

NIKKEI images



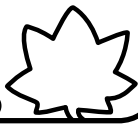
Store on Powell Street, Vancouver, BC ca.1910
JCNM 1994.70.29, Ken and Rose Kutsukake collection



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ON THE COVER:

Store on Powell Street

Vancouver, BC ca.1910 JCNM 1994.70.29, Ken and Rose Kutsukake collection

Do you recognize the men in this shop?

Based on the clothing and style of the shop, we have tentatively dated this photograph around 1910, but we have no information on the names of the people or the actual location of the shop. Can you help us out?

Our collection has hundreds of photographs which are unidentified. **Lost and Found** is an exhibit and online project created by the JCNM to generate a conversation between the museum and the community. This conversation, with your help, will let us put names to faces and places. Each week we will post new photographs on our online blog at <http://jcnm-lostandfound.blogspot.com>. We hope you will check back and join in by leaving your comments on who or where or when or what you think about the photograph!

Quick! Hayaku!

It's finally here. From photographs to phonographs, you can now peruse our online collections from the comfort of your home.

After countless hours of setting up our new computer system, researching information, and scanning, photographing and cataloguing collections, the Japanese Canadian National Museum's new online database is finally here! Simply go to www.jcnm.ca/collections and click 'database'.

The Japanese Canadian National Museum cares for significant collections related to Japanese Canadian heritage, including 4000 photographs, 350 oral history recordings, over 25 metres of archival and textual materials, and 1000 artifacts. Our collections represent a range of experiences from all across Canada, including historic clothing, household objects, and artworks. This database is our first step to truly make these important collections available to people across Canada (and around the world!) We will be continuing to add new items to the database on a daily basis, so check back often. And we welcome any comments or additional information on our collections.

Thank you to our hardworking staff, dedicated volunteers and wonderful summer students who made this project possible. We totally appreciate the funding support we received from the Irving K Barber BC History Digitization Project, The Museum Assistance Program of Canadian Heritage, Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs.



Japan Earthquake Relief

Nikkei Centre extends our heartfelt thoughts and best wishes for all of the people struggling in Japan with this tragic earthquake, tsunami and environmental crisis. We are pleased to support the efforts of the BC Japan Earthquake Relief Fund (BC-JERF) a coalition of volunteers (individuals, community groups, businesses) concerned for the well-being of the people in Japan. For more information, please check their website at bc-jerf.ca.

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MONOGATARI: TALES OF POWELL STREET (1920-1941)

Did your family live or work in the Powell Street area before the war?

What did you see when you walked down the street? What are the unique things you remember? Where did you go to school? What made Powell Street a special place to live and work?

These are some of the wonderful stories that we will feature in two upcoming exhibits. The Japanese Canadian community has made important contributions to the history of Vancouver since the 1880s - before the city was formally established. To help celebrate Vancouver's 125th birthday, the Japanese Canadian National Museum is excited to create two new exhibits to share the pre-war history of Vancouver's Powell Street area -our main museum exhibit will open in May 2011 and a permanent exhibit in the foyer of the Vancouver Japanese Language School will open in July 2011.

This project will focus on 1920-1941 - the heyday of Powell Street as the heart of the Japanese community and one of the oldest neighborhoods in Vancouver.

The first Japanese residents arrived to the Powell Street area in the early 1880s, some working at Hastings sawmill or on the docks of the city's growing waterfront economy. Individual homes, hotels, service agencies and commercial businesses were quickly established in the area to support the workers, and the burgeoning Japanese community. By 1921, there were 578 ethnic Japanese stores and organizations making Powell Street the business centre of the Japanese community.

These exhibits will focus on the wonderful stories - of shopkeepers, families, children, labourers, picture brides - that help to illustrate the diversity and vitality of the community. We are trying to put together a picture of what it was like to live, work, and play in the neighbourhood. Japanese community members were involved in almost every aspect of life in the area: the busy open vegetable markets, the regular baseball games played by the Asahi ball team in Oppenheimer Park, the taxi companies, the Japanese and English language newspapers, Japanese restaurants, boarding houses, traditional bath houses, drug stores, department stores, and special Japanese food businesses, making tofu or manju. Children attended Japanese Language School on evenings and weekends. There were also several churches and a Buddhist temple specifically for community members.

We are hoping that community members can share stories and memories, or donate photographs and collections to help make our exhibit a success. And be sure to plan a trip to the museum soon!



Young boys in front of 122 Powell Street, 1923. JCNM 2010.23.4.234

Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall

By Rika Uto, VJLS-JH Chair



Vancouver Japanese Language School classroom in the original building, ca. 1918.
Mr. Tashiro and school principal Mr. Sato are in the background. JCNM 2010.23.4.257

Established in 1906, the Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall (VJLS-JH) has served as an educational, social and cultural hub since it was first established in the historic Powell Street area in 1906. At the time, it was the only Japanese language school for children in the greater Vancouver area and its proximity to shops, restaurants and services on Powell Street made it an integral part of the Japanese immigrant experience. By 1941, there were 1000 students attending the School and its large facility made it a centre for community cultural activities. For twelve years during the Japanese internment and freedom of movement restriction period, the VJLS-JH was occupied by the Canadian Armed Forces and Army & Navy Department Store. In 1953, however, after a valiant effort by Japanese Canadians now dispersed throughout the country, the 1928 heritage building was returned to the community, the only one amongst all the property confiscated from Japanese Canadian individuals, businesses and organizations. As the one remaining physical and community link from before the war, it symbolized and continues to symbolize the courage, perseverance, and resilient spirit of the Japanese Canadian community.

VJLS-JH is very proud of its history and is committed to upholding its legacy. Presently we are renovating the heritage building, an aspect of which is the inclusion of an interpretive centre. As such, we are thrilled to be working with the JCNM to present this new and informative exhibit that will enliven a vital time and place in Japanese Canadian history.

In 1867 when Captain Ernest Stamp established a logging and sawmill operation on the southern shore of Burrard Inlet, the area was wilderness inhabited by the First Nations people. The business failed within a year but began again as the Hastings Mill. The area soon burgeoned when the Canadian government decided that the CPR terminus would be just west of this mill. In anticipation of its promising future, capitalists and government figures from Victoria and the surrounding area bought land to the south and west of the Mill.

The Hastings Mill employed many single men who lived on scows nearby. They sought relaxation and amusement in the bars and bawdy houses just south of the Inlet on Powell Street. Japanese immigrant workers also obtained jobs at the Mill. About two decades later, the labourers were mostly Japanese. The language spoken and the minor bosses were Japanese, mostly from Shiga prefecture. As reported to the Royal Commission on Japanese and Chinese Immigration in 1902 by R.H. Alexander, the manager of Hastings Mill, could, to be more competitive, use cheap Asian labour and hire whites in the more skilled positions.

Seeking job opportunities, Japanese immigrants flocked to the Powell Street area where rooming-houses, bath-houses and familiar foods were available. The

earlier and more ambitious arrivals learned to speak a smattering of English so they became “bosses”, and contracted for jobs, taking commissions from the new employees and also from the foodstuffs, clothing and other necessities that they supplied.

With the passage of years, enterprising men realized the need for female help and imported wives from Japan. These first women worked extremely hard, doing the laundry, providing rooms, meals and baths. After the Lemieux-Hayashi Gentlemen's Agreement of 1907-08 whereby the numbers of men who could immigrate were limited and controlled, however, family members were not, the women began to arrive in greater numbers, and Japanese families settled down. Most of these families remained in the environs of Powell Street. There they lived behind little family-run stores or in *nagaya* (lit-

erally, long houses), that often had their entrances in the alleys and shared amenities.

Japanese language schools, churches, a Buddhist temple, sports and martial arts clubs, etcetera all created a community. It was a society closed to the wider world. Prefectural societies helped those in need from injury, poverty, and death. They also provided entertainment in the form of concerts, annual picnics and other social events.

What was the significance of Powell Street? What part did it play in the lives of the Japanese immigrants?

One may perhaps think the Japanese immigrants all had equal connection and sentiment towards Powell Street. It is my belief, however, that there were at least three separate groups.

Vancouver shoreline and Hastings Mill, ca. 1910.
JCNM 1992.20.25 Akatsuka collection



POWELL STREET AND THE JAPANESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY

by Michiko Midge Ayukawa

Group One: Those whose whole lives centred on Powell Street. The ones who had little grocery stores of imported Japanese foodstuffs, trinkets, herbal drugs, or who made and sold Japanese delicacies such as manju, *senbei*, clothing and shoe stores. Their children rarely ventured beyond the area. They attended the nearby Strathcona Public School three blocks south of Powell Street on Jackson. But even there, their preferred language was Japanese and their associations were mainly with other Japanese students

Group Two: There were many families who lived within walking distance of Powell Street, for example, in the Strathcona area. The fathers worked away from Powell Street however often went there to socialize for their entertainment: Japanese movies, concerts, and baseball games. The mothers went there to buy most of their food and *banto* (order-takers), came by regularly to take orders that would be delivered to the houses. Their children attended Japanese language school daily after a full day at Strathcona School or others closer to their

homes, such as Seymour, or Model School.

Strathcona was a cosmopolitan area with diverse ethnic representation: Chinese, Italian, Ukrainian, Russian, German, Hungarian, Jewish, English, Irish, Finnish. On the streets and nearby parks the children played together using their common language, English. Thus these Japanese children were exposed to those other than Japanese and were bi-lingual - speaking Japanese and English. Most were able to switch languages with equal ease.

Group Three: The most affluent of the Japanese immigrants moved away from the Powell Street area in the thirties. Their businesses were often carried on in the same place, but the family homes were now in residential areas where successful people of many origins lived. Their forays into Powell Street were spasmodic and mostly for entertainment.

Powell Street was also where the Japanese immigrants that lived in the Fraser Valley, Vancouver Island, northern British Columbia, and even as far as Alberta, made trips to as

family units once in a while to reconnect with their friends and heritage. To them, it may have been as strange and exotic as we in the present day may experience on a trip to Japan.

Had the Japanese not been forced to leave their businesses and homes in 1942, Powell Street may still have

gradually disappeared as the second and third generations matured. A few may have carried on with their parents' occupations and businesses but their world would still have widened. Many *nisei* and *sansei* would have naturally spread across Canada. Some *nisei* had already started this trend in the late thirties.

After the Japanese were allowed to return to the West Coast, driven by nostalgia, a number of the older Japanese found their way back to Powell Street. For a short while it appeared as if Powell Street might return to its former state, but the wartime years of neglect had taken its toll and the area continued to deteriorate. Fearing for their own safety, the returnees left. Now, the Buddhist Church on the site of the former Japanese United Church and the Japanese Hall on Alexander Street, that had housed the Japanese school and also provided a theatre and meeting rooms, are all that is left. Powell Street is no more. It has gone and unless there is a tremendous effort on the part of the city officials and the public to renew the area, it remains lost. One may argue also that Powell Street played a vital role in the formation and the daily lives of the Japanese immigrant community at a time when it was required. But the passage of years would also have brought about its demise. Even the *nisei* who used to return annually to the Powell Street Festival are aged and now find it difficult to attend. "Besides, everyone's gone now," is a common quote.



Logging camp, Vancouver, BC ca. 1900. JCNM 1994.70.28
Ken & Rose Kutsukake collection

St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital (1928-1946)

By Linda Kawamoto Reid

St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital was opened in 1928 by the Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception (MIC), Catholic nuns from the Motherhouse in Montreal. The sisters had served in Canton, China and were sensitive to the needs of the Chinese. Therefore Mount St. Joseph's tradition of providing culturally sensitive health care services to diverse Vancouver residents was born.



Campbell Ave dispensary and hospital 1925. Photo courtesy of Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

When the first four dedicated sisters arrived in 1921, they rented a small house on Keefer Street, turning the parlor into a school and the second floor into a chapel. This house became a refuge for the sick and disadvantaged immigrants, particularly the Chinese, who were grateful to receive services in their own language. After two years of attempting to establish a new mission, four new recruits replaced the sisters, and began by visiting the poor and disadvantaged. Realizing the need for shelter and treatment, they got permission to set up a four-bed hospital in the upstairs of the Keefer home.

In May of 1924, the sisters purchased a house at 236 Campbell Avenue (between Hawks and Raymur off Cordova) and opened up a dispensary. This house was said to be the first residence of Mr. Woodward, the distinguished merchant of Woodward's Department store fame. As the demand increased, they built a new three-story building next door and on May 27, 1928 officially opened the St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital, admitting 18 patients in the 32-bed facility. In the 1929 hospital annual report it lists 182 patients admitted that year, of which 152 were Chinese, 10 Japanese, and 20 other nationalities. By 1935, with more expansion, their seventy beds were

full, as were the beds in Vancouver General and St. Paul's Hospitals.

Up to 1940 in BC, tuberculosis (TB) was the leading cause of deaths. The rate for Asian deaths due to TB in 1922 was 440 per 100,000 compared to 78 per 100,000 for the Caucasian population. The provincial TB sanatorium, Tranquille in Kamloops was at its maximum especially after WWI when many soldiers returned from war with TB. With the anti-Asian atmosphere in Vancouver, even the hospitals were reluctant to treat Orientals.

Pulmonary TB was persistent in those communities who lived in cramped, poor quality housing as it was also highly contagious. In the Japanese community, those conditions existed on Powell Street prior to World War II. St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital would see many people with advanced TB due to the tremendous stigma attached to this disease. Often in both the Chinese and Japanese communities, families were reluctant to seek help, taking care of their sick at home, and they were not privy to education about prevention and cure due to language barriers.

Due to this alarming rate of Japanese TB cases, the Vancouver Health Department called in Dr. Kozo Shimotakahara to initiate TB clinics and launch an educational campaign in the Japanese Community. The reasons for the high incidence rates were due to poor immunity to the disease, overwork, living under



Sisters Theresa Fung and Berthe Surprenant with Chinese and Japanese tuberculosis children at Campbell Ave, ca. 1936. Photo courtesy of Missionary Sisters of the Immaculate Conception.

crowded conditions and existing on poor diets.

This was also the time of economic depression and the Japanese Canadians divvied up jobs so that everyone had a way to make money, had a place to sleep, and rice to feed their families. They felt shame if they had to ask for welfare help and medical care was out of reach for most people during the Depression years. In May of 1932, the Japanese Clinic, initiated by Reverend Shimizu from the United Church of Canada was set up on Pender Street to detect and treat TB among Japanese Canadians. Dr. Shimotakahara was in charge of the delivery of care, and Dr's. Uchida, Shimokura, and Kamitakahara also volunteered. The Japanese Women's organization led by Mrs. T. Hyodo acquired supplies and made arrangements to show films about the cause and cure of TB. Ruth Akagawa and Louise Tsuchiya, two nurses also volunteered to help. Within four years, the death toll from TB in the Japanese community was reduced to half and began to parallel that of the Caucasian population.

Dr. Shimotakahara did not press the patients for money if they could not pay. He also operated a medical clinic and conducted church services in the Fraser Valley farming communities, taking his nurse Yasuko Yamazaki to assist him. As well, he took his films and clinic to the mill towns of Fanny Bay and Woodfibre with the assistance of Ruth Akagawa and his nephew Tetsuo Kamitakahara who ran the projector. On top of that work, Dr. Shimotakahara offered consultation visits to his Japanese patients at St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital. On Dec 9, 1933, the Board of Health closed the Oriental Hospital operated by the United Church of Canada and the patients with TB were transferred to St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital. A ten-bed Oriental Hospital was opened briefly in a private home, attempting to meet the needs of the Japanese Community suffering from TB. It was closed as it did not meet Board of Health standards.



Japanese Clinic, Pender Street, ca. 1930s. JCCC collection.

Through Dr. Shimotakahara's efforts, the hospital was gifted an X-ray machine valued at \$3,500 in 1935, by a benefactor who wanted to help with the diagnosis of TB. The hospital on Campbell Avenue was busy. The hospital's 1935 annual report logs an impressive 320 fluoroscopies, 210 heliotherapies, 530 pneumothorax treatments, as well as 8,759 ordinary treatments and 23,500 medications prescribed in one year. By November 1939,

beds increased to eighty-five, a solarium was built, and the population was a mix of Chinese, Japanese, Blacks, Hindus and Aborigines. By 1940, St. Joseph's Oriental hospital had become the Tubercular hospital for the ethnic populations around the Strathcona area.

At the time of the evacuation, the Japanese patients were moved to Hastings Park Hospital (converted Poultry barn) until the Japanese community could build the sanatorium at New Denver. Originally there were 125 internees diagnosed with TB, but on March 31, 1943, only 105 patients left by train to New Denver San's 100 bed hospital. The patients were accompanied by nursing staff from Hastings Park Hospital.

As TB was being eradicated after the discovery of Streptomycin in 1945, St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital carried on until 1952 when Pearson Hospital opened and St. Joe's officially closed. The building served as a care home for elderly men called the "Immaculate Conception Oriental home" run by Catholic Charities. It was then sold to three levels of government for an Urban Renewal project in 1965, but the sisters still ran it until 1972. The Villa Cathay society (Chinese) ran it as a care home for 6 years until the building was demolished in 1978. The Mount St. Joseph's Hospital on Prince Edward Avenue that we know today was built in 1946 to continue the tradition of diversity in hospital services run by those same Catholic nuns, now known as Providence HealthCare.



St. Joseph's Oriental Hospital, ca. 1940, Kawamoto family collection.



Snowy Powell Street, ca.1910



Grade 2 class performance,
Vancouver Japanese Language School, 1930s



Restaurant interior, 1920s

Life in Powell Street



Two men and dog, ca.1915



Old Language School, ca.1910



Skipping rope, 1930s



Maple Leaf Grocery,
1930



Parade Scene, 1936



Asahi Ball Team, 1930s

(1900-1942)

Powell Street was the business and social centre for the Japanese Canadian community in Vancouver. All photographs are in the collection of the Japanese Canadian National Museum.



Family Portrait of
Sakakibara family, 1936



Judo shoulder throw, 1932



Chester and Roy Kariatsumari on
scooters along Powell Street, 1932



Yama taxis, ready to roll outside the office on Gore Avenue. JCNM 2011.11.1.4

Back on Powell Street

By Raymond Nakamura

My mother's Japanese name is Teruye. She's now called Terry, but growing up in the Japanese community around Powell Street in Vancouver, she was known as Teru, as in, "*Teru, Teru, Bozu*," the little white cloth doll Japanese children hang up to keep the rain away. The nearby Catholic mission where her mother learned to bake pies christened her Rosemary Bernadette. She went there for kindergarten and for church on Sundays with her sister but never used those names herself. She wrinkled her nose at the mention of them.

HOME

She was born in 1929 at home, with the help of a Japanese midwife. Her family, the Yamashitas, lived on Gore Avenue near Powell Street, the hub of the Japanese Canadian community. Their apartment was on the second floor of a building owned by a carpenter named Mr. Ohori, next to the Miyazaki family who ran a small tofu shop on Gore Avenue. Downstairs was a shoemaker and the Maruman restaurant.

DÉCOR

Their home included a *butsudan* (Buddhist altar) with a *honmyo*, a certificate acknowledging Teru's grandparents, as well as seasonal flower arrangements Teru's mother created. Teru didn't have many toys, but her younger sister Ikumi had a kitchen set with working parts and a Shirley Temple doll. On Girls' Day in March, the family brought out the traditional Japanese dolls of the emperor and empress atop tiers of courtiers.

FATHER

Her father, Shintaro, was an industrious businessman, running Yama Taxi with five cars, as well as an electrical appliance shop. He also did minor electrical repairs.

MOTHER

Her mother, Yoshiko, helped run the family businesses and also taught *koto*, the large Japanese stringed instrument, studied *ikebana*, and helped organize community activities. She was an excellent cook. Shintaro arranged for Yoshiko to take cooking lessons from professional chefs on-board ships that came into port from Japan. He knew the staff through the taxi business. They had a large oak table in the living room and would often entertain guests, many of whom were using the taxi service.

COMMUNITY

Shintaro was from Hiroshima and a member of the *kenjinkai*, or prefectural group. Sometimes the family went on *kenjinkai* picnics, where in addition to eating they would enjoy activities like Japanese folk dancing.

BUSINESS TRIPS

In summer, Shintaro would load up the family in their big car and head over to Vancouver Island. But it wasn't a vacation. He took electrical appliances like refrigerators, radios, lamps, and fans to sell in places with large Japanese communities, such as Chemainus or Cumberland. He had started out in Cumberland working in a store for a family friend when he first arrived in Canada in 1912.

EXCURSIONS

Usually, Teru's parents were too busy to take her places just for fun. But others would take her instead. One time, she went to Stanley Park with a young woman named Hatsue whose father knew Shintaro and was living with them while studying to be a nurse at Vancouver General.

BABYSITTER

Teru had a babysitter named Harumi Tomotsugu, who was five years older than her. Teru's mother originally hired Mrs. Tomo to help around the house and Harumi became the babysitter as a bonus. Harumi lived with her mother in a boarding house down the alley. Mr. Tomotsugu was away cutting shingles at logging camps but Mrs. Tomo wanted her daughter to be educated in the city. Mrs. Tomo went to a sewing school and sewed dresses for the girls as projects. For fittings, Teru sometimes visited the school, which was not far from her home. In the summer, Teru would go to the Pacific National Exhibition with Harumi and Mrs. Tomo, with five cents to call for a taxi to come pick them up.

UNCLE

The taxi drivers were all kind to Teru. Sometimes they might give her a nickel to buy some candy or ice cream at the Kawasaki confectionery shop across the street. She fondly remembered her uncle Masao, whom she called "Machan." He was the easy going and kind-hearted younger brother of her stern, no-nonsense father.

..... Continued on next page

SCHOOL

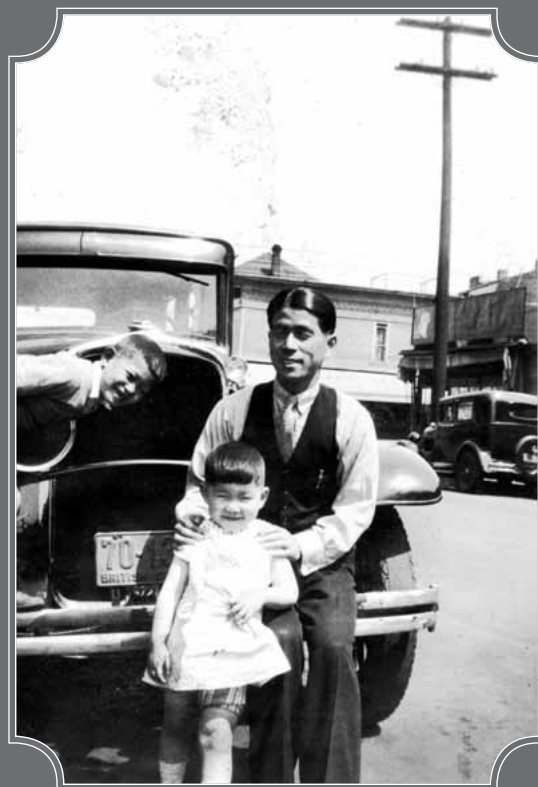
By 1940, Teru was walking the five blocks to Strathcona Elementary with Ikumi. On their way to school, they would join other children from the neighbourhood. About half the school was *Nisei*, second generation children like Teru born in Canada to *Issei*, immigrants from Japan. The other half were children of Chinese descent. They didn't play together. More than once, Teru got into a fight with one of them during recess. But in general, she liked school well enough.

ASAHI

Nearby were the Powell Grounds, where the Asahi played. The Asahi baseball Japanese team players were heroes to the Japanese Canadian community as they successfully competed against their larger Caucasian opponents. On the way home, Teru stopped to watch them whenever they played. The bleachers were always packed.

JAPANESE SCHOOL

When school was done, she headed to Japanese school on Alexander Street, a few blocks north of Powell, from 4 to 6 pm. The students all sat in paired desks. Teru's partner was a boy named Kazuo Aoki who would bring Chinese dried plums for a snack. One of her teachers was a man named Mr. Akiyama. He had a beard and was especially strict. The students called him "Hackenbush" behind his back, after a silly Groucho Marx character at the time. She didn't think she was an especially good Japanese student, but became the narrator for a Japanese play in grade five, because of her "strong voice." She made it up to grade six before the War. Her older brother Bob went to the Language School at night for Japanese high school. Harumi did Japanese high school at the Buddhist church. Teru spoke Japanese with her parents at home, but never had direct contact with her relatives in Japan, except as an infant when her mother took her to see them.



Teru plays with Uncle Masao and her older brother Ichiro. JCNM 2011.11.1.10

EXTRA-CURRICULARS

On top of regular and Japanese school, Teru had *odori* (Japanese dance) lessons twice a week, as well as *koto* with her mother on Saturdays. *Odori* was a part of her life for as long as she could remember. She had pneumonia when she was young and was kept home in grades five and six. Her mother enrolled her in dance as a form of exercise.

DANCE LESSONS

Her first teacher, Hayako, did more modern dances. Later, Teru studied under Tonogai sensei, who taught more classical dance in the Wakayagi style. Her studio was near the Japanese school on Alexander Street, above a store with a big room for about six students. Teru studied with Ikumi and also Harumi. For practice, they wore *yukata*, cotton robes that could be washed more easily than fancy silk kimono.

CONCERTS

The *kimono* were saved for concerts, which took place about once year at the Japanese school hall. Her father applied his electrical skills to set up the lighting and sound. A barber, who was the mother of Betty Usami, another girl who danced, shaved their faces to help the make-up go on more smoothly. It was fun and exciting to see the Japanese community packed into the seats. Each girl usually did two dances, either individually or with a partner, and then a finale involving the whole troupe. After a concert, they would go out to eat at a restaurant, such as the New Pier Cafe or another one which had great lemon pie.

Teru models a *kimono* from her grandmother. JCNM 2011.11.1.14



OTHER PERFORMANCES

Teru also performed at the Catholic Church, but those were minor events by comparison. She even performed at the Hotel Vancouver in the late 30s, not long after it opened. And a few times, Teru and the other dancers dressed up in *kimono* to participate on floats in big parades. Sometimes she had to dress as a male character, much to her resentment.

BATHS

At the end of a busy day, which seemed to be every day, Teru took a bath in the kitchen, in a tub her father made from wood. They filled it with a hose attached to the kitchen sink. Unlike in a traditional Japanese bath, they washed in the bathtub. Her father felt he was too busy to go to the public ones.

BEDROOM

Teru's bedroom was in the attic. She did her homework at a wooden table. In a trunk, she kept her *kimono*, gifts from her wealthy maternal grandmother in Japan. She slept on a Western style bed with a mattress and sheets and a duvet made with Japanese materials. The room was dingy, without windows. But it did have a door that opened onto a small balcony overlooking the rooftops of the bustling Japanese neighbourhood. She would step out to call down the alley for Harumi to come over and play.

GOODBYE POWELL

By 1942, the Canadian government had expelled the community as enemy aliens. The Yamashitas had to abandon their home and sell off as much as they could, including the *kimono*. They went to the self-supporting camp at Minto Mines and eventually ended up in Toronto.

What Powell Street Means to Me

By Frank Moritsugu



Roy Kumano with the Harmonica Band, 1938. JCNM, Makadoro collection

My memories of prewar Powell Street are that of an outsider, because between 1928-42, I was a Kitsilano-ite, living in one of the city of Vancouver's satellite Japanese communities. Powell Street, in the city's downtown, was the main Japanese community or Nihonmachi (if you used the formal Japanese label).

It was created by the original issei who began to arrive towards the end of the 19th century. Immigrants to Canada—especially those who come from countries with different languages and cultures—naturally tend to live together to help each other overcome the strangeness of the new land. And Japanese Canadians landing in B.C. after crossing the Pacific had further reasons for huddling together. As did other Asian immigrants. Ken Adachi put it so lucidly in his excellent history, *The Enemy That Never Was*:

"The immigrants (from Japan) had created a *nihon-*

jinmachi, a miniature of the life they had known in Japan, a wall against prejudice and rejection, a compensation for that return to Japan of which they dreamed. The temple, the school and the neighbourhood group stitched and bound the community..."

Then as the immigrants found themselves staying and their Canadian-born and educated children growing up, that also meant that Powell Street (which the *issei* called "Pa-u-e-ru Su-to-ree-to" when speaking Japanese) was vitally important in our lives, too.

In the past when I have written about prewar Powell Street, I have started off with one of my early memories: Dad occasionally driving us downtown from Kitsilano in his Ford pickup truck to enjoy a family meal at Sun Nom King, one of the original two Chinese restaurants on the main 300 block of Powell Street. We kids all enjoyed noodles in soup that nikkei called "Chinese

soba" (or "nankin soba" because we were not politically correct in those days).

Eating Chinese in Vancouver's Japantown also meant Mom and Dad could do some shopping at nearby stores such as Taishodo which had the best selection of the latest Japanese pop-song 78's that had been brought across the ocean, clothes at the Maikawa store which fit smaller Japanese bodies better, or items from Japan not available in the Kitsilano community's four Japanese stores.

A special purchase sometimes were Japanese sweets like *manju* from Nagami-Kashiya across from the Powell Street Grounds. But tasting them had to wait until we got home and only when Mom felt that after our *soba* feast we'd have room for the delicacy.

Thinking back has made me realize that my connection with Powell Street actually began well before the 1930's era. In late 1926 or early 1927, Dad and Mom left Port Alice, the pulp-mill company town on Vancouver Island: where I and brothers, Ken and Harvey, were born; to move to the city of Vancouver.

Mom was ill and went to a hospital for a short while, so Dad rented rooms at the Hotel World for us to stay. So our first "home" in Vancouver was on Powell Street—at the corner of Dunlevy Avenue! However, I was so young then, only nearing kindergarten age, that I don't remember anything else about that brief stay.

When Mom left the hospital, Dad found a house for the family further east in the so-called Heaps district. It was on Triumph Street near Victoria Drive and one street

south of Powell Street East. There were only a few Japanese homes in the area, and to engage in most JC activities meant taking the streetcar for nine or 10 blocks.

Once settled on Triumph Street, having turned four years old I started kindergarten at the Japanese United Church. That meant a long streetcar ride every weekday morning to the corner of Powell and Jackson Avenue. For the first week or so Mom took me to and fro on the B.C. Electric car. After that, because I knew the way, I was taken to the nearby stop, rode the streetcar by myself, and came home the same way, being met at the stop near our Triumph Street home. Those rides were how I got to know some of the landmarks between Nihonmachi and Victoria Drive, including Rogers Sugar factory that the cans of cane syrup came from, that delicious syrup that we poured onto the hot cakes Mom used to make for us.

Meanwhile Dad, whose Canadian work experience had been mainly farming and the pulp mill on Vancouver Island, was hired by Mr. Sada who had a landscape gardening business. And the following year, the family moved to Kitsilano where there was a growing JC community that was closer to many of the gardening customers' homes and included several families from Tottori-ken, the Western Japan prefecture that our parents were from.

The Kitsilano JC community that centered around the 1600 block of West Second Avenue, had about 1,000 people which was about 1/5 of the number in the Powell Street community. But 'Kits' had its Japanese-language school, the Buddhist

temple, the Christian church, four grocery stores, two barbershops, a taxi company, two Japanese-style *ofuro* (baths), a tofu maker, dry cleaners, and a shoemaker.

I entered second-year kindergarten at the Church of Ascension Japanese Anglican Church, an easy walk of two short blocks and three long blocks away. After kindergarten, it was Henry Hudson School for Grades 1 to 6, then Kitsilano High School, from Grades 7 to 12.

And I also attended the Japanese-language school, daily for an hour and a half. At the church, I joined the Wolf Cub pack and later the Boy Scout troop. And naturally, I played lots of baseball. Many of us boys became judo students when our fathers in their off-hours built a *dojo* in the basement of the gogakko.

But Powell Street was still important to us, even though it was more than an hour away by streetcar. Wherever we lived, either in satellite communities such as Kitsilano, Fairview, Marpole, the Celtic and Canada Canneries on the Fraser River delta or farther away in Steveston, Surrey, Haney and Mission, Powell Street reminded us that we all belonged to a larger world with the downtown *Nihonmachi* as its focus.

One major reason was that along with the many Japanese-owned and operated stores and services, there was the Japanese Hall. It was the hall of the Vancouver Japanese Language School situated on Alexander Street, one north of Powell Street and the Grounds. The sizable auditorium was where the special events were held that regularly enticed us outsiders to visit downtown. Talent from Japan

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sometimes came to give recitals at the Japanese Hall. Music-loving Mom was so excited to be able to hear soprano Sekiya Toshiko and tenor Fujiwara Yoshie whose records she treasured, give “live” concerts there.

But even more importantly at Japanese Hall and elsewhere on Powell Street was where the most talented Japanese Canadians went to show what they excelled at. For me going downtown from Kitsilano, hearing harmonica star Roy Kumano and his bands (both the Gakyukai group and the Meiwa-Gakuin group) perform were always huge treats.

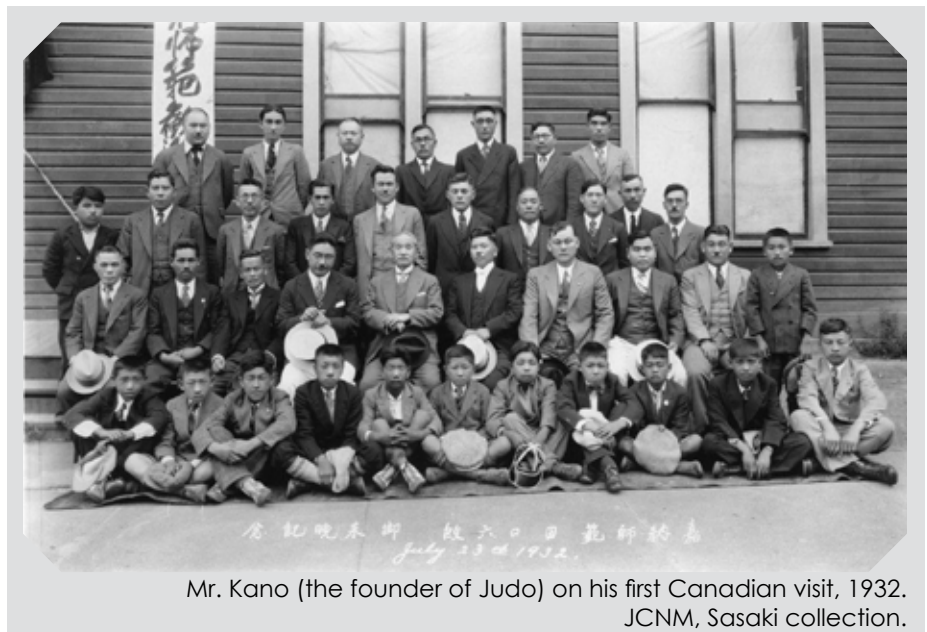
As for young *nisei* singers, the unforgettable thrills I experienced sitting in a Japanese Hall audience included hearing a very young and boyish Bobby Ito in a cowboy outfit singing There’s a Gold Mine In the Sky. He did it beautifully and it was no surprise that he grew up to be the singer/dancer/actor Robert Ito of stage, screen and TV. Another treat was having teenaged Fudge Toyota from Duncan on Vancouver Island wowing us with her swinging rendition of The Darktown Strutters Ball. Didn’t know until then that any *nisei* girl could thrill us like that.

The Hall was also the site of the annual Canadian *judo* championships for blackbelts, and for those under that rank. As a teenager, I was able to compete in individual and team competitions, which was something special. Even more rewarding was being able to watch most of the best *judoka* in the land show their stuff at these contests.

It also happened that the head *dojo* of Canadian *judo* was located nearby in *Nihonmachi* on Dunlevy

between Powell and Alexander Streets. On one special occasion in 1938, our Kitsilano *judo sensei* did a quick phone-around to get his teen-aged and older *judoka* to wear their best clothes and gather to be driven downtown. When we got off at the main *dojo* entranceway, Kamino-*sensei* got us to line up alongside the walk and taught us the Japanese bow that showed the highest re-

really was Jigoro Kano himself, just like in his portrait that graced every judo dojo including ours. He took a step forward, Kamino-*sensei* barked: “Rei!” And down we went as we had just been taught. We held that bow until the founder walked his way into the *dojo* entrance. We must have done the bow properly because we did not get any criticism later from Kamino-*sensei* whose teaching style



spect—the *sai-kei-rei*. It meant leaning forward sliding your hands down your thighs to the knee and bowing and staying that way until ordered up again.

This preparation was for a visit from Jigoro Kano, the founder of judo, who was arriving in Vancouver on his way back to Japan after attending the International Olympic Committee meetings at Cairo, Egypt. Long before judo was accepted as an Olympic sport (in 1964) Kano-shihan was a most active Olympic Games delegate for Japan. When the limousine drew up on Dunlevy Avenue by the *dojo* entrance, out came a little man. Peeking quickly, we saw that it

was traditionally Japanese: never praise, perfection is what is expected.

As for the Powell Grounds, as we got older Dad would occasionally take us downtown to watch a Vancouver Asahi baseball game—always against *hakujin* opponents. Of course, back in Kitsilano we had regular baseball to watch. At the border between Kits and the Fairview districts stood Athletic Park where Vancouver’s Senior League played regularly. The sponsored semi-pro teams were The V.A.C.s (Vancouver Athletic Club), Vancouver Firemen, B.C. Telephones, and Arrow Transfer. And naturally, within the commu-

nity Kitsilano *nisei* had two baseball teams that played against *nisei* opponents from elsewhere. They were the Kitsilano Bussei in the Buddhist league, and the Kitsilano Kyuhin in the Inter-City League against teams from Fairview, Steveston, etc. But what excited baseball fans like my Dad, me and my brothers, was the fact that at least three of the Vancouver Asahi players were from Kitsilano:

would naturally stay to hold their seats and keep watching the game. And when they came back their thirst quenched, we were asked to tell what had happened during their absence.

Enjoying Asahi games at Powell Grounds and Con Jones Park included the memorable visit in May 1935 of the Tokyo Giants. The first-ever visit to Canada of a Japanese

teams and chairs in one classroom and started dancing to recorded tunes played on a portable gramophone. What then happened was one curious *issei* father, seeing lights on through the windows of one classroom, came into the building and peeked through the classroom door window. Seeing us dancing, he reported that to other parents. And the word came down: "No More Dancing In The Gogakko!"

So the Koyukai executive wondered what to do the following year. Then came the solution—go downtown to Powell Street, no Kitsilano parent would see us. So we reserved space at the New Pier Cafe on Main Street just south of Powell Street, and danced our hearts away. That is, those who could dance did. The rest of us, including wishful me, had older girls trying to teach us clumsies how to do the steps. But what the heck, at least we had defied the puritanical *issei* back home.

Then with the Second World War starting in September 1939, I was one of the bilingual high-schooler's asked to assist *issei* in applying for the National Registration Certificates, which everyone in Canada who was 16 years of age or over had to carry in wartime. I remember doing a couple of shifts at the Powell Street United Church where the registration process was handled in *Nihonmachi*.

About two years later, as the war was spreading, Vancouver decided to have an air raid rehearsal in the case of enemy air attacks that might come in the future. *Judo* guys were among the *nisei* asked to act as air raid wardens on the one May night in 1941 when all the city was to perform a test blackout. So I was among



Tokyo Giants Baseball Team. JCNM 2010-29-1

Catcher Reggie Yasui, his outfielder brother Bob Yasui (later changed to Higuchi), and shortstop Roy Yamamura, the small player who became the biggest star in Asahi history.

When my brother Ken and I got old enough to work in Dad's gardening business, on some days after work if we were downtown he would drive us kids and one or two of the *issei* men who worked for him to Powell Grounds for an Asahi early-evening game. We'd usually sit in the seats along the first-base side to cheer our players on. And most times, around the 5th inning or so, Dad and his *issei* comrades would leave for a beer break, usually at Hotel Patricia up the street. Ken and I

professional team. I remember watching both great Giant pitchers Eiji Sawamura and the physically huge Victor Starffin conquer the Asahi. The final Asahi touch for me was Roy Yamamura playing one season in the Athletic Park senior league with the Arrow Transfer, which had already been my favourite team.

Back to Powell Street. Another way that downtown came in handy for us growing Kits kids was the Puritanical ban against dancing in our community. The Japanese-school graduates society, Koyukai, held its annual get-together at the Kitsilano language school on a weekend evening. After the eats, we cleared the

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the Kitsilano-ites who were trained with a viewing of a film demonstrating air-raid precautions in London during the Battle of Britain. And I was in a team watching the 500 block of Powell Street two blocks east of the Grounds. Armed with a flashlight, and a temporary badge, when the blackout was announced, we checked each house and building on all sides for any light showing from the windows or elsewhere. And when necessary, going to the place in question to ask that the light be put out. What is ironic is that after the war against Japan began a few months later, we temporary air raid wardens were treated just like every other JC. Mind you, even those veterans who fought for Canada in the First World War were also treated in unfair ways.

My final firsthand involvement with Powell Street began on December 15, 1941, eight days after the Pearl Harbor attack. With war declared against Japan, the three Japanese-language dailies were immediately shut down by the authorities. Only The New Canadian, a weekly English-language newspaper put out by *nisei*, was allowed to publish. Mainly because the government needed the means to inform us Japanese Canadians what actions were being taken affecting us. This different role also meant that The New Canadian would be issued three times a week at that crisis time because so much was happening about the community.

Having been the editor of the Kitsilano High School monthly paper, I was hired by editor Tom Shoyama to help out under this new system. So for about two months while our futures were being decided by

the Federal Government, I went daily to the Hotel World on Powell Street where the New Canadian offices were. I acted as a reporter and columnist, and learned how to type because, as Tom said, if it wasn't typed it wouldn't be printed.

Because working on The New Canadian on Powell Street meant being close to what was happening, I got to know much more about the continuing events. One dramatic example was when fisherman Min Sakamoto from Prince Rupert came to the office after being part of the fleet of hundreds of JC-owned fishing boats brought down the coast by the Canadian Navy to be impounded at Steveston. Min was livid with rage as he told us how poorly the crafts were handled by the Navy personnel, and the unnecessary damage caused when storms hit the fleet near the Queen Charlotte Islands.

And regular reporters from the Vancouver Province, Sun and the News-Herald would come to the NC office to ask Tom Shoyama and Co. what was happening within the community. One day the visiting press included my hero Jack Scott from the News-Herald. He was not only a great writer but also one of the few B.C. journalists to take our side during the troubling crisis suffocating us.

Other downtown events I was able to attend included heated meetings at Japanese Hall of *nisei* old enough to be sent to work camps. The discussions often flamed into shouting matches between those who felt they should comply with evacuation orders and those who felt they should resist.

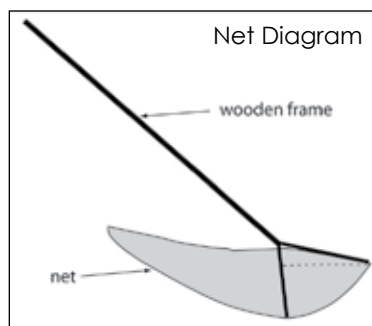
Those few weeks working ev-

ery day on Powell Street taught me so much. And, that was the last work I did in Vancouver before being sent away to the Yard Creek highway work camp as part of the 1942 mass "evacuation" from the B.C. Coast.

So overall, what was Powell Street to me? True, it was not my first home in the way Kitsilano was. But it was where Japanese Canadians like me went to be warmed by the eternal flame that represented what we were about. And that is why in our new lives after things finally became normal, we Japanese Canadians did more than just survive. Much more!

Miichiro (Fred) Kamitakahara was born in Ebusuki, Kagoshima-ken in 1892. He immigrated when 15 years old in 1907 to Canada with several of his peers. Most of them were soon hired by labour contractors, but Miichiro was overlooked because of his short stature so he found work as a houseboy. Consequently, he started working in hotels and eventually found employment as a bellhop with the Macdonald Hotel in Edmonton. His elder sister, fearful Miichiro was dissipating away his earnings, insisted he return to Vancouver and settle down.

He returned in 1918 and married Yae Fukushima, a picture bride from Ebusuki. They had 8 children, 5 sons and 3 daughters. Miichiro fished for about 2 years for the Vancouver Cannery on Sea Island along the Middle Arm of the Fraser River



and then bought a fish packer and started collecting fish. Miichiro would tie onto log booms at Point Grey and collected salmon from fishermen returning to Marpole and Celtic Cannery on the North Arm and Vancouver/Acme Canneries. He then steamed to deliver the catch at the Terra Nova Cannery opposite the Vancouver/Acme Canneries on the Middle Arm.

He would also deliver spring salmon with his truck to the Edmonds and Walker Company at either of their fresh fish outlets on Campbell Avenue in Vancouver or in New Westminster. Spring salmon commanded a higher price as fresh fish than as canned product. He also delivered spring salmon to three fresh fish shops in Japantown; BC Fish (Nakahama), Chaki Fish (Chaki) and Union Fish (owned by various people). During the spring freshet, Japanese women and children at Vancouver and Acme Canneries would fish for small shrimp with fyke nets. A fyke net consisted of a V-shaped wood frame attached at the V to a long wooden pole. The open end of the cylindrical net of small-mesh webbing was lashed onto the V-frame. The fyke nets were generally fished on the ebb tide when the current was strongest. A person would grab the end of the pole and thrust the fyke net into the current. The net would be checked occasionally to monitor catches, which were dumped into containers by turning the net inside out.

Alfie Kamitakahara remembers his mother prepared the shrimp either by deep-frying in a batter or boiling in soy sauce and sugar (*tsukudani*). Alfie definitely preferred the latter. All the excess shrimp was boiled into *tsukudani*, as a means of preserving the catch by the women of Vancouver and Acme Canneries. When catches were exceptionally large, Miichiro would take 8 – 10 trays of fresh shrimp and jars of *tsukudani* for sale to the Japanese fish shops in Japantown. These products were readily consumed by the Japanese of the area.

Chaki Fish Market

DELIVERING FISH PRODUCTS TO POWELL STREET

By Moe Yesaki

PHONE DOUG. 5542	STATEMENT
VANCOUVER, B. C. _____ 19__	
M _____	
IN ACCOUNT WITH	
T. Chaki Fish Market	
新鮮魚肉並に食料品	
Terms: Net 30 Days	262 POWELL STREET

REFLECTIONS ON THE POWELL STREET FESTIVAL

By Julia Aoki, with special thanks to John Endo Greenaway

The first Powell Street Festival took place during an extended moment of cultural and political restlessness in the Japanese Canadian community and it was one among many events to develop out of the ephemeral gatherings and discussions of a shifting group of interested individuals. In 1976, the year before the centennial project was to take place, organized in recognition of the first recorded Japanese immigrant to Canada, a historical photo-exhibit was mounted at the Centennial Museum. This photo-exhibit would be the basis for an expanded photo-project and a subsequent publication, *A Dream of Riches: The Japanese Canadians 1877-1977*. Also in 1976, Ken Adachi's *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of Japanese Canadians* was published followed by Ann Gomer Sunahara's *The Politics of Racism* and Joy Kogawa's *Obasan* in 1981. Through their circulation, these among numerous other important forms of expression by groups and individuals, have contributed to cultural, social and historical stability of Japanese Canadians who had faced fragmentation and disintegration in the wake of internment and dispersal.

What distinguishes the Powell Street Festival from these other cultural forms is its fleeting nature: the structures are temporary, and the food and programming are limited. Still, in the summer of 1977, out of that atmosphere of heightened expression, the Powell Street Festival was mounted in Oppenheimer Park, and 35 years later it has been established to give stability and permanence within the Japanese Canadian community. Through anticipation, organization, celebration and reflection, the Powell Street Festival has its own familiar and comforting rhythms bringing shape and consistency to the JC community. It is one more among the many important forms of culture, social with historical sharing and exchange.



Poster 2001

The exact roles and temporal order of the people involved in the first festival have been somewhat obscured through time, though Takeo Yamashiro, Tamio Wakayama, Michiko Sakata, Rick Shiomi, Mayu Takasaki, and Gordon Kadota are names inseparable from the history. The collective fundraising and organizational effort of this group (which may exclude key figures, and I can only apologize for the partiality of my knowledge in this regard), resulted in the Festival that perseveres today. The event has certainly changed, most significantly in its size. Powell Street Festival Society programming is now year-round, and during the



Martial Arts Demonstration, 2001

Festival weekend it spills over into a number of nearby venues. Yet, looking through photographs of that very first year, there is something strikingly familiar. If that 'something' can be expressed, to my mind, it is a collective spirit, one that makes possible an event that could not be achieved individually.



Logo for 35th Anniversary, 2011

That something familiar is evident in Tamio Wakayama's account of the first festival, which he recalls, happened...

"on a brilliant summer's weekend filled with plenty of hot sun and even warmer spirits. In the days preceding the event, I remember walking by Oppenheimer Park on my way to the project studio and watching the magic transformation as the green space began to fill with the huge main stage with its brightly coloured Centennial banner and all those back-breaking 2x4 booths... From the blur of activity of the festival weekend, two memories vividly remain—the unbridled joy of the *Issei* and the visceral beat of Taiko ... In the end we were exhausted but immensely pleased for the complex festival had run like a fairly well tuned machine and more importantly, we had achieved our principle objective of a strengthened united community that had come together to celebrate and reaffirm a worthy heritage."

(T. Wakayama, "The First Powell Street Festival," *The Bulletin*, July 2001)



Festival goers carry the omikoshi (shrine), 2010



Kimonos, 2010

FOLDING POCKET CAMERA

Mizuno Collection, ca.1921
JCNM 2011.17.1

This small and ordinary No 3-A Autographic Kodak Folding Pocket Camera encompasses many sentiments for the Mizuno family and Mr. Cornish. The Mizuno family ran a rooming house at 578 Alexander Street in Vancouver BC. Mr. Cornish was a bachelor who rented one of the upstairs rooms. He called his landlady Mama Mizuno and was a good friend to her two daughters, Mary and Jerie. In 1942, when the family was required to quickly move from their home, they sold many things in a rush. Cameras were forbidden in the internment camps, so the No. 3-A camera had to be left behind. The camera, being dear to the family, was entrusted to their close friend Mr. Cornish to care for until they could return. The camera originally belonged to Mr. Mizuno, who had passed away before Mr. Cornish met the family.

The family was evacuated to Sandon, BC and later moved to the Toronto area. They never returned to claim the camera, and Mr. Cornish eventually decided to donate it to the Japanese Canadian National Museum in their memory.

This "pocket" camera is 10 inches (25 cm) long, and was one of the best selling cameras of its time. It was considered an amateur's folding bellows camera, and was made by Eastman Kodak between 1914 and 1934. It originally sold for about \$50. The 3A created postcard format images on Kodak 122 roll film.

