

 **Nikkei**
national museum
& cultural centre

NIKKEI IMAGES



Mrs. Hayashi's house, New Denver, 1943
NNM 1992.32.23
Harold Hayashi collection



Mrs. Hayashi's House in New Denver	1
Life in New Denver, by Beth Carter	2
What does Membership Mean, by Beth Carter	3
Where Canadian Nikkei were Exiled, by Stan Fukawa	4
The Power of Euphemism, by Roy Miki	6
Reflections, by Ken Noma	7
Life in a "Self-supporting" Nikkei Family's Shack, by Stan Fukawa	8
Lemon Creek Memories, by Midge Ayukawa	11
It happened here too, by Alexandra Wood	17
Memories of Taylor Lake, by Linda Kawamoto Reid	18
Oak Bluff and Winnipeg, by Margaret Lyons	22
Treasures from the collections	24

CONTENTS



LIFE IN NEW DENVER

Cover Photo

The Hayashi family were interned in New Denver, BC along with over 1600 other Japanese Canadians. New Denver was originally a silver mining community, formed in 1892. By the 1940s, the town was mostly abandoned, so the BC Security Commission chose it as a site to build new houses for the internment. The areas known as Harris Ranch and the Orchard were selected, across the river from the main part of town. A large tuberculosis sanatorium was also built on the shores of Slocan Lake.

At first glance, this appears to be an idyllic cottage in the country. However, these rough wood shacks were built with little insulation, and no running water. Shared outhouses were placed nearby. Each house was only 14 x 28 feet and housed two families. The lush gardens shown in the photo were essential to help feed the residents.

Japanese Canadians gradually left New Denver after 1947, but many houses still remain to this day. In 1994, members of the volunteer run Kyowakai (translated - "working together peacefully") Society successfully achieved their dream of opening an interpretive centre to raise awareness about internment. As a National Historic Site since 2007, the NIMC cares for significant collections about the internment of Japanese Canadians. From a site of initial trauma, the Kyowakai Society members have transformed the Centre into a wonderful place of memory.

The Nikkei National Museum is excited to work with the NIMC over the next year on a project to catalogue and digitize their important collections. This will help to preserve Japanese Canadian history and make these cultural treasures available to all Canadians via an online database. Thank you to the Vancouver Foundation, and summer students through the Young Canada Works and Canada Summer Jobs for making this possible.

WHAT DOES MEMBERSHIP MEAN TO YOU?

by Beth Carter

You may notice a new look to the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre (NNMCC) publications. After some dedicated effort from our Board and staff, we are pleased to present a cohesive new name and logo to start our second decade. This initiative grew out of the strategic plan we did in 2010 - when we had many discussions about our goals and identity. It may seem like a subtle change, but we feel this new name more accurately represents our cultural focus, and the new logo (for those who read kanji) clarifies the cultural interpretation of Nikkei (meaning "of Japanese ancestry" rather than the economic index).

We are also working to enhance our membership program. The Japanese Canadian community is our focus, and we truly value the support we receive from our members. Your membership helps support our ongoing operations, including our collections database, exhibits, educational programs and special community events.

As a member of the NNMCC, your 12-month membership provides you with:

- The *Nikkei Place Network* guide to programs and activities at Nikkei Centre
- The museum and heritage-oriented *Nikkei Images* newsletter - mailed directly to you!
- 10% discount in the Museum Gift Shop
- The right to vote at the society's Annual General Meeting
- **Plus discounts at many local Japanese businesses!** See our website for a full listing of participating businesses. www.nikkeiplace.org

What a deal! Please help us spread the word about these new benefits - and encourage your friends and family to become members today. Thank you to our existing members for your ongoing support.

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* For senior couples and family memberships, please attach the names and email addresses of the other persons joining under the same membership.

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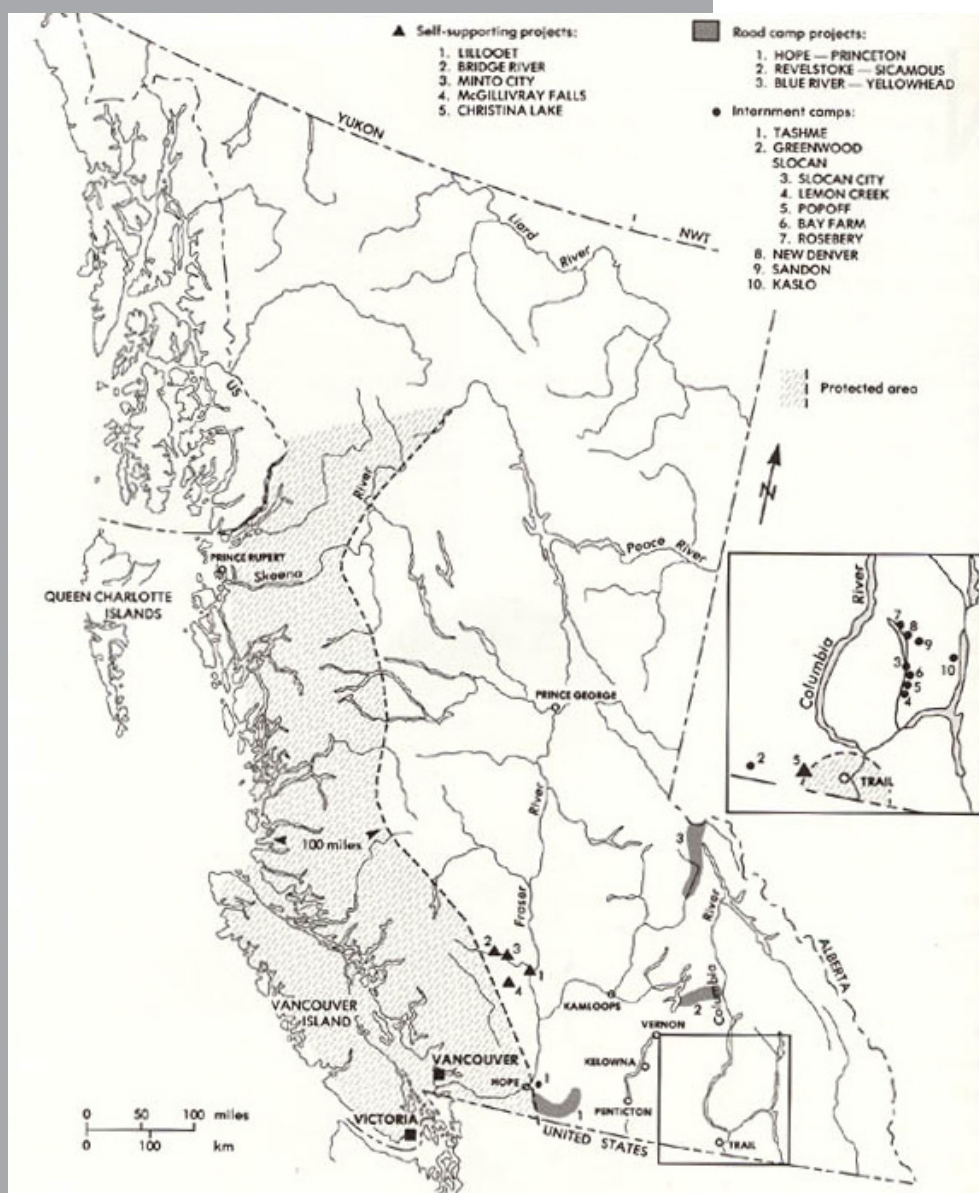
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1942-49: Where Were Canadian Nikkei Exiled?

by Stan Fukawa



Courtesy of Justice In Our Time

Just as in the mainland United States, all Nikkei in Canada, regardless of citizenship, were declared to be enemy aliens and were forcibly moved from the Pacific coast. In Canada, Nikkei could only remain in the 100-mile-wide “security zone” if they had clearance. Whereas the US imprisoned their mainland *Nikkei* in about a dozen large concentration camps, of about 10,000 people each, the Canadian situation was, in comparison, a rag-tag, ad hoc and even more low-budget affair, in that the Canadian Nikkei in the housing centres didn’t pay rent but paid for their own living expenses from out of their bank accounts that were held for

them by the Custodian of Enemy Alien Properties.

The upheaval of 90% of the *Nikkei* community affected double the population of the fabled Great Expulsion of the Acadians—an example of “ethnic cleansing” almost two centuries earlier on the Atlantic coast. It is hardly surprising that, since it was accompanied by the confiscation and forced sale of property, it is still, 70 years after the fact, the common experience that defines the *Nikkei* community of that era.

The Canadian Department of Labour that administered Japanese Affairs in that period estimates that as of October 1942, the population of Japanese in Canada was as follows, based on the Department’s own statistics and those of the 1941 Canadian Census.

Nikkei living in Security Zone and sent:

1. 11,500 to Interior Housing Centres* (8,000 via Hastings Park)
2. 3,600 to Sugar Beet fields of Alta. & Man.

3. 3,000 to Self-Supporting projects, etc.**
(1,200 to projects***)

4. 2,150 to Road Camps in BC & Ont.

5. 750 to Internment in northern Ont.

* categories defined below

21,000 Forced to leave the security zone

Nikkei living outside the Security Zone

6. 1,500 in BC outside security zone

7. 664 in Alta, Sask, Man.

8. 60 in the rest of Canada

2,224 Live outside security zone in 1941

23,224 Total living in Canada in 1941

*Interior Housing Centres:

All of the ethnic Japanese living in Canada were declared by the government to be “enemy aliens” and their rights were curtailed under the powers of the War Measures Act. Those who lived within the “security zone” (within 100 miles of the Pacific coast) were banished from the Pacific Coast by a government which was ill-prepared to deal with the housing needs of these 20,000 wards of the BC Security Commission.

Hundreds of tar-paper shacks were hurriedly built in the spring, summer and fall of 1942 in the new part of the Interior Housing Centres, consisting of Tashme (just east of Hope BC) and in the Kootenay Valley settlements of Lemon Creek, New Denver, Slocan and Rosebery. A few families only had tents to live in even after winter arrived in the cold Kootenay Valley climate. The older settlement part consisted of the ghost towns of Greenwood, Kaslo and Sandon in which the government tried to refurbish the housing abandoned by mining communities when the ores had given out.

**Self-supporting projects & other self-supporting “Self-supporting projects” were settlements to which groups of *Nikkei* signed up to be sent, agreeing to be responsible for their own travel, housing and living costs. It was a way for these *Nikkei* to ensure that their families were kept together. 1200 went to Lillooet, Bridge River, Minto City, McGillivray Falls, Grand Forks, Christina Lake and “other spots.” Other *Nikkei* often referred to them as the “*kane-mochi*” (the rich people). Many *Nikkei* families were split up when the males were sent to road camps and the women and children to the Interior Housing Centres.

Others in the voluntary leavers and “self supporting” category were people who left in groups or in families before the deadline of April 1, 1942, arranging employment or other economic activities, including farming, so that there were no costs borne by the government.

Road Camps

In the early months of the internment period, men between the ages of 18 and 45 were separated from their families and sent into the Rocky Mountains to work on roads to aid in the national defense of Canada. The families did not know where the men had been sent or when the families would be re-united. This caused a great deal of unrest among the men, affecting morale and willingness to work. The plan was abandoned, families were re-united and the young men were sent to work in the beet fields or further east.

Despite the labour shortage caused by this time of war, there was a great deal of resistance to Japanese workers being used throughout Canada due to wartime propaganda and the eastward movement began only after the end of the war. Under the leadership of the leading Liberal politician in BC, Ian Mackenzie, the King government passed the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act that prolonged the exclusion of *Nikkei* from the security zone until April 1, 1949. Meanwhile, in the US, citizens’ civil rights were stronger because they had a Constitution guaranteeing them, so that the courts ruled at the end of 1944 that they could legally return to coastal communities.

**Statistics from the “Report of the Department of Labour on the Administration of Japanese Affairs in Canada, 1942-44” submitted to Hon. Humphrey Mitchell, M.P., Minister of Labour, Aug. 1944.*

The Power of Euphemism: A Critical Note on Language and the Mass Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the 1940s

by Dr. Roy Miki



Departure from Vancouver, 1942
Photography Leonard Frank
NNM 1994.69.4.29

“Evacuation,” the euphemism coined by the government, became the term used to describe the internment of Japanese Canadians. It took root so deeply that to this day many Japanese Canadians invoke the term, not merely to denote the event itself, but also to identify the weight of all its phases—dispossession, deportation, dispersal, and assimilation. “Evacuation” in its singularity has taken on the proportions of myth for them, embodying that circumscribed period when each person of “the Japanese race” was subject to the violation of rights without recourse to protective mechanisms. “Evacuation” has come to exemplify the whole Japanese Canadian experience of the 1940s, from the moment of uprooting following Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, to the final lifting of restrictions on April 1, 1949. “Evacuation” strikes the chord of a shared “exile” from the coast. The word has been so internalized that many Japanese Canadians use it even when they understand that it is a euphemism for their unjustified forced removal from the BC coast, and that it reinforces the government’s assertion

of power.

For the government, constructing euphemisms was an effective mechanism to whitewash its actions. Euphemisms helped to translate the inherent racism of its policies for Japanese Canadians into the language of bureaucratic efficiencies. This

way of neutralizing the abuse of power generated a complex of terms that rendered “normal”—in the eyes of the Canadian public—its brutal implications. The representation of Japanese Americans was similar.

According to the Canadian government, Japanese Canadians who were forcibly uprooted, dispossessed, and dispersed were being “evacuated” for the “security and defense of Canada” (Order in Council, PC 1665, March 4, 1942). Many who were shipped into Vancouver from the coastal towns and Vancouver Island during March and April of 1942 and forced to live in the livestock barns on the PNE grounds in Hastings Park, often for months, were officially described as being housed in an “assembly centre” or “clearing house.” The Custodian of Enemy Property, who took custody of their properties and belongings, did so as “a protective measure only.” The “ghost towns” in the BC interior, hastily prepared for the “evacuees,” were described as “interior housing centres,” “relocation centres” and “interior settlements.” “But these almost reassuring descriptive terms,” says Ken Adachi in *The Enemy That Never Was*, “suggesting a cozy picture of a tranquil, sequestered life in the Kootenay Valley, were simply euphemisms for what

many Nisei and others preferred to call ‘internment’ or ‘concentration camps’” (252). The Japanese Canadians who were shipped out of BC to sugar beet farms on the prairies—my own family were a part of this displacement—were identified as part of the government’s “sugar beet projects.” The men who were confined to various isolated BC sites were working in “road camps.”

Use of the term “evacuation” implies an intention to return “evacuees” once the danger has subsided. Among the Japanese Canadians, who themselves adopted the term to explain their experience, there was the assumption that they would return once the wartime danger had subsided. After all, they were “Canadians” and not “enemies,” and what better way to demonstrate their loyalty than to cooperate with the government by complying with its “evacuation” policy? For the government’s policy makers, its bureaucrats and politicians, however, the question of return never arose. As far as can be determined, no statements or reports seriously considered this scenario. Rather, the documentary evidence points to the fact that the removal was not an “evacuation” in the conventional meaning of the term: there would be no return.

A striking example of the way euphemisms disguised the injustices of the mass uprooting is the report submitted by the BC Security Commission to Labour Minister H Mitchell, covering the period from March 4 to October 31, 1942. In a virtual handbook of euphemistic lingo, the report frames Japanese Canadians as the “victims of the cruel action of their [Japanese] race”(2). Their mass uprooting, dispossession, and confinement become the “Removal of Japanese from Protected Areas” (the title of the report).

This benign “removal” is then narrated, in an outrageous fantasy, as one of the “colourful pages” of Canadian history. As a “protective measure” and in the “interests of self-preservation, to take the essential precaution against attack from within,” this group was being “evacuated” from the coast. The “Japanese” identified in the report became benefactors of the progressive development of Canadian history, as part of a “mass migration ... unique in the annals of this country.” Since the desire of these people to live in groups has led to their unassimilability, the report concludes that the “Japanese problem in Canada” can be resolved by “relocation in self-supporting family units” (2)—the displacement of the west coast communities. The report concludes:

It may be said that the foregoing

summary of this first episode of the saga of an industrious people lifted from the fields of activity to which they had been accustomed, and placed in comparative idleness in interior towns, depicts no permanent static condition, but is believed to be only the frontispiece to the still unfolding story of the final relocation and rehabilitation of the whole Japanese-Canadian population. (218)

“Final relocation” meant permanent exile from the coast, and “rehabilitation,” a term usually reserved for social deviants and criminals, would occur through gradual but irreversible assimilation. Beneath the simplistic appropriation of narrative forms to repress the knowledge of the abuse

of Japanese Canadians by racialization lay the broader agenda—a plan to dismantle the geographical, social, and cultural spaces they had created and occupied over the previous 50 years.

Excerpted from Roy Miki's Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice (Raincoast Books 2004)

Works Cited

Adachi, Ken. *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976.

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REFLECTIONS

by Ken Noma

As this year is the 70th anniversary of the internment of Japanese Canadians, it is natural for us to reflect upon the impact to those who suffered during this period but we must also find ways to deal with the challenges created by the Diaspora. Our people are scattered across this vast country.

Several summers ago, our family toured what remained of Cumberland's Mine Number One Japan Town settlement on Vancouver Island. Number One Mine was located half way between Union Town and Comox Lake and was in operation for two years beginning in 1888. The Japanese population in Cumberland in 1913 numbered about 306 people. Out of the 186 men, the mines employed 91. When we visited the site, there were no signs marking the settlement and no existing buildings. The only landmark was two hills of coal tailings where there was once a baseball field. My wife's paternal

grandfather - Matsutaro Iwasa - owned a store and later became part owner of the Royston Lumber Company with other Nikkei. We also visited the small, well-maintained Cumberland Museum and, shaded by tall pine trees, the hauntingly beautiful 'Oriental' Cemetery where the Japanese and Chinese pioneers rest.

We had lunch at Comox Lake whose beach was crowded with people enjoying the waters of the glacial lake. Suddenly, I felt an immediate sense of unease. Coming from the ethnically diverse city of Toronto, I realized that we were the only visible minority there that day. On April 16, 1942, five hundred and eighty-six Japanese Nationals and Japanese Canadians from Cumberland, Royston and Fanny Bay were transported by the Canadian authorities from Union Bay aboard the S.S. PRINCE GEORGE to Vancouver and onward to the internment camps of BC. Sitting on the picnic bench, I could not help wondering how Cumberland would have looked like if the internment had not taken place. The culling of Japanese Canadians

into camps allowed the Canadian government to move forward with their policy of systemically destroying our community through repatriation to Japan and eastward dispersal after the cessation of hostilities with Japan.

We must create programs that will engage our youth and encourage them to learn the history and culture of our community. I applaud the efforts of the Burnaby Nikkei National Museum and Cultural Centre who tirelessly work to preserve our rich legacy through educational outreach projects and engaging exhibitions. The Redress Settlement of 1988 has entrusted every Nikkei with the profound responsibility of keeping alive the Japanese Canadian legacy and to speak out against racism, discrimination and political abuse. Let us renew our commitment to preserve the past. For the sake of our children and all Canadians, we cannot forget the internment years.

Ken Noma is the President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, www.najc.ca



LIFE IN A “SELF-SUPPORTING” NIKKEI FAMILY’S SHACK, 1942-1949

by Stan Fukawa

During the war years, most Canadians seemed to believe that people’s thoughts and behaviour were the result of their racial origin. The Canadian government assumed this to be true and declared all persons of Japanese race to be “enemy aliens,” including those veterans of the First World War who had served in the Canadian armed forces. My father acted to prevent the break-up of our family by moving us outside the “security zone” before the deadline of April 1, 1942, and this moved us into the category of “self-supporting” families. My wife’s father was picked up by the authorities and sent to a Road Camp and his family was not informed of his whereabouts for some months - a not unusual occurrence at that time. His family was sent to the internment centre of Greenwood.

The first photo was probably taken in late 1945. It could not have been a wartime picture because ethnic Japanese in Canada could not legally own cameras during the war years. It shows my father, Shoji Fukawa, and me in front of our shack in Coldstream, just southeast of Vernon, BC. We lived on the property of an apple farmer, a post-WW I British immigrant. My father built the shack and its out-buildings. He was 46 in the picture and I was about 8.

My own memories of shack life are less painful than those of older *Nikkei* who were uprooted from their 1942 West Coast lives as I was only four years old when the so-called “internment” began. At the beginning of the war, *Nikkei* had just survived the Depression years and were becoming comfortable and even affluent. My aunt and uncle who lived in the farm next door to our family farm had just built a new house with central heating and this was not an isolated case. The Mukaida family had just built an up-to-date house in 1941 which was written up in a local newspaper for its fine, modern amenities. Tosh Mukaida regretted that after 1949 his father was too old to regain his past success and

his mother was never to live in anything approaching that house for the rest of her life.

Nikkei farms, businesses and newly-built fishing boats, too, were confiscated and later sold off without the owners' consent as part of the ethnic cleansing campaign which was euphemistically termed an "evacuation." From time to time, memories of what had been left behind would be brought up in conversation about toys or furniture or vehicles and remind us of the realities of exile and banishment. The Newspeak of that period was so successful that *Nikkei* still use many of the official terms that camouflage what was really done to us. We still use "Custodian" without any sense of sarcasm for the government department which did not keep custody of valuables for our people but were involved in stealing it from us.

Our shack was about 18 feet long and 12 feet wide but I am not sure. I was 11 when we left it, so I am guessing from memory. The house had two rooms: a bedroom-storeroom and a kitchen-living room. It was not unlike a summer cabin that people build on their recreational properties. There was no running water but we had electricity and the furniture consisted of a table, chairs, and a bench plus a home-made double bed and child's bed. There was a wood-burning cast iron kitchen cook stove and a sheet metal "Air Tight" heater stove side-by-side. My mother made delicious cakes, pies and cookies in the cook stove like most housewives of the

day, without an oven thermometer. She would stick her hand in the oven to gauge the temperature.

Water had to be fetched from a standpipe 60 feet away. It was left in the galvanized pail by the home-made wooden sink which drained through an iron pipe to a waste pit at the back of the house. The building shown beside the house was a combination wood-shed and Japanese bath-house. The bath had to be filled by carrying many buckets of water from the standpipe and the water was heated by building a fire under the metal bottom of the wooden bath tub. Before entering the tub, a bather scrubbed and rinsed himself so that the water stayed clean for the other bathers. It was used almost every day. Beyond the bath-house was the toilet outhouse—a familiar landmark in rural Canada of that day.

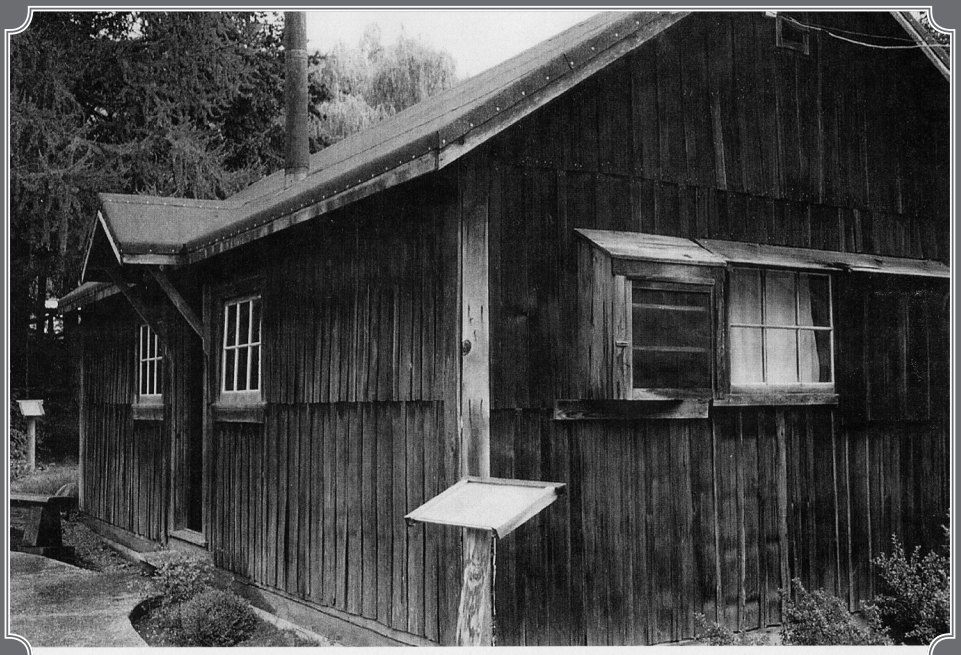
A uniquely Japanese food-storage device was hung outside in the shade and on the outside wall of the house. It was called a "*hae-irazu*" meaning "keeps-out-flies" or "fly-proof." We kept our meat in it at a time when there were no rural ice-deliveries and few if any electric refrigerators. It was a box whose outside walls were wire-mesh screens and had a screen-door in front. An example can be seen on the shack at the New Denver internment museum. It is still possible to buy commercially made versions online in Japan for use outside mountain cabins without electricity. We also had a small root cellar for storing vegetables and fruit.

PHOTO ON PAGE 8:

Stan Fukawa, and his father Shoji, in front of their wartime shack, ca.1945. Fukawa Family photograph

PHOTO ON PAGE 9:

Wartime 2-family shack now at the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver. Photo by Stan Fukawa.



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Our family, consisting of my parents and me, lived in four different shacks during the period in question. Our first was on the tomato farm of a Japanese farmer in north Vernon. It was a tiny one-room shack built to house pickers in the harvest season. We then moved into a larger shack with another family while my father looked for a job. It was crowded and did not have electricity. It was the only time we had to share quarters with another family, so we were quite fortunate for a small family. Our third shack was next door to the one in the photograph. We lived in it while my father built the new one. It was a tiny one-room structure but it had painted exterior walls and electricity. My mother was keen on our own private quarters and the electric light. While there, we bathed in a laundry wash tub inside the house but we could not bathe daily as was our practice in the Fraser Valley and on the Japanese farm in Vernon.

My father worked year-round in the apple orchard, pruning, fertilizing, spraying and cultivating out-of-season, and making the wooden apple boxes during the picking season. My mother worked thinning the apples in the spring and picking them in the fall harvest. In between the work with the apples, mother sewed and knitted our clothes and socks, and worked in the fields for some of the Chinese farmers nearby. To the left of our shack, she grew flowers. She loved flowers and tended a variety of them which our employer's wife used to bring her friends by to admire. Pheasants were common and even roosted in the bushes behind the house. A kindly neighbour who loved to hunt them, would drop off one or two for us from time to time.

I can still vividly remember the day when my father's boss came by to give us one of the radios which had been confiscated from a Japanese family at the outbreak of the war. As an only child, it was a great source of companionship and entertainment and it Americanized me, just as it did the millions of Canadians for whom American radio was the source of news, religious broadcasts, soap operas, music, sports, comedy and action programs featuring Superman, the Lone Ranger and Sgt. Preston of the North-West Mounted Police. My father loved the New York Yankees and like many first-generation men later took the plunge and bought an expensive short-wave radio so that we could listen to baseball games on the U.S. Armed Forces Radio Network.

Two basic shacks, a bit larger than ours, were re-constructed in New Denver in a sort of internment heritage park and can be seen today but the rest of them remain now only in photographs or in the memories of the people who lived in them.

In farming communities in Alberta and Manitoba, some Japanese were housed at the beginning of their stay in farm shacks which were not built for use in winter and some of which had been intended for chickens.

The internment camps such as those in the Slocan Valley (Slocan, Lemon Creek, New Denver, Sandon) and Tashme in the Allison Pass near Hope, BC, consisted of rows of shacks, hastily built, often using green, undried lumber. The shrinkage of the lumber as it dried, caused cracks to appear in the walls and the lack of insulation resulted in frost on the walls which melted when the stoves were fired up. The unpreparedness of the government resulted in some families having to initially live in tents. These camps had large communal baths with separate times for males and females.

In the ghost towns of New Denver and Kaslo, families were crammed into old hotels and other dilapidated structures, sharing the limited kitchen and bathroom facilities. Some of the official government spokesmen described the internment facilities as being as good as or better than the housing that the Japanese lived in before the war in their coastal communities. *Nikkei* knew this to be wartime and post-war propaganda.

The Canadian government attempted to ethnically cleanse BC of Japanese through its "No Japs from the Rockies to the Sea" program and began "deporting" Japanese, including many Canadian-born who did not want to leave BC. This coincided with a new anti-racist initiative and the movement for the United Nations to adopt a Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Canada could hardly openly support such an initiative while deporting its own citizens and so gave up this scheme. My father decided to return to farming in the Fraser Valley in 1949 as soon as *Nikkei* were allowed to live in the wartime security zone, four years after the war had ended. Our first post-internment house was much roomier though modest and was painted inside and out. He built a new house with central heating and indoor plumbing ten years after moving back to the coast.

LEMON CREEK MEMORIES

by Midge Ayukawa

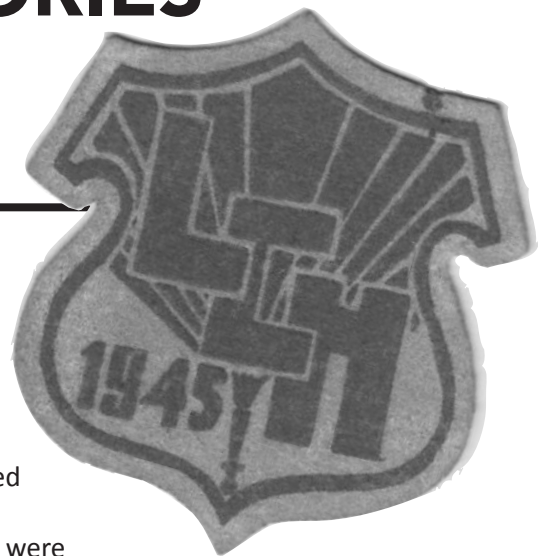
September 1942 - I am twelve years old and should be back at Strathcona School. One day, restless and bewildered, I went for a walk with my six-year-old brother. We went to my school and sat on a low fence and I stared at the window from which my Grade Seven teacher had often looked outside. I "willed" her to spot me and perhaps wave a greeting; but to my disappointment, she didn't. Since December 8th when the Japanese language teacher had announced that the school was being closed and had admonished us that we were Canadians and to remember that our allegiance lay in Canada, our lives were becoming more and more restricted. My father had to give up his little Kodak camera, our shelf radio, items all purchased by saving money diligently. Later my mother told me to ask the school librarian if she would like to have the boys' dolls that my mother set out for Boy's Day: *Benkei* and *Ushiwakamaru*, I believe they were. They were beautifully dressed in brocade with swords ready to strike. Then my piano was gone. My father left for Road Camp in late March and my eldest brother in May. The curfew made it difficult for my mother to go bid farewell to friends when the rest of us were told to leave in September. My piano teacher's family urged my mother to stay behind and "*gambaru*," but she said she wanted to keep the family together. On our street there were two other Japanese families (all women) who had moved in together for company. My mother went to some office on Powell Street and asked that we leave for Lemon Creek with them since to be the only Japanese family left on Georgia Street was daunting.

The neighbours received their orders but we didn't. Then at the last minute we did. University student

Teiso Uyeno, the son of my father's closest friend came by to help. After he left, mother ordered my fifteen-year old brother to put a box around the wood-burning kitchen stove. My mother had scrimped and saved for several years to buy it and to leave it behind was more than she could bear. Although my brother insisted that we would never be allowed to take the stove, she won the argument and it was put to good use throughout our days in Lemon Creek.

The morning we left Vancouver, our Italian neighbour invited us all for breakfast. Due to the inability to communicate, there had been little interaction between the families except for sharing our home-grown vegetables, and the

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Lemon Creek Highschool

children playing with each other. I thought it was strange that we actually were in their house!

However, as the hours passed the next day and the hour was approaching for our departure when we had to leave for the CPR Railway station, the young men who were supposed to pick up our luggage had not come. But an ex-*samurai* (or descendant) came to the rescue! Mr. Okimura, a neighbour, a man too elderly to have been sent to a road camp came to check on us and realized our problem. He quickly found a solution. He located a Chinese vegetable hauler with a rickety old truck, loaded our baggage, and off they went. He soon returned to tell my mother not to worry. He had seen to it that our baggage was loaded on the train. Now I don't recall how we got to the station, but we did!

My mother had packed a lunch and we slept overnight on the hard seats. Two facing benches could be pulled out to make a flat surface. I slept well but in the morning I was scolded for my 'unlady-like sleeping posture"! My mother later bought me a root beer. Oh, I thought it was the most delicious drink I had ever had! (Several years later, in my teens, I bought one and was shocked at the terrible taste!)

SLOCAN: POPOFF

Everything was an adventure! We lived in a tent with no bottom, equipped with two sets of bunk beds. My teen-age brothers lived separately. I don't think the bunkhouses were built yet so they must have slept in tents too. We all ate in mess halls. Most *Issei* longed for Japanese food but I thought that pancakes, boiled eggs and toast were just delicious: although the porridge was not!

My father was a carpenter trained in Japan before he emigrated so he supervised the building of some houses in Lemon Creek. As houses were completed, some men were put in charge of selecting the families who were to move into them. The first families assigned to a house were for households of at least seven or larger. Thus, my parents were told we had to share a two bedroom house with a young family with one baby. My mother was appalled at the idea of six of us all sleeping in one small bedroom. So she had my father suggest that we be given a house temporarily and we would agree to share, if necessary. Since my father knew the layout of Lemon Creek and the terrain, he selected a house built on a small rise, located close to the stores. The lower part of the cellar was later used to store vegetables, also



Grad Ceremony 1944

as a darkroom by my brother, and later to store the Camp's baseball equipment.

The houses were built with raw lumber and not insulated. When we first moved in no stoves were installed yet so we all ate in a mess hall. One of the first nights in the house my father brought in a nail keg with smouldering coals, and closed all the windows. The next morning my father and two older brothers went off to the mess hall to work. But my mother, youngest brother and I were very sick from carbon monoxide poisoning. Luckily it was not very serious and as the day progressed we complained to our mother that we were hungry, but she was afraid to leave us to see what was available in the nearby store. She spotted someone on the street that she had just been introduced to by my father. She yelled out to him, "Chikamaru-san." His name was "Rikimaru" she was told later. At any rate he was our knight in shining armour when he arrived with a package of biscuits! A short while later Teiso Uyeno came to see us. My parents told him about our experience with the make-shift heater and he said he would look for a proper heater. And soon a sheet metal wood-burning heater arrived. (Later every household was supplied with one.) I wonder how many young caring *nisei* made it a point to help the families who were finding it difficult to cope!

One of the work crew my father supervised built the outhouses. Three households were to share each one. My younger brother worked in that crew as did several young men. (When the Lemon Creek Harmonica Band came to perform at the Powell Street Festival one year, I was asked to introduce them. When I went to see them prior to the performance,



Grad Ceremony 1944

they said to each other, "She's Ishii-san's daughter—remember him?" I suddenly felt like a juvenile again!) As for my brother, he told me that he had carved specific signs on those outhouses he had worked on—like a crescent moon or a star.

Gradually, as the community settled down, cook stoves were provided and a small kerosene lamp (the fuel had to be picked up weekly at the office). Water was piped down one side of all the streets. My father made a leak-proof water container which I had to fill by the bucketful from the tap across the road. When the water pipes were first laid, teenage boys who had been looking for a sturdy sliding bottom for the bob-sled they had designed and were building were pleased to find the solution—just dig up a length of the new water pipe! No one discovered who the culprits were! The teens had a merry time sliding on the road but my brother forbid me from riding it. At the bottom of the road was a sharp blind curve and one never knew when a vehicle might be coming at you!

There was a lane behind each row of houses where the outhouses were lined up. The women in the three houses on our side immediately met and decided on schedule for a weekly cleaning of our assigned outhouse. Behind the rows of outhouses was a lane that was used by the trucks that carried away the household garbage. I doubt if there was very much since organic matters were dug into the backyard gardens and most other things could be burned in the stoves. Wood for cooking and heating was distributed by young men on trucks. If no male was available in the household to chop the wood into smaller pieces, wood-choppers provided the service.

How I loved chopping kindling! But my father put a stop to it saying it was unladylike, especially with three males in the household!

At first there were three grocery stores: Graham and Avis, Parker's and Horsewill's. The post office was at the Graham's store. After a year, Horsewill's closed and Graham moved to the more central location of Horsewill's. It became the hangout for young teens between classes.

BATHHOUSES

Our house was across from one of the several Japanese-style bathhouses. My parents insisted that we take our baths early when the water was clean. Young men would often call out to my father, "*Ishii-san, ofuro ni hairimasho!*" I don't know what made him popular with them. He was a great story-teller at times when in the mood..

There were always tales being told of knots being knocked out of the walls separating the men from women and also men in charge of the bathhouses who were peeping-toms.

SCHOOL

It was in April, 1943 that the construction of the school was finally completed. There were two wings each two storeys high. The walls on the first floor of one wing were movable so it could become a hall for school assemblies, dances and movies shown regularly by Tak Toyota of Slocan City. At times they were samurai movies, and at times those produced in the late 1930s like "*Aizenzakura*," and even "silents" with "*benshi*." I recall Hollywood movies too; especially "*Road to Morocco*" with Bing Crosby and Bob Hope. The following day, we went around saying, "I look at the moon and I look at you. I am SO sad, the moon is lovelier than you!"

LEMON CREEK SCHOOL

The teachers were young high school graduates. They were all female except for the boys' Physical Education teacher, Kaz Suga. We loved it when he occasionally included the girls. We heard about the prowess of the Asahi baseball team. He was our hero!

We sat in pairs on benches. Untrained music teachers taught the students songs that they thought appropriate for children. I wonder what they did when they couldn't carry a tune!

When June arrived it was clear that every child would lose one year so the authorities decided

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to have us all write Stanford IQ tests. On that basis we were held back a year or advanced. But how about the ones who were to be advanced from Grade Eight?

Since the BC Security Commission didn't feel the need to provide high school education, people like my brother who had graduated from Templeton Junior High School (grades 7-9) could only take correspondence courses. He begged my parents for the costs of courses from the BC Department of Education. (At that time it was not free.) I recall him burning sulphur on the top of the stove and my parents fussing about the possible danger.

Our class was referred to as "Advanced Grade Eight" and a house that became unoccupied was renovated to accommodate us. Miss Miyo Goromaru was our Homeroom teacher. She worked so hard that she was overwhelmed and so some of the courses were later taught by Miss Molly Hirayama. I recall we had a choice of Latin or French. Latin was taught by Tony Tateishi, a high school student. Most of us opted for French. But no French course papers were available for months. When they finally came, Miss Goromaru announced, "The French course papers have arrived. Are you ready to work?" To our chorus of "Yes!" she replied, "Okay, be here at 6:00AM tomorrow!" Most of us passed!

GRADUATION

The PTA decided that a proper graduation and party would be held. Graduation and year-end prizes were handed out in the farmer's field across the railway tracks. Special tiered stands were built. In the evening the mothers were to provide a dinner for the graduates. As the plans were laid out, we were told that we were to bring a plate and cutlery to the dinner. One student laughed out loud saying the family had their meals on metal pie plates. The family had come from Cumberland where they had only an hour to pack up and leave!

The PTA objected to dancing after the dinner. We were also told that they wanted to know the games we would be playing. I recall my father returning home after a meeting and muttering to my mother that a blind-folded boy and girl chasing each other around the room was just as bad as dancing! The students in our class admired and respected Miss Goromaru. When we realized graduation was imminent and she would be leaving for Toronto, we all met and discussed how we could thank her. We decided to buy an autograph book in which we would

all write something and would include our class photo signed by us all. One student offered a brand new cushion. We looked for the autograph book in all the stores in the Slocan Valley but could not find any. So we just gave her the cushion and the photograph. Later we heard that our teacher had run to the teacher's room screaming with glee!

In September, we entered High School, now being provided by the Women's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada. Miss Helen Hurd and Miss Gertrude Hamilton had returned to Canada on the exchange ship *GRIPSHOLM* from the English language school *Toyo Eiwa Jogakko*. Later, conscientious objectors, Joe Grant, Donald Ewing and Frank Showler joined the faculty. I believe these men were imprisoned for refusing to take up arms in



School Activities

Europe and after two years of hard labour, they were released on condition that they didn't profit by staying behind. Those who came to teach us were good men and patiently put up with the antics of angry teenage boys that at times behaved very badly.

OUR CLASSROOMS

At first a few rooms at the elementary school were used between 6:00 to 9:00 PM daily and on Saturday mornings. Then the PTA decided that all that freedom during the day was bad for the teens and they should lead more regulated lives. My father and some other volunteers built a two-room school house close to the homes of the teachers. Although it was a nice new building, there were not enough classrooms to accommodate everyone. So we ended up walking

back and forth all day. We occasionally rebelled by skipping classes. It was especially embarrassing one evening when Miss Hamilton and Mr. Grant came by with a gift for my father to thank him for building the new school. The teachers asked why I had missed a certain class that day. To my chagrin, I could not even recall which class it had been!

DANCING

The *Issei* in Lemon Creek struggled with our desire to hold dances. It was always a point of contention between the two generations. Although the elementary graduation party was "dance-free", in high school we were occasionally permitted to dance for a short period. I recall attending a students' meeting at which one fellow told us how many minutes each record took and thus how long we should ask for. Men like my father were thus forced to accept dancing at high school parties. But he always struggled with the "dance" problem. Only when my elder brother and his friends had dance parties and the invited girls were asked to take some baking would my father reluctantly agree to let me join them. It appeared that my father believed that my brother would be watching over my behaviour!

DOUKOBOURS

Doukobour farmers used to drive their wagons to Lemon Creek to sell us cabbages, potatoes and such. They were our saviours but the authorities tried to keep them out by building a log fence on the road-side. But overnight the fence was destroyed. There were suspects, but no proof. High school students were blamed and the school was closed until someone admitted guilt. I don't know who the culprits were, or whether they were caught, but after a week the high school reopened.

Later some Doukhobors became very friendly with us. We used to walk along the railway tracks to pick and buy their cherries. Some young men enjoyed their saunas and even learned "The Volga Boat Song" and sang it at concerts. Baseball games between the Lemon Creekers and Doukhobors were often held. Teenage boys were heard remarking, "Wow, the gals are great looking aren't they!" Then someone would say, "But later they will look like THAT!" pointing to the middle-aged women. I must say that those tall, well-built Doukhor men looked pretty good!



School Activities

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RECREATION

Ice-skating: At first the boys flooded the school yard and played hockey, but later it was discovered that there were some stagnant areas of the Slocan River where the ice was pretty thick. All it required was clearing the snow. Mornings were safe, but by afternoon the ice became thinner and someone usually fell through the ice. In preparation, the boys built a bonfire nearby. Once, I recall playing “follow the leader” and skating over a small crack in the ice. The girl following me fell right through!

Swimming: The first summer we used to go through the farm across the road, trudge through the woods, climb over fallen trees, and avoid swampy areas to a swimming hole. It was dangerous. A friend of mine almost drowned when the side kept crumbling as she tried to climb out. She was panicking and did not try to find a more stable spot. To her cries of help, most of us were too shocked to act but another friend had the presence of mind to just reach out and pull her out. The following summer we discovered that a better, safer place was just before the junction of Lemon Creek and the Slocan River. One day in May, however, when it suddenly turned hot, we decided to go swimming. Ice was still tumbling down the river. The boys thought it was too cold, but the girls didn't. I jumped in and floated downstream until I was near the rocks of Lemon Creek. I scrambled out, but didn't tell anyone about it since I was afraid that word would get around to my parents.

1946 - THE END OF LEMON CREEK

In the spring of 1946 many families were preparing to leave for Japan, while others were hoping the application to cancel their original agreement to go to Japan would be accepted. Compared to the year before when family members were arguing over the pros and cons of signing the papers, things were relatively calm. The day the first “returnees” left was one of the saddest days of my life. A friend from Strathcona School days, and one of our trio (“the long, the short and the tall”) was the first to go. I wept. Our days in Lemon Creek had been an idyllic time. I was afraid of what the future would be like. My two elder brothers had already left for Hamilton and the rest of our family spent six weeks in a recently vacated German Prisoner of War camp on the north shore of Lake Superior. And then we were reunited in Hamilton. My parents and I reported to the RCMP.

When I was told I no longer needed to carry my registration card all the time, I gleefully threw it into their garbage can. I am sorry now—it would have been something to keep for posterity! Life became serious as I devoted myself to my future studies. I have always felt grateful to parents who allowed me to pursue my studies rather than work in a factory.

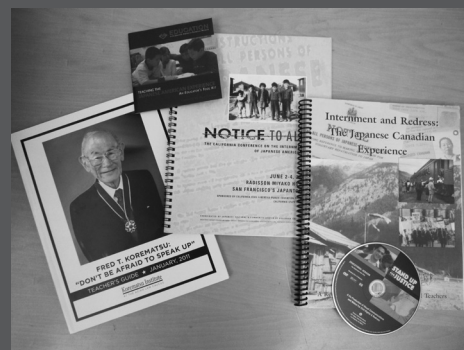
All photographs in this article courtesy of the author.



Lemon Creek Camp

IT HAPPENED HERE, TOO: EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT JAPANESE CANADIAN INTERMENT

by Alexandra L. Wood



In 1988, Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians achieved a major goal: official acknowledgement by the American and Canadian governments of violations of civil rights and suffering inflicted upon persons of Japanese descent in World War II internment camps. But, to many in these communities, government apology and financial compensation to survivors were not enough – to truly achieve redress, the public needed to be better educated about the causes and consequences of the internment. Consequently, the U.S. Civil Liberties Act of 1988 included an earmark for the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund (CLPEF); similarly, the Canadian government authorized funds for the Japanese Canadian Redress Foundation (JCRF) and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, both of which included educating the public about Japanese Canadian internment among their mandates. In the years that followed, however, the internment in the U.S. would be memorialized – and its lessons shared with the next generation of citizens – to an extent not shared in Canada.

Despite similar origins and funding, CLPEF and its state-level successors produced far more resources and had a wider impact than their Canadian counterparts. It is not known what led to this divergence – no systematic study of either country's efforts to educate the public about the internment has been undertaken. My dissertation seeks to fill this gap by using qualitative and archival data gathered in Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto, as well as several locations in the United States.

Through interviews conducted in Vancouver, I learned about education and outreach programs offered by the Nikkei National Museum, and explored the relationship between the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) and the JCRF. Since lesson plans and other curricular resources about the internment reveal how educators inform the next

generation about the dangers that racism and war hysteria pose to civil liberties in democratic societies, I was particularly interested in learning about the *Internment and Redress* resource guides for grade 5 and 11 social studies classrooms, and a course on Japanese American and Japanese Canadian history offered at Simon Fraser University. I also looked into the recent campaign to lobby the University of British Columbia to award honorary degrees to former Japanese Canadian students, plans to expand the Assembly Centre memorial at Hastings Park, updates to the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver, and the continued success of the Powell Street Festival.

To compare how Japanese Canadian history is taught in other parts of Canada, I conducted research east of the Rockies. In Toronto, I gathered information about the Sedai Project and heritage programs offered by the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. I also learned about the unique challenges of educating new immigrants from Japan about Japanese Canadian history at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre of Montreal, and had the opportunity to discuss my work with Greg Robinson, notable scholar of Japanese Canadian history at the University of Quebec at Montreal. Examining textbooks and curricula archived at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I discovered that, although coverage has improved, representation of the Japanese Canadian history is inconsistent – and occasionally inaccurate.

Tentatively, I can report that individuals in Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver acknowledge that much more must be done to educate people about Japanese Canadian internment. Inadequate representation of the Japanese Canadian experience in the Canadian War Museum in Ottawa (prior to recent changes after formal complaints by the NAJC), for example, demonstrates that the Canadian public remains largely uninformed about the internment.

In addition to research conducted in Canada, I gathered data in California, Washington, Oregon, Washington D.C., and New York. I was surprised to find that many individuals involved in efforts to educate the U.S. public about Japanese American incarceration were not necessarily aware that internment occurred in Canada as well; even those who did know about Japanese Canadian internment were largely unaware that the community in Canada endured harsher treatment.

I suspect that public education programs in the U.S. benefitted from several factors. Japanese Americans, who are less geographically dispersed than Japanese Canadians, found strength in numbers. This – and the influence of the Civil Rights Movement – engendered a sense of political activism, leading them to lobby ferociously on behalf of the community and its representation in school curricula. My research also indicates that there has been insufficient support by the Canadian government at provincial and national levels, in contrast to substantial financial and political backing by several states and by the U.S. federal government (notably via agencies like the National Parks Service).

I believe that public education programs, by teaching future generations what is considered acceptable behavior for democratic citizens, represent a pledge to never let such an injustice happen again. As such, I am eager to contribute to ongoing efforts to educate the public about the internment by sharing the results of this study, which I expect to complete in 2013. If you have information on efforts undertaken since the 1960s to educate the public about Japanese Canadian internment, please do not hesitate to contact me, Alexandra L. Wood (alw353@nyu.edu).

Alexandra L. Wood is a Ph.D. candidate in International Education at New York University



LEFT: Chiyo (Chic) and Tets Haya in front of General Store. NNM Tanaka collection
RIGHT: Fred Okimura (teacher), Kaori Ishikawa & doll in front of Ishikawa shack. NNM Ishikawa collection

MEMORIES OF TAYLOR LAKE 1942-1946

By Linda Kawamoto Reid

'Taylor Lake' was an independent settlement community during the internment period of the Japanese Canadians. It was the largest of the 'industrial projects' authorized by the BC Security Commission with a total of 180 residents by November 14, 1942. The other industrial project was located in Westwold, close to Vernon and Kamloops. Work at Taylor Lake was provided by the Sorg Pulp and Paper Company with a logging camp, bunkhouses, and a cookhouse. Also known as one of the 'self supporting' camps, Taylor Lake was connected to the BC Security Commission by appointment of a supervisor to look after the general interests of the community.

Fred Okimura, a teacher remembers "Taylor lake was about 12.8 km from the Cariboo highway which was a narrow gravel washboard road at the time, and it was the same distance from Lone Butte on the Pacific Great Eastern Railway (PGE) line. It was situated about 1500 meters above sea level, so it was about 44 degrees in the summer and 15 degrees below in the winter. The dry air helped withstand the rugged conditions but one summer, I lost my voice, much to the delight of some of my pupils. There were 37 students the first year. Originally the site had no name but the lake nearby, Taylor Lake, was a railway siding built by a *Nisei* gang so we called it Taylor Lake siding. The weekly train stopped to unload mail and provisions on its way to Quesnel. I was chosen to assist Miss Chitose Uchida, the principal to teach grades 4-8 in camp school. I recall lighter moments such as playing baseball with pupils or having snowball fights with the entire school of children against me, or seeing

huge mosquitoes coming into the classroom in the summer and the time we kept the 45-gallon oil drum stove filled with wood to stay warm in the winter. Few outsiders came to break up the boredom of an isolated community.”¹

Chic (Haya) Tanaka was in grade one at Lord Byng School in Steveston in 1941. “Miss Hide Hyodo was my teacher, she was so nice. I remember when lightning struck, how we all had to hide under our school desks, I was so scared. She used to visit us at Taylor Lake too because she was friends with Miss Uchida, our teacher.”

Chic’s father, Yoshimatsu Haya was a fisherman in Steveston before the war, with his own boat he would go off for months to River’s Inlet and other places. Since he was a naturalized Canadian citizen, he was able to freely choose where to relocate outside the 100 mile security zone. At first he chose Monte Creek Sawmill in Chase so the family could stay together, but when they found out his sons were not old enough to work in the mill, they sent the family of six back to Vancouver. The Haya family then stayed in a rooming house over the Sun Peking restaurant on Powell Street and Chic remembers “it seemed like forever, and we were stricken with bed bugs. It was a dream to be relocated to Taylor Lake.”

“My father was Mr. Fix-it at the logging camp in Taylor Lake; he was the go-to guy for anything mechanical. He was on call 24 hours a day for trucks, cars, machinery, bulldozers, engines, water pumps, anything that the mill needed or even the community needed. He also ran the bulldozer to make the roads for the logging trucks and his job at the mill was to run the water spring at the water house. Everyone relied on him, I guess his skill running a fishing boat, went a long way. All the Japanese lived close to the mill in tarpaper shacks that were built one by one while living in tents in the barn. All the men had a job at the mill or shipping logs to 70 Mile House, loaded onto the PGE every day. Father had a truck to get around everywhere. We never left Taylor Lake for 3 years, except one time when I had appendicitis. Father had to drive me to Ashcroft, and we made it just in time, but it took hours to get there. And because he had to go back to work, he left me in the hospital, I felt so lonely and so sick. The only other time we left Taylor Lake was to go to the dentist in Williams Lake, 106 km away on the PGE, where we would stay overnight in a rooming house or if we went to Lillooet we stayed at Tasaka’s house.”

Chic remembers, “We were pretty lucky to live in the log house beside the kitchen, because my grandmother Kumaye Haya was in charge of the kitchen. She worked hard and hired my mom to work there too. Naturally as soon as I was old enough, I had to scrub the bunkhouse and cookhouse floors!...”

“My grandmother would get the pigs and cows in slabs, maybe half an animal and they would have to go in the cool house with blocks of ice to keep them cool. She would have to butcher the meat herself, but she was pretty good at it. She also made her own *miso*. We had food rations for rice and sugar, had to save and collect all the coupons from the single men who ate at the bunkhouse so she could order the supplies. I think Mr. Mori brought the supplies in, he ran the general store by the cookhouse.”

“Because I was the oldest, I had to work all the time; I even helped with piecework – peeling the bark off the trees for three cents apiece. I was about 10 or 11, wore no gloves, and had to use a scythe to shave the bark off. Maybe together, we made a dollar a day! We picked strawberries, blueberries, sugar peas to make *ocha* out of, and we picked pussy willows to dry them out. I had little play time at all in Taylor Lake. But for fun, me and my best friends Miyoko Miyazaki and Oya Kariya would get together, taking turns going to each other’s homes, knitting and listening to ‘Inner Sanctum’ on the radio. It was a mystery series and it scared us, but we loved it! That and the Hit Parade! And when the ice cream came in on the dry ice which was covered by sawdust, I remember lining up for it but not minding the wait, because summers got so hot. If it was a really hot summer and I was at the back of the line, the ice cream would be melted, but it was still a treat. Mrs. Mori taught me how to crochet and my grandmother taught me how to knit.”



**Back: Miss Uchida and her mom, Mr. Haya.
Front: Mrs. Haya and children, George Uyehara.
NNM Tanaka collection**

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In a report from Mrs. Booth who was the camp education supervisor for all the camps, she reported to Mr. Eastwood of the BC Security Commission on July 8, 1943 that they are using an old log cabin about 20x25 feet which is poorly lit and badly ventilated. There are four teachers in total and they hope to build another school by Sept 1, 1943.²

Chic remembers the men building that school for the children at Taylor Lake; it was a two-room school, so all the children went there. "They also built a playground and a baseball diamond where the men played. Sometimes the workers from the PGE would stay overnight and challenge the men to a baseball game. It was something to do with the community, we all watched the games. We also had a pond that my dad cleared with a bulldozer in the winter when it froze over so that we could ice skate on it. One winter we saw a pack of wolves migrating somewhere, we ran home so fast! We also spotted a moose. In the summer when we put our legs into Taylor Lake, they came out with bloodsuckers on them! We also had to attend Japanese Language School in the evening at the community school; Isamu Ishikawa was our teacher."

The Ishikawa family came to Taylor Lake after a short time in Hasting's Park. Isamu was sent to a road camp near Jasper at first, likely because he was an *Issei* Japanese National and a teacher in the Japanese Language School in Port Hammond. Eventually Isamu arranged for his young family to go to Taylor Lake. He was an independent shingle bolt cutter and since his children Kaori (4) and Nobby (5) were too young to work, he had to work hard to support his family on his own. Kaori's fondest memories of Taylor Lake were the bachelors. "Tosh Imada and Fred Okimura were so kind to us, Tosh would take us for a drive to the Flying U ranch for ice cream. He was an avid photographer. He had an illegal camera and set himself a dark room and took many pictures of the people and events held in the community. One time Fred took Nobby



Mrs. Haya and some children in front of their log home. NNM Tanaka collection

Nobby (3rd boy from left sitting on car), Chic and sister Yosh in front of him, and Kaori on right in front of car. NNM Ishikawa collection



to the dentist in Williams Lake and Nobby saw a doll in the window of a store which he wanted to bring home for me. Fred refused to take any money for it from my mom and I still treasure that doll today."

Kaori remembers "one day at school when Miss Uchida was out of the room and Fred Okimura peeked in to see what the ruckus was all about in our class. One boy was misbehaving and not listening, so Fred threw a piece of chalk at him, he was a really good shot, and the boy settled down. Sometimes if we misbehaved, we had to stand facing the corner holding heavy encyclopaedias. But Fred was so kind to me. In the mornings when he was too late for breakfast at Haya's, he would arrive at our home and Mom would quickly soft boil an egg or two for him and he would set me on his lap and share the eggs; the whites for me because I didn't like the yolks."

"Mr. Yamada Sr., our neighbour was quite old, and he used a long horn so that he could hear us. He came to our house to play 'Go' with another old man. Mrs. Kotani and her sister were also kind, they would heat up the curling iron on the stove and send Freddy their son to fetch me so that they could curl my hair. We lived in a one room tar paper shack, it was very cold in the winter, icicles formed in the house! A curtain was hung to separate the beds from the rest of the house. I had to sleep with Nobby but at least we were warm. Mom would put a hot stone or hot water bottle in the bed to keep us warm. There was no electricity or plumbing, and we had a home-built wooden sink with a drain in it. The Yamada's had their own *Ofuro* and they were kind enough to share it with us."

Chic remembers, "We shopped through the mail order

catalogues from Simpson Sears or Eaton's. As I got older, I wanted to pick my own clothes, but was often told we could not afford it, and had to settle for the cheaper version. We had to wear snowsuits in the winter to keep warm, even to school, but if we slid down the hill on a piece of cardboard for some fun, we would sure hear about it from my mother! Father had a phonograph and he would listen to Japanese music, but we would listen to Glen Miller, Tommy Dorsey, Butterfly Sky."

"We also had some sad times at Taylor Lake, my brother died while we were there, he was an asthmatic and died of heart failure at age 13, the whole community came out for the funeral, maybe because it was a child, maybe because it was the first funeral there. The service was on a little outcrop on the marshland of the lake, we had a *boson* (Buddhist priest) from somewhere, and I remember looking out my window, because I was still recovering from appendicitis, and seeing him burn on the funeral pyre. I was so upset, wondering why they are burning my brother. Many years later, I visited the little cemetery (*ohaka*) and noted there were three graves there."

In the fall, Chic remembers everyone excitedly saying "*Matsu take tori, Matsu take tori*" (*we are going pine mushroom picking*). In October every year, it would be time to go down by the Flying U ranch to pick mushrooms, another community event.

George Uyehara had an office beside the Mori's General Store and Dr. Uchida's office. Chic wondered why he was always sitting in his office and not working at the mill like the other men. One time she sat on his lap and noticed the RCMP label on his suspenders. He often told Buzz Otori what to do, and her father Yoshimatsu had to report to him after a job he had done in the community. He was such a friendly guy. Nothing ever happened at the camp, we all behaved ourselves, but Chic thinks maybe George was the camp supervisor.

"Some of the people we (Chic and Kaori) remember are Buzz Otori who was a good skier, he could do full 360 degree turns in the air and land on his feet. Fred Okimura was also the first-aid man at the camp. Then there was George 'Moonshine' Imada, Joe Shiho, Tad Kadohama, the Kagawas, Hirots, Oikawas, Kumamotos, Ikaris, Shishidos, Nagatas, Shibatas, Fujishiges, Kotanis, Koyanagis, Kosakas, Nagais, Uchidas, Andos and the Komoris. We remember a camaraderie and connectedness at

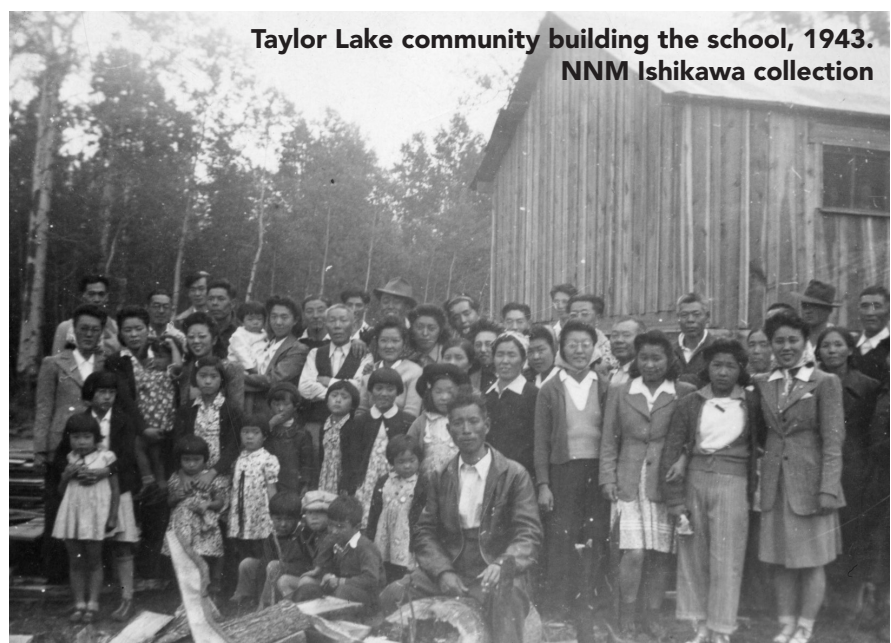
Taylor Lake as the community came together and relied on each other." Such a connectedness was not repeated as they all moved on to other areas in 1945.

In fact, Kaori remembers in 1945 when the RCMP came to sign the community up to go to Japan, how most people in Taylor Lake agreed to go. Kaori's father did not sign, understanding that he could sign up later if he decided to go, but was accused of being a traitor by some of the people in the community. The uproar which Kaori remembers, was understood much later. In the end, very few actually went to Japan from Taylor Lake. "And when Fred Okimura left for Montreal, the whole community saw him off at night, and there were so many tears of appreciation and respect for him as he was so well liked in the camp."

The Hayas moved to Forest Grove as Kumaye secured another job as camp cook and the Ishikawas moved to Lillooet so Isamu could work at Takimoto's Mill. Some of the other families who moved to Lillooet were the Komoris, Kagawas, Hirots, Tasakas, and the Nagais. Still unable to return to the coast, the families at Taylor Lake continued to find work in the interior towns until they could return and all restrictions were lifted in 1949. Then the Hayas moved to Great Northern Cannery in West Vancouver, and the Ishikawas moved to Mt. Lehman.

¹Moritsugu, Frank and the Ghost-Town Teachers Historical Society. *Teaching in Canadian Exile: A history of the Schools for Japanese Canadian Children in British Columbia Detention Camps during the Second World War*. Toronto: Ghost-Town Teachers Historical Society, 2001.

²ibid.



**Taylor Lake community building the school, 1943.
NNM Ishikawa collection**

WINNIPEG AND OAK BLUFF

By Margaret (Inouye) Lyons



We arrived in Winnipeg in early April 1942 on the CPR and were escorted into the old Immigration Hall which had not been in use for some time, so that the plumbing was rusty and did not always work. It was like an army barrack, no rooms or partitions, steel two tier cots, women and children on one floor and men and boys on another. The plan was to move us to our final destination, sugar beet farms, as quickly as possible so home comforts were not necessary. We had come from coastal spring weather, when the pale green leaves were beginning to unfurl, to a barren North Winnipeg slum with no trees, subzero temperatures, and no warm clothes.

We were a problem family: three teenaged girls and three much younger boys led by our mother, and no able-bodied men which the farmers expected for the hard physical work. Our father had kept his job in the saw mill in Hope so the family would have some income.

I volunteered in the "office" - the clearing house matching farmers who had obviously been promised cheap, experienced workers with the bewildered Japanese Canadian evacuees. For the Security Commission, there was no difference between a soft fruit farm which did not involve stoop labour and non-stop lifting of heavy clay-covered beets in subzero weather.

I saw wealthy fishing families from Steveston with their fine leather luggage, and flimsy city clothes returning in disgust from a farm where their home was to be an unheated hastily-cleaned chicken coop with no running water. None of us could work in the city because Winnipeg had passed bylaws against enemy aliens within in the city.

Because of living so closely together, colds and flu were epidemic. I do not recall any doctor or nurse visiting. I tried unsuccessfully to get medical help for a man dying of cancer of the esophagus.

April passed into May and we could not be placed. June came and we were still in the Immigration Hall. So an exception was made for my sister and me. We were placed in a family, friends of the Chairman of the Security Commission, who needed help for their three young boys. I was to be the cook/downstairs maid and my sister the upstairs maid and nanny.

What a contrast from the Immigration Hall. Our own room in a new, large Cape Cod style house in a new subdivision of Tuxedo. The family were very patient and kind, and put up with my complete lack of kitchen skills. My sister was more experienced having looked after our younger siblings. I had a feeling that they were relieved we knew English. But first they had to clear us with the local municipal council who had to debate and approve the acceptance of dangerous enemy aliens into their new suburb. My employers, the Leaches were a member of the grain aristocracy and were very generous to our entire family.

About the same time that my sister and I were placed as domestics in the suburb of Tuxedo, my other sister Kazuko and three brothers were sent to the village of Oak Bluff, just outside the Winnipeg city limits, to a four-room house on the highway. The house was fairly primitive with an outhouse and water from a nearby pond. There, mother enrolled the children in the local school where they stayed for three years, until Japanese Canadians were allowed into the city and could find suitable housing.

Their Slovak neighbour helped them insulate their house with loads of manure (not sod), which they spread onto the vegetable garden in the spring. In

the village there was one general store with only basic groceries. For anything else, they had to make a trip into Winnipeg either by way of an infrequent bus service or hitch-hiking. Like the rest of the community, they shared in the meat of slaughtered animals and milk in exchange for fruits, vegetables or handcrafts. Mother was an expert in making wool batt from sheep wool, to make wool duvets, which were lighter and warmer than cotton.

There were other Japanese families working on sugar beet farms in the area. They were critical of our family for not having to share in this hard life of thinning, weeding and topping the beets. In spite of these trials, my sister recalls her days in Oak Bluff with nostalgia - generous neighbours, mail deliveries to the mailbox on the highway, fetching water from the pond and occasional visits to the city.

I left in less than two years for Hamilton and McMaster University. My nanny sister succeeded me as the cook, and my Oak Bluff sister was now old enough to work as the nanny. My brother was recruited to help with the cleaning at the cottage in the summers. The Leaches felt a sense of feudal responsibility for us. The children, four in all (a little girl arrived after we started) - model perfect towheads, were attached to their nannies, and years later, the head of the family looked us up in Toronto to see how we had fared. He was delighted to learn my sisters had started their own families and I had a prominent position at CBC.

We will be forever grateful to the Leaches that our Winnipeg memories are sunny summers in Assiniboine Park, and not sugar beets in fields of gumbo.

TREASURES FROM THE COLLECTION

KNITTED KNICKERS, CA.1940S

These knitted knickers belonged to Sawa Morishita. As her daughter Nancy recalls, Sawa made them in the 1940s. The warm knickers served as a fashion trick. Many of the Japanese Canadian women were loath to give up their stylish Vancouver apparel during the internment period. Unfortunately colder climates, like Lemon Creek, where the Morishitas eventually settled, were not favourable to fashionable fair-weather frocks. A compromise, in the form of warm wool knickers, was struck. Japanese Canadian women set about knitting underclothing to wear under their long skirts, thereby staying warm while still keeping a little bit of the home they were forced to leave behind.

For more information about this fascinating treasure, and many more, check out the Nikkei National Museum online database at www.nikkeimuseum.org



*Knitted Wool Knickers
Morishita Family collection
NNM 2011.79.2.2*