

NIKKEI images



The Royal Visit of 1939
JCNM 2010.80.2.66



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ON THE COVER:

The Royal Visit of 1939

by Bryan Akazawa

The recent Canadian tour of William and Catherine, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, is a mirror image of the visit of Prince William's great grandfather King George VI back in 1939. In both cases there was a real concerted effort to strengthen ties between Canada and Britain, to increase and solidify bonds of trust and loyalty.

During their visit, King George VI and his wife, Queen Elizabeth travelled 80 km by motorcade through the streets of Vancouver, including Powell Street. The Royal Couple was greeted by the proud and excited Japanese Canadian residents. The community members were dressed in their finest clothing and elaborate kimono. Banners lined the street and everyone waved the Union Jack.

It is ironic that such a display of loyalty to the British Empire and Canada would be followed three years later by the expulsion of all people of Japanese ancestry from the coast. The Canadian Government claimed that these Japanese Canadians could be disloyal or dangerous during times of war. These notions were unwarranted as both the RCMP and the Canadian military would point out. The Japanese Canadian community was no threat.

This picture was taken by a Japanese Canadian community member who must have been caught up with the same sense of excitement that Canadians have recently experienced during the Royal Visit of 2011.



Building Community Partnerships

by Beth Carter

The Japanese Canadian National Museum recently received a significant grant from the Vancouver Foundation to develop important collaborative partnerships with *Nikkei* communities in Kamloops and New Denver. This project will ensure preservation of Japanese Canadian collections and make these cultural treasures available to all Canadians via an online database.

When the JCNM was first conceived in the early 1980s, and received start-up funding from the Redress settlement fund, the museum was intended to serve as a national repository for collections and archives from across Canada, and also be a resource for other Japanese Canadian cultural organizations. Until now, the museum has succeeded in building its own collection however has not had the time or resources to assist other smaller, volunteer-run heritage organizations. We feel that this is definitely part of our mandate. As the Japanese Canadian community ages, there is some urgency to ensure that *Nikkei* historical items are correctly cared for and recorded for posterity.

This summer, we are working with the Kamloops Japanese Canadian Association. The KJCA was founded in 1976 and has a history collection in the basement with archival papers, books, photographs and artifacts that have been donated by members. In 2009, the Cultural Centre tragically burned down, but fortunately the collections were preserved. The Centre is now rebuilt, but the archives remain in a state of disarray, and the few volunteers desperately need assistance. With the JCNM's help and Vancouver Foundation funds, new computer equipment was purchased and summer student Julie Reed received training and is making great progress cataloguing and digitizing their collection, as well as improving the storage conditions. This information will soon be available through the JCNM online database for all Canadians!

Towards the end of the summer, JCNM staff will visit the *Nikkei* Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver, BC to develop a plan of action for their collections. The NIMC is a project of the volunteer *Kyowakai* (translated - "working together peacefully") Society. As a National Historic Site, the NIMC cares for significant collections about the internment of Japanese Canadians. The bulk of this documentation work will take place in 2012.

The JCNM is dedicated to working together with other Japanese Canadian groups across BC and the rest of the country to ensure *Nikkei* heritage is preserved and our history is remembered. Thank you to the Vancouver Foundation for supporting this vision!



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A Visit to Mio Village and its Canada Immigration Museum

by Stan Fukawa



Photo 01

Mio Village in Wakayama Prefecture has long been known as “Amerika Mura” or “America Village” because to the Japanese of the 19th and early 20th century, Canada--where thousands of Mio villagers went as immigrants--was Amerika to them.

Mio is undoubtedly the ancestral home to more Canadian Nikkei than any other village in Japan. Gihei Kuno, a master carpenter from that community saw the massive salmon runs on the Fraser River at Steveston in 1887 and encouraged villagers back home to leave their poverty for abundance in a new land. Kuno succeeded so well that they have raised memorials in his honour in both Mio and Steveston, BC. Mio descendants in Canada now easily out-number those still in Japan.

Fishing as an occupation in Mio has dwindled even further. Birth rates have fallen and improvements in social and health services have resulted in the ballooning numbers of the aged. Mio Elementary School has closed due to decreases in young children. Educated and skilled workers have left for large cities and retired city people have moved to lower-priced properties in Mio. Mio village itself was amalgamated with two other villages to form Mihama-cho or Mihama town in 1954.

Hisakazu Nishihama and Yoshiya Tabata, two retired teachers who taught early in their careers at Mio Elementary, are two stalwarts who have nursed connections with

Canada. Photo 01 shows them at the carved stone memorial to Gihei Kuno erected in 1987 at the centennial of his departure to Canada. Nishihama Sensei is on the outside. The author Stan Fukawa and wife Masako are opposite. Photo 02 is a mural next to the Kuno memorial on a rock surface painted by ten Grade 5 and 6 Mio Elementary students in 2002 depicting “What’s famous in Mio.” The famous people are Gihei Kuno, the father of Japanese immigration to Canada, and Johannes Knudson, a chief engineer on a Danish freighter, who gave his life in a futile attempt to save a Japanese fisherman off the coast of the village during a storm. The other famous things are lobsters and seagulls.

Near the Kuno memorial is the Noda House (Photo 03), western in style both outside and inside. It is one of the few remaining foreign-styled houses that were built by immigrants who did well abroad. Mr. Noda’s house, with its iron front gate, decorative columns and painted wooden walls



Photo 02



Photo 03



Photo 04



Photo 05

was also fitted with a furnace in the basement for heating in winter. He was a local high school principal.

A few miles from Mio is Hi-no-Misaki or Promontory of the Sun, a viewpoint from which you can look down onto the bay (Photo 04) on which Mio sits and the strait between the Wakayama peninsula and Shikoku Island. This is the body of water where Chief Engineer Johannes Knudsen (aged 39) of the Ellen Maersk met his death in his heroic attempt to save a fisherman in a burning boat. Photo 05 is the Knudsen Memorial erected by a local Rotary Club. An annual memorial service is conducted there.



Photo 06

Photo 6 is a local craftsman's attempt to create a Canadian west coast totem pole. Mr. Nishihama is the curator and director of the Canada Immigration Museum at Hi-no-Misaki. Photo 07 shows some of its many artefacts from Canada. They include photographs from the earliest migrants including scenes from Powell Street and Steveston, books about Japanese immigrants, logging tools, fishing gear, 78 rpm records, old gramophones and oil paintings by Mr. Nishihama. Masako was shown her paternal grandmother's trunk from her trip back from Canada in 1946, which is part of a display.

Photo 08 would be quite familiar to people who have visited the JCNM as it shows a panel of the series created by John Endo Greenaway. In previous visits, the museum displayed the 'Dream of Riches' photo exhibit. It is a valuable repository of materials for Japanese scholars with an interest in immigrants to Canada. The facilities are privately owned by the family which has a

bed-and-breakfast lodge (*kokumin shukusha*) at the site. Hi-no-Misaki used to have a small zoo but even that did not help to make it a popular tourist destination.

The Canada Immigration Museum will probably be kept in good shape as long as Mr. Nishihama is well and able to look after it. (The landlord is a former student of his.) He is the rare local historian of the region and has

written on the immigrants from Mio and Gobo, including Gihei Kuno and Eikichi Kagetsu. He never emigrated but his father did and that connection has led him to his work in immigration, local history and membership in the Japanese Association for Immigrant Studies.

His friend, Yoshiya Tabata, was born in Steveston but was taken back to Mio because one of his brothers was sickly. He has been deeply involved in the local community as a teacher and town councillor and was acknowledged for his campaign which sent



Photo 07

15,000 Japanese books to Canada's Japanese Language Schools (*NIKKEI IMAGES*, Summer 2000, pp. 7-8). He was honoured in 2008 for his 42 years' service as Chair of a local committee formed to save the *Ohga Lotus*, the oldest known lotus plant in Japan (over 2000 years) and still volunteers with the developmentally disabled at age 88.



Photo 08

World War II and the *Kika-nisei*

by Haruji (Harry) Mizuta

This is the story of a small group of Japanese Canadians called “*kika-nisei*” (they were born in Canada, sent to Japan before the war, lived in Japan through the war and returned to Canada after the war). The *kika-nisei* were born between the 1910s and 1930s and would be 70 to 90 years old and their numbers are decreasing every year.

During the war they lived in Japan as Japanese, after the war they were allowed to return to Canada through their entitlement to Canadian Citizenships by their births in the country. In the next ten years, most of these people will disappear from our society. They have encountered quite a different life to the Japanese Canadian Nisei who were forced to evacuate from the B. C. coast and live in internment camps.

In my case, I was born in Revelstoke, B. C. in 1933 and moved to Japan in 1938 where my mother was born, to be educated in Japan. Generally, many Canadian-born Japanese children went to Japan to receive their education in Japan. It was mainly for education, though on the other hand, this might have helped to minimize their parent’s expenses in Canada. Children were either sent to grandparents or to relatives in Japan by themselves or accompanied by their mother, while their father stayed in Canada to work.

The village I grew up in was known as the ‘immigration’ village in Japan. It was not unusual when I was in grade one that about half of the pupils in the class were Canadian-born, as half the population of the village had previously immigrated to Canada.

My father went back to Canada just before the war started and we lost contact with him as well as his financial remittances when war erupted. It fell on my mother to support the family. I did not realize the consequences

because there were similar situations throughout the entire village at that time.

Still I can remember in the fall of 1940, we celebrated the Year Showa 15 or 2600 of the Koki calendar of Japanese Emperor’s Year by marching with lighted lanterns. In addition, in the spring of 1941, the elementary school was changed to the People’s School. However, for very young people like us, we could not understand the dangerous conditions in the world. In those days, I thought the most respected persons around us were the school principal and the police officer in the village.

In December 1941, the Second World War broke out and the Japanese Army advanced to Southeast Asia. We marched with lighted lanterns to celebrate. We sent off soldiers just about every day with waving Japanese flags. We did not have any doubt of winning the war and we thought the family could live together under one roof in a short while. In the middle of 1942, I was shocked with news that the Japanese Navy lost the Battle of Midway and the General Commander Yamamoto had been killed in action.

Around that time, we were told not to use any English words such as Mom and Dad in daily use. I was hesitant to use “*Oka-san*” to call mother. Mother told me that if I did not use Japanese words she would not answer me. That decided for me that I should call her, “*Oka-san*”.

In 1944, all the senior students were called to work in factories, leaving their studies behind. In addition, at age 17, all young men in the village enlisted in the army. Some of the young men, including the *kika-nisei*, volunteered to join the army before they were called up to join. All Japanese, including *kika-nisei*, felt it was their obligation and duty to serve the country. They looked especially brave and beautiful in their navy uniforms. Even today, I can re

member how they looked. I was only 10 or 11 years old at that time, I was hoping to enter the navy college and to become a navy officer one day. Nevertheless, I was not old enough to go to college, so I asked my mother "why couldn't I have been born a few years earlier?"

In the meantime, some *kika-nisei* were killed in action as many soldiers died in battles overseas. In the village, the special police in civilian clothes came around the village to search for spies just because some of the villagers could understand English. Some of the villagers were very nervous because of their snooping.

In late 1944, the special Kamikaze suicide air attacking units were created and B-29 (Boeing 29 Heavy Bombers) bombed the city of Tokyo. In the spring of 1945, our village was attacked with firebombs; 21 houses were burned down and six villagers were killed. There were fires all around our house. The houses in front of our home burned down, but luckily, our house escaped from burning.

The U.S. Air Force had the advantage over Japanese air space because at this time Japanese had no airforce with which to encounter the U.S. bombers. Around 11 p.m. every night, bombers flew right over our heads with flying lights on, heading northwards over the Kii Peninsula to attack the Osaka area. Every time the siren sounded, we scrambled to safety.

We were nervous because of the bomb attacks and from lack of sleep. The next town was bombed as there was a factory engaged in making armaments.

U.S. airplanes that had been hit by Japanese anti-aircraft guns were crashing into the ocean spewing black smoke. Because of the nightly bombings, even though we were living in the countryside, we understood that living in the big cit-

ies such as Tokyo and those in the Kansai area would have been like living in hell.

The government cancelled all the school classes, with the exception to the sixth grade, all others were sent to volunteer for work in the fields. In 1945 when Germany was defeated, the few men left behind in the villages began training with bamboo spears in anticipation of fighting the enemy at the seashore.



..... Continued on next page

We were told that it would be the last defense to protect ourselves. That June the Japanese army in Okinawa was wiped out and in August the Soviet Army invaded Manchuria from the north, while Hiroshima and Nagasaki were demolished by atomic bombs. We were scared that the effects of this new bomb would be so strong as to kill everything in the area for the next few hundred years. Later on, as we discovered the devastation caused by the atom bombs, I wondered about the future of Japan. I was told those sad stories by the people who were directly affected by the bombing later in Vancouver.

On that hot day of August 15, 1945, the Second World War finally ended. From that day on the "Gruman Fighter Plane" flew over our rooftops every day at very low altitudes. We could see the faces of the pilots and they seemed to be showing off. Only a couple months before those very same fighters had randomly shot at us.

There were some rumors that occupational forces would kill all the men and sell all the women and children. When those soldiers came to the village, most of them were so young and chewing gum on the jeep. We were impressed to see the Imperial Mark on the Japanese Army Gun that was lying beside a driver's seat had been badly smashed with a hammer. Many of the kids in the village gathered around the jeep to get some chewing gum from the soldiers. There was a young mother with a small baby on her back. Her husband had gone to fight in the war and was killed in action. We thought she

came here to take revenge for her husband. Suddenly, she started to speak to the soldiers. Those soldiers replied with a smiling face. We realized she was speaking in English. As their conversations progressed, the surrounding atmosphere changed to a friendlier mood. Then we found out that the woman was born and educated in Canada and came to Japan before the war.

In 1946, I proceeded to Senior High school during very difficult times. There were shortages of everything, including food and necessities. The first reading book in our high school was from sheets of a paper cut to make pages of the book. The shortage of school supplies did not bother me at all, though it was a quite a shock to me that the guidance for life usually learned from history and geography, especially that of the Japanese history in the previous old sections was denied. I was confused and did not know what was right and what was wrong in our history. From then on, I did not trust everything right away.

There were many changes: currency fluctuations, agriculture land reforms, price controls, and amending of the education system. Devaluation of the yen meant that it was worthless after the war, though we were poor and therefore not affected. However, we did not own land, so we suffered from food shortages. My grandmother went out every day to collect edible weeds, seaweed and anything edible to fill our stomachs. We were extremely anxious when our mother became sick from the lack of nutritious food. Many soldiers and people came back to Japan from



WITH MY PARENTS (1937)



FRIENDS (1937)

overseas. In addition, many families (about 425 people) came back to our village from Canada, many of whom were Canadian-born.

Children were enrolled into classes to make everything look normal. However, in reality, Japan was anything but normal as there were severe shortages of food. The returning families had spent very difficult times in the interment camps, though they had not suffered food shortages in Canada. The returning families did not stay very long, preferring to return to Canada after a short while.

The level of education the *kika-nisei* received in Japan was much different before the war compared to during the war. When the war erupted, their financial support was cutoff and severely affected their living conditions. As a result there were few households that could sustain necessary high education levels for their sons and daughters. So the goal to obtain a higher education in Japan was curtailed because of the war. Some of the *kika-nisei* who had returned to Japan long before the war had the opportunity to receive a higher education and because of their higher education were enjoying a comfortable life in Japan. They remained in Japan after the war as they did not have to return to Canada to find employment.



REVELSTOKE, B.C. (1936)

In 1949, some of us who had returned to Japan before the war and stayed with our grandparents or relatives were the first to go back to Canada rejoining our parents. However, not all reunions resulted in successful conclusions for the returnees. There were deep gaps between the parents and their children, especially in communication. For myself, as I had been separated for 6 years from my father, I could not get along with him because of our long separation and my stubbornness at that time.

who had returned to Canada earlier. I could not speak a word of English at that time. Canadian society was very restrictive with limited employment available for Asians, other than in heavy labor. Even English speaking Canadian-born Japanese had difficulty in finding good jobs. I realized that to be accepted in Canadian society I had to learn English as my first priority. Some times, I was called "Chink" by white people, who mistook me as a Chinese immigrant.

I am obliged to my parents for sending me to high school despite their financial hardships. After graduating I was employed by one of the major manufacturing companies in Osaka, but I was thinking of going back to Canada as some of my friends were returning to Canada. I realized that a high school education was not good enough when competing with university graduates. University did not materialize, though I was offered an opportunity to accompany the General of Canadian Occupational Forces back to Canada who wanted to take a Canadian-born *nisei* with him.

Eventually when I was 22 years old, I returned by ship to Canada in the spring of 1955 through the help of my cousin

A healthy body is the only asset we have. Everyone worked hard in sawmills, fishing and gardening. The hourly wage for gardeners was one dollar per hour. Our preliminary target was to earn \$300 per month so we worked 10 hours a day for 30 days per month without a day off in order to achieve this goal. We used city buses to go to work. We got back on the bus with our sweaty clothes on the way home; I was embarrassed that everyone on the bus was looking at us. One thing that encouraged us to work hard was the currency rate of the Canadian dollar that was worth 360 yen at the time. That was huge money in Japan.

Meantime, we went to night school to learn English and stayed with a Canadian family to engage in daily conversations. *Kika-nisei* girls worked as house maids during the winter and in fishing canneries in summer to support their families back in Japan. There was a huge gap in the living standards between the Japanese Canadians and white Canadians. This gap has narrowed in recent years.

In the 1960s, some *kika-nisei* were starting to emerge as entrepreneurs, especially in gardening as they gained a reputation as being the best in that industry. They purchased their own houses, raised families and established firm foundations. A priority of the *kika-nisei* was the education of their children. In addition, they were keen in educating their children in the Japanese language and more than half of the students in Japanese schools at one point were children of *kika-nisei*.

Kika-nisei that were included in the redress compensation process were very grateful for the effort provided by the Japanese Canadian Redress Committee in 1988.

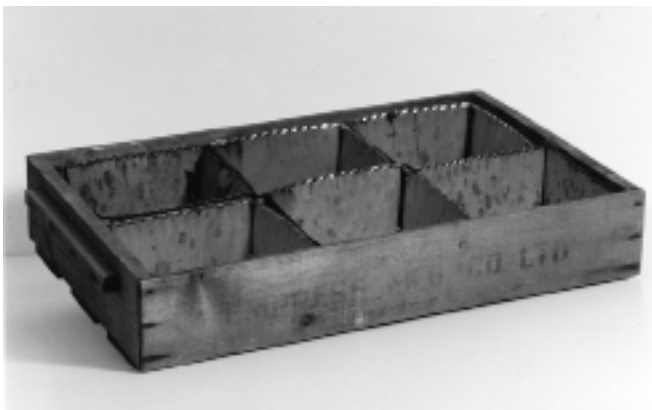
It has been more than 50 years since we came back to Canada. We are now living comfortably with pensions and surrounded by children and grandchildren. Our life that we have experienced has been interesting, along with some hardships. We are so fortunate in comparison to other people affected by the last war.

Fortunately, *kika-nisei* experienced Japanese culture at the most important time in our lives, influencing our thinking and important decisions. When we look back on our own lives, we feel we are fortunate for experiencing new lives in Canada.

We realize that our hearts are Japanese like our parents even though our nationality is Canadian. Even after living more than 50 years in Canada, we live like Japanese living in Japan (in our conversations, food, literature, hobbies, etc.) and intend to carry our Japanese traditions to the next generation. Our time is quietly approaching closure. We sincerely hope that there will be peace on the earth, though we understand that suffering and separation of families will continue as long as wars exist on earth.

Note: This is the English translation of the article published in Japanese in the JCCA Bulletin, September 2009 issue





BERRY TRAY

JCNM 1999.4.10 a-g

by Momoko Ito

This cedar berry tray was handcrafted by Unezo Ota in 1950 and was used for his berry picking business. The Ota family returned to the coast

in 1950 from Minto and settled on a two-and-a-half acre plot of land in Cedar Hills, Surrey, where they began a small berry picking farm. By 1951, many Japanese-Canadians were berry farming in the area and it was decided that a farming co-op would be established on 88th Ave. in Surrey.

This particular tray, being equipped with veneer inserts, was called a 'tin-top' because of the accompanying tin lids (not pictured), and was used for transporting strawberries and raspberries to the Empress Cannery in Burnaby for the production of jam. Once the berries were cultivated, the harvest would take place in the summer months between mid-June and mid-August. The best berries would be selected and frozen for use in name brand jams like Bird's Eye and the lower-grade berries were sent fresh for the production of store-brand jams.



SCURF SCRUBBER SET

JCNM 2002.11

By Lisa Hansen

This curious little object is one of those things that catches your eye and begs to be picked up and touched. Cleansing and exfoliating one's skin before entering an *ofuro*, or Japanese bath, has been a longstanding tradition in Japanese culture. Unlike bathing practices in the West, the Japanese tradition is to thoroughly wash oneself

and then enter the clean water. The communal nature of Japanese *onsen* (hot springs) and *sentou* (public baths), and the sharing of bath water within each household, necessitates this practice. The jagged edges on these tiny scurf scrubbers help remove scales from dry skin and dandruff from the head before entering the bath. They were donated by John (Jack) William Duggan (1919-2006), an RCMP officer who was posted in several Internment camps, including one in Tashme, during World War II. He became good friends with many internees, including members of the famous ASAHI baseball team. The scrubbers were handmade from bamboo by a Japanese Canadian resident of Tashme.



KASLO TO NEW DENVER: A ROAD TRIP

BY CARL YOKOTA

On a recent road trip through the Kootenays this past June, I was finally able to visit Kaslo, Sandon and New Denver along the scenic 47 km valley stretch of Highway 31A. It was in this region, that over 6000 Japanese Canadians were interned during WWII. Although my own late father was interned at the Angler POW 101 internment camp in Northern Ontario, I had always wanted to learn more about the Japanese Canadian internment experience here in the Silvery Slocan that I had read and heard about.

During WWII, Kaslo was the internment destination for approximately 1100 Japanese Canadians. This small mountain village is located just north of the Ainsworth Hot Springs Resort along the picturesque west shore of North Kootenay Lake. Founded in 1893, Kaslo was then the commercial hub for all the area mining (gold, silver and lead) activities in the early 1890s. Its natural harbour offered safe and easy access for the many steamships and barges that worked the waters of Kootenay

Lake.

One of the venues featured in this summer's 2011 Kaslo Art Walk is the Langham Cultural Centre. This historic wooden structure first built in 1896 was at various times of its existence a hotel, a bottling plant, a wooden boat factory and a bank, and during WWII housed approximately 80 Japanese Canadian internees. Painstakingly restored since 1977, the Langham Cultural Centre is now one of the jewels of the village with art galleries and studios, a theatre, offices and the Japanese Canadian Museum.

The Japanese Canadian Museum found on the second and third floors of the Langham Cultural Centre offer a unique collection of exhibits, displays, photos and artefacts of the internment years. On the third floor there is a plexiglass door through which visitors can peer into a small room about the size of a small bathroom where members of the Konno family once resided. [Visitors Tip: take the back staircase from the second floor up to the third where you will find many more special photos of Kaslo and its Japanese Canadian inhabitants.]

Kaslo was also home to the New Canadian newspaper that thrived during the War Years. It kept Japanese Canadians abreast of local and current government news, and is now an invaluable historical resource. Our accommodation during our stay, the New Kaslo Hotel & Brew Pub that before its current luxurious renovations, was used during WWII as housing for the interned Japanese Canadians. In the front lobby entrance, there is a framed photo of former Japanese Canadian internees who lived at the old Kaslo Hotel. The present hotel management is offering on their website (www.kaslohotel.com) a special offer of two nights complimentary accom-



Front Street, Kaslo

modation for any of those individuals pictured.

Approximately 45 km west of Kaslo along the lush forested highway, there is a loose rock and dirt turn-off leading to the old "ghost town" of Sandon. Following up a long, well travelled mountain road with a deep drop off to your right, you come to a clearing surrounded by steep forests and a small collection of old buildings, remains of former wood structures of one kind or another, a rushing creek, and quite peculiarly a number of old BC Transit buses along with an old train locomotive.

In the late 1890s, this once thriving city of Sandon, fuelled by the booming silver mine activities of the area, is said to have been home to close to 5000 inhabitants. This mountain city boasted numerous bars, hotels, supply stores, banks, bakeries and even houses of ill-repute, all to keep the residents and thousands of miners well looked after. After the short-lived heyday for silver mining came to an end, Sandon fell upon hard times until it was sourced as a place to intern Japanese Canadians during WWII.

Hidden high in the mountains, with available accommodation for approximately 1000 people, Sandon was an ideal location for the then B.C. Security Commission to settle the internees. With its remoteness and harsh winter conditions, the internees must have had a difficult time during their stay in Sandon as the majority had lived on the Coast, with its relatively mild winters.

A short fifteen minute drive northwest of Sandon and to the junction of Highway 31A and Highway 6 will take you to the village of New Denver. Like Kaslo and Sandon, New Denver's beginning was tied to the early silver mining boom years of the 1890s. Orig-

inally called Eldorado, the name was later changed to New Denver after its namesake in Colorado. This present village community of about 600 residents is popular with outdoor recreational enthusiasts and others seeking the more peaceful Kootenay life. However, it also harboured a dark past.

Following the signs, we found our way to the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre located on quiet Josephine Street. This local attraction has the distinction of being the only Canadian interpretive centre dedicated to the internment of Japanese Canadians during WWII. The site features three original shacks (one now serving as the Visitor's Centre), a former community long house - the Kyowakai Hall, and a beautifully designed Japanese Garden (Heiwa Teien or Peace Garden).

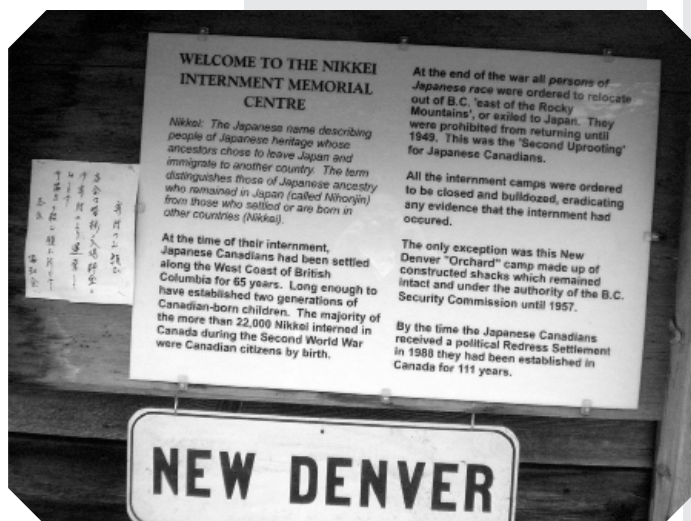
Our gracious and engaging host, Margaretha, explained the origins of this Memorial Centre and about the Japanese Canadians interned in New Denver. Two of the small shiplap and tarpaper constructed shacks are complete with personal belongings and simple handmade wood furnishings. The Kyowakai Hall (the original community bathhouse) houses an archival mix of displays and artefacts chronicling the Canadian government's incarceration of nearly 22,000 Nikkei folk, three quarters of whom were Canadian born. The shacks and Hall are remnants of the former "Orchard" community, a ranch quickly converted to assemble and house the approximately 1500 New Denver Japanese Canadian internees. "The

Orchard" site continued to operate until 1957 under BC Security Commission authority - 12 years after the end of WWII.

The Kootenays are such a beloved scenic and serene place to live and vacation but this part of British Columbia also holds many secrets and offers discoveries of all sorts. Some of my earlier yearnings have been realized though I still find myself having more questions than answers. This summer road trip surely opened my eyes in more ways than one.



Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre
Visitors' shack. New Denver



Internment Poster, New Denver

JEFF CHIBA STEARNS' ONE BIG HAPA FAMILY

BY CHRISTINE KONDO

Jeff Chiba Stearns' first feature-length documentary, *One Big Hapa Family*, got its world premiere in Fall 2010 at the Calgary International Film Festival and has started making the rounds on the North American film festival circuit. The documentary received an enthusiastic response with sold-out screenings at the Vancouver Asian Film Festival and the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival.

In November of 2010, the documentary won the prestigious NFB Best Canadian Film or Video at the Toronto Reel Asian International Film Festival. The festival's jury said that *One Big Hapa Family* was "An extraordinary work that combines home movies, history and first-person accounts, it is a journey of self-discovery that includes the voices of four generations of a Canadian family. Written, directed and edited by the filmmaker, he has taken the particular and has made it universal in both form and content."

Inspired by a 2006 family reunion where he noticed that every child in his large extended family was of mixed heritage, Stearns picked up the camera and started the four-year process of interviewing four generations of his family to explore the reasons for the high intermarriage rate. "The film revolves around how my family sees themselves and how they understand their own unique identity," he said.

Although it focuses mostly on Stearns' own family, *One Big Hapa Family* is an important documentary for the Nikkei community because it reflects on the changing demographics due to the 95% intermarriage rate, the highest intermarriage rate of any ethnic group in Canada. A significant number of Japanese Canadian viewers will see their own family's story parallel Stearns' family story.

Born and raised in Kelowna, British Columbia, Stearns is an award-winning animator and filmmaker and is well known as a writer and spokesperson on hapa issues and mixed race identity. His 2005 animated short film, *What Are You Anyways?*, screened at more than 40 international film festivals and won the award for Best Animated Short Subject at the Canadian Awards for Electronic and Animated Arts. The film explored issues of growing up half-Japanese and half-Caucasian in Kelowna.

Yellow Sticky Notes, his 2007 animated short film, won the Prix du Public award at the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival and Best Animated Short Film award at the Calgary International Film Festival. *Yellow Sticky Notes* was animated by hand using a black pen on over 2,300 yellow Post-It notes.

Stearns has edited together two versions of the documentary: a 48-minute broadcast version and an 85-minute feature-length version. Both versions are available on DVD with a bonus CD of the original music featured in the film. Visit www.onebighapafamily.com to order the DVD and find updates on public screenings. The DVD is also available for sale at JCNM's Gift Shop.



The Tohoku Earthquake, the most powerful to have ever struck Japan, and the accompanying tsunami, occurred on March 11, 2011. The scenes of devastation on television brought a great deal of concern from around the world. Many readers will remember the *SUIAN MARU* Centennial Celebration at the Nikkei Centre in 2006, and the exhibition of the Oikawa Collection, a gift from the great granddaughters of Jinzaburo Oikawa, the leader of the colony that settled on Don and Lion Islands in the Fraser River just downstream from Annacis Island. Jinzaburo Oikawa went back to Japan in 1917 but most of the 82 people who came with him on the 1906 voyage remained in Canada and dozens of families in the Lower Mainland are descended from the Oikawa colony.

The Oikawas' older great granddaughter and the Imakita family came for the *SUIAN MARU* celebration and the following year, her younger sister came with the Ouchi family. Mrs. Reiko Imakita spoke at the celebration, and wrote articles which appeared in Japanese Canadian publications. Mrs. Yuko Ouchi and her husband who have a gourmet noodle restaurant prepared a delicious lunch for a large crowd at the Nikkei Centre. Both also visited relatives here.

On March 15, 2011, I received brief e-mail messages from both sisters. Mrs. Imakita assured us that everyone in both her family and that of her sister had survived the disaster. Electricity and water had been restored the day before and they were able to cook rice. Gas had not been restored and there were long lines at the supermarkets. But, they were able to eat. Later messages said that things were getting back to normal but slowly. Reiko Imakita had lost a sister-in-law, and the fiancé of a graduate of their school had died. The Ouchi's knew of acquaintances who

were still missing. Their restaurant business was interrupted by the breakage of their crockery and the glass in their shop. They were encouraged by their friends and neighbours to get back in business as quickly as possible. They are all working harder than ever with community support and encouragement. Responding to queries on behalf of their cousin, Kim Kobrle, both were very grateful for the messages of concern from Canada.

Yuko Ouchi was so happy to be visited at that time by David Sulz all the way from Alberta. She thought it brave of him to go to Miyagi-ken after the situation at the Fukushima Atomic Energy Plant. (David is the translator of the famous Japanese novel about the *SUIAN MARU* voyage (Jiro Nitta, Mikko-sen *SUIAN MARU*) under the title: *Phantom Immigrants*, self-published.) He had taught English in the village from which many of the *SUIAN MARU* voyagers had originated and had become a close family friend. Yuko-san was glad they had gifted the Oikawa Collection to the JCNM as "Who knows what might have happened to it had it been in Miyagi-ken at the time of the tsunami. It might have been trashed." She is determined to work hard and hopes to be able to visit Canada again.

Coincidence: the writer and family were on Air Canada flight 03 to Narita on March 11. Due to the Tohoku Earthquake, the flight was diverted to the Chitose Airport outside Sapporo.

JINZABURO OIKAWA DESCENDENTS SURVIVE EARTHQUAKE AND TSUNAMI

BY STAN FUKAWA





Nakamura family on Salt Spring Island. George is two. Two older sisters were in Japan. The youngest was not yet born. Nakamura Family photo

Growing Up on Salt Spring Island

By Raymond Nakamura

My Dad was the seventh child of Shinkichi and Taki Nakamura. They named him Hichiro, which technically means "seventh son" in their Yamaguchi dialect, but maybe they figured that was close enough for inventory purposes. He was born on June 7, 1927 in the Lady Minto Hospital on Salt Spring Island in BC. His English name was George, like the British monarch at the time, a good choice on an island where many British ex-pats lived and in province that called itself British Columbia.

His mother claimed he was born during the strawberry season, in May. The story went that his father had mis-registered him in June, possibly under the influence of strawberry wine. When I was growing up, our family would celebrate two birthdays for my Dad, one in May and one in June. Finally, a doctor friend dismissed the mistaken birthday story, given that my Dad was born in a hospital. Apparently, his mother also claimed other offspring were also born during the strawberry season, despite birth certificates to the contrary.

Father

His father came from a family of four boys and one girl in the Japanese village of Agenosho, in Yamaguchi prefecture on the island of Oshima in the Inland sea. Not being the eldest, he knew his options at home were limited. When his sister married, she adopted him to carry on her married name, "Yanagihara," apparently because she did not have a son.

New Life

Maybe he didn't like the sound of Yanagihara because he left for Seattle in 1895, at the age of fifteen, and changed his name back to Nakamura. He went to work as a school boy, doing chores for an American family. Later, he worked onboard a Merchant Marine ship, until one time he got off in BC and didn't get back on. He found work among Japanese farmers in Port Hammond in what is now Maple Ridge. From there, in his late twenties, he arranged to get married through his family in Japan.

Mother

His picture bride was named Taki Kinoshita, who came from a family in a village called Shitata (now Shimoda) not far from Agenosho. Her family held multiple businesses and she had grown up in a comfortable home with maids. When the 4' 7" nineteen-year-old arrived in 1908, she expected to live a comfortable life in a nice house with her new husband in Canada. She must have been disappointed with the one-room wood shack she found waiting for her and the hard life that went along with it. But she must have been made of strong stuff. She would live to be 91, rolling her own cigarettes all the way. She never really became comfortable speaking English and when I knew her as a boy, we didn't really have any conversations to speak of. But she always had a gentle smile, Vicks cherry cough candies and at Easter, chocolate bunnies.

A year after she arrived in Canada, their home, such as it was, burned down. They started over and soon had a boy, Shigeru. Eventually, they moved to an area so thick with Japanese strawberry farmers that it became known as Strawberry Hill, in what is now known as Surrey. They had a daughter, Toshiko and then another, Kyoko. To educate them in Japanese, the parents sent the threesome to Japan to stay with the Yanagihara aunt. Shigeru returned from Japan in his teens, but the girls stayed on as other children were being born in Canada.

New Digs

The family moved to Salt Spring Island in 1925 at the suggestion of a friend named Mr. Horrow. At the time, about ten to fifteen other Japanese families lived around the Island, as well as about four single Japanese men who worked as general labourers.

The Nakamuras rented a wood-framed house with a concrete foundation on the beach overlooked Ganges Harbour in the heart of Salt Spring. It had about four or five rooms plus an outhouse to accommodate what was to eventually become a family of eight offspring. George shared a double bed with his brother Gord. They had running water but paid something like \$200 to install a line of electricity. The front room featured what seemed like a huge fireplace to a small boy, with a log to sit upon during cold winter evenings. One Christmas morning, George discovered mysterious ashen footprints emerging from it, reviving his belief in Santa Claus for a few more years.

Businesses

Shinkichi was an enterprising man, who had picked up English through his involvement in various businesses. Shigeru, the eldest, was seventeen years older than George and usually called Nisan, a polite way to say "older brother." He helped his father with their various family businesses on Salt Spring.

These included contracting to chop wood for cooking and heating. They were paid by the cord, a volume of stacked pieces about four feet high by four feet deep by eight feet long. One time, they discovered a Cascara tree in the forest, whose bark was much valued as a laxative. They sold it to pharmacists, and made enough money in the year George was born to buy a new Model T Truck, a first among the local Japanese. Nisan drove it to deliver the potatoes and carrots and strawberries they grew. Sometimes he took the ferry over to Victoria to sell them as well. Nisan also started the Snow White laundry business so he picked up and delivered the cleaning to customers in town. I wonder if he considered his siblings the seven dwarfs.

The sisters returned after the Yanagihara aunt sold off their silkworm business. The girls had taken on the Yanagihara name, but Immigration had no record of this. Their English was so limited, they had trouble communicating. The teenaged girls ended up in jail for a few days until Nisan was able to retrieve them. Then they had to start school over again because of their limited English.

School Days

For breakfast, George's mother, Taki usually made potatoes and bacon. Other times, it was rice and

..... Continued on next page

miso shiru. And more often than George would have liked, they had porridge. He got a stomach ache every time he ate it.

After breakfast, George and the other children would hike three-quarters of a mile to Ganges Public school, a two-room schoolhouse. Along the way, George would meet up with his pals, Dick Royal and Bob Howard, inexplicably called Hippo and Cow. George's own nickname was Jeep, after a strange creature in the popular Popeye comic with magical abilities to solve problems.

The whole school comprised about twenty students. Most were English. A few African Canadians. A few First Nations. Some Asians. The school was divided into two classes. Miss Lois taught grades one to four. George loved Miss Lois. She had lovely dark hair and was so nice. Mr. West taught grades five to eight. He always dressed immaculately, though perhaps he just wore the same suit.

The school resembled a small barn with its pitched roof. A favourite game George and the other kids played was called "Anti I-over". They would have

two teams, on opposite sides of the building and take turns tossing a tennis ball over the roof to the other side. Someone on the first team would throw the ball and call "Anti I-over." If someone on second team caught the ball (which didn't happen very often), then they would all run around to the other side and try to tag someone on the first team, while everyone on the first team tried to run to safety on the side the second team had just been on. George always chased the girls he had a crush on. Tagged players joined the other team until one side had all the players.

Sports were limited because the school was on the side of a hill. Because the field was not flat, they could not have races and when they played softball they had to run uphill. Same for football (soccer), which was the most popular sport because you only needed one ball to kick around. Some kids played barefoot in the summer.

At lunch, George usually had jam sandwiches. Peanut butter was a treat. He often shared pork fat sandwiches with a buddy. Although they often ate rice at home, George never took rice balls (*nigiri*) to school. He didn't want to seem too Japanese. He just wanted to be like the other kids.

Hobbies

George joined the Cubs, which had a retired British Captain as Cub master. He was a good soccer coach and their team played against other groups on Salt Spring and sometimes even went to Sydney on Vancouver Island to play other Cub teams.

George loved cars. By the time he was eight or nine, he knew all the different makes. He marveled at their neighbour who bought a bright new Chrysler every year. Cars back then required cranking to start. If it caught while you were cranking, it could spin around and break your arm. Kids weren't strong enough to do it. A drinking buddy of his father's who was a retired policeman had a trick of jacking up the back wheel so that it could "free wheel," making it easier to crank. The gas station was in town. The pumps had a round logo on top and you could see the amount along the side. You had to manually pump a lever for the gasoline to come out the hose. Some cars had the gas just below the windshield and used a gravity fed carburetor so they would have to drive backward up hills.



Shinkichi and Taki Nakamura marry in 1908. Nakamura Family photo

Town

George and other family members often joined Nisan when he drove into town to make deliveries. Ganges had a doctor, a dentist, a dress store, and two big department stores that sold everything from toys to meat. You could even get a car through them if you wanted. Mouat's was the biggest, run by a wealthy family. The other was the Salt Spring Island Trading Company, which was also the landlord of the Nakamura property.

Milk

One of George's regular chores was to pick up the milk once or twice a week. He and his kid sister Haru would walk maybe half a mile to the edge of their property to a certain tree with a box in it where the milk was delivered. It was a steep hill through a forest, past a field of ferocious cows. Sometimes he would spook his sister and they would both start screaming and run, sometimes dropping the bottle. It might be no use crying over spilled milk but it's easy to see why they would. They would get in trouble and have no milk for a few days.

Strawberries

George would help carry strawberries in the little square baskets called punnets over to his mother and older siblings who packed them into crates under the shade of their huge maple. Up in the branches sat a treehouse, in which George played many hours with Haru.

His mother made wine from strawberries and other fruits like loganberry. They put it into 45 gallon vats and strained it out. They also sold it for 25 cents a bottle and used the money to buy new shoes.

Changes

In 1938, Shinkichi developed cancer in the throat and could only take liquids (including alcohol) through a straw. He decided to return to Japan. He died there not long after, at the age of 58.

This must have been a stressful time for my



Ganges Public School, 1933.
George Nakamura sits in the middle of the front row with the sign.
Saltspring Island Archives 1933-2

Dad, who was only eleven. In addition to losing his father, a new school opened in town, which consolidated the smaller schools and seemed overwhelmingly huge. He developed boils on his head and was hospitalized for a week. They shaved his head, which made him even more reluctant to go to school.

Nisan took over as the head of the family and in 1939 he acquired a dry cleaning business in Victoria and moved everyone there. They were just getting themselves reestablished there, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor.

My Dad recalls with surprising equanimity their subsequent moves to Hastings Park, the internment camp at Popoff, a farm in Chatham Ontario and finally a house in Toronto. But his memories of Salt Spring seem to hold a special place in his heart.

Just Add Shoyu: A Culinary Journey of Japanese Canadian Cooking

Written by the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre Heritage Committee, Toronto

Reviewed by Margaret Lyons

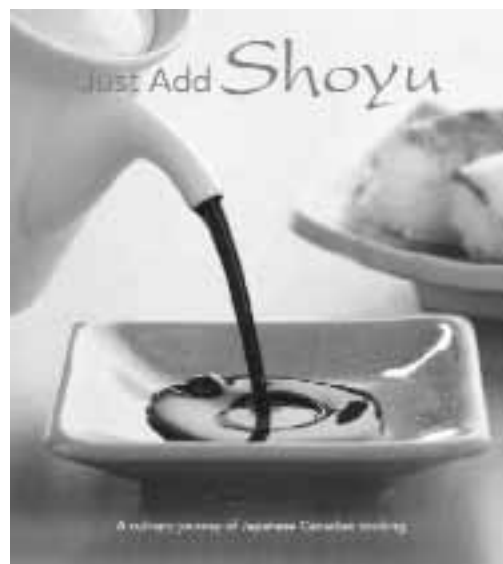
Just in time: an ethnic cookbook as Canadian as maple syrup, with luscious photographs of food presented as carefully as any still life. The accompanying recipes are well spaced, easy to follow and the Japanese names for the ingredients have their English equivalents on the same page, so the cooks acquire a Japanese vocabulary as they chop. Shoyu is more fluid than soy sauce and azuki more exotic than red beans.

The title “Just add Shoyu” is the Japanese cultural equivalent of “add a pinch of salt”, except that it has more resonance for the Japanese-Canadian cooks who claim that it elevates a bland dish to near gourmet level and instantly transforms the humble wiener to a tasty side dish.

This book will be a welcome addition to any cook’s library, and the short essays in the epilogue are an easy historic guide to the evolution of these recipes, which are personal contributions from members of the Japanese community. A large committee collected, tested, and selected the best known and loved dishes, which are professionally photographed and presented on austere pottery plates in earth tones with the occasional nod to white geometric modern china. This makes for a rare combination of a plain warm church kitchen in high fashion decor which also describes the evolution of this unique pan-Canadian cuisine.

It had its beginnings nearly one hundred years ago when Japanese women began to join their menfolk on the farms, lumber camps, and fishing villages in coastal B.C. One noodle dish is called the Cumberland chow mein, after a small town on Vancouver Island. The entire community was evicted in 1942, and those who settled in Toronto brought with them their experiences in the internment camps in the Interior of B.C. and added Southern Ontario tastes and innovations, such as the Hawaiian taste for Spam, or the postwar Japanese adaptation of curry and croquette. Fortunately it has gone back to English croquette for the latter dish, rather than the Japanese mouthful korokei.

With its tips for shortcuts and economy, the dishes would add a welcome variation for Canadian meals. Teriyaki salmon and steak will be as common as sushi and as Canadian.



BOOK REVIEW

Forever the Vancouver ASAHI Baseball Team!

by Norifumi Kawahara, Ritsumeikan University

The ASAHI, a Japanese-Canadian baseball team in Vancouver, was started in 1914. On March 7, 2011, "A Conference to Discuss the Vancouver ASAHI" by those with connection to the team was held at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo in order to record more of its history. Also involved were the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies and the Japanese Association for Migration Studies. More than forty people attended including Koichi "Kaye" Kaminishi from Kamloops, a former player with the ASAHI. Prior to the meeting, a luncheon was held for eighteen people including the following: Kaye Kaminishi's daughter, her husband and son; Roy Nishidera's daughter and his two grandchildren; Sally Nakamura's son and grandchild; and a son of ASAHI Ted Furumoto, named Ted Y. Furumoto. This latter Furumoto is the author of "The Vancouver ASAHI: A legendary 'Samurai Baseball Team' and its History and Glory," which was published in 2009. Also in attendance were Ken Nakanishi's nephew and his wife; Norio Goto, the representative of the event organizers, and his wife; along with the author, Norifumi Kawahara. Journalist Norio Goto has also published a book titled ASAHI: Dento no Yakyu Tiimu: Bankuuba Asahi Monogatari (The Tale of the Vancouver ASAHI, a legendary baseball team).

Introductory messages were presented by the Canadian Embassy, the President of the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies and the author as proxy for the President of the Japanese Association for Migration Studies. The history of the ASAHI was then introduced by showing the DVD, "Sleeping Tigers," produced by the Nippon Broadcasting Corporation (NHK). Subsequently, the film of the induction ceremony of the ASAHI into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in 2003 was shown. Then, Norio Goto presented the highlights of the ASAHI – and gave his interpretation of the situation of Japanese Canadians in those days.

After the coffee break, Kaye Kaminishi and four of the player's relatives took the stage, including Sally Nakamura's son, Ken Nakanishi's nephew, Ted Furumoto's son,

and Roy Nishidera's daughter. They exchanged memories and stories heard from their fathers or grandfathers about the ASAHI, including the Japanese terms used for baseball plays, their speed and dexterity on the field and their motto of fair play echoing *Bushido*. They also told stories of the excited Japanese Canadian fans interfering with Caucasian players attempting to catch ASAHI foul balls and Sally Nakamura's success as a *Nisei* singer and actor in Japan.

The audience at the conference included not only university scholars of Japanese immigrants but also curators of the Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum, personnel from the Japanese Overseas Migration Museum, as well as sports writers, sports newspaper reporters, and photographers. The questions to the speakers covered a broad range of topics including other Vancouver baseball teams such as the Mikado and the Yamato, and the existence of baseball teams of Japanese, Chinese, and Indian immigrants on the west coast of America, and baseball games at internment camps after the outbreak of WWII.

"Though we have never forgotten Japan, do people in Japan know anything about us?" asked Ted Y. Furumoto. There might be a few people who know about the match-up of the ASAHI and the Tokyo Giants (the current Yomiuri Giants) in Vancouver during the Giants' tour to the U.S. in 1935.

Seventy-five years later, on a snowy spring Tokyo day, "A Conference to Discuss the Vancouver ASAHI" brought baseball fans from Canada and Japan together to exchange stories about a remarkable baseball team that inspired Japanese immigrants in a distant Canadian city.



From the left: Sally Nakamura's son, Ken Nakanishi's nephew, Koichi "Kaye" Kaminishi, Ted Furumoto's son, Roy Nishidera's daughter.

In 1949, the year the ban was lifted on ethnic Japanese living within 100 miles of the Pacific Ocean in British Columbia, three Japanese families returned to the Fraser Valley community now most commonly referred to as the Aldergrove Japanese community. At the time, the postal addresses were mainly RR#1 Mt. Lehman and RR#2 Aldergrove and that is where the co-op got its name, the M.A. (for Mt. Lehman-Aldergrove) Berry Growers Association. The Japanese farm community there grew as more families returned from internment. They farmed mainly strawberries and raspberries, with some also growing rhubarb and daffodils.

The Berry Growers Co-op resulted from a problem common to small producers - that of negotiating with cash buyers who often hold the upper hand in dealings with individual farmers. In the earlier part of the strawberry season, there is a good market for fresh market berries and they command a higher price than berries for jam production (jam berries). The buyers paid cash for the fresh market berries repacked in wooden crates and then shipped them off to fill the orders they accepted right up to the departure times of the CP and CNR trains at the Mission and Matsqui stations respectively. The higher prices and the cash for the fresh market berries made them the farmers' preferred product. Money for jam



berries was not paid until the end of the season.

Unfortunately for the farmers, there was no guarantee that buyers would purchase all the fresh market berries they crated. Buyers only bought enough to fill their orders for the day. At the beginning, the farmers would pack as many crates as they could produce, not knowing what the demand would be for that day. Any left-over crates had to be taken home, the hulls (the green calyxes) had to be taken off the berries, and the resulting jam berries repacked into flats for pick-up by the jam processors. This was inefficient and a nuisance and they turned to a better solution. Many of the farmers had lived in Mission and Haney before the war and they had been members of berry and rhubarb co-ops. Even though their numbers were small, they knew how cheaply

they could organize and the benefits to them of controlling their side of the relationship.

The co-op was not organized until 1956. The farmers prevailed upon a dairy farmer, Mr. Jackman, to sell them an acre plot of land on the south-west corner of Ross Road and Downes Road and they built a small shed with a large scale mounted in its own foundation to meet government standards. The author served as the first paid employee of the co-op, the Receiver of the strawberries and raspberries delivered by the members, a part-time job from about 5 to 9 p.m. daily. He worked in that capacity for the berry seasons of 1956, 1957 and 1958, reporting to the elected co-op president and treasurer.

The co-op enabled the farmers to negotiate as a group with the buyers who had to make their

THE POSTWAR M.A. BERRY GROWERS CO-OP

by Stan Fukawa

orders during the day so that the farmers could pick and pack to meet the orders and no more. The co-op transported the orders to the train stations in one vehicle, saving farmers the time and expense of each person delivering his own produce. The farmers also delivered their jam berries to the co-op station rather than have them picked up at their homes by the jam plant truck. At its peak, there were 27 members in the association, declining to about half that number as the older farmers retired, before it became too small to continue.

In winter, most of the very same farmers grew hot-house rhubarb which had to be delivered to a wholesale company in Vancouver. Rhubarb was quite popular in those days as fruit was scarce in winter and there was not the air-freighted fruit from around the world. They called their organization the M.A. Rhubarb Growers Assn. There is a bit more leeway in when rhubarb can be picked so that the association was able to pick to order and increase or decrease their output to meet the demand. This resulted in more even prices for their product.

There was a distinct generational divide in the farm community with the *Issei* or first-generation

immigrants making up the full-time, small-scale, mom-and-pop-and-school age kids type of operation. The *Nisei* or second-generation either had larger-scale operations relying on hired help or they were part-time farmers supplementing their main source of income as millworkers. Part-timers did farm-work on weekends and their families worked during the week. As in the rural community surrounding them, children who grew up on the farms tended to leave for jobs in the city or elsewhere often far away when they grew up.

In the summertime, there was an influx of *Nikkei* teenagers from the city and from other BC communities such as Greenwood who came to pick berries. Berry-picking did not pay well as workers were paid by the weight of the berries they picked but Japanese parents liked to send their children to learn what it meant to work and earn even modest sums of money rather than be idle at home during summer holidays. This was due to the Confucian belief that work and hardship provided a good moral preparation for adulthood.

However, only a fool would ignore more money so that the teens went on to work in the canneries at age 16 where the unions had succeeded in raising hourly wages.

Within the Japanese community, berry-picking was almost a rite of passage for 13- 14- and 15-year olds who experienced living away from home for the first time, cooking their own meals, growing up with their peers in a safe environment with Japanese farm families keeping a watchful eye.

This fairly small community was also able to build the Fraser Valley Buddhist Church in Bradner, about 4 miles away from the co-op in the same time period. Mr. Katsuo Imamura donated a corner of his property for the temple which was built by the farmers - a project undertaken by thirteen families. As is evident in viewing the structure, its design is the traditional pre-war rural Japanese Canadian hall. It has since been rebuilt after the fire of a few years ago to standard ceiling heights but the original one was built with a seven foot ceiling in the basement dining area. The person who drew up the plans was barely five feet tall with his shoes on and he thought seven feet would suffice. He later acknowledged his error.



Exterior of Fraser Valley Buddhist Church, Bradner, BC.
Photo courtesy of Kaori Yano.

Fraser Valley Buddhist Church celebration, ca.1995.
Photo courtesy of Kaori Yano.

TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTIONS



WARAJI SANDALS

JCNM 2011.63.1-3

by Scott Owens

Ideal for combating the humid Japanese summers, hand woven *zōri*, a type of Japanese sandal, allow for free circulation of air around the feet. *Waraji*, a type of *zōri*, were originally made for sale and personal use by farmers when they were not tending to their crops. They were made of wheat rice stem and were common footwear in Japan before the nineteenth century. However, both modern plastic and traditional varieties are still made today. Along with *geta*, a wooden Japanese sandal, *zōri* are considered the antecedents to flip-flops.

These *waraji* were created by Naka Oikawa, a British Columbian who eventually settled in Toronto, Ontario. He learned the craft in Japan and created the *waraji* for the Canadian Handicrafts Guild in the late 1960s. The volunteer-run Canadian Handicrafts Guild incorporated in 1906. It was involved in stimulating and reviving traditional crafts, particularly in Quebec and among Native Peoples, in supporting the crafts of immigrant Canadians and in encouraging excellence among all craftspeople. It later merged with other groups to become the Canadian Crafts Council.

These *waraji* are uniquely international. Rather than using wheat rice stem, Oikawa used raffia palm, a material made from palm trees native to Africa, and Canadian corn husk. Both of these products were not available to nineteenth century craftsmen in Japan. This gives Naka Oikawa's *waraji* a distinct texture and tone that differs from contemporary *zōri* and other remakes.