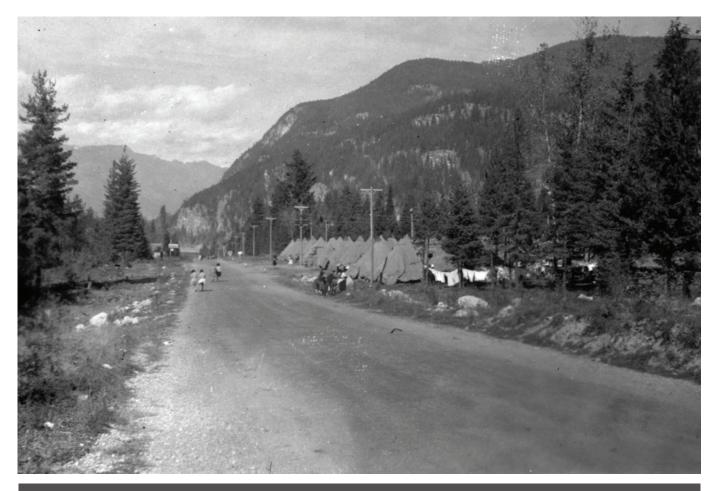
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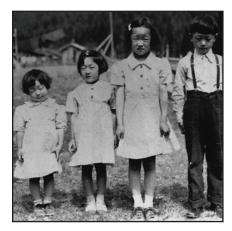
2017: 75th Anniversary of the Japanese Canadian Internment

Children running along the dirt road at the Bay Farm internment site, about a mile south from Slocan City.

Bay Farm, circa 1942. NNM 1996.178.1.9



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Welcome to Nikkei Images



Nikkei Images is a publication of the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre dedicated to the preservation and sharing of Japanese Canadian

stories since 1996. We welcome proposals of family and community stories for publication in future issues. Articles must be between 500 – 3,500 words maximum and finished work should be accompanied by relevant high resolution photographs with proper photo credits. Please send a brief description or summary of the theme and topic of your proposed article to Ireid@nikkeiplace.org. Our publishing agreement can be found online at centre.nikkeiplace. org/nikkei-images



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Our Journey: Revisiting Tashme and New Denver After 70 Years

by Micki Nakashima

As part of our 2017 commemorations of the 75th anniversary of Japanese Canadian internment, Nikkei Images will be printing Micki Nakashima's story of her 2015 visit to former internment camps, along with her childhood recollections, in instalments. Part 1 is printed below. Look for Part 2 in our next issue, Vol. 22, No. 2

Invariably whenever Japanese Canadians first meet, the question, "where were you during the war?" is asked. After Japan bombed Pearl Harbor in Hawaii and Canada declared war against Japan, all people of Japanese descent in Canada were rounded up and sent to various internment camps in the interior of BC, their possessions and assets confiscated and auctioned off. Our family was interned in Tashme (1942-1945) and in New Denver (1945-1952).

Although I had spent the early 10 years of my life in internment camps, it was not until recently, in the summer of 2015, that I felt a desire to make the trek back to New Denver. The trip started out, not as an internment reexperience, a pilgrimage as my daughter called it, but as a simple trip to revisit New Denver, my childhood home, which just happened to be an internment camp. I merely wanted to see and photograph my mother's name inscribed on a plaque in the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver.

As we made plans for this trip, I felt an overwhelming desire to see Tashme, our first internment camp. I knew what remained there would have no resemblance to what I remembered as a child – there's nothing there I was told - but yet, I wanted to stop by.

Along the way we decided to stop by a few of the other internment camps. Many of my friends were interned in those camps. It would be interesting to see what their camps were like. So the trip expanded to include Kaslo, Sandon, Silverton, Slocan City, and Greenwood. Daughter Lynne and grandson Sam accompanied me.

This is a story of our journey.

Photos courtesy Micki Nakashima.

Family Background

My father, Kumematsu Tanaka, immigrated to Canada with his father as a teenage boy of 16 years. At the marriageable age he returned to Japan to take himself a wife as was the custom back then. He married my mother, Kimi Yagi, and they returned to Canada together in 1933. The two of them worked hard and saved enough money to buy a plot of land in Japan, a rice paddy. They were in the midst of making plans for their return when on a foggy day in December 1940, my father was killed in a sawmill accident. He was run over by a truck. Mother was widowed with four children under the age of seven: Hiroshi (Ed) was six years old, Kikuko (Kay) four, Takako (Jane) two, and I, Miyoko (Micki), was a baby in my mother's arms.

The year after my father's death, his older brother came to Vancouver to help Mother return to Japan to live with his family, as was his duty as the eldest son. While in Vancouver, Pearl Harbor was bombed and the Port of Vancouver was closed to all Japanese ships. Soon after, Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of the federal government, legislated the forced removal of all people of Japanese ancestry from the west coast. So it came to be, unfortunately, that my uncle also became a victim of the internment process. But lucky for us, he was interned in Tashme with our family.

When notified of my father's accident Mother left me, a baby three months old, with a teenage neighbour while she went to the hospital. Years, years later, I think I was in my forties, there was a knock on my door. A strange woman asked for Miyoko Tanaka, my maiden name. She explained that she was the teenage neighbour with whom Mother left me when she went to the hospital. She said that in all these years she had wondered whatever happened to me

and had always wanted to see me. On her first visit to Vancouver since moving to Toronto after the war, she had to satisfy herself. She located my address through the Vancouver Buddhist Church where Mother was a devout member. She would not come in for tea, did not ask to see Mother who was living with me at the time, nor did she ask anything about my life. She simply saw me and then left.

First Stop, Tashme

Our first internment camp on the trip was Tashme, now Sunshine Valley, 22 km east of Hope. Tashme was the last, the largest and said to be the harshest internment camp with a population of over 2600.

Surrounded by mountains, it was isolated and built to be self-contained with various shops, a hospital, school, church, a community hall, and so on. The public bath house had assigned days that men and women could use it. During the day it was used for laundry by the women.

When Mother and I went shopping we would frequently stop by the men's bunkhouse where my uncle lived. I loved my uncle. He was able to make me laugh. When he came for dinner he would bring us sugar, butter, and eggs which were rationed.

My favourite shop was the meat market. The floor was covered with sawdust. I drew circles, other shapes, and pictures with my foot. On every visit the butcher would give me a wiener.

Once Kay had to stay in the hospital for a few days. Mother, Ed, Jane, and I went to visit her. To get there we had to cross a log bridge. The logs were just far apart enough that my short little legs could not reach the next log in one step. Ed and Jane grasped my hands and swung me from log to log. It was such fun. Children were not allowed into the hospital so while we waited outside Mother went in and soon after we were waving to Kay at the window.

When I was four years old I went to nursery school. I believe it was held in a church. I had always wanted to go to school as my older siblings were away all day at school every day. On my first day of school I was so excited. Mother tied my shoelaces and I was ready to go. Mother wanted to take me but I insisted on going by myself. There was a swing that I was eager to use at recess but other children got to it before me. I thought I



Micki and her daughter Lynne, 2015.

would come back in the afternoon when I would have the swing to myself. After lunch I went to the school and was swinging happily, when suddenly the door flew open and several big boys ran out to claim the swing and chased me away. I had not realized there was a class in the afternoon for the five year olds.

A pot-bellied stove was our source of heat. I used to stand near it to warm my hands and feet. I fell against the stove one day and had second degree burns on my left arm from wrist to elbow. Dr. Shimokura, the camp doctor, dressed my burn. My uncle came over almost daily to help mother deal with me and comfort me. I must have been impossible for my mother. I still have a six inch scar to remind me of that fateful day. Coincidentally, many years later Dr. Shimokura became my sister Jane's father-in-law.

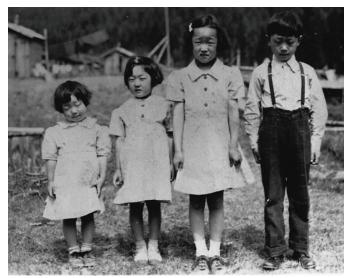
In the evenings, I would on occasions hear a man outside singing very loudly. I always ran to the door as I loved listening to him. He seemed so happy. Mother would shut the door and shoo me away. I couldn't understand why she did not want me to hear the man singing happily. I later learned that he was inebriated and Mother did not want me to see him in that condition.

One sunny day, mother dressed us up in the new yellow dresses with tiny flowers on it that she had sewn for us. She took us out to a field which was across another bridge on the other side of the camp. The boards on this bridge were flat so I did not get swung from log to log. A big contraption with a black cloth draped over it greeted us. I did not know what it was but to my four year old mind it looked ominous. Suddenly a man





emerged from under the cloth which frightened me. I clung to my mother and refused to line up just a few feet from this contraption. I did not know what that contraption would do. After much coaxing, Mother said just shut your eyes and you won't see it. So I did. Mom just wanted a photo of us. That's me on the left with my eyes shut. Silly, wasn't I?



The author (far left) with her brother and sisters in Tashme, circa 1944.

My brother belonged to the Wolf Cubs. One evening there was great excitement in the camp. My brother was to meet at the church wearing his Wolf Cub uniform. Mother sent Jane and me to look for him. By the time everyone gathered together, it was dark. All the boys ran throughout the camp with lit torches. It was so exciting. At the time I did not know the reason for this impromptu torchlight parade. When I was older it occurred to me that parade might have been to celebrate VE (Victory in Europe in the Second World War) day or VJ (Victory in Japan) day. This was never confirmed by my brother as he has no recollection of the parade.

Not long after it seemed, Mother appeared anxious and very worried. There were many concerned conversations among the adults. Mother made several visits to the BC Security Commissioner's Office that was responsible for the processing and transferring of Japanese Canadians. On her last visit I remember two or three men sitting at a table. Mother was crying. This was her third or fourth appeal. After a short time, they finally conceded to allow Mother to remain in Canada and not deport us to Japan. We were moving to New Denver.

The war was over, yet the BC Security Commission continued to dictate where we could make our homes. As early as 1944 the federal government had already planned to remove all people of Japanese descent from British Columbia.

"It is the government's plan to get these people out of BC as fast as possible. It is my personal intention, as long as I remain in public life, to see they never come back here. Let our slogan be for British Columbia: 'No Japs from the Rockies to the seas.'" - Ian Mackenzie, MP

We were given two options: to move east of the Rocky Mountains or be "repatriated" to Japan. Around 4,000 Japanese Canadians chose the latter. My uncle was one of them as he was anxious to return home to his family.

Those who opted to go to Japan were brought to Tashme from other camps to be held here while awaiting a freighter to take them to Japan. Internees living in Tashme who were remaining in Canada were relocated to other internment camps further in the interior to make room for the deportees. Our family was part of this shuffle.

Drive to Nelson

In the summer of 2015, the drive to Nelson from our home in Richmond took about nine hours. That summer, over 100 forest fires were ablaze in the interior of BC. The area around Rock Creek was devastated by fire. Evidence of the forest fires was everywhere – blackened trees, some fallen and some still standing as well as huge areas of blackened ground. It was distressing to see. Around Christina Lake the smell of smoke was very strong and the haze was so thick we could not see across the lake.

Even in Nelson the smell of smoke and a haze greeted us.

A fine dinner at a nice restaurant where we sat outside was followed by a stroll to the beach where I showed Sam how to skip stones on the lake. Skipping stones was a favourite pastime for children living in New Denver and I was quite good at it.

The Route

Starting in Nelson we planned to drive the loop around Valhalla Provincial Park with stops at Kaslo, Sandon, New Denver, and Greenwood with quick drives through Silverton and Slocan. A quick stop at Ainsworth Hot Springs en route to Kaslo proved disappointing as we arrived before its opening for the day.



Sam and Lynne in front of Kaslo book store, 2015.

Kaslo

Kaslo, originating as a sawmill site, became a thriving centre with the discovery of silver in this area. After the silver rush the town declined into a ghost town.

At the Kaslo Japanese Canadian Museum which is located in the Langham Cultural Centre, we learned that the first group of internees arrived by steam ship, the SS Nasookin. Almost 1,000 Japanese Canadians were ultimately interned here. Old abandoned buildings, such as the Kaslo Hotel and the Langham Hotel, were reconditioned for the internees.

The Canadian government had shut down all Japanese language newspapers. The English language newspaper *The New Canadian* added a Japanese section to serve the community, and during internment was printed here in Kaslo.

Kaslo was also one of the first camps to open a school for the interned children. The federal government funded education for the children in camp when the provincial government refused. So it seemed fitting that we came upon a cute and quaint book store in Kaslo. Lynne as a teenager dreamed of opening a book store just like this one so we had to pop in.

We had a nice chat with the very friendly proprietor. He was one of the founding members of the Langham Museum Committee as well as being very much involved in the establishment of the Nikkei Internment Memorial Centre in New Denver. His concern now is that there is not enough funding to keep the two centres viable. He also wishes to retire and has his bookstore up for sale for \$145,000.



Micki with grandson Sam, 2015.

Sandon

I have always been intrigued with Sandon. It seemed incredible and illogical that its busy downtown street was built right over the Carpenter Creek. Carpenter Creek flows down to New Denver and into Slocan Lake. Once populated with over 5000 residents and over 300 silver mines, it was known as the Monte Carlo of North America, a rollicking wild west town. What remains now is a ghost town with only a few buildings along with eight old trolley buses from Vancouver. It was strange to see these buses with signs that read Broadway to Alma, Main St, Renfrew, and so on. I rode these buses.

During World War II almost 1000 Japanese Canadians were interned here.

New Denver after 63 years

It was with some trepidation I anticipated a return to New Denver. I was unsure of my reactions after 63 years. On the one hand I was excited to see my childhood home, the lake, the town, and the Orchard where I spent my most memorable years. On the other hand I wondered what emotions would be evoked about the internment experience.

Editors' note: This story will be continued in the next issue of Nikkei Images, Vol. 22, No. 2.





mensch.

by Erica Isomura

I used to work across the street from a Jewish deli. As one of the newer, more hip-looking establishments in a quickly changing working-class neighbourhood, I held some reservations about the place. It was a bit pricier to eat at and a little aesthetically out of place, filling in the storefront between two of my favourite lunch spots: a 24-hour convenience store/donair shop and

a cramped Filipino restaurant with sticky floors, kitschy bamboo walls, and often loudly playing singing reality game shows.

The first time I walked in, I ordered a half-size pastrami on rye. The shop was empty and the butcher was eager to welcome me inside. "We're new," he explained, as he went on to carefully describe how he personally brined, smoked, and hand cut the meat himself. Jars of pickled goods and loaves of fresh rye lined the shelves behind him. Keeping with a minimalistic look, the white walls were decorated simply with a chalkboard sign to display daily specials at the door and opposite to that, a framed photograph of a boy sporting a newsboy cap. I sat upon one of the low wooden benches, adjacent to the wide floor-to-ceiling window, and waited.

The young assistant at the counter, the only other person in the deli, was excited to draw attention to my red Asahi baseball t-shirt. It was the shirt I'd recently earned from the tribute game at Oppenheimer Park, an annual community baseball game to honour the legacy of the historical Japanese Canadian Vancouver-based team and the role they played in bringing segregated communities together across difference.

As I waited for my food, she eagerly chatted with me about the baseball team, asking where I'd gotten my t-shirt from and if I had gone to the tribute game this past year. (She'd been to a tribute game in Kamloops before.)



She'd learned about the Asahi baseball team in a university course on the history of concentration camps. The professor had covered camps both in Europe and in North America during World War II and the history of the team really interested her, "y'know because the Japanese Canadian internment camps split up the team," she said before pausing. "Ah – oops, maybe this is a sensitive topic to bring up in a Jewish deli." Her voice trailed off as she noticed the shifting movement of the butcher working beside her. Lips pursed, he grimaced and kept his head down as he swiftly brought a knife down to sever my sandwich in two.

"Your food is ready," he announced, quickly putting an end to our conversation. He handed me a brown box with a pastrami sandwich on rye and a homemade pickle on the side. "Thanks for giving us a try," he said with a nod, pointing his stoic and earnest face in my direction.

"Of course," I replied and lingered for a moment or two. My heart twinged and throat gaped as I stood stiff and stilted in place.

I wanted to tell him I knew how hard it was to talk about the past and how even if I didn't know his story, I had stories of my own. I wanted him to know my family carried deep and hushed pains from the war, too. But the moment had passed and it felt awkward, forced, to speak of such wounds again.

Not knowing how to acknowledge our overlapping clashings of memory and grief, I walked out the door, wearing my Asahi baseball t-shirt and with my Jewish pastrami on rye in hand. I thought about our people, on different sides of the ocean, across differing imposed borders and different margins of history. Such different silences and yet, unknowingly, a deeply intertwined sadness.

*Mensch is a Yiddish word for a person with integrity and honour.

Author's note: While there are clear differences between the histories of the holocaust of Nazi Germany and Japanese Canadian incarceration in Canada, there are also many similarities in the impacts and legacies of our fractured communities and families, intergenerational trauma, and assimilation and survival amidst anti-Semitism and anti-Asian racism. Both of these experiences are a result of systemic racism as enabled by white supremacy and compliance of bystanders.

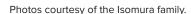
These discriminatory issues that once so predominantly impacted our families and communities still exist. In the wake of 9/11, the Trump election, and rise of the alt-right, we are witnessing the explicit rise of discriminatory policies and violence targeted at brown and black communities, particularly migrants and Muslim people.

As communities who have survived such harsh impacts of these histories, I believe we have a responsibility to stand together, support other marginalized communities, and speak out to state we will not allow this to happen to anyone else. More than ever, I believe we need to be critical and vigilant of the media we consume and the leaders we entrust with power and influence over our society and communities. Through inaction and silence, we remain compliant with what wrongfully happened to our people in the past. We have the chance to stand on the right side of history every single day and say, "never again."



Family portrait of my great-grandparents, grandfather Hide and great uncles Tosh and Soi. L to R: Tsuruo, Hideharu, Toshi, Soichi, and Fusa Isomura, circa 1945.







Karl Konishi – a memoir

by Karl Konishi

Konishi Family Portrait, circa 1945. NNM 2016.18.1.2.085



My name is Karl (Kaoru) Konishi and I was born April 10, 1928 in Port Moody, BC. My father, Kunizo, came to Canada via Hawaii, where he spent one year. Dad was from Kanagawa, Mitsu-gun, Okayama prefecture and my mother, Kuni Khan, was from Fukuwatari, Mitsu-gun, Okayama prefecture. Mom came over to Canada as a picture bride.

Upon arrival in BC, Dad obtained employment at Flavell Cedar Mill in Port Moody. There were three cedar mills in Port Moody, but now only Flavell remains. One of the mills was jokingly called "Hindu mill" because most of the employees were South Asian and wore turbans. The other mill was McNair on the north shore, which was predominantly Chinese. They had a bunkhouse and kitchen. Dad owned acreage in Port Moody plus the house, and he also owned a farm in Burquitlam. He was the youngest of five boys – they were farmers and

also owned a working gold mine on their property. He was a very quiet, hardworking individual.

Our house was on Maude Road – there were only three houses there. Our immediate neighbours were the Fujioka family, who operated a logging business. It was country living – four miles to town and another four miles to a store near loco. A salesman would come around to take orders for Japanese food and whatever else Mom wanted. For a time, we attended Japanese language school after regular school, which was taught by Mrs. Tokitsu.

As kids we used to collect metal scraps and bottles, and a junk collector would visit occasionally. Most of the metal we dug out of an old trestle at the head of the bay. This structure was falling apart and rotting. I still don't know the purpose of this trestle bridge. There was no such thing as weekly allowance at that time.

Mom's passion was growing flowers — her favourites were roses and then mums (*kiku*). I still remember countless nights picking earwigs from her mum flowers. Mom was a good cook who made lovely bread, pies, and canned various fruits and vegetables. We had four goats and around thirty chickens and rabbits. Mom made cottage cheese and regular cheese, which she learned

from Mrs. Lebrandi, our neighbour. I don't know how she communicated because Mom never understood English very well.

Mom and Dad were excellent brewmasters. makina beer, sake, shochu, and occasionally wine. I know of a couple times when Mom got busted - friends would come over, get plastered, and get picked up by Mr. Moody, the local policeman while walking home. Dad liked his beer after coming home from work, but he was not an excessive drinker The rest of the family were not heavy consumers of alcohol, either. My brother



Portrait of a young Karl Konishi, circa 1945. NNM 2016.18.1.2.10

and sisters did not consume alcohol, and neither did I.

As kids, we used to collect hazelnuts, blueberries, loganberries, salmonberries, and some mushrooms. At that time I did not know anything about *matsutake* mushrooms. We collected the bark from castor trees - the bark was used in the making of castor oil. We would dry the bark and Mom would take it to the local drug store. Dad used to scour the forest for old fallen cedar trees, covered in moss and shrubs. He would remember the location of the trees and return later to cut into a desired size. It was easy money without the work of cutting down a tree - these old trees would be hundreds of years old. Come fall, the creek at the back of our house would be loaded with salmon, as were all the other local creeks. The loss of habitat and pollution has since decimated the salmon runs. Noons Creek now has some salmon returning with the help of an enhancement program.

I used to go with my buddies to collect many pigeons,

preferably the white ones. I raised them as pets and had about six, but come hunting season they would be killed. I once had a pet mallard duck, which I found wounded and nursed back to health. It lived in the chicken coop and it could not fly. One day the duck went missing —I guess somebody wanted it for a meal. Many things would disappear from our backyard — it was frequently

used to access the upper portion of Noons Creek. Once my sister and I were drying out about 10 pounds of hazelnut we picked which disappeared. I was kind of disappointed after all the work we had put in. The hill behind our old property is now covered with hundreds of homes — I never thought people would be living there.

One day at school I was told by the principal not to come back to school, and my friends were now my enemies, calling me all sorts of names. Propaganda at that time depicting Tojo with a bald head, horn rimmed glasses, and buck teeth had

done its job. Dad was picked up in early 1942 and sent to a Prisoner of War (POW) camp.

After Dad was taken away, we ran out of money to buy essentials. We went to Pitt Meadows to pick berries, then to Surrey to pick more berries. Following that, we went to Chilliwack and Sardis to pick hops. After running out of jobs, our family was incarcerated at Hastings Park for four months. I was separated from the rest of my family and lived with the men in another building. I worked for 10 cents an hour stuffing straw into mattresses to be used by internees.

After Hastings Park, our next destination was Popoff in the Slocan Valley. We lived in a two-story building. Being short of money and food, Mom was worried about how we were going to survive. She had a nervous breakdown and ended up in the hospital. At this time, my sister Kay, my brother Fred, and I received help from neighbours, who provided us with food.

Our next move was to New Denver, since my aunt was



*

there. It was the same situation with a lack of money and food. Mom used to visit the security commission office and I think the staff cringed when Mom showed up demanding things. She would say "you put us into this situation!"

Eventually with the help of friends, Mom started a *tofu* business, which was a trade she learned in Japan. We worked out of the shack, making improvements when necessary. It was hard work but provided the family with income. Throughout this, I've always wondered why my

father insisted on remaining in the POW camp. I never brought up the subject with him though – he seemed to have enough worries.

One day, my buddy Sam Nagata had a wonderful idea – to build a club house under his house. There was Sam, Nobby Hamazaki, Mas Aida, Frank Yoshioka, and I don't remember if Bob Takagi was in on it or not too. We excavated a large portion under the house to a depth of around five feet. We shored up the dirt using ship lap which was for firewood, built a table, chairs, and even rigged up electricity. We played card games like crazy eights,

Another time, my good buddy Frank and I decided to make ourselves a raft. We took some basic tools, and went to an old abandoned silver mine just outside of Silverton. From some logs and lumber we made

rummy, west, cribbage, and it killed a lot of time for us.

ourselves a fairly decent raft and some oars, and then went back to New Denver. Japanese Canadians were not allowed to fish, but I used to fish at the mouth of Carpenter Creek, which was the accumulation point for fish because all the garbage from camp was dumped upstream. I kept all the trout and whitefish I caught and Mom sold any excess fish to neighbours.

During this time, I attended the United Church's "Lakeview Collegiate." Without their help, we would not have got our education. One of our teachers, Miss Remple, wrote to her alma mater in Texas and we received boxes of sporting equipment to use.

Our next move was to Tashme, where Mom started to make *tofu* again. I worked at the local saw mill with Tak Kobayashi. Later I moved to another mill about five miles away. Once while I was at the mill in Tashme, I was sent to fight a forest fire outside of Tashme. Since I was the youngest I was detailed as a water boy and had to carry water in the canvas bags to the men on the fire line. In my spare time I went fishing. It was a remote area so fishing was great. I would go to the mess hall and obtain salt to pickle the trout to take home.



Karl on the shore, circa 1945. NNM 2016.18.1.2.73

go to Japan, a country foreign to me. The Ayukawa family volunteered to take me in, but eventually it was time to make the dreaded trip to Japan and I was not looking forward to it. We landed in Uraga and it was shocking to see so much destruction from the war. I met my father dockside in Vancouver, after not having seen him for four years. We travelled on a US troop ship and the food they gave us was terrible. We later learned how bad things were.

After the war. I did not want to

My dad owned a fairly large farm, a house, and a hill (yama) so we were probably a little

better off than most people. The reason why everything was in place was because my sisters, particularly Mary, worked the farm and paid the taxes. To this day, I don't know how she did it — farming in Japan is all physical labour. This was the first time I met my sister Aguri. She had gotten married to avoid compulsory factory work for the war effort.

During the war, my sister witnessed the fire bombing of Okayama City from Kawaguchi, 25 miles away. She said it was like daylight, the sky just lit up. The bombers dropped incendiary bombs around the city and the flames consumed the city. The next day, my sister went to Okayama city with food and clothing to hand out and said the sight was terrible: bodies were in the canal all trying to escape the heat, but in turn were cooked alive. My sister Mary said she was once called to Hiroshima

by the dreaded *kempeti* (secret police). The interview was horrible – they quizzed her about the family back in Canada and the Japanese people in Port Moody – which she could not answer because she did not know the Japanese in Port Moody.

On arrival in the village, I was asked if I played baseball. I said yes, but not very well. I participated with the guys and played other village kids nearby – it was fun. I would say about 30 to 40 percent of the villagers were related to me. As I had no plans for the future, I decided to assist around the farm. One job I did not like was going into the rice paddy. I wore my hip waders and the locals had a good laugh. I sure was not going into the paddy knowing what they used for fertilizer – human feces!

While in the country I took part in the local fishing, scuba diving, setting eel pots, and night time spear fishing using the carbide lamp. I remember a couple of times going out with the villagers looking for *matsutake* mushrooms. Everything found was put into a pot and divided among the participants. Once again money was a problem, so I went off to the big city of Okayama to find work with the US occupation forces.

After about two years, the US occupational forces left Okayama and my sister Kay returned to Canada. In Osaka, I was fortunate to have a cousin in the US army, so I could go there and have a place to stay. I worked as a house boy until one day I got a job as a sales clerk at Shinodayama Post Exchange. My sister Mary also got a job there. It was a medical training school, as they needed to train their troops for the Korean War. My boss was a sergeant married to a Japanese girl and as he was going home, he made a recommendation I take over as Post Exchange manager. This was also backed by the camp commander, so I was now in charge as manager of the Post Exchange, where I oversaw the snack bar, bowling alley, and barber shop.



Karl Konishi (at bottom of ladder) and friends. New Denver, circa 1945.

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One day, a Pepsi cola salesman, a *gaijin*, mentioned that the Canadian army was taking volunteers for the Korean War. I thought about it for a while, then decided to check it out and went to Hiro where the camp was. Lo and behold! Most of the enrollees were guys I knew from either New Denver or Tashme.

Editors' note: This is an excerpt of Karl Konishi's memoirs. Continue reading in a future issue of Nikkei Images.





Trans-Pacific Voyage: Kawabata Family's 125 Years

By Yusuke Tanaka

This story was originally published in Japanese in The Bulletin in March and April 2016. It was translated into English by George Sadao Kawabata and edited for this publication.

When talking about deportation of Japanese Canadians after the end of World War II, there is one picture that cannot be overlooked. It's the photo taken in May 1946 showing people waiting at Slocan railway station for the train bound for the west coast. Ever since appearing on the cover of *The Enemy That Never Was* (1976) written by Ken Adachi, the same photo has been used repeatedly.

In fact, every time I see the photo, I murmur "Oh, that's Kitamura-san..." The lady standing second from the right and looking towards the direction of incoming trains is Misako Kitamura, the wife of Taka-aki Kitamura (hometown Kuchinosu, Nagasaki). He steadfastly declined being uprooted and remarked, "I believed that I was a Canadian. So darn unreasonable. Hell no, never would I go to any road camps" (*Nikkei Voice* August 1991 issue).

Having so declared, he was confined at the 101 POW camp at Angler in Ontario until July 1946. He was a reticent, faithfully loyal, and spiritually strong Meiji-era man. However, unlike most of the other issei, he was a strong supporter of the NAJC's Redress Campaign for individual compensation. The Kitamuras, having been reunited soon after this picture was taken, moved to Toronto in July 1946. Therefore, my belief was that the people in the photo were all moving to eastern Canada. This apparently has been incorrect. Very recently, I received other information.

That took place in December 2015 when I returned home to Sapporo. Namita-san (Hokkaido University Professor Emeritus), accompanied by Sapporo resident, George Sadao Kawabata, came to visit my hotel for an interview. The interviewee, George, upon seeing this picture first uttered "See this?" pointing at the suitcase in the lower left hand side of the photograph. There it was written "KAWABATA". Without the slightest doubt,



Group gathered at railroad station in Slocan, bidding farewell to "repatriates" on their way to Japan in 1946. Nearly 4,000 people went to Japan in 1946, many of them embittered and disillusioned after their wartime experience in Canada. (PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA).

it was a scene bidding "a final farewell" to people heading for Japan via the west coast.

So this is the story of how the Kawabata family "repatriated" to Japan. George was a 10-year-old boy. After seven decades of blank memory, in early 2013 George happened to view NHK's TV documentary program titled *Chinmoku no Dengon (Message Told in Silence)*. This film was to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and focused on the experience of Japanese Canadian internment camp life. It was there that George discovered a photo of his Slocan-days school class photo!

Settling down in the adopted land

His father, Teiichi Kawabata, was born in 1890 in Negoro, Wakayama Prefecture. In 1906, he was supposed to head for the United States mainland via Hawaii but

Above: May 1946, at Slocan station people waiting for train bound for west coast (Ken Adachi; *The Enemy That Never Was*)

Grade 4 class picture of 1944; Joy Kogawa, front line far right, David Suzuki, back end line far left, George, same 3rd from left. Teacher Mitsue Ishii (Sawada). Courtesy of the Kawabata Family.



George said as follows: "Disembarking from the ship temporarily in Hawaii, Teiichi was late in boarding that ship again for the US. He hurriedly hopped on the next available ship that was bound for Canada." That period coincided with a storm of adverse racism and discrimination against Asians/Orientals raging on the west coast of the US.

The following year, 1907, the anti-Asian activist group called the Asiatic Exclusion League, originally formed in the U.S., extended their reach northward into Vancouver. They organized an informal white labourers' group and agitated to prohibit the influx of Japanese immigrants. In September, this group provoked a riot in Vancouver.

It was in the year 1908 that quotas of Japanese immigrants were limited to 400 per year with the exception of so called female "picture brides" that were not counted in the immigration quota. So George's father belonged to one of the last group of Japanese immigrants into Canada before the restrictive quota was introduced. Henceforth, with the influx of the "picture brides" the Japanese communities which were previously comprised almost totally by

male immigrants shifted into family-style settlement units. Vancouver's population in 1908 was approximately 100,000 with Japanese counting just under 1,700.

Meanwhile, a Japanese community of similar size was established in Steveston, BC. The core of this group consisted of migrant labourers coming from Wakayama prefecture. However, Teiichi, who was still a 16-year-old youth, did not settle down there. He must have been a person that due to his personal character found it easy to assimilate into Canadian society from the start. He referred to himself by his English name, Tom Kawabata.

"My dad hated physical labour and worked for a long time as a bell-boy at a well-known

summer resort facility, Chateau Lake Louise Hotel in Alberta. For his hard work and diligence, he received awards from the hotel", said George. It was then that a wealthy hotel guest from New York noticed him and wrote in his appreciative letter addressed to the hotel management in 1924: "That Jap (unchanged original expression) serving your hotel is unmistakably Bell-Boy No. 2. I personally wish to hire him should he be ready to work as my household servant in New York".

What an arrogant attitude with the scent of prejudice disguised in words of praise! The expression and wording can be said to be a typical reflection of the white person's thoughts at that time. By the way, this hotel was heralded as a famous resort hotel in the scenic Rocky Mountains, where the late Showa Emperor during his youth as Crown Prince of the Imperial Family is said to have lodged on his way to the United States.

Teiichi was not the only Japanese national working near the Lake Louise Banff area. According to one issei's memoir, another was the pioneer immigrant Manzo Nagano's first son, George Tatsuo. He was



15

once active as an outfielder on the "Victoria Nippons" baseball team. The memoir says: "After a marriage in 1920 which ended up resulting in a bad family relationship with his motherin-law, he chose to work at a resort hotel in Banff." Being in the same age bracket, he might have been friends with Teiichi.

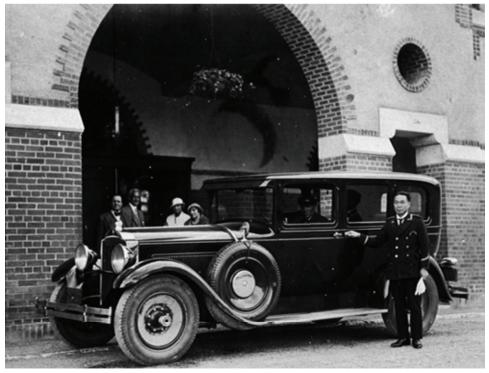
To continue, the two of them had fine physical statures that made them very attractive wearing their hotel uniforms. Teiichi surely must have had pride in this job at the hotel. To underscore that thought, according to son George's testimony based on his recollection, dad Teiichi even after returning to Japan very often wore a dressy tuxedo matched with a tall silk derby

hat. In the eyes of surrounding neighbors, his style reflected "an odd eccentric person."

Teiichi returned temporarily to Japan in 1928. After having married his wife Sei, he was blessed with three children. Until the outbreak of the war, Teiichi spent summers working at Lake Louise while spending winters in Vancouver. There, at 371 Hastings Street, next door to Patricia Hotel, he operated/managed a grocery store with his wife Sei. At the ripe age of 45 and with two daughters, he was joyfully blessed with Sadao, his first son.

Little Tokyo village was the environment in which the three children were brought up and nurtured during their infancy and childhood. The Japanese community in Canada, while exposed to racial discrimination, was beginning as a whole to climb the ladder towards middle-class society.

Despite this, the Manchuria Incident caused by Imperial Japan and its aftermath provoked the global turmoil that ultimately resulted in World War II, and terrible consequences for the entire North American Japanese community. In 1933, Japan withdrew from the League of Nations and bid farewell to the western world powers. Simultaneously, the military assumed power and began confiscating the taxpayers' precious



Tom Teiichi Kawabata, No.2 bell-boy (thereafter promoted to Chief, Chateau Lake Louise, Alberta) standing by to greet and room-guide classified guests.

Courtesy of Jean and Jerry Chihara.

money to build up the armed forces.

On the other hand, to cover the shortage of raw natural resources, there was no choice but to extract these resources from neighbouring Asian countries. To this end, Japan declared war with China in 1937. Extensive news reports about the Nanking Massacre eventually led to racial hatred toward Japanese Canadians in Vancouver. Firing of Japanese from employment became a daily routine.

At the beginning of 1941, with the Canadian government preparing to declare war, compulsory registration of all Japanese Canadians was enforced by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It was then that Etsuji Morii, who may have been called "Japan's Commissioned Agent", started collecting cash, aluminum tin foil, medicines, and solace packages through the so-called Wartime Security Committee. To the *issei*, Japan's military policy was believed to be right without the slightest doubt (Ken Adachi). Nobody dared oppose such actions. People of Japanese descent in North America were already trapped in a cage before entry into war.

On December 7, 1941, just after George's entry to Lord Strathcona Primary School, Japan's Imperial Navy bombed Hawaii in what was said to be a "sneak attack." Henceforth, Japanese Canadians were treated as the enemy. In March of the following year, the Kawabatas were herded into the livestock exhibition ground at Hastings Park. No doubt for a still playful naughty boy, born under the zodiac sign of the boar, the horse barn must have been a perfect playground.

"Tumbling down, I suffered a terrible cut on my skull." Saying this, he showed me the big scar that was still visible. While the wound must have been quite deep, the scar itself seems to have changed into his good luck charm from his days of trial. He continued speaking with misery in his voice: "the entire building, being a horse stable, was Stink, Stink, and nothing but Stink! How could the Canadian government act that way, might you know?"

Meanwhile, his father Teiichi, then already 52 years of age, was exempt from deportation to road camps. The dragnet swept up all of the adult males of Japanese ancestry under the age of 45 for road camp work. Nevertheless, having declined the Hastings Park confinement option that he was given, Teiichi chose to become a POW Camp detainee which separated him from the family. Whatever made him do so? "Dad was a typical Meiji-era-born Japanese who was deeply patriotic." After the war, he was the one who decided that the family would repatriate to Japan. Until the ship carrying the family arrived in Uraga, Kanagawa Prefecture, Teiichi believed Japan had won the war.

Editors' note: This story will be continued in the next issue of Nikkei Images, Vol 22, No. 2.



George with bitterness criticizes government for Kawabata family's deportation to Japan; says he "Exclusion was Canadian Government's FELONY". Photo: Yusuke Tanaka. Dec. 2015.



Grade 3 representative George awarded Honour Certificate from principal Takashi Tsuji, with Miss Mitsue Ishii overlooking at Slocan school. Courtesy of the Kawabata Family.



Teiichi Kawabata in his late years living in Osaka. Courtesy of the Kawabata Family.





A Tribute to A Remarkable Man: Soi Isomura

by Kim Kobrle

Dr. Soi Isomura's life came to an end on August 22, 2015. There wasn't a ripple in the community, no fuss and no fanfare. That is exactly how this multi-gifted physician lived and died. However, we would be remiss if we did not record his life and times in the annals of Japanese Canadian history.

Soi Isomura was born September 17, 1923 in Vancouver. His early days were marked by his inability to keep pace with his friends due to a congenital anomaly, 'a hole in the heart' he called it. It was probably at this time that he developed an insatiable love of learning which never left him as he had more quiet time on his hands than his playmates. He felt that as he grew and with the passage of time his heart corrected itself.

During the unsettled days of World War II, he and his family relocated to Greenwood. It was here that he first noticed his future love, Frances Imai. After a year and a half, he moved to Belleville, Ontario where he attended Albert College. On graduation, he was awarded the Governor General's Medal for the highest aggregate. He went on to study physics at Queen's University in Kingston.

1951 was an eventful year in Soi's life. He married his sweetheart, Frances and was one of the first Japanese Canadians to be accepted to study medicine at McGill University. As a struggling and hardworking student, he became a father in 1952. He recalled this period of fatherhood and studying as "great." He would study with baby Terry napping beside him, giving Fran a break. With the fresh breezes of Mount Royal around them, he thought things couldn't be better. Another daughter, Mary Ann, a sister to Terry, joined them in 1955. He penned some of his most thoughtful poems during this time. His creative mind could not be suppressed.



Graduation from McGill University. Portrait with Fran, Soi, and daughters Mary Ann and Terry. Montreal, 1955. NNM TD 219-3a.

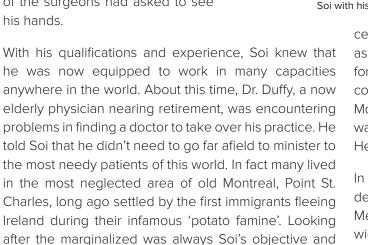
He decided to spend his residency at Montreal's St. Mary's Hospital. In spite of his heavy load of intern's duties, with the help of his colleagues, he developed a method of calculating 'blood volume loss', vital information in emergency situations. As his breakthrough methodology became known he received inquiries from hospitals around the world.

Dr. Dinan, Chief of Surgery at St. Mary's Hospital, recognizing Soi's potential, designated a room at the hospital for his experiments. His next project was to develop an apparatus for underwater gas exchange (like an underwater lung). Dr. Dinan helped Soi get a patent for this invention which ensured that he got the proper recognition for his work. The American Navy was most interested and followed his progress closely as evidenced by the extensive correspondence between them. Soi took this research as far as he could.

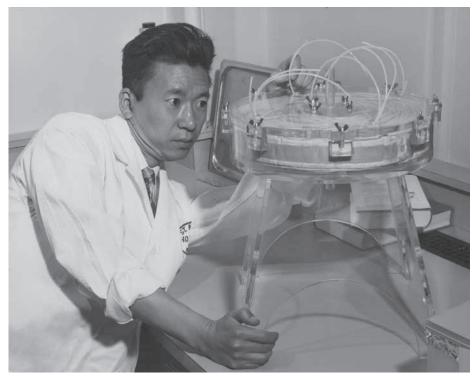
Soi's plan now was to become a member of the World Health Organization (WHO). To this end and with Fran's blessing, he decided to take two more years of surgery and a year of pathology. It was while doing some complicated surgical procedures that he made quite a name for himself as a skilled surgeon.

Years later, having moved from Montreal to BC, I remember going to the Royal Columbian Hospital's Rehab Unit in New Westminster, where we were waiting to meet our new Director of Physiatry (specialist in Physical Medicine). When Dr. Feldman saw me, an Asian, he asked if I knew Dr. Soi Isomura of Montreal. He said, "Dr. Isomura did the most delicate and intricate surgeries with the most deft fingers". When I told Fran about this she recalled Soi saying that some of the surgeons had asked to see

so he took on this new challenge.



Following Dr. Duffy's retirement, Soi, Fran, their two daughters, and Fran's mom moved into Dr. Duffy's old house in the 'Point' among the row houses. The doctor's office was downstairs and living quarters were upstairs. It was here that they welcomed their son, John, into their lives. As in all of his previous projects, he set a high bar for his work in the 'Point' neighbourhood. Soon his practice was thriving. With long hours, "on call" nights and weekends, often with little or no remuneration, Soi felt this was where he was meant to be. He said when these tough folks say "they have a gut ache, they have a gut ache." He upgraded their medical care and records to the point where he could then think about their social needs. He and Fran formed a group and, using their church



Soi with his invention. Montreal, circa 1966. NNM TD 219-8-8.

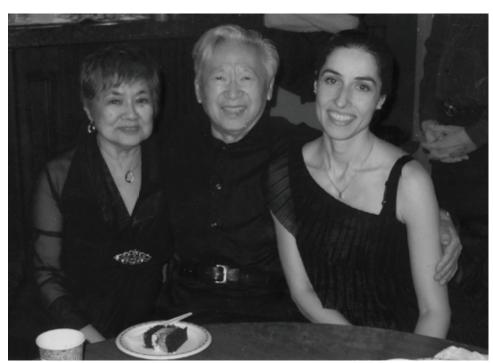
centred venues, they organized community events such as clothes drives, seasonal, and religious events. This forgotten part of Montreal once again became a viable community. Soi's accomplishments did not go unnoticed. Montreal's daily newspaper, the *Montreal Gazette*, wanted to do a profile of Soi. This he strongly declined. He never wanted any recognition or accolades.

In July of 1968 the Federal Government of Canada decreed that all Canadian residents were entitled to Medicare and by 1972 it was to be implemented Canada wide. This sounded great as Soi would finally be paid without problems but there was a caveat. The political climate in Quebec was changing and French was to be the official language in Quebec. Soi felt it was time for a change for him and his family. After much thought and discussion with Fran and family, they decided to pull up stakes and move back to the West Coast. Having left Vancouver in 1942, Soi decided to return to BC with his family after nearly 30 years in Eastern Canada.

There were two teenagers living with the Isomura family at that time. Their mother, a Japanese war bride, had separated from her French Canadian soldier husband and was dying from cancer. She died in peace when assured by Soi that he and Fran would care for them until they became adults. Now that they were leaving Montreal, their aunt, their dad's sister, offered to provide







Soi and Fran Isomura were recognized as the oldest couple taking tango dance lessons. Pictured here with their dance instructor. Vancouver, 2011. NNM TD 219-4b.

a home for them. Earlier they sponsored a young Kenyan man (a student in mechanical engineering) who wanted to stay longer in Canada. Soi and Fran provided a home for him too until he found employment and was able to support himself. Soi and Fran, whenever there was a need, never hesitated or questioned but stepped forward and helped. This was repeated many times during their days in Montreal.

Leaving Montreal was surely a momentous decision, to move to an unfamiliar city and an unknown future. In 1971 they drove across Canada and settled in Richmond, BC where coincidentally, there was a sizable Japanese speaking population.

Registration with the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons was easily processed. Setting up a practice required more thought and research. He was accepted as an associate with a group of young physicians who owned a medical building and an adjacent parking lot. Soi was astounded that they accepted him as he said "with so little collateral." As he moved into a new building into a spanking new office with shiny new chrome equipment, he said that he had some misgivings. In Montreal he had moved into a practice all set up with "antiquated everything. Now at my age I've got debt up to my eyeballs but ownership, unbelievable." He said he asked himself many times if it would have been easier if he had just learned French and stayed in Montreal.

Again as with all of his previous pursuits, he set a high bar for his practice in this new location. The Japanese-speaking population which included many fishermen were pleased they had a doctor in their midst who could understand them. Soi had to convince these hardworking men that they had to pay as much attention to their health as to their boats and equipment. Fran said Soi used all the visual aids at his disposal to stress his points. Soon his practice was thriving as his reputation became known to all in Richmond. Another bilingual staff member was hired to help Soi and Fran.

Soi's assistance to those needing help never ceased. My sister had breast surgery, in a time when it was not a refined procedure as it is today. Post operation, she had problems with strength in her right arm, poor self esteem, and no confidence in going back to her former work as a paediatric nurse. Her doctor thought she could work in a clerical position in nursing. She had no such experience. Soi intuitively sensed her problem and hired her as a third assistant (who he really didn't need). Later she found employment as a nanny. He continued his many other good deeds quietly, unnoticed as he did in Montreal.

Once his work was going smoothly, he turned his attention to what was being discussed a lot at that time like the need for renewable energy. He spoke about the need to look into hydrogen fuel cells. His quest for learning would be front and centre of the important topics of the day. He also started taking lessons in playing the organ. Was he going to be the modern day Albert Schweitzer, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, writer, musician, organist, or a missionary doctor in the jungles of Africa?

Soi never ceased to amaze. Next he and Fran tackled weekly dance lessons in Argentine tango. He also enrolled in courses at BCIT to upgrade his knowledge in the latest electronic advances. This active lifestyle continued until his childhood heart problem reared its

"Life is not to waste for it is God's greatest gift" soi Isomura.

ugly head. Now in spite of feeling he could continue his medical practice beyond the usual retirement age, he now had to pace his activities as his strength and stamina would allow, especially after many tests and procedures proved that the "valve problem" in his

heart was inoperable. He accepted his limitations with his usual realistic attitude. He asked my husband, "Way back did we think we'd make it to our 90s?"

When his rest times increased he surrounded himself in bed with reference books on new discoveries and theories in physics and science. One local doctor described him as a "brainiac." Yes he was, until the very end.

Before his last time in hospital, when he phoned and wanted to come for a visit, I reminded him that we no longer lived nearby in Richmond, but an hour away. As it was 9pm we arranged to meet the following Sunday. However, our meeting didn't happen as he was hospitalized for the last time before we were able to get together.

Soi, I wish I could have told you that:

You were always a 'cut above' the rest of us. With your

constant quest to help your fellow man, the neglected, marginalized, and the needy, how you ministered to the very best and to the 'least among us' with diligence, dedication, and true altruism. You were so underappreciated.

Your greatest success was your marriage to Fran. What a great life partner and soul mate! She was wholly in sync with your hopes and aspirations.

You, Fran, and your family were my surrogate family for all my years in Montreal. Even during your lean student years, I'll never forget the many pleasant visits and delicious craved-for Japanese meals.

During our last phone

conversation, you said, "I hope they won't bring me back again (referring to being resuscitated). I want to check out the mysteries in our cosmos, dark matter and stuff. The only thing is that I can't come back to tell you about it."

Well, Soi, I hope you sailed through our galaxy, got some answers, then soared through the stratosphere and universe to be with the angels.

What a legacy you left your family, friends, and community to cherish.

Remembrance always.......
Kim.

It's difficult to compress a lifetime of achievements in these few pages. My sincere hope is that I was able to adequately portray

a humanitarian, scientist, researcher, thinker, and physician who once walked this earth among us.

There were valued members in our community who spoke of Soi's humanity and his brilliance. Unfortunately many have predeceased him. His close colleague Dr. Dick Reeve who studied with Soi at McGill University and St. Mary's Hospital, and practised as a cardiologist in Hawaii, is now living in California. Dick too is now ailing and when he last phoned Fran, she found his speech difficult to understand. Testimonials from his many friends would have been so welcome and would have enhanced this bio.



Soichi and Frances Isomura on their wedding day. Montreal, August 11, 1951. NNM TD 219-2a.



Yuriko Obayashi Barrow: A Life History

by "Vicky" Yuriko Barrow, (nee Obayashi)

Vicky (Yuriko) Barrow wrote this life history at age 69. Vicky passed away on June 25, 2005 at the age of 74. It was submitted to Nikkei Images by Hollis Ho, daughter of Vicky Barrow. Hollis has added names for clarity, and made two brief additions of facts shared with her by her mother that are relevant to the story.

My father, Fusajiro Obayashi, immigrated from Shika-ken, Japan to Canada in 1906. He managed to find employment at the Rat Portege Sawmill. After five years of long, hard labour, he saved enough money to go back to Japan to marry my mother, Toyo Matsumoto. Together, they returned to Canada to make their home and settled in the Kitsilano district in Vancouver, BC.

My parents had nine children – four sons and five daughters. I am the eighth child, born Yuriko Obayashi on September 8, 1930. We were all born at home on West 2nd Avenue in Vancouver, with the help of a mid-wife.

Mom and Dad were of the Buddhist faith and we all attended church regularly. They were both warm and caring, and instilled in us the importance of keeping family ties strong. Though our parents are no longer with us, we continue to be a close-knit family.

In Vancouver, after years of long hard work, my parents managed to purchase a two-storey, ten-unit apartment building at 1661 West 2nd Avenue, and, also, a house which they rented out. Our family occupied three units in the apartment building with father tearing down walls as the family grew. My parents also owned and operated a barber shop in this building for 20 years prior to the relocation to the interior of BC.

With the onset of World War II, my father was immediately ordered to Gosnell (50 miles north of Jasper, Alberta) to work on the railway. My mother was left to fend for herself and children until September 1942 when we were relocated to New Denver, BC, which was one of



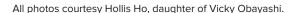
Fusajiro and Toyo Obayashi, parents of Vicky (Yuriko) Barrow, before 1947.

the many internment camps scattered throughout the interior.

In March of 1942, the evacuation of all the citizens of Japanese ancestry to various camps began and was completed by October 15, 1942.

It was soon after my twelfth birthday in September 1942 when my mother and siblings boarded the train to New Denver. At the time it seemed like an adventure to me – little did I know what hardship this was for my Mom. In later years, I began to realize this anguish, humiliation, and pain my parents endured during this ordeal. Uprooted from their secure environment and not knowing what to expect in the future must have been utterly devastating. I know they suffered immeasurably.

In New Denver, we were finally reunited with Father after nine months of separation. As Dad knew carpentry, he had been sent to New Denver to assist with the building of the "shacks" for living quarters.







Funeral service for Vicky's mother, Toyo Obayashi September 1947, New Denver, BC. Back row, L-R: Misa, Sue, Kon, Sally, Robbie, Fumi, Yuriko.

Front row, L-R: Fusajiro, Toki. Missing: eldest son, Fusao (living in Japan)

My formative years were spent happily in Vancouver where I attended Henry Hudson Elementary School, and I also attended the Japanese Language School daily from 4:30-6:00pm. In September 1942, I was looking forward to attending Kitsilano Junior High, but it was not to be.

Once settled in camp, we faced another obstacle. Japanese children were barred from attending regular schools. Fortunately, the Catholic nuns learned of our plight and started Notre Dame High, converting a large house into classrooms. As there were too many students, the United Church missionaries also came to our aid and opened Lakeview High in the local Odd Fellow Hall. I completed high school at Notre Dame.

When we first arrived in New Denver there was much hostility among the Caucasian community. This is when I became fully aware of discrimination. Verbal abuse and bruised spirits were experienced almost daily. It was truly a traumatic time.

In the spring of 1945 when the war was all but over, the government issued a "Repatriation Order" to go to Japan or move east of the Rockies. My father stood firm in his decision to remain in Canada.

In 1945, Nakusp was a thriving logging and sawmilling town. My father and brothers found employment in the mill. Mother, my younger brother, and I remained in New Denver until I finished my schooling and joined the rest of the family in 1947.

On April 1, 1949, the ban was lifted and Japanese Canadians were permitted to back to the West Coast. My father was not eager to move to Vancouver as all their personal possessions and properties were lost and their former life was completely obliterated. He opted to settle in Nakusp, a small village just 30 miles west of New Denver.

When I first arrived in Nakusp I was totally lost – my school friends and their families were dispersed to various parts of the country and I missed them. My parents were concerned that I was not mingling with children my age and encouraged me to join "Teen Town." This was the best advice I got. I was pleasantly surprised that the members were warm and friendly



July 1st, 1949 crowned the first ever "Queen of the Arrow Lakes", Nakusp, BC (age 18)

and accepted me whole-heartedly. To this day, I remain friends with many of the people I met as a teenager. I met my husband, Bill Barrow, then.

In late 1947 I found employment at the Leland Hotel which was owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Barrow who later became my in-laws. Their son Bill and I were married in January 1953. Inter-racial marriage was quite uncommon in those days but we were fortunate to have the blessings of both families. We travelled to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho to get married, but were turned away as interracial marriage was illegal in that state unless one was from Hawaii. We then had to travel to Spokane, Washington where interracial marriages were legal.

We were blessed with two sons and one daughter. We are now also blessed with two beautiful grandchildren.

After our marriage, I did not work until all my children were in school. I began working part-time at a local food store for several years until management changed hands. I left to work full-time in the Payroll Department for a logging firm. I stayed with this job for 15 years but unfortunately when the company began down-sizing, I was among the many who were laid-off. I then went to assist my sister-in-law at a Men's Clothing Store which I co-owned with her for 22 years. We sold the business in 1993 and I have been enjoying retirement since.



Bill & Vicky Barrow, wedding day, January 29, 1953, Spokane Washington USA



Vicky and Bill Barrow's 3 children, left to right: Robin, Hollis, Grant, 1958

Yes, I have seen many, many changes throughout my life. I vividly remember using washboards to do the family laundry. We certainly didn't have the luxuries we have today. It's difficult to keep pace with technology as it is constantly and rapidly advancing and much too quickly for a senior like me.