
(Courtesy Masako Hori, ca 2004)*

A room at the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre is a bustle of activity as students organize paper, brushes, ink and grinding stones for Masako Hori's popular *sumi-e* class. *Sumi-e* refers to ink painting, a brushwork technique which originated in China as a form

of calligraphy, but was assimilated by the Japanese in the 14th century. *Sumi-e* is indeed very beautiful to look at, but it is more than a picture – it is an expression of the artist's emotions rather than realism. *Sumi-e* painting is a spiritual exercise and incorporates both meditation and poetry into its form.

Sumi-e painting involves more than outward appearances – this statement applies to the instructor, as well. Masako Hori was born in 1931 in Kamloops, B.C. Masako's parents desired that the eldest of their eight children obtain firsthand knowledge of Japanese language and culture so she was sent, as a five-year-old, to stay with relatives in Japan. Due to the onset of World War II, however, Masako was unable to return to her family in Canada and, as a result, she experienced the war from a perspective different from other Japanese-Canadians.

A few memories of the devastation that Masako witnessed during the war still remain with her. She



Masako in front of giant climbing kiln at Shigaraki, Japan. (Courtesy Masako Hori, date unknown)

witnessed the overnight destruction of her house and school in the Shizuoka Prefecture. She remembers that as she fled with relatives during the evacuation of Shizuoka, they had to step over countless blackened bodies in the streets. After the war, she recalls seeing the homeless and destitute wandering the streets amidst the black marketers whose backpacks were filled with anything they could sell or trade.

Yet, in spite of the horrors she witnessed during the war in Japan, Masako remembers much kindness and generosity. At the age of 13, still unable to return to Canada to be with her own family, Masako was welcomed into the homes of numerous relatives, even though they were barely able to feed their own families. These relatives provided her with food and shelter, and cared for her while she waited to return home.

In 1948, after spending 12 years in Japan, Masako was finally able to return to Canada to be with her



Some of Masako's pottery on display in her studio. (Courtesy Masako Hori, ca 2004)

parents and siblings. Masako found that integration into the Canadian educational system was difficult due to her limited English skills, so she decided to enter a diploma program in fashion design, tailoring, drafting and clothing construction. After receiving her diploma, Masako was able to utilize these skills and talents and was self-employed as a seamstress for over 20 years.

Masako married Isamu in 1955 and raised three girls. She worked out of the family home until the youngest of her children reached school age. In the early 1970s, Masako decided to register for post-secondary courses to broaden her knowledge in several



Masako with Prince Akihito. (Courtesy Masako Hori, ca 1981)



Tuesday sumi-e class at NNMHC. (Courtesy Masako Hori, ca 2004)

areas of interest. She completed a variety of classes in the Visual Arts Program at Douglas College, including oil and watercolour painting, art history, ceramics and glaze calculation. She studied under the late Fred Owen whose love for the aesthetics and craftsmanship of Asian ceramics and art influenced all those who studied with him. To augment her artistic skills, Masako also participated in numerous workshops on pottery, glazing and watercolour through the Burnaby Arts Centre and Douglas College.

Masako embarked on a new and

very successful career in ceramics, opening her own artist studio in Burnaby. Her pottery is unique in its *sumi-e* style brushwork and the serendipitous marriage of beauty (in both the pottery shape and painting) and functionality. Masako's pottery reflects her biographical history and is an expression of her emotions – much like her *sumi-e* creations. The hardships she experienced in Japan have instilled in her a desire to create pottery, which is not only appreciated for its artistic value, but also for its functionality. "I would like people who receive my pottery to find fulfillment

Continued on page 10



Thursday sumi-e class at NNMHC. (Courtesy Masako Hori, ca 2004)



Lantern-making workshop. (Courtesy Masako Hori, ca 2004)

and reward,” Masako explains. The analogy she uses to further illustrate this concept is that of a baby who sleeps with a full stomach; there is a smile on the baby’s face and this, in turn, makes the mother happy. People who own Masako’s pottery will enjoy the utility of each piece, but will also enjoy its beauty. Knowing that people will enjoy her pottery gives Masako both satisfaction and pleasure.

Masako has completed study tours of Japan where she was able to visit art galleries and pottery manufacturing sites. She toured the kiln and pottery work sites of revered Japanese master artist potters in places such as Kiyoto Mashiko, Tokoname Imari, and Shigaraki. She also had the honour and privilege of working with Japanese pottery master craftsmen during one of her study tours.

One of Masako’s most memorable moments occurred during a 1981 journey to Japan as a member of a Canadian delegation of business representatives – she met and shook hands with Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko (now the Emperor and Empress of Japan).

The study of *sumi-e* painting developed as a natural progression of Masako’s rich background and her dedication to explore and study fine arts. In order to develop her artistic

skills, she took a *sumi-e* class from Mrs. Takeda. Since 1987, Masako has been volunteering her time to teach *sumi-e* painting at various venues such as the Strathcona Community Centre, the Vancouver Japanese Language School, the Vancouver United Church and, most recently, the National Nikkei Heritage Centre. She has displayed her artwork and demonstrated her talents at events and venues such as the Japanese Pavilion at Expo ’86, the Bayshore Inn, the Powell Street Festival, Showcase 2000 and Showcase 2002 at the Jack Shadbolt Centre and Burnaby Arts Centre. In addition, Masako has helped to develop and present seminars and demonstrations for various public schools and community centers throughout the Lower Mainland, and she has assisted in the development of educational programs for elementary and high school students at the National Nikkei Heritage Centre and the Japanese Canadian National Museum.

Masako’s contributions to the Japanese Canadian community have not gone unnoticed. As a result of her dedication to creating an awareness of and educating others in traditional Japanese art forms, she was nominated for a Living Heritage Award at the 2002 Explorasian Canadian Heritage Award Ceremony presented

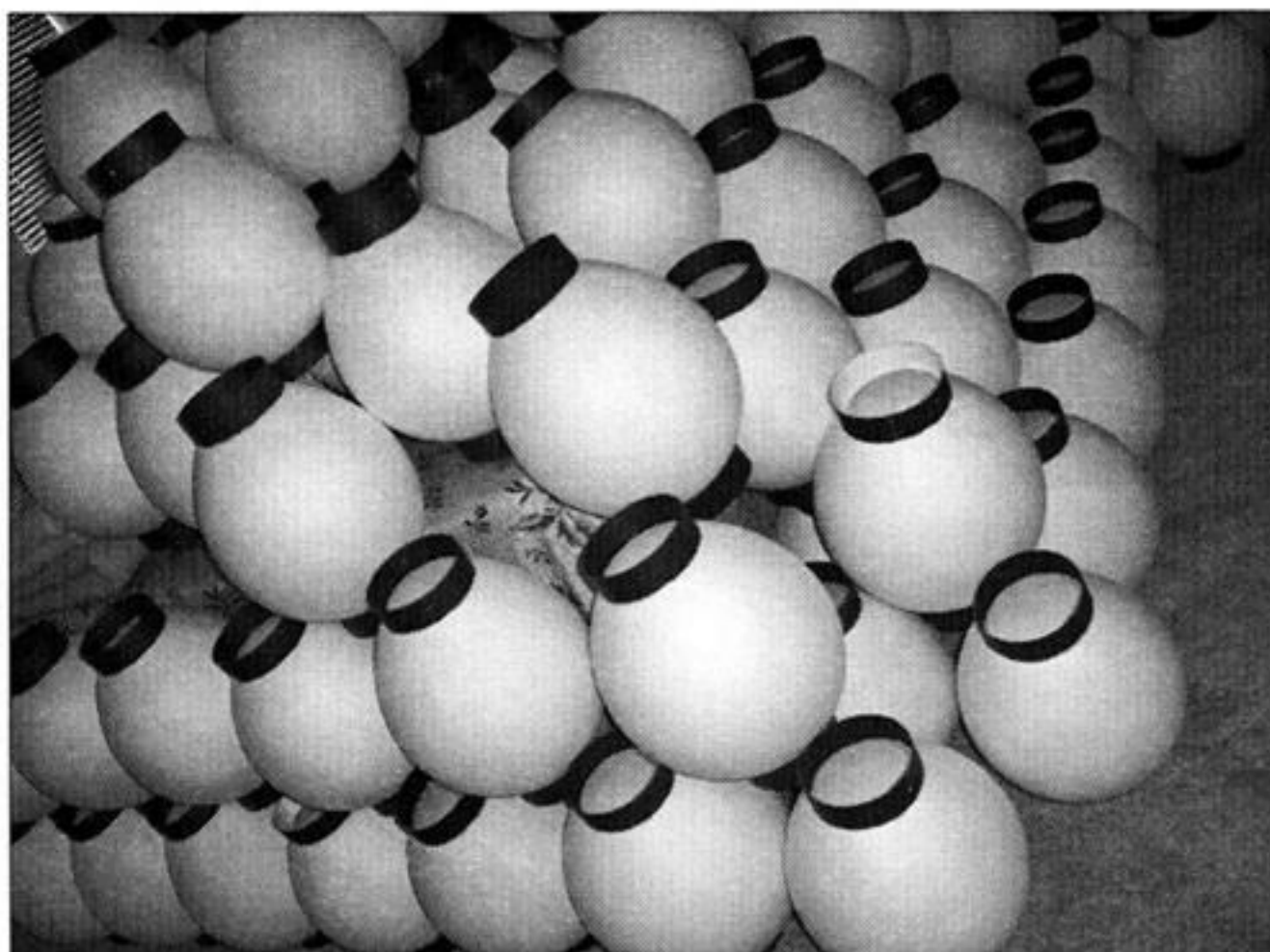
by the Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society. Masako received many letters expressing support for her nomination.

Masako sees the traditional Japanese arts as a continuum. An example she uses to illustrate this connection is the tea ceremony – a potter made the cup in which to serve tea, and a brushwork artist created the *sumi-e* scroll for the tea ceremony room. This continuum also exists within the artists themselves because they are always progressing, combining and developing their skills. Masako admits that the enjoyment she gets from instructing *sumi-e* is heightened because she feels that she is also learning from her students.

Masako’s most recent project was for the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre’s 5th Anniversary Garden Show. With the help of her husband, Isamu, she constructed over one hundred lanterns for the celebration. Masako also presented lantern-making workshops for the NNMHC.

Masako Hori has been sharing her specialized knowledge of Japanese art forms for many years. Her work in the community and in the local arts scene has not only helped preserve the traditional Japanese arts, it has also encouraged Canadians to either connect, or reconnect,

with Japanese culture and tradition. Many Japanese arts represent not just a unique and beautiful art form, but also a philosophy. Masako not only represents the traditional values that everyone can enjoy, but also a lifetime of unforgettable experiences, dedication and training. She is shy about her accomplishments and quick to acknowledge that she would not have been successful in her endeavours over the past thirty years had it not been for the support she has received, both at work and at home, from her family, friends and community. She is grateful for this support as are all those who benefit from her knowledge and skill. ❀



A sampling of lanterns made for NNMHC 5th Anniversary Garden Show. (Courtesy Masako Hori, ca 2004)

Family History Series No. 4

The Saito Berry Legacy By Michael Saito



Clockwise from top left: Senjuro, Kane, Tatsuo and Shohe. (Courtesy Saito Family, ca 1919)

Both of my paternal grandparents, passed away before I was born, so as a child I knew very little of Senjuro and Kane Saito, of *Shizuoka*-prefecture, Japan. Mixed memories

of the internment years resulted in my parents not really talking about the internment and/or family history. My mother, particularly, never liked to talk about it. As a child, I recall when there were family conversations about the internment, Mom would tell us of cold hard winters in the Prairies. Difficult times. Not yet a teenager, she had to work in the sugar beet fields with her parents, or she had to take care of her younger siblings while her parents were out in the fields all day. From a kid's perspective, it didn't sound very pleasant.

Then Dad would tell us his version. Rather than being uprooted to an internment camp, or to the sugar beet farms, his father took the family and moved to the B.C. interior. For a short period they lived in Westwold, southeast of Kamloops. Dad told us that when they moved to this place, the local school wouldn't let him and his siblings attend. So Dad, and his

father, would spend the days fishing down at the local creek. I pictured sunny days, sitting on the grass, fishing for trout while the other kids were in school. Wow! At this point, Mom would usually give Dad heck for making it sound like internment time was fun. Then, as if to darken things up a bit, he would tell us how cold it was in Kamloops in the winter, and how their house was so close to the tracks that the train would shake them out of bed at night. It still sounded like fun.

Since then, I have learned more about the Saito family, and the internment, and I have a better understanding and appreciation of what happened. From the Gold Rush, to Saito-berries in Pitt Meadows, to Saito-tomatoes in Kamloops, and then back to the Lower Mainland, the story of my father's family is not entirely typical of Japanese internment tales. But it is certainly worth

Continued on page 12



Clockwise from top left: Shohe, Minoru, Tatsuo, Kikue, Hitoshi and Masao. (Courtesy Saito Family, ca 1933)

telling.

My grandfather, Senjuro Saito was born in *Shizuoka*-prefecture, Japan on Dec. 5, 1885. He immigrated to Canada in 1900 with his father, Juichiro Saito, to work the Gold Rush. In March 1915 he married Kane Tsuneki. They lived at Britannia Beach where sons, Tatsuo (Tats) (1916 - 2001) and Shohe (Sho) (1918 - 1995) were born. Soon after, they moved to Pitt Meadows and started farming. Sons Minoru (Min) (1921 - 1943), Masao (Mush) (1924 - 1986), Hitoshi (Tosh) (1929), Yoshihisa (Yosh) (1932) and daughter, Kikue (Kay) (1926 - 2005) were born in Pitt Meadows. Apparently, at some point in time, my grandfather sent his father back to Japan, due to his excessive drinking and gambling (A colorful skeleton, worth mentioning).

My grandfather did not exactly match the stereotypical farmer, thinking about his crops and the weather all the time. He was a progressive thinker. He envisioned the family operating an import/export business with Japanese interests. In 1939 he sent his third son, Min, to study at the University of Tokyo. Min was sent to study in Japan in order to fine-tune his Japanese language skills and his knowledge of the country, people and culture. It was thought that this would better prepare him for conducting business between his country of origin, and his adopted country.

It was around this time that the saga of the Saito-berry began. In Pitt Meadows, my grandfather had been

farming the standard strawberry of the time, the British Sovereign. One day, my grandfather's brother-in-law, Jiro Kamiya, found some strawberry plants growing by a deserted cabin on the farm. These plants were away from the main crop. Intrigued by the distinctness of the berries, especially the bright red colour, he transplanted them to a more suitable area on the farm. The plants took well and in the second year he replanted the healthiest ones to an area with more room. He repeated this the third year, and at that time showed the bright red berries to his brother-in-law. The berries were not quite as tasty as the British Sovereign, but the colour was exceptional, and the berries held the bright red colour for a long period. The following year, my grand-uncle, Jiro, and my grandfather, Senjuro, planted a small field of the berries. The berries thrived, and soon runners and berries were all over the walking aisles.

Platforms had to be built to enable pickers to get to the berries without damaging the plants. Jiro was not a farmer at heart and declined the monicker, "Kamiya-berry." Thus, it became the "Saito-berry." The Saito-berry was in such demand by the local grocery stores that quotas had to be put on the berries. A premium price was placed on the berry, but demand still increased as more and more people became aware of them. The Saito-berry became a large part of the pre-war B.C. berry market.

Along with the rest of the world, the Saito family and the Saito-berries were subjected to significant changes after December 1941. At that time, my grandfather had three parcels of land in Pitt Meadows: two 15-acre parcels and a 20-acre parcel. Before the British Columbia Securities Commission (BCSC) confiscated the land, Senjuro managed to sell one of the 15-acre parcels. The other 15-acre parcel was lost to the securities commission and is presently occupied by the Pitt Meadows Golf and Country Club. Amid the hysteria and confusion of the mass evacuation of Japanese Canadians, the family hid vehicles, farm equipment and other personal prop-



Saito family house in Pitt Meadows. (Courtesy Saito Family, date unknown)



(Courtesy Saito Family, date unknown)

erty with non-Japanese Canadian neighbors. They also rented property in Westwold in the Okanagan during the spring of 1942. According to my father's story, this was the spring that kids dream of. I have since learned the truth: the Westwold School Board approached the family immediately after their arrival and invited the kids into the school. Apparently, they did not miss a day of school (Talk about deflating a childhood pipedream!). Unlike the severe treatment experienced by most of the Japanese Canadians during the coastal evacuation, my grandparents obtained permission from an officer of the BCSC to retain the bulk of their personal belongings. They were allowed to keep their belongings if they moved them forthwith and with little attention drawn from the general public. Consequently, stealth trips in the dead of night were made up and down the Fraser Canyon to Westwold. This "permission" was refreshing, considering the black mark that the securities commission had for their dealings with the Japanese Canadians who were relocated from the coast.

In the fall of 1942, the family rented farmland in North Kamloops. They farmed vegetables, including field tomatoes. In 1944 my grandfather purchased his own farmland. The farm did well, employing some of the Japanese Canadians in the area. Unfortunately, Westwold was the beginning of the end of the Saito-berries and Kamloops the end. In both locations the soil was too alkaline, and the climate too different from the coast. The winter carried too far into the spring, resulting in a shorter growing season, and temperatures were too extreme. The plants produced unmarketable, gnarled, monkey-faced berries. The mighty Saito-berry perished.

My dad told us stories about the North Kamloops house. It was not built for the harsh winters. In the winter, it was so cold in the house his toothbrush would be frozen in a cup of water, like a popsicle. They had to thaw their boots out by the wood stove in the morning before they could put them on to walk miles to school, in the snow,

of course. The house was less than a stones throw from the railroad tracks. It was so close to the tracks that when a train went by, the whole house would shake. They had to nail their beds to the floorboards to keep them from jumping around the room when the floor shook.

I imagine that the worst day for my grandparents was when they found out that their son, Min, was killed in the war. Min was still at the University of Tokyo when the war started. He volunteered his service to the Japanese Army in a non-combat capacity, as a translator. He was stationed in Saipan when he was killed. It was a tragic end, considering he never really wanted to go to study in Japan, in the first place.

In 1950, most of the family moved back to the Lower Mainland. My grandfather was in poor health, so the eldest son, Tats, ran the family farm in Surrey. In 1951, at the age of 65, Senjuro Saito passed away. Three years later, at the age of 59, my grandmother, Kane Saito passed away.

My parents, Tosh Saito and Mitzi Suzuki married in November 1954. I was born in 1961, after my siblings Bob and Debbie. In the Saito family there were seven *nisei*, and from them, 17 *sansei*. Today, most of the *sansei* are married and have children. Some *sansei* even have grand-

Continued on page 14



(Courtesy Saito Family, date unknown)

children. There's a saying, "family is everything." With this in mind, Senjuro and Kane Saito would be very proud today. True, their dreams of a family business did not unfold as planned, but not all dreams do. What my grandparents did do was to sow the seeds of an amazingly close knit family. A very large extended family, in which siblings, nephews, nieces, cousins, second cousins, grand nieces and nephews, keep in close contact. A family that makes a point of doing things together and are always quick to lend each other, and friends, a hand.

I find that these are common qualities with the families of Japa-

nese Canadians who had endured the internment years. I believe that it is a result of the hardship and discrimination that they persevered, by relying on each other's support. Family and friends could be counted on to always be there.

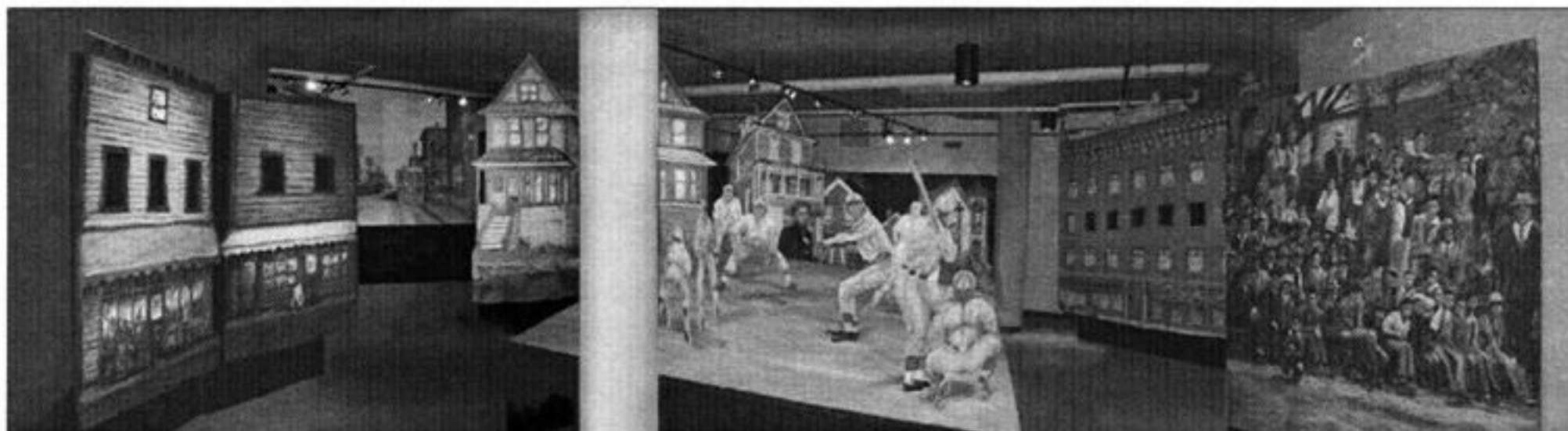
As I have grown up, I have learned more and more about the history of the Saito family. Some of the colourful stories that captured my childhood imagination have gone up in smoke, only to be replaced by other tales reinforcing the age-old adage, "truth is stranger than fiction." The Saito history is colourful and engaging. But, history aside, what is significant, is that the Saito family,

(like most Japanese Canadian families who endured the internment), is a family in the true sense of the word. That is the legacy of Senjuro and Kane Saito, and all of the *issei*, whom we should be very grateful to.

Or maybe, as a family friend suggested, perhaps the Saito legacy survives somewhere in the wilds of Westwold or in the barren hills of North Kamloops. In the dry, alkaline soil of the interior, perhaps there is a Saito-berry plant still surviving among the shadows of an abandoned cabin, producing large bright red strawberries every July and waiting to be discovered once again. ●

Japanese Canadian National Museum Report - Winter 2005

by Timothy Savage, JCNM Interim Curator



Levelling the Playing Field exhibition at the Japanese Canadian National Museum Gallery. (Courtesy Duane Fast, ca 2005)

The Japanese Canadian National Museum proudly celebrated the opening of the new exhibition, "Levelling the Playing Field: Legacy of Vancouver's Asahi Baseball Team," on Oct. 28 - 29, 2005, at the National Nikkei Museum and Heritage Centre.

Over 200 community members, former Asahi players, and their families attended the two-day event, including many out-of-town guests. The opening reception on Friday (Oct. 28) evening was emceed by

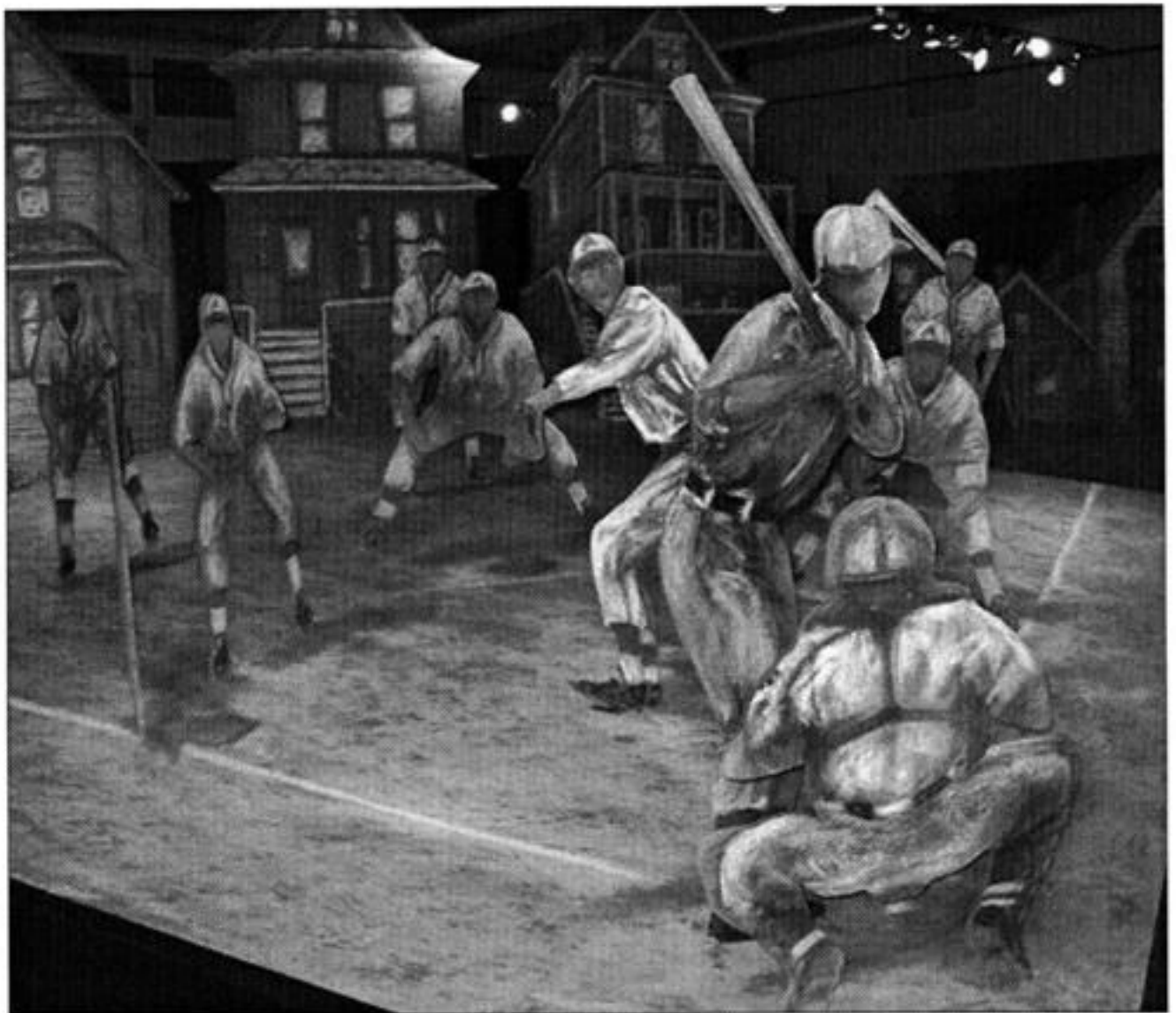
longtime Asahi fan Frank Moritsugu, who started with his harmonica rendition of "Take Me Out To The Ball Game." Fred Yada, president of the NNMHC, warmly welcomed everyone and was followed by greetings

"Over 200 community members, former Asahi players, and their families attended the two-day event, including many out-of-town guests."

and congratulations from Mayor Derek Corrigan of the City of Burnaby, Toshiyuki Taga, Consul General of Japan, and Judy Hanazawa of the National Association of Japanese Canadians. Former Asahi infielder Kaye Kaminishi spoke following remarks by the exhibition curator, Grace Eiko Thomson. Music from the Asahi era was performed by Harry Aoki and Friends. The NNMHC Auxiliary worked with Alisa Noda and Sam Araki to provide refreshments for the occasion.

The celebration continued on Saturday (Oct. 29) with a family afternoon of fun activities for children and parents centred on the exhibition. On Saturday evening an enthusiastic crowd gathered for a panel of three speakers on the topic of "Asahi Baseball in Vancouver's Powell Street Community." Midge Ayukawa, Pat Adachi and Frank Moritsugu shared stories and lively anecdotes of what the Asahi meant to them and to the community from the early days through the present.

Thanks are owed to the many individuals and organizations that worked on and contributed to the exhibition and opening events. Generous financial support was received from Canadian Heritage – Museums Assistance Program, National Association of Japanese Canadians, Vancouver Foundation, The Leon and Thea Kerner Foundation, The McLean Foundation, The Hamber Foundation, G&F Financial Group, Pacific Coach Lines Ltd., and



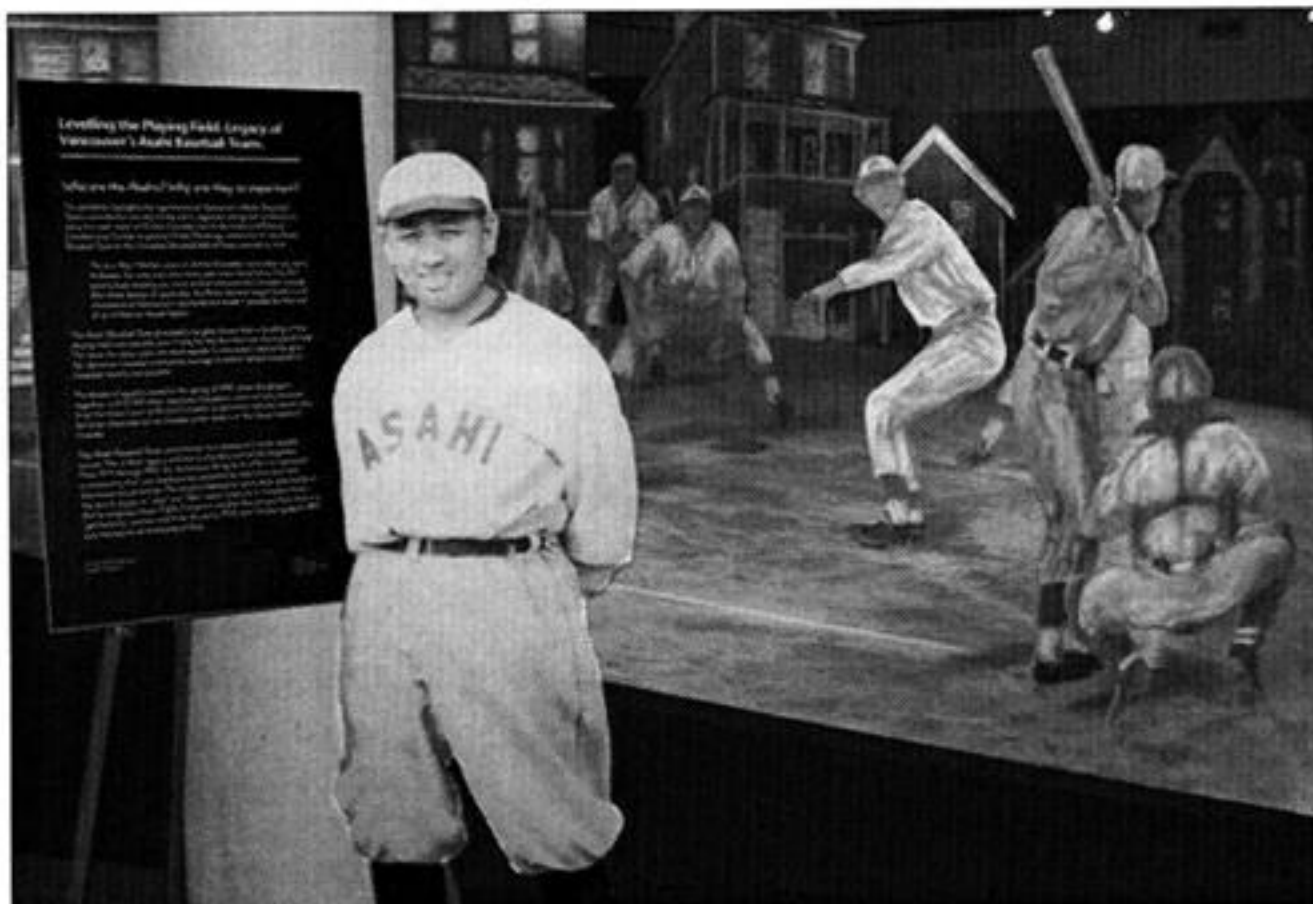
Levelling the Playing Field exhibition at the JCNM Gallery. (Courtesy Duane Fast, ca 2005)

numerous individual donors from all over Canada. Thank you to everyone!

News of the exhibition has reached a wide audience with coverage in local and national newspapers, Global TV, and

Nikkei publications. Plans for the exhibition's tour across the country are underway – interested venues should contact museum staff. Watch for upcoming events presented by the museum to celebrate the achievements of the Asahi and the Japanese Canadians of that era 1914-1941, including an afternoon of baseball films to be screened on March 18, 2006, for which information will be released in the coming months.

The JCNM's touring exhibition, "Shashin: Japanese Canadian Studio Photography to 1942" moved from the Langley Centennial Museum, where it was on display through Sept. 25, to the Kamloops Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre from Oct. 5 - Nov. 15. The next venue is the Gendai Gallery at the Jap-



Levelling the Playing Field exhibition at the JCNM Gallery. (Courtesy Duane Fast, ca 2005)

Continued on page 16

anese Canadian Cultural Centre in Toronto before the show returns to British Columbia in fall 2006.

On Oct. 20, a celebration of the life of the late artist and author Shizuye Takashima was held at the NNMHC with a display of her paintings and books. Later that day the Museum Speakers Series held a book launch for the bestselling publication, "Coldstream: The Ranch Where It All Began," with author Donna Yoshitake Wuest speaking on her new history of the Okanagan ranch where she grew up in a tightly-knit *Nikkei* community near Vernon, B.C.

On Nov. 26, the NNMHC hosted the Vancouver Opera production, "Naomi's Road," based on the story for young audiences by celebrated author Joy Kogawa. The JCNM's Collaborative Research Centre contributed to the exploration by the opera's librettist Ann Hodges and composer Ramona Luengen.

Coming up on Saturday, Feb. 11, 2006, the JCNM will host



Levelling the Playing Field exhibition at the JCNM Gallery. (Courtesy Duane Fast, ca 2005)

the second *Jan-Ken-Pon* Family Games Day at the NNMHC with fun-filled activities, games and crafts for youngsters and their parents.

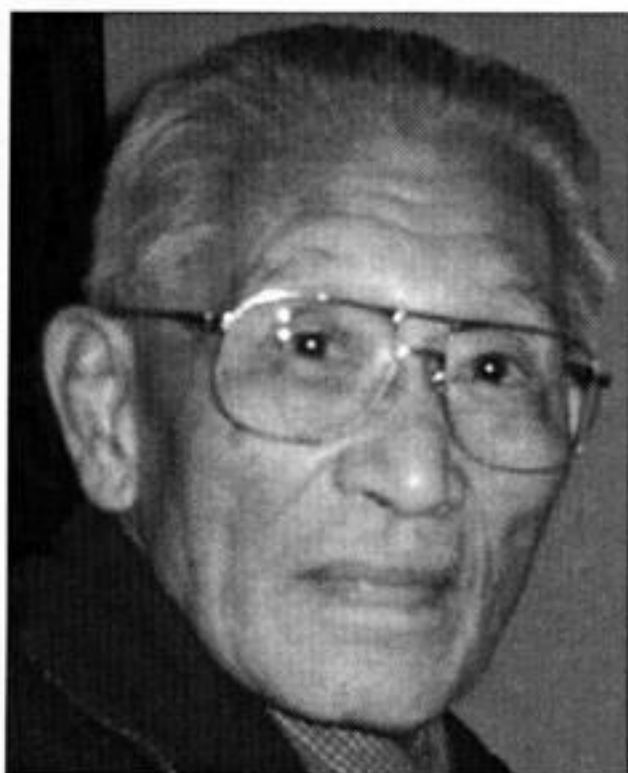
For more information on JCNM exhibitions, programs, publications, research or donations, please contact us at 604.777.7000 or by e-mail

jcnm@nikkeiplace.org. ☎

Asahi Merchandise on Sale in the Japanese Canadian National Museum Shop

Ball Cap (10% off for 3 or more)	\$14.95	Road to the Pinnacle	\$23.37
T-shirts Adult S,M,L,XL	\$13.16	Sleeping Tigers DVD/video	\$19.95
T-shirts Youth 10-12, 14-16	\$12.15	Souvenir Program	\$2.00
Asahi: A Legend in Baseball	\$28.04	Pen	\$2.00

Peter Shoji Yamauchi by Stan Fukawa



Peter Shoji Yamauchi. (Courtesy Stan Fukawa, ca 2005)

Peter Shoji Yamauchi was born on March 17, 1917, in Welling, Alta., just south of Lethbridge.

He was the eldest son of Japanese immigrants who were from Shizuoka-prefecture. Peter's mother was Kon (nee Akahori) and his father, Sanpei, was a veteran of the Russo-Japanese War where he served in the Japanese Imperial Army, bringing home a scar courtesy of a Cossack bayonet. Wanting to build a secure life for his future family, Sanpei emigrated to Alberta shortly after being demobilized. He worked as a cook in a restaurant before going into mixed farming where he grew sugar beets and vegetables.

In 1941, Canada was already at war with Germany when Peter enlisted with the Reserve Army. He had wanted to join the Air Force but they were not accepting anyone of Japanese descent. Ultimately, Peter wanted to serve his country and learn a trade. He was called up for his compulsory training at Camrose, Alta., and took courses in machine shop and welding.

Potential employers did not want to hire reservists as they could be called up at anytime with only a month's notice. Unable to find work because of this, Peter felt that he might as well enlist and he did so in October 1941. He

had faced little discrimination in Alberta, which is quite surprising considering the situation in B.C. where *Nikkei* were not allowed to join the forces. One fellow soldier tried to make fun of him and called him a "Jap" but Peter did not have to respond because the other soldiers would not stand for it. Alberta was fairly multicultural at that time as Peter remembers growing up with Polish and Ukrainian kids and learning a bit of both languages as a result.

His father had died in 1935, but Peter believes that he would have wanted his children to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces. One of Peter's younger brothers, Henry, also enlisted and served in the Canadian Army for two years. A sister tried to enlist but she was rejected for not being tall enough.

With his trades training, Peter was assigned to the Royal Canadian Army Service Corps which maintained and repaired equipment. Machinists, mechanics and sewing machine operators who fixed tarp, were among the tradesmen. In May of 1942, the Adjutant called him up and sent him to London to serve the Canadian forces there.

While visiting another *Nissei* soldier who had been hospitalized, Peter's military career took an unexpected turn. He found out that the British Army required Japanese language teachers in order to train more soldiers. Peter had never studied Japanese formally, as there were never enough Japanese families in his neighbourhood to support a Japanese language school. He had, however, learned to speak it at home. After being evaluated for his Japanese conversational ability and a thorough background check of his character by the RCMP back in Alberta, he was called up to London to teach at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) beginning in January of 1943.

Peter's job was to teach conversational Japanese and focus on pro-

nunciation and usage. The textbooks were supplied by SOAS and were romanized, meaning no Japanese or Chinese scripts. His classes had up to eight students who were enrolled in 18-month courses of study with three hours of classes daily. There were three separate programs: a) a phonetics program to train soldiers to write down what they heard in radio messages; b) a translators program; and c) an interrogator's program.

Among those who Peter remembers from classes and the staff are: 1) Ronald Dore, who later came and taught for a while at UBC and is well-known and highly regarded in the areas of Japanese community studies and comparative industrial relations; 2) Sir Hugh Cortazzi, who had served as Britain's ambassador to Japan and is another prolific and well-known writer on a wide range of topics in Japanese history, culture and art; and 3) Frank Daniels, a pioneer in the Basic English movement begun by his teacher, I.A. Richards, and professor of Japanese Language at SOAS before his death in 1983. At the reunion of SOAS wartime Japanese language teachers a few years ago, he met a number of his former students who had gone on to successful careers in government.

The work was not without its pressures but Peter found it rewarding to be able to contribute to the intelligence services which are a vital part of any military operation. He lived in London which was bombed heavily by the Germans. Peter was fortunate in moving from one apartment to another; his just vacated former residence was severely damaged.

Peter returned to Canada in 1946 and does not remember being discriminated against because of his ethnicity either in Canada or in England. He served five years of active duty and 17 years in the reserves.

After leaving active military ser-

Continued on page 18

vice, he returned to Alberta where he worked for a time in the Postal Service. A brother-in-law, George Kazuta, was starting up a new business and Peter first bought a share in it and later joined the company in February 1953. The timing was good as there was an upturn in the business which imported Japanese fishing gear, including nets and lures and later radar and communications equipment. Nikka Industries Ltd. is still doing well in Richmond despite the decline in the fishing industry and two of his sons, Wayne and Dale are working in the company. Ron Yamauchi, who writes in the Georgia Straight, is a nephew and son to the brother who also served in the Canadian Army during the war.

When his wife became ill in the late 1970s, they consulted many doctors but only Dr. Harold Saita was able to make a correct diagnosis and he treated it successfully with acupuncture. This led to Peter's interest in importing acupuncture machines from Japan to assist doctors in this therapy. In the beginning, he accompanied Dr. Saita who introduced acupuncture as an effective treatment at a number of

workshops in Canada and Europe and was able to sell these machines. It was not an accepted therapy in the West at that time and so the medical profession did not allow him to sell them at these workshops because they were thought to be of questionable medical value.

Peter's wife was born Kiyomi Miyashita in Nanaimo and raised in Ucluelet and Steveston before spending the internment years in Slocan and Greenwood. She passed away in 2004, leaving Peter a widower. He lives quite contentedly in a Seniors' Home in Burnaby with a varied program of daily activities. Should he miss Japanese food, there is a Japanese restaurant across the street from the Home. At 88 years of age, Peter's mind is still sharp as a tack but he uses a walker to get around. He looks back on his life with a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. ☀

RIGHT: A newspaper clipping of Peter Shoji Yamauchi, exact source unknown. (Courtesy Peter Shoji Yamauchi, ca 1942)



Pte. Skogi ("Chuck") Yamauchi, son of Mrs. T. Yamauchi, of Edmonton, now in service with the Canadian forces overseas. Canadian-born, of Japanese parents, he spent his boyhood at Opal, north-east of Edmonton. Wishing to serve his native Canada, he enlisted last September and went overseas this spring, arriving in England about a month ago.

Lest We Forget:

Remembering Japanese Canadians who Served in World War II

Courtesy Japanese Canadian War Memorial Committee

Japanese Canadians serviced with distinction during World War II, despite being censored from service.

Two days before the federal government was to permit Japanese Canadians to serve, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. The policy was stopped, and 11 weeks later, Prime Minister Mackenzie King ordered the mass evacuation of Japanese Canadians from the West Coast.

As the war progressed, the British and Australian governments saw a desperate need for Japanese-English translators, and urged the Canadian government to enlist *niseis*.

Thus, spearheaded by Lieut. Col. Brian R. Mullaly, the S-20 Japanese Language School, Japanese Military Intelligence Division, Canadian Army, was formed. *Niseis* were given special permission to attend the school.

A number of *niseis* who were already proficient in the Japanese language served in Burma, India, Australia, South-east Asia, Japan, the Pacific Military Research Section in Washington, D.C. and Canada. They were later joined by the S-20 graduates.

Some *niseis* had enlisted before Dec. 1941. Thirty-two served in Eu-

rope. Two *niseis* (not of the S-20) were killed in the service of Canada: Minoru Taisuke Tanaka, TPR, 1919 - 1945 and Winston Claude Mawatari, LAC, 1920 - 1943. It is these brave men, and all Canadians who served in World War II, that we are gathered here to honour and remember. ☀

This was originally printed in the program for the Remembrance Day Ceremony held at Stanley Park in Vancouver, B.C. on Nov. 11, 1992.

Things That Were Left Behind: Artifacts From Early 20th Century

Nikkei Logging Camps in North Vancouver by Bob Muckle



Plate found in excavation. (Courtesy Bob Muckle, ca 2005)

Although logging camps are known to have dotted the landscape in North Vancouver's Seymour Valley during the early 20th century, there is little visible trace of the camps in its forests today. Some of these camps housed *Nikkei* workers and perhaps their families as well.

The camps all burned to the ground. Some undoubtedly were burned by forest fires that are known to have swept through the area. Records of health inspectors indicate that they would periodically set fire to camps as well, but it isn't known if these included *Nikkei* camps.

What the fires didn't destroy has mostly been covered by forest re-growth. Things of perceived value left on the surface, like complete bottles, have probably been looted by collectors.

For the past several years, I have been taking groups of archaeology students at Capilano College into the Seymour Valley to excavate two former *Nikkei* camps. The main period of occupation for both was probably 1920 - 1924.

I first reported on our

activities, including the excavation of an *ofuro* (bathhouse), in the Winter 2004 volume of *Nikkei Images* (vol 9, no. 4). While that article gave a general overview of the archaeology at the two camps, this article focuses more on the artifacts recovered

through excavation.

The McKenzie Creek camp appears to have consisted of several small cabins, reminiscent of some descriptions of *Nikkei* camps where loggers would live with their families or perhaps three or four men would share a cabin. This is the site where the *ofuro* was discovered and what appears to have been a garden area has been observed. The Suicide Creek camp is much more typical of logging camps of the time, with a communal bunkhouse.

Many artifacts recovered during our archaeological excavations at the camps are what would be expected at logging camps. These include such logging tools as broken axes, saw blades, sharpening files, and the metal end-pieces of peaveys (tools used to move fallen logs). We know that horses were often used in logging so it was not surprising to also find horseshoes and other equipment related to the harnessing of horses.

Many workboots were also found, which included studs on the soles,

commonly used by loggers.

Hundreds of cans were discovered in the trash dumps at each camp. Nineteen distinct shapes and sizes were identified. Most are in an advanced state of corrosion but we have been able to identify the contents of some. In most cases this was accomplished by soaking the cans in a solution of Coca-Cola to remove the rust and expose the label. Dozens of cans contained only small puncture marks in the top, suggesting they contained liquid, probably canned milk. Some cans are typical of those containing fish or meat.

Several tobacco cans have been identified at both camps. After removing the rust, some painted la-



Sketch of plate found in excavation. (Courtesy Bob Muckle, ca 2005)

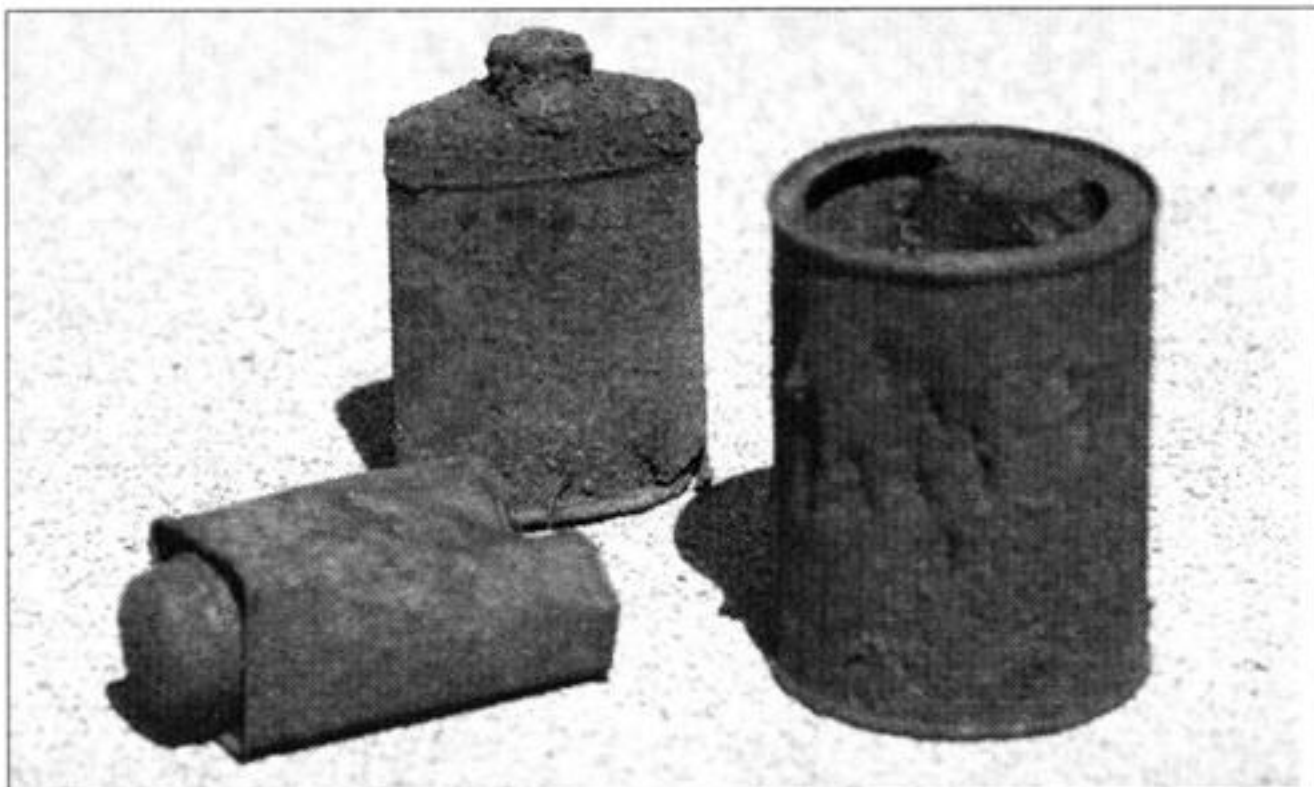
bels indicated that some contained tobacco from the Tuckett company (in existence from 1896 - 1930). Others have been identified as containing 'Velvet Tobacco.' A few cans contained polish. One has been identified as harness polish and another as 'Brown Beauty' leather polish.

Some cans held baby talc. At least two different brand names are represented on the labeling of the cans. One is 'Bauer and Black Baby Talc' and another is 'Johnson's Talc



Sketch of bottle found in excavation. (Courtesy Bob Muckle, ca 2005)

Continued on page 20



Bottles found in excavation. (Courtesy Bob Muckle, ca 2005)

Baby Powder.'

Dozens of complete bottles and hundreds of broken bottle pieces have been recovered. Many of the bottles have no markings to indicate the contents, but some do.

Bottles once containing alcoholic beverages are common. Beer bottles, from both Japanese and local British Columbia breweries were found. Two bottles from the Dai Nippon brewery were found; one with the markings in English and the other with the markings in Japanese. Local brands of beer represented in the deposits include B.C. Breweries, Silver Springs Brewery, and the Phoenix Brewery of Victoria, B.C. Japanese markings have also been found on bottles containing sake and cider.

Japanese markings have been found on several bottles interpreted to have contained medicine and perfume. Non-Japanese medicinal bottles have been found as well, including 'Sloan's Liniment' and

'Minard's Liniment.'

Many dishes have been found. Most have been identified as rice bowls. The bowls have a white background with a painted design, usually in blue but some also contain other colours as well. Some designs are found in both camps. One lid of a teapot has also been discovered. Some of the bases have Japanese characters on them, indicating the manufacturer; others have the words 'Made in Japan,' which became common about 1920.

Remnants of stoves have also been recovered. At the Suicide Creek camp, parts of one large cook stove was found in the area interpreted to be the kitchen and mess hall; and one smaller heating stove was found in the area interpreted to be a bunkhouse. At the McKenzie Creek camp, portions of at least three stoves have been found.

There was no electricity at the camps. Many pieces of broken lantern glass have been observed as

well as an almost complete lantern base. Some items must have been powered by batteries, as carbon battery cores typical of the early 20th century were found in both camps.

Remnants of metal basins and coffee pots have been observed at both sites. A metal ladle, perhaps for dipping water from the *ofuro*, has been recovered from the McKenzie Creek site.

Excavations have also uncovered many personal items at both camps. These include remnants of toothbrushes, combs, buttons, garter clasps (Boston Garter), suspender clips, costume jewelry, a buckle, and a shawl pin. Several pieces of a Kodak camera or film cartridge, with the labeling identifying it as 'Bulls Eye...Eastman Kodak' were found at the McKenzie Creek camp, and an 1899 dime was found at the Suicide Creek camp. Many hand cream jars were recovered from the McKenzie Creek site. Most are from the Ponds company.

So far, approximately 500 artifacts have been collected and cataloged. Once cataloged, most artifacts have been returned to the camps. Things have typically only been cataloged as artifacts if they are complete, such as a whole bottle, provide some diagnostic information (such as the manufacturer), or are unique in some way. Tens of thousands of nails; broken pieces of bottle, window, and lantern glass; and fragments of metal remain uncataloged, and most areas of the camps have remained unexcavated.

Fifteen archaeology students and I will be returning to work at the camps for several weeks in 2006. •

Bob Muckle is a professor of archaeology at Capilano College in North Vancouver.

"Excavations have also uncovered many personal items at both camps. These include remnants of toothbrushes, combs, buttons, garter clasps (Boston Garter), suspender clips, costume jewelry, a buckle, and a shawl pin."

Nikkei Logging On The North Shore by Carl Yokota

On Sunday, May 29, 2005, led by Bob Muckle, an archaeologist with North Vancouver's Capilano College and instructor with Seymour Valley Archaeology Field School; and Ficus Chan of the Greater Vancouver Regional District, a group of 14 interested participants visited the excavation site of a former *Nikkei* logging camp located deep within the Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve.

Destroyed by a forest fire in the mid-1920s, this tract of land located near McKenzie Creek, is covered by years of dense forest floor growth. The excavation site can be seen from the Seymour Valley Trailway which is used daily by outdoor enthusiasts. Since work started on the McKenzie Creek site in 2004, Bob Muckle and his archaeology students have unearthed and identified large wood plank roadways, habitation remnants, a possible garden area evidenced by bits of bone and shell scatterings, a possible garbage or toilet pit, old tin cans, nails, broken glass, empty



Bob Muckle showing the fire chamber of a Japanese ofuro. (Courtesy Carl Yokota, ca 2005)

bottles, and Japanese bowls. One of the most interesting and remarkable finds is a stone-walled, Japanese-style *ofuro*, most likely wood-fired. Could this be the remains of the first Japanese-style bath or *ofuro* unearthed in North America? Bob Muckle believes he has stumbled across an archaeological gem.

The two-hour long trek into the second-growth forests of North

Vancouver's protected 5,668-hectare Lower Seymour Conservation Reserve was highlighted with Bob displaying some of the fruits of his field archaeological efforts. Neatly lined up on a wood bench for the group to view were empty beer and sake bottles, small medicine bottles, Japanese bowls and dishes, an old clock body, a glass jar and lid, toothbrushes and even an old Ponds cold cream container (most likely used as a hand moisturizer by the early Japanese loggers). ❁



Road sign pasted on tree designating archeological dig site. (Courtesy Carl Yokota, ca 2005)



Tour participants examining artifacts recovered at the excavation site. (Courtesy Carl Yokota, ca 2005)

Lumber Industry Material from the Museum Collection

by Reiko Tagami, JCNM Assistant Archivist

From the earliest *issei* in Vancouver, who found a life of hard labour at Hastings Sawmill, to the young *nisei* who worked in lumber camps throughout pre-war B.C., and who during the Second World War were sent to logging camps in the B.C. interior, to Ontario and Quebec as relief labour, *nikkei* have been as much a part of the lumber industry as they have the fishing, farming and mining industries. However, apart from single images of logging operations that pop up from time to time in family photograph collections, the Japanese Canadian National Museum holds less than 10 collections of material related to *Nikkei* loggers and mill workers, and less than ten interviews with men who worked as loggers. A significant number of these interviews are in Japanese, which makes them more difficult to access.

What about Kagetsu Lumber, Royston Lumber, and the Japanese-run shingle bolt camps in the Fraser Valley, you might ask? What about numerous smaller enterprises and lumber camps that you have heard of through word of mouth? The truth is, these are under-documented in our community. At the JCNM, we value the materials we do have that document *nikkei* in the lumber industry, but we have little idea of other materials or collections that may exist, held in families' or individuals' private collections.

The following is a small sample of material from the JCNM collection. Kogiro Imamura grew up in Bradner, B.C., before the Second World War, farming berries, daffodils and asparagus; worked on a sugar beet farm in



Knight Lumber (where Kogiro Imamura worked as a faller in the late 1940s and early 1950s), Crowsnest Pass, B.C. (Courtesy Tosh Mukaida Collection, ca 1945: JCNM 94/72.005)

Arnaud, Man., in the early 1940s; worked as a faller in and around Kamloops and Natal in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and in Campbell River from the 1950s to the 1970s; and returned to Bradner as a horticultural farmer from the 1970s to the 1990s. In this interview excerpt, Mr. Imamura talks about working as a faller in the Kamloops area.

Kogiro Imamura Interview, February 8, 1995, JCNM 94/74.149.

Transcribed by Reiko Tagami

Interviewer: Yosh Kariatsumari (Y)

Interviewee: Kogiro Imamura (K)

Y: You mentioned that you went to Kamloops. How was that possible during the war years? I understand that to travel, they kept a pretty close eye on you.

K: Oh, yeah, well you see my sister wrote here and there to the [BC Security] Commission to try to get me to join the family in Kamloops, but we were unable. So we got this friend of ours, lived in Bradner, he was a politician so he went to Vancouver and took a nice big bouquet of flowers and he talked to a Commission lady, I think her name was Mrs. Booth. And right

away got the permit, everything was OK in BC here to return, but I had to go to Winnipeg and get the OK from them, so they said that everything's OK, so I could leave for Kamloops at that time. I guess I was one of only one or two that returned to BC at that time. So I was pretty lucky. I think it was June the 29th I left Winnipeg and I came here to Kamloops. And from there on, I worked in the woods.

Y: Can you tell me who this politician was, or what party he belonged to?

K: I think he was a CCF-er [Cooperative Commonwealth Federation], I think, far as I can remember.

Y: So, yes, the CCF-ers helped the Japanese a lot at that time.

K: Yeah, at that time.

Y: So in Kamloops, you stayed with your sister?

K: No, I stayed with my brother most of the time. But I was mostly out at camps, working.

Y: Can you tell me what camps you worked at?

K: Oh, I worked quite a bit most of the time cutting tie logs and cutting saw logs for an old bachelor logger, you know? A gypo is what we called him.

Y: So whereabouts did you log in that area?

K: South of Kamloops, a place called Fish Lake area. Cutting tie chunks, it was up around North Thompson River, place called, what the heck's the name of that place, it was a little past a place called Black Pine. I was cutting tie logs there every summer.

Y: Were the wages pretty good?

K: Oh yeah, at that time I think we were getting 20 cents a tie chunk, tie log chunk, you know.

Y: What is a tie chunk?

K: A tie log. The logs sized that they get two ties out of them or one tie.

Y: Oh, I see.

K: The timber was very small, you see.

Y: So would that be pine?

K: No, mostly Doug[las] Fir.

Y: So what was the equipment in those days like?

K: The good old Swedish fiddle. The crosscut.

Y: I see. Was it hard work?

K: Oh yeah. We made around, let's see sometimes, let's see now, 20 cents a tie log, we used to cut, we used to make around \$15, \$20 a day, that was good wages them days. In 19 ... let's see, 19

... I can't remember.

Y: That was '43 or '44?

K: In the middle 40s, anyhow. I worked so many places here and there in the woods that I can't remember them all.

Y: Did you have to bring those logs by hand? Was there machinery?

K: No, he had a portable tie mill, there.

Y: I see.

K: In the bush like, you see.

Y: So who would bring the logs into the mill, then?

K: He had a little cat, and he brought them in. I think he sawed the tie logs in the bush. ●

東理夫氏の随筆と竹中さん

西村 咲弥

昨年の秋、「ニューデンバーに住む竹中さんから言付かりました」といって、古い書類の入った箱を博物館に届けて下さった方があった。その箱の中には、故ミスター・竹中がウッド・ファイバーで働いていた時の勤務時間表、当時の竹中家の家計簿、それに第二次世界大戦後、ミセス竹中が会計係をしていた、ニューデンバーの合同教会の会計簿などが入っていた。

今のようにタイム・レコーダーがなかった戦前は勤務時間は自己申告だったようで、私は以前やはり同じような勤務時間表を見たことがあるが、その人のも、ミスター竹中のも、大体日曜も休まず働いていたようで、極端に言えば、休むのはクリスマスと元旦だけという感じで、当時の日本人は少しでも多く故郷に送金しようと、休みも取らずに働いていたものと見える。

今年94歳になるミセス竹中に電話でちょっとお話を伺ったが、大変しっかりした、記憶力の良い方で、できればお目にかかっているいろいろ教えて頂きたいと思った事だった。

それがつい最近、思いがけないところで、ミセス竹中の名前を発見しこんな事があるのか、とびっくりした。それは日本のある雑誌に連載されていた「アメリカのありふれた町で」という随筆を読んでいた時の事だった。この随筆を書いているのは、もとニュー・カナディアン社の創始者の一人である故東信夫氏の次男理夫氏で、その最終回には「父との旅」という副題がついていた。

理夫はギタリスト、音楽評論家、紀行エッセイスト等、広範囲にわたるタレントで、この「アメリカのありふれた町で」のシリーズ中で、カナダの第二次世界大戦のキャンプ跡を訪れた事があった。その時、ニュー・デンバーで、永らくここに住んでおられる竹中さんを訪れたのだった。その時のよもやま話の中で、竹中さんは理夫に「あなたのお父さん(東信夫氏のこと)に初めて逢ったのはスコームッシュの近くで、彼は父親(東善吾氏)の路傍伝道に従って、父の横に立って人寄せの為に太鼓を叩いていたのよ。」と語り、理夫を驚かせた。父親は音楽好きで良く歌をうたっていたが、楽器ができるとは知らなかったし、彼の生前の言行から彼が宗教を理解していたとは思えなかったからだ。

竹中夫妻はカナダに来てバンクーバーに3年住んだ後、スコームッシュに近いウッド・ファイバーで働いていた。理夫の父に逢ったのはこのウッド・ファイバーだった。ミスター竹中は仕事中大怪我をして、左手の肘から先を失い、ウッド・ファイバーを去り、ニュー・デンバーに住むようになった。

理夫はウッド・ファイバーをも訪ねたが、昔のパルプ工場は閉鎖されていて、金網が張巡らされ、敷地内に入る事もできなかった。

その後、理夫は父親のルートを巡るために、宣教師であった祖父の住んでいたプリンス・ルパートを訪れたが、この町は1968年の大火で古いものは殆ど焼失していた。

理夫はこの博物館で、「プリンス・ルパート聖公会」と記されていた看板を背にして写した写真の中に、祖父母を見つけた。この写真は1923年に新設された日本人教会の記念写真であった。ここにあった古い電話帳の21年7月の分にZ. Higashiを見つけた時は、確かに祖父母がここに住んでいたことがわかった。次にアングリカン教会を訪ねて古い書類を見せてもらおうと、その中に手書きのメモで、「ジャパニーズ・ミッション・イン・スキーナ」というのがあった。それによると、1918年ごろ、スキーナ川沿いの開拓地を訪ねた日本人牧師Z. Higashiがこの伝道所の下地をつくり、2年後には信者が六十八人に増えたと書いてあった。この他に、Z. Higashi とその家族が18年の7月にポート・エシントンに着いたというメモもあった。理夫はポート・エシントンへ行って、見たいと思ったが、ここもまた廃墟になっていて、水上機でもチャーターしなければいけない事がわかった。ポート・エシントンにあったキャナリーに働いていた日本人を差別排斥した現地人の暴動によって火事が起こり、町が消滅した、という。そこにあるという日本人の墓地に父の兄の墓があるらしいのだが、彼はスキーナ川のほとりで、あの辺りがポート・エシントンだろうと暫く眺めていた、と書いてあった。

竹中夫妻がウッド・ファイバーにいたころ、そこには既に二百人ほどの日本人がいて、家族持ちが三十世帯余り。小学校は百人の子供達と一緒にだったが、放課後日本語学校に通っていた。当時はここに住む白人は約三百人、原住カナダ人は一人もいなかった由、竹中さんが話してくださった。

東理夫がそこを訪ねた時は、1973年以来のゴースト・タウンだったが、最近このゴースト・タウンが町ぐるみ売りに出ている。クルーズ船の停泊できる港があり、近くには温泉もあるので、将来性は期待できそうである。

The list of new and renewing members of National Nikkei Museum & Heritage Centre from August 1, 2005 to October 31, 2005

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Ms. Mieko Amano
Mrs. Dorothy Arnet
Mr. Guy Champoux & Ms. Reiko Okubo
Ms. Hazel A. Chong
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Mr. & Mrs. Mike & Margaret Ebbesen
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Mr. & Mrs. Stanley & Masako Fukawa
Mr. & Mrs. James & Molly Fukui
Ms. Yoshiko Godo & Terry Lightheart
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Mr. Roy Hamaguchi
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Mr. Yoshiharu Hashimoto
Mr. & Mrs. Hap & Diane Hirata
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Mr. & Mrs. Walter & Jean Kamimura
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Mr. & Mrs. Makoto & Mary Kawamoto
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Steveston Judo Club
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Mr. Thomas M. Teranishi
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