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NIKKEI IMAGES



Rintaro Hayashi on the Fraser River
Steveston, early 1920s
NNM 2010.23.2.4.167



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Rintaro Hayashi on the Fraser River, by Mariko Kazuta	2
Reeling in an exhibit, by Beth Carter	3
Ryoshi: Nikkei Fishermen of the BC Coast, by Raymond Nakamura	4
Jinshiro and Koyuki Yesaki, by Moe Yesaki	6
Return to Clayoquot Island, by Christine Kondo	12
Rescuing Wayward Men and Raising the Status of the Japanese In Canada: Early Goals for a Chapel/Hospital, by Stan Fukawa	14
The Restoration of Two Japanese-built Fishing Boats, the 'NAKATA' and 'SEAGULL,' by Robert Critchley	17
Confiscation of vessels owned by Nikkei fishermen, 1941, by Masako Fukawa	18
Treasures from the Collection, by Bronwen Bird	24

CONTENTS



RINTARO HAYASHI ON THE FRASER RIVER

STEVESTON, EARLY 1920S
NNM 2010.23.2.4.167

It is a beautiful sunny day on the Fraser River and Rintaro Hayashi is enjoying every moment. He is accompanied by a young boy, possibly George Hanazawa, son of T. Hanazawa, or Masao Hayashi, Rintaro's younger brother. Although the exact date for this photograph is unknown, Rintaro is probably in his early 20s, before he was married and had children.

This precious photograph was collected before 1977 for the Japanese Canadian Centennial Project (JCCP). The JCCP created the first exhibition on the history of Japanese Canadians, entitled *A Dream of Riches*. It was shown throughout Canada and Japan in 1977 as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations for the first documented immigrant from Japan to Canada - Manzo Nagano.

Rintaro Hayashi was born in 1901 in Wakayama prefecture. After immigrating to Canada in 1913, Rintaro began fishing with his father and Takezo Hanazawa, his maternal uncle. He also became involved in *kendo* at the *Yokikan dojo*, and became the head teacher in 1920 at the age of 20. He was an active member of the Steveston United Church and served as secretary of the Steveston Japanese Fisherman's Association and also was in charge of accounting for the Steveston Japanese Hospital managed by the Fisherman's Association.

He fished in the Steveston area for over 50 years before retiring in 1970. Life as a fisherman was tough, it could be dangerous, the work was strenuous, and the pay was poor. There was also a great deal of racism and many unfair government restrictions related to Japanese Canadians in the fishing industry. We are lucky that Rintaro Hayashi recorded some of his memories, and the stories he heard from his father about the history of Japanese Canadian fishermen (Hayashi). He was also extensively interviewed in 1972 about the history of Steveston (Marlatt).

In 1972, he summarized his philosophy: "The goal for a Japanese lies in the future. He works hard for future peace or security, he sacrifices his present for that so he accepts having a hard life now. But the Westerner places all importance on his present life. Maybe he thinks about the future, but he puts more emphasis on the present."

Mariko Kazuta is a summer student at the Nikkei National Museum, funded by the Young Canada Works in Heritage Institutions program. She will continue her studies in the Library and Archives program at UBC in the fall.

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REELING IN AN EXHIBIT

by Beth Carter

Shortly after I started work at the Nikkei National Museum, I learned of the Nikkei Fishermen's Committee and their many wonderful projects. I was thrilled to hear they wanted to work with the museum to develop an exhibit on the topic of Nikkei in the fishing industry in BC.

Almost three years have gone by, and the exhibit, *Ryoshi: Nikkei Fishermen of the BC Coast*, will open to the public on September 15, 2012.

This has been quite the learning experience for me. When we started the project, I knew next to nothing about fishing, and was a bit worried about taking on the project. Luckily, I was able to hire Raymond Nakamura as an Assistant Curator and we had a very experienced group of fishermen to guide us. Over many meetings, and with much animated discussion, we were able to focus the content of the exhibit and decide on our key themes. In a way we were slowly "reeling in" the exhibit – which was very big indeed!

Through this project, I have truly gained a great appreciation for the hard work, perseverance and energy of those Nikkei involved in the fishing industry. We have had wonderful monetary support for the project from the Nikkei Fishermen's Committee, the BC Arts Council and G&F Financial. The Nikkei Fishermen's Exhibit Committee members include Leslie Megumi Budden, Frank Kanno, Paul Kariya, Dan Nomura, Richard Nomura, Jim Tanaka, Bud Sakamoto, Richard Omori, Jim Kojima, Ken Takahashi, and Floyd Yamamoto. The Gulf of Georgia Cannery, and staff members Marie Fenwick, Heidi Rampfl, and Karen Lee, has been a wonderful community partner, providing access to their collections and facilities. The Nikkei Carpenter's Group – Hap Hirata, Isao Kuramoto and Art Nishi – helped with exhibit construction. We would especially like to thank the many people involved in the fishing industry who have stepped forward to be interviewed, share their memories, photographs, artifacts and special skills. Thank you to all!

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RYOSHI

Nikkei Fishermen of the BC Coast: Exhibit Notes

by Raymond Nakamura

Over the last decade, a group of fishermen and descendants of fishermen have been honouring the legacy of Nikkei fishing in BC. They organized a fishermen's reunion dinner, a commemorative statue, two books dealing with the history of Nikkei fishing and biographies of fishermen, with an oral history project in the works. Now they are working with the Nikkei National Museum to create an exhibit on the history of Nikkei fishing. *Ryoshi: Nikkei Fishermen of the BC Coast* will open at the NNM on September 15, 2012 and then move on to the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in Summer 2013. NNM Director/Curator Beth Carter is managing the project. She hired me in the Fall of 2011 to help with research and writing.

APPROACH | Creating an exhibit can be like making a movie, because you need to work with other people to make it happen. Their talents and insights all help shape the way it comes together. We have also been fortunate to have a dedicated and knowledgeable committee able to vouch for the authenticity of the content. At the same time, we wanted to make sure the exhibit was not so much about the technical details of fishing as the human experience. And we wanted to represent not just gillnetting around Steveston, but also different methods of fishing and other parts of the coast. As well, we were keen to include not just the stories of men out fishing, but also the experiences of the women working in the canneries and raising the children back home.

BACKGROUND | Raconteurs of Japanese Canadian history, such as Mitsuo Yesaki, Masako Fukawa and Stan Fukawa, have written extensively on Nikkei fishing. Their work provided the foundation for the general outline of the story and pointed us toward other sources such as translated chapters on Nikkei history by Rintaro Hayashi and an early history of the Steveston Fishermen's Benevolent Society.

THEMES | Rather than a chronological approach, we decided to explore the history through four themes: Contributions, Cooperation, Community, and Comeback. Nikkei contributions to the fishing industry were not just about catching sockeye or working in canneries, but opening new markets and building boats, which grew out of their experiences in Japan. Boat building by Nikkei was so important and wide-spread that it could have been a display in itself. Cooperation was central to the success of Nikkei, rooted in village life back in Japan. They sought out other Japanese and were forced into ethnic groupings by Canadian society. Within these communities, women played central roles as the men were away during the fishing season and the children struggled to straddle the worlds of Canadian schools and Japanese society. During World War II, the confiscation of hundreds of fishing boats belonging to Japanese Canadians following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor may be one of the most dramatic scenes in Nikkei history, yet we see that it was not an isolated event, but rather a culmination of years of discrimination. To stick with fishing, we focus on the remarkable return to the coast by the Nikkei, beginning in 1949. We echo the themes of contribution, cooperation, and community to explore the involvement of canneries and the union until the 1960s, when Nikkei became more assimilated and their experiences became more about being fishermen than being Nikkei.

TEXT | To introduce each theme, we decided to use 50-word panels outlining the main points. Instead of the more typical, omniscient third person museum voice, I wrote it with a collective first person “we” to hint at a more subjective, storytelling approach to the content.

OBJECTS | Every medium has its own way to tell stories. Authentic three-dimensional objects are what make a museum exhibit an experience distinct from reading a book, watching a video or scanning a web site. We began with combing the NNM collections. Having an online database makes this job so much easier and Collections Manager Alexis Jensen helped clarify particular questions. Most remarkable were a number of items from the famous entrepreneur, Jinzaburo Oikawa and his family, from when he set up a colony on the Fraser.

Finding other artefacts, however, was more challenging than we expected. Partly this was because in the beginning, we didn’t know what we needed, so people weren’t just going to bring in their old junk. Perhaps also, in our age of mass production, one thing seems like another. But to a museum, a thing is not just an object, it can represent a time, a place, and a person. A new teapot might hold hot water just as well, but if we have an old one that was used in a particular cannery at a particular time by a particular person, then we have something to talk about.

PHOTOS | As much as possible, we are using photos already in the Museum’s collection. Hundreds of personal photos were also collected for the fishing book project, but at the time, permissions were only granted for use in the book. So we are being more particular about which of those photos we choose to get further permissions to use in the exhibit. The choice of a photo is a combination of what it shows, where it was taken, who is in it, and how it looks.

QUOTES | Personal experiences bring the general narratives alive. I searched for quotes in existing oral histories in the NNM collection. Some of them were in Japanese. I listened to some

of them to get the gist of what they were talking about, but did not feel comfortable transcribing them. I acquired access to some interviews in the *Sedai* project in Toronto on people with fishing experiences. I watched the *Ohanashi* video series. And I arranged to interview more people, mostly members of our exhibit committee, because I knew them a little already. Transcribing and choosing a few quotes takes hours of listening and concentration. I also scanned all the back issues of the Nikkei Images for relevant stories, as well as books based on oral histories, including *Steveston Recollected* and *A Man of Our Times*. From nearly five hundred of these excerpts, we chose a few dozen to include in the exhibit, usually to fill in gaps in the stories not covered by our artefacts and photos.

ARCHIVAL VIDEO | Earlier in the planning stages, we looked into developing video for the exhibit and interviewed a few possibilities. Archival material over in Victoria may have been useful, but it wasn’t practical to find appropriate items from the BC Archives. Fortunately, we came across some existing video of fishing that we are able to use and which provides glimpses into fishing for the uninitiated.

DESIGN | Design is essential for bringing all the components together in a coherent whole. We have been working with W3 Design Group. They bring to the table experience with large scale projects and an expansive vision to create immersive exhibits. At the same time, to keep to our budget, they have been working hard to borrow items from the extensive resources of the Gulf of Georgia Cannery. We are also enlisting the skills of volunteer Nikkei carpenters who know fishing to create exhibit components like parts of boats. These kinds of collaborations require considerable time in communications and going back and forth with suggestions and commentary, particularly when working together for the first time. At the time of this writing, we are getting to the final stages of the design and it will be exciting to see how it all turns out. You can see for yourself when it opens in September. Look forward to seeing you there!



Japanese fishermen pulling in purse-seine in Departure Bay. ca. 1900
NNM 2010.23.2.4.180



Moe Yesaki, on his Mosquito Boat, 1953
NNM 2012.16.1.2



Steveston, c.1910
NNM 2010.31.2

PHOTOS ON PAGE4

Left:

Shuchona II, Steveston, BC,
c.1920s
NNM 2010.11.3.1

Right:

Enjoying a big catch
NNM 2010.23.2.4

JINSHIRO AND KOYUKI YESAKI

By Mitsuo Yesaki

Jinshiro was born on March 10, 1878 in Shimosato, Wakayama-ken, the first surviving child of Jineimon and Omatsu Ezaki. Jineimon eked out a living as a farmer/fisherman with a small rice field and employment in the seasonal sardine fishery. Jinshiro was probably also engaged in the sardine fishery as family folklore has it that young men emigrated at the turn of the 20th century because the sardine stocks off the coast collapsed. These men were probably influenced by Saigoro Hashimoto's tales of the abundant fish resources off the west coast of British Columbia. Saigoro had returned to Shimosato in 1893 after becoming a successful gunner in the sea otter fishery of the North Pacific Ocean and to raise funds for the construction of a sealing vessel. Jinshiro was one of the early immigrants and arrived in Victoria on April 20, 1896 aboard the **SS GUADALUPE**¹. He did not speak English and when asked by the immigration officer his name, the officer noted 'Jinshiro Yesaki' in the immigration ledger. The surname is a legacy for the descendants of Jinshiro.

Jinshiro made his way to Steveston where other immigrants from Shimosato had settled. There are no records of which cannery Jinshiro was employed with during his initial years in Steveston. He fished as a boat-puller for sockeye salmon during the summer and chum salmon during the fall on the Fraser River. During the winter and spring, he probably worked at charcoal kilns, herring salteries and lumber camps.

In about 1899, Jinshiro returned to Shimosato and married Koyuki, the first daughter of Toyomatsu and Iso Ezaki, on February 4, 1899. He returned to Victoria on April 17, 1900 aboard the **SS GOODWIN**². Koyuki remained in Shimosato at House (*banchi*) No. 754 with Jinshiro's parents and siblings. Koyuki gave birth to Miyakichi on May 6, 1899.

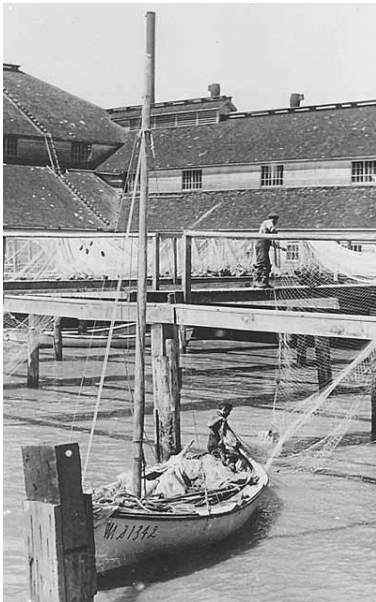
Jinshiro is listed in the Canada Census of 1901 as residing in Steveston (F. Yezaki)³. He applied for and received his Certificate of Naturalization on June 21, 1900⁴. With this certificate, he was able to obtain a fishing license and probably fished as a contract fisherman for a fishing boss connected to a cannery in Steveston. He fished with a boat-puller on a Columbia River skiff owned by either the cannery or fishing boss. He continued to fish during the summer and fall and work at whatever jobs were available in winter and spring. As there was generally more employment in the United States and as the border was relatively porous at the time, many



Jinshiro Yesaki
(Yesaki family collection, ca. 1905)



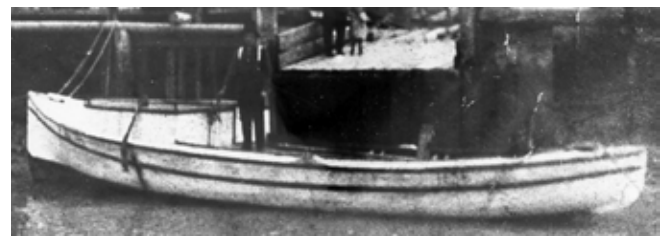
Koyuki Yesaki
(Yesaki family collection, ca. 1900)



Left: A Columbia River skiff similar to one fished by Jinshiro around the turn of the Twentieth Century. (Vancouver Public Library, Special Collections photo, ca. 1900)



Centre: Yesaki house in Shimosato. (Yesaki family collection, 1958)



Right: A motorized boat similar to one owned by Jinshiro in later half of the 1910s. (M. Yesaki photo, ca. 1915)

Japanese traveled south to work on the railroads and in the forest industry. Jinshiro is listed as a passenger on Northern Railway to Everett, Washington on November 21, 1905² and was probably on a trip looking for work. In the 1911 Canada Census, he is listed as residing in Barnet in the Municipality of Burnaby (Yessiake), as a labourer in a lumber mill⁵.

A photocopy of his Certificate of Naturalization shows he received a fishing license for all years from 1901 to 1921, except in 1902, 1906, 1910, 1911 and 1912⁴. The 1901 census states he immigrated in 1900 and the 1911 census that he immigrated in 1908, which are probably re-entry dates after visits to Japan. However, as Jinshiro applied for fishing licenses in 1907 and 1908, he probably returned to Shimosato sometime in 1906, instead of 1908, which would explain why he did not fish that year.

The dominant Fraser River sockeye salmon runs

of 1897, 1901, 1905, 1909 and 1913 produced phenomenal catches, whereas the off-dominant cycle runs during the early decades of the 20th century were already being over-fished. The highest catches of sockeye salmon recorded in the available ledgers for the Imperial and Great West Canneries were reported in 1905⁶. During this dominant cycle run, a contract fisherman with T. Ikeda's fishing unit of Imperial Cannery caught 7,369 sockeyes. Jinshiro probably also had good catches so would have returned to Shimosato with a fair amount of savings. It was probably during this visit that he purchased a house from an old couple in Ota, a farming community inland of Shimosato. The house was disassembled, loaded onto a raft and floated down the Ota River to Shimosato. The house was re-assembled and erected on the family plot (*banchi* 754) where it still presently stands. Jinshiro returned to Steveston sometime before the start of the fishing season of 1907. Jinshiro's employment at a lumber mill in Barnet would explain why Jinshiro did not apply for a fishing license in 1911. However, there is no evidence

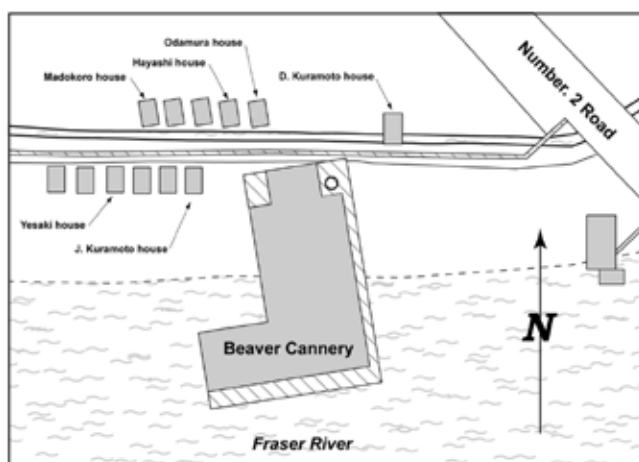
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to indicate he also worked in Barnet during 1910 and 1912.

Fraser River fishermen started installing gas engines in their boats in the early 1910s. Companies and fishing bosses were unwilling to install gas engines in their skiff fleets because of their initial capital cost and the expense of maintaining the motorized boats in working order. Jinshiro became an independent fisherman and an owner of a motorized boat during this interval.

Sometime before or in 1915, he started fishing for the Beaver Cannery at the foot of Number 2 Road. He requested the use of a cannery house and sent for Koyuki and Miyakichi to join him in Steveston. They arrived in Victoria on July 15, 1915 on the **SS AKI MARU**⁷. After a hiatus of 15 years, Jinshiro and Koyuki started adding to their family. Fusae was born in 1916, Miyako in 19??, Tazuko in 1921, Toshio in 19?? and Teruo in 19??. With the family ensconced in a cannery house, Jinshiro fished every season and probably started working in the off-fishing season painting boats at Kishi Boat Works .

On July 29, 1922, Jinshiro filed a petition to have his Certificate of Naturalization changed to an Imperial Certificate of Naturalization. This petition was accompanied with a \$3 fee and 2 affidavits by natural-born British subjects verifying the applicant to be a person of good character. Jinshiro may have known Harry Orr, a net-loft worker for Imperial Cannery who was one of the witnesses, while he was fishing for an



Beaver Cannery compound showing Yesaki canneryhouse and that of selected other Japanese families.⁸

Imperial Cannery subsidiary before transferring to Beaver Cannery. This petition was approved on August 26, 1922⁹.

On May 11, 1924, disaster struck the Number 6 cannery house on an early Sunday morning. An account in the Vancouver Daily Province¹⁰ reported, "Two Japanese rushed out of the Yesaki house shouting, 'Fire!'" This article also attributed the fire to an overheated tin stovepipe of the cannery house, though family rumour has it that the fire started from a cigarette Jinshiro was smoking while working on a net in the attic. He was a heavy smoker. A strong southwest wind fueled the fire and it quickly spread through the Beaver and Canadian Pacific Cannery compounds. The Beaver Cannery was still in operation but the Canadian Pacific Cannery had not operated since 1917. Besides the two canneries, two wharfs, 40 cannery houses and 8 gas-boats were destroyed. Estimated loss from this conflagration was \$150,000. Three hundred Japanese were left homeless¹⁰.

The J. H. Todd and Sons Company decided not to rebuild the Beaver Cannery and cannery houses so the Japanese families employed by the company had to seek employment and accommodations elsewhere. With nowhere to stay, Jinshiro sent the family back to Shimosato where Koyuki could look after his aging parents. Jineimon passed away in 1929.

Jinshiro remained in Steveston and started fishing for the Great West Fishing Company where he probably found accommodations in a bunk house. Catch records of Jinshiro and Miyakichi from 1924 to 1940 are available in the Great West Cannery ledgers on file in Special Collections of the University of British Columbia Library. These records give the daily catch by species, expenses and earnings for each year. Table 1 shows a summary of these records giving an estimate of Jinshiro's annual financial status from 1924 to 1932⁶. During this interval, his highest catch of sockeye was 1,287 in 1930 that resulted in earnings of \$238. The relatively low earnings for 1930 resulted from high expenses, probably resulting from the construction of a new boat, and declining prices for sockeye during the depression. His low catch for the interval was 198 sockeyes resulting in a debt of \$50 in 1931. Also,



contributing to this loss was the lowest price of 40 cents per sockeye paid during this interval. Jinshiro's highest earnings were \$482 in 1926 and \$452 in 1929 when catches were high and prices per sockeye averaged 78 and 73 cents, respectively.

The low catch of pink salmon in 1931 was probably due to little demand for this species during the depression. Canneries did not purchase chum salmon resulting in low catches of chum salmon for all years. Fishermen sold their chum catch to Japanese entrepreneurs who salted this species for export to Japan.

Sometime before 1927, Jinshiro was given a cannery house for himself, Miyakichi and his recently arrived wife, Sunae. In the fall of 1927, he traveled to Shimosato and visited Koyuki and the children. He returned to Victoria on June 1, 1928 aboard the **SS ALABAMA MARU**⁷. Jinshiro contracted the Richmond Boat Works in 1930 to build a new boat, most probably for Miyakichi to fish the Skeena in 1931 and 1932. Jinshiro continued to fish his old boat, but failing health prompted him to send for Koyuki to care for him.



Top:
Photograph of Yesaki family probably taken prior to Koyuki and younger children returning to Shimosato. From the left: Tazuko, Miyakichi, Fusae, Koyuki with Teruo, Miyako and Jinshiro with Toshio. (Yesaki family collection, 1924)

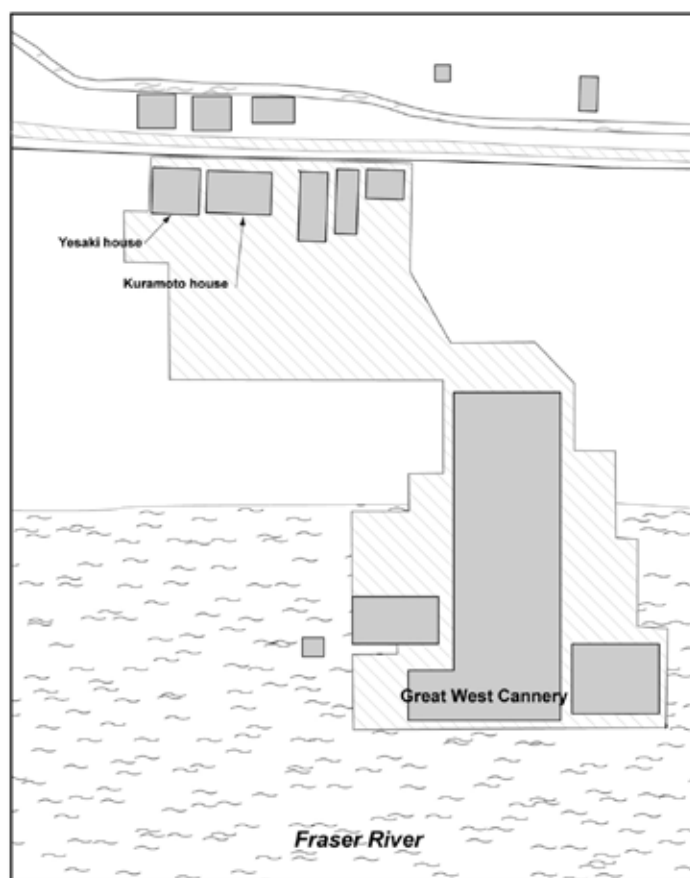
Bottom:
Yesaki children in Shimosato. From the left: Teruo, Fusae, Kiku (niece), Miyako, Tazuko and Toshio. (Nishi family collection, ca. 1925)

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Koyuki and the children, accompanied by Nobu Kuramoto, returned to Victoria on June 10, 1931 aboard the **SS EMPRESS OF JAPAN**⁷. Jinshiro's illness was probably aggravated by his heavy smoking and off-fishing employment as a painter. Lead was a basic component of paints in the first half of the 20th century and is especially lethal for people that smoke. Jinshiro probably did not fish beyond 1932. He became bed-ridden with sores all over his body in the Great West cannery house and was eventually interned for some time at the General Hospital in Vancouver. Koyuki would take the British Columbia Electric Railway tram from Steveston to the Madokoro apartment in the Matsumoto *naga-ya* in Kerrisdale. Koyuki, Ine and Kuniko Madokoro would visit Jinshiro at the hospital and then take the bus to the Woodward Department store to purchase 99 cents running shoes for the children¹¹. Jinshiro passed away on July 28, 1936 at the age of 58.

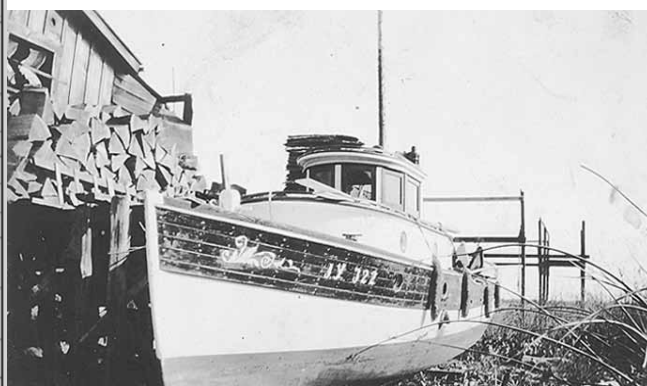
Very little is known about Jinshiro except that he lived most of his life away from his family (32 years out of 58) and returned to Japan on three occasions to visit his family. Also, he was a heavy smoker with a good voice and was always called upon to sing at the annual *Obon* festival. He must have been a welcome guest during celebratory visits to bring in the New Year at the homes of relatives and friends. There are also very few artifacts of his existence including only five photographs (a portrait and four group photographs), a pocket watch and an ivory cigarette holder. This ivory holder was used frequently to dislodge fish bones from the throats of Jinshiro's grandchildren.

Koyuki and Tazuko returned to Shimosato to care for Omatsu and Kiku after Jinshiro passed away. The other children Fusae, Miyako, Toshi and Teruo remained in Steveston with Miyakichi and his family. In the 1930s, the Japan Railway Company laid a railroad along the coast of the Kii Peninsula. Koyuki fought a futile battle against authorities to prevent them from appropriating a portion of the only rice field owned by the Yesaki family. Koyuki maintained that a family could always survive if they had a rice field. She succumbed to old age in 1968.



Great West Cannery compound showing Yesaki and Kuramoto cannery houses

New boat tied to the wharf immediately west of the Yesaki house of the Great West Cannery.
(Yesaki family collection, 1930)





Yesaki family at Hiroji Ezaki's house in Tokyo before returning to Steveston.

From the left: back row; Mrs. H. Ezaki, Fusae, Nobu Kuramoto and Koyuki. Front row; Teruo, Tazuko, Toshio and Miyako.

(Nishi family photo, 1931)



Koyuki (left) and Ine Madokoro beside the Matsumoto naga-ya. (Yesaki family collection, ca. 1930)



Four generations of Yesaki women. Standing; Tazuko and Koyuki. Front; Omatsu and Kiku. (Yesaki family photo, ca. 1938)

Hiroji, Koyuki and Toyoko in front of a store in Tokyo. (Yesaki family collection, ca.1950)



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- ¹¹ - Kuniko Nakagawa (Madokoro), pers. comm.

RETURN TO CLAYOQUOT ISLAND

by Christine Kondo



1



2



3



4

1 - 2.
Scenes from
Clayoquot Island

3 - 4.
Pottery shards and
artifacts left behind

For one weekend each year in May, the Clayoquot Island Preserve hosts an open house which allows the public to visit the privately owned island located one nautical mile across from Tofino. Tofino residents and tourists alike pack picnic lunches and line up at the First Street Dock for free boat shuttles to the island.

The open house coincides with the blooming of the magnificent rhododendron gardens. Visitors picnic, play games, hike, beachcomb, and explore the 250-acre island of mature old growth Coastal Hemlock forest, second growth forest, sand dunes, beaches and gardens.

Clayoquot Island Preserve is not only an important ecological preserve and showcase for sustainable living off the grid, but it's also an important historical location for the Japanese Canadian community.

Clayoquot Island, also known as Stubbs Island on marine charts, is steeped in history, beginning with the Nuu-Chah-Nulth people who lived on its shores and surrounding areas of Clayoquot Sound. Europeans began settling on Stubbs Island by the mid-1850s. In 1855 a trading post was established by Banfield and Frances Ltd.

In the days before Tofino existed, Clayoquot Village on Stubbs Island was the commercial hub of the region and was one of the first trading posts outside of Fort Victoria. By 1899, the trading post had become a small fishing village with its population listed as 150 whites and 250 natives. There was a hotel, a school,

a jailhouse, gold assay office, beer parlour and general store. By the 1890s, ships bound for the Bering Sea were outfitted there and it was not uncommon for as many as 16 schooners to be moored at the island. By this time the population started to get too big for the small island and more people settled into the village of Tofino across the harbour.

By the 1900s Japanese settlers began to arrive and created their own small fishing community on the west side of Clayoquot Island. My own great-grandfather, Naoichi Karatsu, and his friend Mr. Okada arrived on Clayoquot Island after the Russo-Japanese war of 1905.

Ruby Middeldorp (nee Karatsu), Naoichi's daughter, said they were originally planning on immigrating to South America, "They landed there wondering why the people were not speaking Spanish. They asked, and someone told them that this was Vancouver. They liked the mountains and decided to stay."

Naoichi Karatsu eventually did make his way to the real city of Vancouver. He settled in the fishing village of Steveston and his wife, Sen, gave birth to two children, Alice and Peter. By 1922, Naoichi decided to move his growing family to the spot where he first landed in British Columbia: Clayoquot Island.

A number of other Japanese Canadian families settled on the west beach at the same time and it became a thriving fishing community with often as many as 30-40 Japanese fishing boats anchored at the island. Some of



The Karatsu family in Toronto in the late 1940s. Top row from left: Celia, Peter, Rennie, Ivy and Norah. Bottom row from left: Gloria, father Naoichi, mother Sen, and Ruby. (Missing from the photo are sisters Alice and Marie)

the other Japanese Canadians who settled there were the Igarashi, Katsuro, Kimoto and Okada families.

The Karatsu family lived on Clayoquot Island from 1922 until the evacuation in 1942. During that time, Sen Karatsu gave birth to six more children—Rennie, Ivy, Celia, Gloria, Norah and Ruby—at home with help from their next-door neighbour, Mrs. Okada, who acted as midwife.

Life on Clayoquot was simple but idyllic. Naoichi became a naturalized Canadian citizen very early so he was able to fish there with his motorized fishing vessel named **NK**. He was also the community's unofficial medic. (Naoichi acquired some medical skills while working as an orderly for the Japanese medical corps during the Russo-Japanese war, before he immigrated to Canada.) He offered his medical knowledge to the First Nations people in the area, inoculating children and administering first aid. One time a local tribe repaid him with a canoe full of *kazunoko*!

By all accounts, it sounded like growing up on Clayoquot Island was fun. The Karatsu children attended school together with the other kids on the island. They had a huge sandbar they could explore at low tide, forests to discover and play in, and they were even allowed to row across the channel without life jackets and without adult supervision! Times were different then.

Their quiet existence on this little isolated island came to an end in 1942 when the Canadian government forcibly evacuated all Japanese Canadians from the British Columbia coast. Most of the Japanese Canadian inhabitants of Clayoquot Island would never see the island, or the homes that they built there, ever again.

From the 1940s to 1990, Clayoquot Island was sold to a series of private owners. In 1990, it was purchased by the current owner Susan Bloom who turned it into a wildlife refuge and preserve. In 2007, Bloom registered a conservation covenant on the property with The Land

Conservancy of British Columbia that covers 70% of the island. A conservation covenant is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and TLC which the landowner promises to protect the land in specific ways. The covenant is attached to the title's land forever, regardless of who owns the land in the future. TLC then agrees to monitor the covenant and ensures that its objectives are maintained. In the case of Clayoquot Island, the covenant will ensure that the old growth forest, historic Japanese village site, and shoreline for bird-nesting habitat will remain in its natural state.

Today, Clayoquot Island's permanent population is two: caretakers Sharon Whalen and Chris Taylor. They live off the grid, using solar panels to power generators and a sand filtering system to make potable water. The caretakers tend to the island's magnificent gardens.

In the early 1900s, an annual festival called Clayoquot Days took place on the island every May long weekend.

In commemoration of this tradition, Clayoquot Island Preserve is open to the public once a year on the May long weekend.

During the 2011 open house, I took the opportunity to visit the island and see where my great-grandfather and his family lived before the war. Ruby Middeldorp also visited the island that weekend, her first visit since the evacuation in 1942.

Upon disembarking from the boat shuttle, I walked down the long wharf towards the caretaker's cottage. There, a volunteer handed me a brochure and map of the island. Retracing my steps back to the wharf, I veered off along a forest path toward the old Japanese village site. The path is marked with broken pottery and other Japanese artifacts left behind by its residents.

No homes remain at the Japanese village site. Second growth forest and bush make it difficult to get to the beachsite. But persistence pays off and soon I'm rewarded with a deserted sandy grey beach filled with mussel beds and a sweeping vista of Clayoquot Sound. Seeing the location of the old Japanese village site on Clayoquot Island for the first time is bittersweet. It truly must have been paradise for the Karatsus and all the other Japanese Canadian families who lived there.

Rescuing Wayward Men and Raising the Status of the Japanese in Canada: Early Goals for a Chapel/Hospital

by Stan Fukawa

The Steveston Japanese Fishermen's Hospital came into being unexpectedly and, in reviewing its history, the reader will realize that its birth, though understandable, was anything but planned. It is now seen as a symbol of honour for a much maligned minority.

When a dentist, Dr. Umejiro Yamashita, and a surgeon, Dr. Seinosuke Oishi--both from Japan--came from Portland, Oregon and urged the building of a church in Steveston, BC for Japanese fishermen in 1895, their intention was not to create a medical facility for sick fishermen. These volunteers from the Pacific Coast Japanese Christian network were concerned about saving the men from debauchery and drunkenness. To these devout Christians, these sins were the disturbing signs that offended them in the new frontier town of Steveston which had sprung up around the fish processing industry, accompanied by bars, brothels and gambling dens--a common occurrence in such mostly-male communities.

The doctors strongly urged the local Christian leaders to build a church to rescue the men from sin by leading them to take up wholesome and practical pursuits like the study of English and the Bible. In support of such aims, the Phoenix cannery provided the land on which a two-story church was built in 1895--the first floor to provide rooms for gatherings and teaching; the second floor to serve as the manse.

Typhoid was in those days a most dangerous illness, with a high death rate if left untreated. There were also other infectious diseases such as yellow fever and scarlet fever. The Japanese were the most susceptible to these diseases. Japan was blessed with

abundant potable water from short, clean streams which encouraged the custom of drinking untreated water. They also ate raw fish which could harbour dangerous bacteria.

In stark comparison were the Chinese, who made up the bulk of cannery workers and came from a country with long, polluted rivers. They customarily boiled their water before drinking it as tea. At that time, the Fraser River was the most common source of drinking water. It was free whereas it cost money to obtain water transported from New Westminster and Marpole. Unfortunately, upstream and local fish canneries dumped fish waste, and many toilets emptied their refuse into the river, so water-borne diseases took their toll for some years. Eventually, local authorities replaced the Fraser River water with piped Capilano Lake reservoir water from north of Vancouver, and put in a proper sewage system.

In 1897 as many as 26 local Japanese and 12 aboriginals died of typhoid (Ross). Among the Chinese, their habit of drinking only boiled water saved them--not one died of typhoid in Steveston that year. When an outbreak struck that summer during the fishing season, the church was quickly converted to meet the emergency, and it became a temporary hospital and its members served as hospital staff.

In recognition of this conversion, it became known locally as the Chapel Hospital and was in operation during the July to November fishing season for several years, reverting to its role as a chapel from December to June, and then back, until 1900 when the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Association built its own hospital.

The Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Association (known to the Japanese as the *Dantai*) accepted responsibility for the hospital as a service vital to its members because of their high susceptibility to such diseases. The local Japanese Christians had very generously assumed responsibility in time of need but could not be expected to continue indefinitely.

The 1897 Constitution of the newly established Dantai had only 11 Articles. Article 1 was a comprehensive statement advocating the "advancement of the fishermen in all things." Three other articles directly mention the hospital and its upkeep as a major responsibility of the Association. This shows how serious a threat such diseases were at that time to Japanese fishermen and their families. The association had no choice but to include the hospital in their operations. The nearest other hospital was in New Westminster and the fishermen's lack of English, especially in the early years, made it so much easier for them to talk to medical staff in their own language.

Non-Japanese residents of Steveston also received medical care at the Fishermen's Hospital from the beginning. According to Harold Steves Jr., currently the longest-serving Richmond City Councillor, his father, Harold Sr. was not only born in the hospital in 1899 but also spent months there some years later being treated for typhoid fever. The younger Harold says that his father's hair turned white from the disease and because they had so often fed him junket at the hospital as something his stomach could tolerate. He developed a life-long dislike for that dessert (personal communication,



Japanese Hospital, Steveston, probably 1897. Dr R.R. Robinson, M.D., in centre. Miss Simmons, nurse, seated; Miss Abrams, nurse, standing. Japanese fishermen patients. Dr Robinson lived at Steveston in 1895. The Japanese Hospital, Dr Oishi, surgeon, was operating in 1897. The exact year of this photo is uncertain. City Archives, S.M.
Photo presented, May 1954, by Mrs F.G. Ireland, 384 Steveston Highway, Steveston.

NNM 1994.85.6

..... Continued on next page

June 2012). Steveston is named for their ancestor Manoah Steves who first settled in that corner of Lulu Island in 1877.

It is difficult for young Asians growing up in British Columbia today to believe that, until about 1950, Canada's western-most province was inhospitable to Asian immigrants. The biggest threat to their welfare then was the Asian exclusion campaign waged by the white labour unions (including fishermen's union) and the politicians who used Asian-baiting as an easy means to garner votes from the majority white voters who saw Asians as a direct threat to their economic well-being.

In 1895 British Columbia passed a provincial law denying the vote to Asians, whether born in Canada or naturalized citizens, and to aboriginals. Tomekichi Homma, the first president of the Japanese Fishermen's Association, a naturalized Canadian citizen like all licensed Japanese fishermen, was chosen to take the case for franchise all the way to the Privy Council in London in 1902. They fought the 1895 law on the grounds that a naturalized citizen is a citizen. Unfortunately and unexpectedly, the case was lost there after having been won at the provincial higher court and the Supreme Court of Canada. The hostility of the majority white race to their presence was constantly in their faces in this period and reached its first peak in the Anti-Asian Riot in Vancouver in 1907. The Anti-Asian movement had succeeded in obtaining the levying of a "head tax" on Chinese immigrants, beginning in 1885 at \$50 and rising to \$100 in 1900 and to \$500 in 1903. They tried to have these measures extended to the Japanese but the Japanese had a greater leverage in Ottawa than the Chinese due to the Anglo-Japanese military alliance. The Japanese saw that, in order to change their own social and legal status, they would have to convince the white majority that they were an honorable people with a strong sense of public responsibility.

At the end of the first year of operations, the hospital had incurred a debt and a meeting was held including others of the BC Japanese community to deal with this issue. The Japanese Consul in Vancouver, Tetsugoro Nosse spoke at this meeting and told them about having begun a personal campaign to combat the anti-Japanese propaganda in Canada. He had seized upon the Steveston Japanese Fishermen's Hospital as the most suitable symbol of the community-mindedness and responsible citizenship of the Japanese immigrants, as well as the churches and schools which they had built in spite of the few years they had been in Canada. He visited Ottawa, to call upon government ministers, members of parliament, and newspaper editors, to hand out a pamphlet he had printed with the story of these symbols of good citizenship.

At the end of his rousing speech, the Consul called upon the Fishermen to uphold the honour of the Japanese in Canada by maintaining the hospital and, with community support, to find the solutions to their inevitable financial difficulties because the reputation of all Japanese in Canada was in their hands at this critical time.

The general acknowledgment in the community that the hospital was an important part of the public image of all Japanese allowed them to accept the \$200 gift that Prince Arisugawa had left to the immigrant community in BC. They used it toward the \$400 debt incurred in the first year of operation. In so doing, they also inherited an obligation to maintain the hospital--an onerous burden in difficult times.

The Fishermen's Association maintained the Japanese Fishermen's Hospital until 1942, when the Japanese were banished from the Pacific coast and the hospital was taken over and renamed The Steveston Hospital (Ross p.163).

The importance of socialized medical services to Canadians was confirmed

by the CBC's national public poll of 2004 when Tommy Douglas was voted the greatest Canadian of all time as the founder of Medicare in 1962 in Saskatchewan. Douglas had launched an earlier version as a hospital insurance plan in 1947.

As Bill McNulty observes in his recent book on Steveston, the Japanese Fishermen's Hospital was the first of its kind in Canada in providing a health care program based on a modest annual membership fee (\$8 a year). In 1897, it was fifty years ahead of the Saskatchewan medical plan. Unfortunately, in the first half of the 1900s, anti-Japanese sentiment in B.C. was too high to allow the Japanese to be judged dispassionately and Consul Nosse's hope that they would be found praiseworthy for their hospital was in vain in that period. Mitsuo Yesaki has described the Japanese Fishermen's Hospital and its features in his series on Steveston, beginning with *Steveston: Cannery Row*, published in 1998.

The hospital has only belatedly come to be seen as a symbol of the community-mindedness of the Japanese immigrants, and only after Japanese Canadians have come to be seen as worthy citizens and positive contributors to Canadian society. In that same CBC poll, David Suzuki, the most well-known Japanese Canadian, placed 5th--and shares a spot on that roster of greatest Canadians with only one other obviously non-

References:

- Teiji Kobayashi, *35 Year History of the Steveston Fishermen's Benevolent Association* (in Japanese), 1935 Tokyo.
Bill McNulty, *Steveston: A Community History, 1859-2011*, 2011.
Leslie J. Ross, *Richmond, Child of the Fraser*, 1979.
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The Restoration of Two Japanese-built Fishing Boats, the 'NAKATA' and 'SEAGULL'

by Robert Critchley



NAKATA

I was given this old boat, the "**LEINA**", after hearing that the owner was going to put it on the beach and scrap it at Ladysmith Harbour, Vancouver Island. She is thirty-five-feet long by eight-feet wide. Andy Crocker who had the boat knew a lot of the history. His brother, a long time cod fishermen said the boat was originally called the "**NAKATA**" he said that if you pulled the name board off you should see the old name etched into the hull. He also told Andy that it was one of the boats that had been confiscated from the Japanese. An old Japanese cod fisherman years ago also told Andy that it had been built by the Sakamoto boat yard in Steveston for Minosuke Nakata. Also the Noda family that had the Do-Boy Packers remembered the family and boat well.

It was sold by the Japanese Fishing Vessels Disposal Committee with an asking price of eight hundred and four dollars in nineteen hundred and forty two. It had a 1937, fifteen/eighteen Easthope in it. It was sold to Fred Passman who fished it for many years selling her to Kazumi Tony Hamanishi with Andy Crocker buying it off the family in 1973. By this time it had a four-cylinder, Isuzu diesel. Also the traditional aft cabin had been taken off as it was too rotten to be saved. It still has the original rectangular wooden plugs used for flooding the live-cod tanks. I have a fifteen/eighteen Easthope to place back in for museum purposes.

A couple years ago I acquired a nice little classic double-ender. I knew from the build style and techniques used that it had been built by one of the various Canadian Japanese boatyards. From the size twenty-nine-foot six-inches by seven-foot-three-inches wide that it was from the 1920s or 1930s. With no visible name or numbers it always gets your mind wandering who built her? What was her name? Who owned her? With the start of restoration, I carefully started to burn the paint off with the hopes of finding any clues in the



SEAGULL

hull. After scraping the top section of the bow with no luck, there was a slight feeling of disappointment. But oh well, it looks nice and smooth if nothing else. As I started below the guard up at the bow, I could see faint fine lines in the wood start to appear. My heart did a skip, here was something, letters about ten inches high, NW 096C, were etched in. They were called naval control numbers issued after the outbreak of World War II. They had to be visible on top of the cabin and shown on both sides of the vessel, the NW standing for New Westminster.

So off to Burnaby I went to the Nikkei National Museum to peruse through their information to determine if there was anything on the two boats. The next morning with an old ledger book about six or eight inches thick plus numerous other folders, we started fanning through. My wife Nancy found the Nakata fairly soon in one folder box of documents. I looked at the old, yellowed-pages of the ledger with the neat old hand-written notations and typing. As I was nearing the end of this irreplaceable book, I flipped a page, looked down and the numbers 'NW 096C' jumped out at me, and there was the little boat. It was called the "**SEAGULL**" and was built in 1936. It was owned by Sawaichi Obayashi of Steveston, powered by a seven-horsepower Easthope and sold to H. Bell Irving and Company in 1942 for eight hundred and fifty dollars. I thought that if I had taken a couple more passes with my sander, these numbers would have been gone along with the very important history of the Canadian Japanese boat builders and fishermen that these two vessels represent.

If any readers have additional information or any old photos of these two boats, please feel free to contact me. My telephone number is 250-282-3419 and my e-mail is oldcannery@saywardvalley.net



Photo 1 - Boats were mishandled in the round up and in impoundment.
Vancouver Public Library 1352



Photos 2 – Over 1100 boats were rounded up.
Photos courtesy Greg Kimura

CONFISCATION OF VESSELS OWNED BY NIKKEI FISHERMEN, 1941

by Masako Fukawa

Of all the traumatic experiences during the 1940s, the loss of his boat was one of the most difficult to endure for the Japanese Canadian fisherman. His boat was his livelihood, his companion, his refuge in stormy weather, his pride and joy, and a symbol of his success. To have his vessel immobilized, confiscated and forcibly sold left him without a means of providing for his family and his financial investments in ruin. For Hideo Kokubo, a fisherman in Steveston, **“It was like being cut off at the root. All those years of work, just gone.”**¹

The rationale espoused by the Canadian government in revoking fishing licences and immobilizing the Nikkei fleet was “national security”; that fishermen were Japanese naval officers in disguise who were a source of sabotage. To Buck Suzuki, Secretary of the Upriver Fraser Japanese Fishermen’s Association, their actions were incomprehensible. **“Why, we could go into Vancouver any time and buy British Admiralty charts of every single mile of the coast.”**² Furthermore, the RCMP had the community under surveillance since 1938 and concluded in late October 1940 that the Japanese of BC did not constitute a menace to Canada.

There was also convincing evidence of the Japanese's loyalty to Canada. These included strong support of the Victory bond drives and the work of the Red Cross; donations of canned salmon in support of the British; the expressed desire of the Nisei to volunteer for military service and the offer by fishermen, some who were WWI veterans to be of service "in any capacity the government may decide."

The Round-up

Yet, **"within two hours things began to happen. Two hours"** said Suzuki who received a call to report to navy headquarters at 9 am the next morning. There he was informed that all fishing vessels must be turned over to the authorities immediately.

In Port Essington on the northern coast Masao Nakagawa and Isamu Kayama reacted in dismay at the news. **"When we heard that the navy was confiscating our boats it made us sick. We waited wondering what was going to happen next."**³ As if waiting in anticipation, pre-assigned naval vessels proceeded from port to port, disabling the fishing boats and impounding them. Within 48 hours all 1,137 vessels were accounted for (see Table 1)

Table 1 - Fishing Vessels Owned by Japanese Canadian fishermen

Gear type	Number of vessels
Gillnet	715
Troller	115
Seine	67
Packer	138
Cod, other	102
Total	1,137

Soon after Nikkei fishermen received orders to take their boats to New Westminster. The first to leave the ports were fishermen from the west coast of Vancouver Island in Tofino, Ucluelet and Bamfield, each with a soldier on board.

On the Skeena, fishermen remained on boats for two days until 60 gillnetters were assembled. They were not allowed to go ashore. They were given no time to prepare for the long journey nor time to inform their families. They left with no provisions, no warm clothes and no fuel for their stoves to keep warm.

After two weeks of battling the cold, rough and stormy winter seas, the flotilla arrived in New Westminster on December 28th. With no money for their return fare, they borrowed from friends and relatives and arrived home to find their anxious wives and families fearfully waiting, not knowing their whereabouts for the past two weeks.

Fishermen of the lower mainland coast, including the Fraser, were similarly ordered to return to one of 19 official ports where their vessels were searched for weapons and maps, immobilized, tied together and towed to the Annieville Slough. Fishermen watched helplessly as their boats were mishandled by inexperienced naval personnel.

The scene at the Slough was chaotic. Harry Yonekura, a fisherman in Steveston recalled: **"I will never forget the overwhelming sadness and sense of disbelief I felt at the Annie Dike (Annieville Slough) as I patted my boat and tied it up securely one last time."**⁴

The ships were tied together in a jumble without regard to their size resulting in the larger vessels rolling over the smaller ones. Several hundred vessels lay damaged and waterlogged, while the engines of others filled with silt making them inoperable, and 162 sank.⁵

The Sell-off

With over 2,000 of the best fishermen and the newest vessels put out of commission, the Government of Canada belatedly realized that it faced a production crisis just when an uninterrupted supply of food was essential for the war effort. Its response was to sell the confiscated vessels to fishermen "other than Japanese origin." The Japanese Fishing Vessels Disposal Committee (JFVDC) was established by Order in Council PC 288, on January 13, 1942 and authorized to sell off the boats as quickly as possible. Those not sold were placed under control of the Custodian under terms of Order in Council PC 6247, July 20, 1942. The Committee had full power to force the owners to sell, with or without their consent.

Appointed to the JFVDC were three men: Justice Sidney Smith as chairman, Commander B.J. Johnson of the Royal Canadian Navy, and Kishizo Kimura, secretary of the Canadian Salt Herring Exporters, as a representative for the Japanese fishermen. They were assisted by the three district (Fraser, Skeena and

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Photos 3-4 – Over 1100 boats were rounded up.
Photos courtesy Greg Kimura

Vancouver Island) representatives of the Japanese Fishermen's Association whose responsibility included obtaining the signatures authorizing the sale of their vessels from the reluctant fishermen.

Nikkei fishermen, all of whom were Canadian citizens through naturalization or by birth, cooperated with the round up of their vessels and reluctantly signed over the sale of their boats. They saw no options. They did not want to be accused of disruptive behaviour, nor seen to be disobedient especially when the leaders of their organizations were seeking their cooperation. They also viewed cooperation with the authorities as a demonstration of their loyalty to Canada.

The pressure to sell was compounded when the government announced the mass removal from the coast of "all persons of the Japanese race." Families were split apart with the adult males sent off to road camps leaving the women, children and the elderly to be dispersed to places unknown to fend for themselves with no means of support.

Fishermen complained that they did not receive a fair price for their boats; that the selling prices were much lower than what their vessels were worth. Their complaints were justified and legitimate. The vessels had experienced "abnormal depreciation in value" since appraisals were made after the vessels had sustained damage during the hasty impoundment, from vandalism and deterioration after three and more months of neglect and abuse. Furthermore, with over 1,000 vessels glutting the market it was a buyer's market. "It was like trying to sell refrigerators to Eskimos" says Greg, son of Kishizo Kimura. Kimura, Adachi⁶ notes was a "token" representative of the Japanese. The government's interest was in quick sales and Kimura was the scapegoat should fishermen complain.

Table 2 - Buyers of Confiscated Fishing Vessels

Purchasers	Number of vessels
Fishing companies	660
Individuals/small companies	227
British Admiralty	20
Canadian Armed Forces	43
Custodian of Enemy Alien Property	187
Total	1137

Exceptional difficulties arose in the appraisal of nets and fishing gears due to theft, deterioration and damage caused by faulty storage. Correspondence between the fishermen and the Bird Commission attest to the difficulties Japanese faced in having to provide proof in their claims for compensation.

The expulsion

The decision to rid the Japanese from the fishing industry and from BC began long before the Second World War. The bombing of Pearl Harbor gave the anti-Japanese elements in British Columbia a "god-sent" opportunity to rid the Japanese once and for all from the fisheries.

Photos 5-6 - The vessels were sold to non-Japanese buyers.
Photos courtesy Greg Kimura



NO. 7 - PROSPECTIVE BUYERS PEERED BY A NAVAL PERSONNEL
購買希望者と船員に警戒する海兵



Beginning in 1895 with the disenfranchisement of all Japanese until 1949 with the granting of the right to vote, Nikkei had no clout with politicians and other decision makers. Discriminatory laws and regulations were enacted in all occupations but none more prolific than in the fisheries. Nikkei fishermen, all Canadian citizens through naturalization or by birth, were convenient scapegoats and victims, especially when economic times were bad.

The fear of competition from the Japanese precipitated the first recorded strike in the industry in 1893. It was followed in 1900 and 1901 with violent strikes on the Fraser when “Indians” and “whites” came together to combat the Japanese.

In 1914 the “white” union first formed in 1899 to protect themselves against their steady displacement by the cannery who hired Japanese to replace those who left for the Klondike gold rush was resurrected as the Fraser River Fishermen’s Protective Association. Its stated goal was to spearhead a drive for anti-Japanese legislation.

The Department of Marine and Fisheries responded in 1919 with policies “to gradually eliminate Orientals from the fishery.” They were to be replaced by “white” fishermen in the shortest possible time without disrupting the industry. That year, the Japanese held 3,267 licences or nearly half of the licences issued. By 1925 the Department had stripped close to a thousand licences drastically reducing their control of licences.

Efforts by Nikkei fishermen to combat these reductions proved fruitless. The province-wide Amalgamated Association of Fishermen and the Steveston Benevolent Fishermen’s Association sent delegations to Ottawa in 1922 and 1926 requesting a more lenient settlement but the trips were futile. In 1927 they resorted to legal action. The following year the Supreme Court of Canada delivered a judgement in favour of the Japanese. The government’s appeal to the Privy Council was dismissed. Nikkei won the legal battle but lost to the racists who circumvented the judgement by enacting legislation which gave the Minister of Fisheries absolute discretion

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Photos 7-8 - The larger vessels were
requisitioned by the navy.
Photos courtesy Greg Kimura

issuing licences. By 1930, 1,253 fishermen had been driven out. Whereas in 1919, the Nikkei held almost 50% of all the licences issued that year, in 1941 they were reduced to only 12% of all fishing licences.

That the government had plans to seize all fishing vessels owned by Canadians of Japanese descent in case of war with Japan is evidenced by a memo several months before the attack at Pearl Harbor. In a memorandum dated May 2, 1941, the Commodore, Officer Commanding the Pacific Coast at Esquimalt, outlined instructions on how to deal with the “enemy”. It included a thorough search of the vessel for weapons, armed guards to be put on board if necessary, steps on how to immobilize vessels, and concluded with “When approaching vessels, they should be kept covered by machine-gun and small arms until the capture is complete and the situation well in hand.”⁷

After decades of racist laws and regulations, British Columbia succeeded in eliminating the Nikkei from the fishing industry in 1941 but only for a time. When all bans were lifted in 1949, Nikkei fishermen returned from exile to re-enter the fishing industry, some with their sons and daughters, and rebuilt their lives. They leave a proud legacy of “*gaman*” (perseverance) and “*gambaro*” (to do one’s best) in overcoming the loss of their life’s work and the pain and suffering of internment with patience and dignity for the sake of the children, “*kodomo no tame ni*.”



Photo 9 - Boats were put on flat cars to be shipped to military.

Photo courtesy Greg Kimura

Footnotes:

1. Marlatt, Daphne, *Steveston Recollected*, p. 59
2. Broadfoot, Barry, *Years of Sorrow, Years of Shame*, p.58
3. Public Archives of Canada RG 24, Vol. 11867, File 10-7-1, P.C. 601-1 in Ito, Roy, *Stories Of My People*, p. 222
4. Fukawa, Masako and Stanley, *Spirit of the Nikkei Fleet*, p. 124
5. Sunahara, Ann, *Politics of Racism*, p. 180
6. Adachi, Ken, *The Enemy That Never Was*, p.321
7. Ito, Roy, *Stories of My People*, pp. 222/3

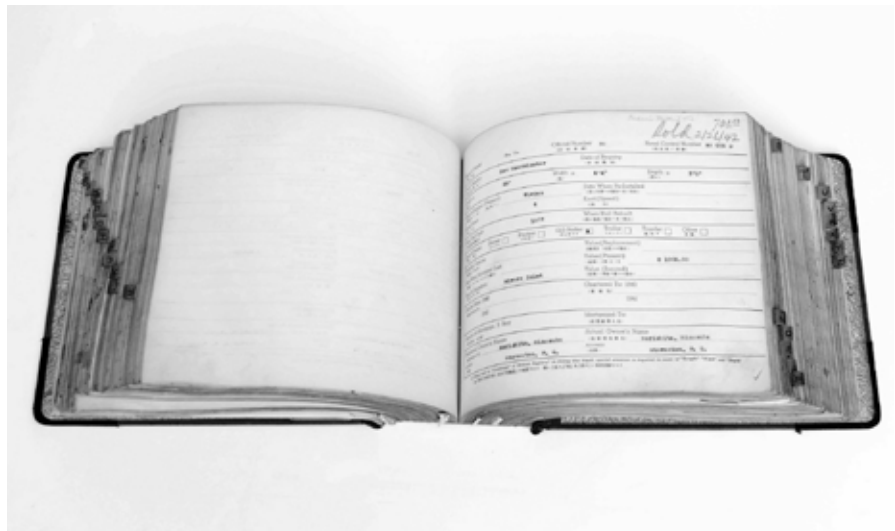
TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTION

BY BRONWEN BIRD

At first glance this ledger does not appear to be anything of extraordinary importance. There are no distinguishing marks on the stained blue cover that give a clue to the valuable information that it contains. However, the yellowing pages of this ledger provide a glimpse into a significant moment in Japanese Canadian history.

One of the many tragic circumstances brought on by World War II was the confiscation and reselling of 1,137 fishing vessels belonging to those Canadians of Japanese ancestry. The extent of this injustice can be clearly seen in this unique ledger, which contains specific detailed information on 1,058 confiscated fishing vessels. It also records details of the sale of the boat, as managed by the Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposal Committee (JFVDC), a group formed on January 13, 1942. The committee consisted of a judge, The Honourable Mr. Justice Sidney Smith, a naval officer, Commander B.L. Johnson, and one Japanese Canadian, Mr. Kishizo Kimura.

Kishizo Kimura came to Vancouver with his adopted mother in 1911 to join



his adopted father who had already immigrated to Canada. Kishizo attended Strathcona School until 1915 when he began working in sawmills and lumber yards to help support his family. In 1918 he began working for an importer and distributor of Japanese sundry goods, and then an exporter of salted herring and salmon. Kimura played a principal role in influencing salted fish producers to establish a cooperative marketing company which led to the creation of the Canada Salted Herring Export Sales Company. Kishizo Kimura became the executive director of the company as well as establishing the BC Salted Salmon Export Sales Company in 1935. Both organizations remained in operation until the onset of the war.

When the war with Japan began in December 1941 immediate action was

taken by the Naval Service to confiscate all Japanese Canadian owned fishing vessels, and to moor them near New Westminster. For more details on this tragic story, please read Masako Fukawa's article on page 18.

The sheer volume of this ledger, full of carefully typewritten information and additional handwritten notes, helps give a sense of the magnitude of the work of the committee. For every person who sees this ledger, it really brings home the personal loss that these fishermen and their families had to endure. It is also clear that Mr. Kimura, as the only Japanese Canadian member of the JFVDC was put in an extremely awkward position within the community.

Kishizo Kimura saved the ledger and his family made sure this history was preserved at the Nikkei National Museum. Despite his hard work, Kimura and his family were sent to Christina Lake, BC in October 1942 and after a brief tenure with the Custodian in 1943 he worked as a general foreman of a sawmill until 1961. Kishizo passed away in Vancouver in 1976 at the age of 77.

Japanese Fishing Vessel Disposition Committee Ledger, 1942
NNM 2010.4.4

Name of Vessel (英 日)	ALBERT II	Official Number (日 英 日)	275 243	Serial Control Number (日 英 日)	7 144 0
Date of Registry (日 英 日)	1940-01-10	Date of Registry (日 英 日)	1940-01-10	Form 10 1940	
Length (日 英)	10' 0/10	Width (日 英)	9' 0/10	Depth (日 英)	5' 1/10
Make of Engine (Present) (日 英 日)	YAMAHA (Full Diesel)	Date When Re-installed (日 英 日)	1940-01-10	Know (Signed) (日 英)	
Horse Power (日 英)	50 H.P.	When Hull Built (日 英 日)	1940	When Hull Rebuilt (日 英 日)	1940
Type of Vessel (日 英 日)	Schooler	Picker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gill Netter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Formerly Used as (日 英 日)	Fish dealer	Trawler	<input type="checkbox"/>	Trapper	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date When Surveyed Last (日 英 日)	1940	Value (Replacement) (日 英 日)	\$ 6,000.00	Value (Present) (日 英 日)	\$ 6,000.00
Place of Operation (日 英 日)	SKAGWAY BEAR	Value (Insured) (日 英 日)	\$ 6,000.00		
Charter Rate 1940 (日 英 日)	\$16.00	Chartered To 1940 (日 英 日)	Canadian Fishing Company		
Amount of Mortgage, if any (日 英 日)	\$1,400.00	Mortgaged To (日 英 日)	Canadian Fishing Company		
Registered Owner's Name (日 英 日)	Genichi Tanaka	Actual Owner's Name (日 英 日)	Genichi Tanaka		
Address (日 英 日)	11111111111111111111	Address (日 英 日)	11111111111111111111		

Bronwen Bird is a summer student at the Nikkei National Museum, funded by the Canada Summer Jobs program. She will continue her studies in the Library and Archives program at UBC in the fall.