MINORU FUKUSHIMA

Pronunciation:
Me-no-roo Foo-koo-she-mah

From the private collection of Minoru and Michael Fukushima. NNM 2017.5.1.1.2

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

MINORU FUKUSHIMA

Pronunciation: Me-no-roo Foo-koo-she-mah

ANSWER KEY:

NEW DENVER, BC

1942-1945: Lives with family in a tent with a wooden floor in the New Denver internment camp. Learns to swim in a nearby lake.

TSURUGA, FUKUI, JAPAN

1946: Deported with family to Japan, and starts school in Grade 1 to learn Japanese with a class of much younger students. Drops out after one year to work in rice fields with family.

TOKYO AND YOKOHAMA, JAPAN

1950: Joins the Canadian army from Japan and is sent to help United Nations forces in the Korean War.

CHECK IT OUT:

MINORU: MEMORY OF EXILE

https://www.nfb.ca/film/minoru-memory-of-exile/

Watch this film about Minoru's life on the National Film Board of Canada website.

MINORU FUKUSHIMA

Minoru Fukushima was born on June 16, 1932 in Vancouver, BC. His parents immigrated from Japan to Canada in the 1920s, and he was the third-born of five children. They ran a grocery and candy store on Powell Street, which was the centre of the Japanese Canadian community in Vancouver. Minoru was nine years old when Canada declared war on Japan and eventually forced Minoru and his family to leave their home and business to go live at the New Denver internment camp in the interior of BC. Although their home in New Denver was a tent with a wooden floor, which could not have provided much protection against the cold BC interior winters, Minoru fondly remembers learning to swim and enjoying the outdoor environment.

The war ended when Minoru was 13 years old. But things could not go back to the way they were because the Canadian government had sold Japanese Canadians' businesses and property, including Minoru's family's grocery store, without their permission. The government had used the money to pay for running the internment camps. Minoru's family had nothing left to start over with, and they were not allowed to return to Vancouver. The government encouraged them to either re-settle east of the Rocky Mountains (outside of British Columbia) or offered to pay for their passage to Japan. Many cities and governments across Canada said they did not want Japanese Canadians to settle there, some even passing rules to try to keep them out. Minoru's father decided they would be better off in Japan, so he signed up for them to leave. At 14 years old, Minoru had to go with his parents. He sailed for Japan (a country he had never been to) with his parents and siblings in 1946.

The family returned to the village where Minoru's grandfather was from. Their relatives gave them a barn to live in, and they worked in the rice fields. Japan was a very difficult place at this time because the war had caused so much damage and there were severe food shortages. To make things worse, Minoru didn't know very much Japanese. Even though he had finished grade 8 in Canada, he had to start over in grade 1 in Japan to learn the language. He dropped out after a year and went to work in the rice fields with his family.

In 1949, Canada lifted its restrictions and discriminatory policies against Japanese Canadians, but it was too late for Minoru and his family. Their family was struggling to survive in Japan and could not possibly afford the long journey back to Canada. The Korean War began in 1950 and Canada (as part of the United Nations) sent troops to help South Korea fight North Korea. Minoru was now 18 and still a Canadian citizen, so he signed up with the Canadian army in Japan. He was one of almost 40 Japanese Canadians living in Japan who were recruited by the Canadian army to serve in Korea. Like many others, Minoru joined the army so that they would bring him back to Canada after he finished his service in the war.

In 1953, at the end of the Korean War, Minoru got his wish and returned to Canada. He ended up staying in the army for thirty-five years, serving with United Nations peacekeepers in Cyprus and Sinai as well as on postings in Europe and Canada. Minoru returned to Japan to find a wife in 1959. He brought his new wife Yoshiko home to Canada (Toronto) in 1960. Their son, Michael, was born soon after and grew up to become a filmmaker at the National Film Board of Canada. When Minoru retired, he and Yoshiko settled in Kelowna, BC and later moved to Peterborough, ON, to be closer to their son and grandson.

EIKICHI KAGETSU

Pronunciation:
Eh-kee-chee Kah-get-soo

Tadashi Jack & Kaneye Kay Kagetsu fonds.
NNM 2016.14.1.8.238

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

EIKICHI KAGETSU

Pronunciation: Eh-kee-chee Kah-get-soo

ANSWER KEY:

MINTO, BC

1943: With his business seized by the government, he is forced into retirement. Fills solitary time in the Minto self-supporting internment camp with gardening, pickling, and making artificial flowers. Two of his children are trapped in Japan and his wife has taken the younger children to Toronto to continue their schooling.

TORONTO, ONTARIO

1950: Awarded government compensation for property that was confiscated and sold without permission, a fraction of its actual value. Disputes the amount offered over the next few years without success. Daughter returns from Japan.

TORONTO, ONTARIO

1950s: With help of children, opens and runs a number of small businesses. Is active in emerging Japanese Canadian community organizations in Toronto, such as the Buddhist Church and the Kotobuki-kai (seniors' group).

CHECK IT OUT:

TAIKEN BOOK AND EXHIBIT

Find the story of "Kagetsu - The Logging Baron" in the Taiken exhibit at Nikkei Centre, or on page 29 of the Taiken book, available in the Nikkei National Museum shop and the resource centre.

FURTHER READING:

- Kagetsu, Tadashi Jack. *The Tree Trunk Can Be My Pillow: A Biography of an Outstanding Japanese Canadian*. Victoria: University of Victoria Press, 2017.

EIKICHI KAGETSU

Eikichi Kagetsu was born on September 5, 1883 in the village of Yukawa (now Gobo City), Wakayama, Japan. As the eldest of 11 children, he was responsible for helping to support his family, so he left school after grade three to work. He went first to Osaka to work in an artificial flower store, and found various other ways to earn money for the family as he grew up.

In 1904, Eikichi was drafted into the Japanese imperial army to serve in the Russo-Japanese War. He was discharged after the war ended in 1905 and received the Eighth Order of Merit and the White Paulownia Leaf decorations from the Japanese government.

In 1906, Eikichi decided to immigrate to Canada. He had heard stories about the giant trees in British Columbia, and thought he could make money by logging them. He worked in various mines and for a logging company to save money to start his business. Eikichi bought his first timber rights in 1908. In 1911, his family helped arrange his marriage. His mother came with his wife Toyo from Japan to Canada. Not long after that, an accident led to the loss of a lot of valuable logs, and Eikichi's business failed.

Eikichi was eventually able to resume and even expand his business ventures. He became well-known in the Japanese Canadian community as an employer of Japanese Canadian workers, a generous supporter of local businesses, a philanthropist, and a community leader.

In 1942, the Canadian government forced Eikichi and his family to leave their business (mainly on Vancouver Island) and their home to move to the interior of BC. The Kagetsus went to a self-supporting internment camp called Minto. Japanese Canadians living in Minto had more freedom than others who lived in government-run internment camps like Tashme or New Denver, but they had to have enough money saved up to pay for everything they needed without any government help. Their family was still separated: Eikichi's son Hiroshi and his daughter Takako were living in Japan. With the war, it was impossible for them to rejoin the family or even to send letters. Eikichi fought to be allowed to continue his business operations and provide timber for Canada's war effort. He also wanted to look after his workers and find a suitable buyer for his business and equipment, since he was unable to properly run them from a distance. The government repeatedly declined his requests and blocked his actions. His business was sold by the government without his consent for a small fraction of its actual value. Meanwhile, Eikichi's wife Toyo had taken their children to Toronto to continue their schooling. He stayed in Minto alone, working in his garden and making artificial flowers to fill up the time and ease his boredom.

After the war ended, Eikichi joined his wife and children in Toronto in fall 1945. In 1950, Takako returned to Canada, further reuniting the family, but Hiroshi stayed in Japan. 1950 was also the year that Eikichi was offered a settlement from the government for the forced sale of his business. The money was much less than his business had been worth, but it was all he was ever going to get.

Around this time, Eikichi started up the first of a number of Toronto-based businesses with the help of his grown-up sons and daughters. He opened a gift shop which featured imported goods from Japan, a wholesale Japanese importer, and later a drycleaning business. However, these businesses didn't make a lot of money and they barely broke even. Eikichi was also active in the new Japanese Canadian community in Toronto, especially the Buddhist Church and the Kotobuki-kai seniors' group, of which he was founder and the first president.

In 1955, to celebrate the fifth anniversary of the founding of the Kotobuki-kai seniors' group, the group organized a tour of Japan to visit relatives and sightsee in their native land. Eikichi led the group and was able to visit his son Hiroshi while in Japan. Eikichi was also a founding member of the Toronto Japanese Garden Club and enjoyed growing vegetables and flowers in his garden, especially chrysanthemums. He passed away peacefully in 1967, at the age of 83.

MARIE KAWAMOTO

Pronunciation:
Mah-ree Kah-wah-moh-toh

Marie in 1938. Marie Katsuno fonds.
NMM 2001.5.1.8.256

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

MARIE KATSUNO / KAWAMOTO

Pronunciation: Mah-ree Kah-tsoo-no / Kah-wah-moh-toh

ANSWER KEY:

TASHME, BC

1945: The internment camp where she has lived in a shack with parents and another family for almost three years is being shut down. Accompanies aging parents to Japan.

TOKYO, JAPAN

1948: While working for an international airline company, marries a Japanese American who was conscripted into the Japanese army and lost his US citizenship.

TOKYO, JAPAN

1965: A parent of two and freelance stenographer for various international conferences, including the United Nations. Attends a ceremony at the Canadian embassy to see the new Canadian flag installed.

CHECK IT OUT:

TASHME STORIES - MARIE KATSUNO

http://tashme.ca/stories/tashme-stories-marie-katsuno/

FURTHER INFO:

- "Marie Katsuno". *Ohanashi* DVD series, Nikkei National Museum. Available through the Nikkei National Museum shop.

MARIE KAWAMOTO

Marie Katsuno was born Marie Kawamoto on November 8, 1923 at Vancouver General Hospital. She was an only child, and her family moved around a few times before buying a house in East Burnaby. They moved again to West Vancouver in 1934, because Marie had pneumonia and her doctor recommended sea air to help her get better. She and her family ended up living there in a small fishing community of Japanese immigrant families. Marie graduated from West Vancouver High School in 1941.

After Pearl Harbor, Marie and her parents quickly returned to their house in Burnaby. They got ready for the government to take them away by packing away precious things and supplies such as rice, in their garage and under their floorboards. Marie's father said that Japan had never lost a war, so he expected the family to be back in Burnaby in six months. Because Marie and her parents were in east Burnaby, far from the urban centre of Vancouver, they were among the last families to arrive in the Tashme internment camp in October 1942. They shared a tiny shack with another family, because smaller families had to share houses in Tashme. Since Marie was a high school graduate, she became a teacher to the children in Tashme and went to teacher training school in New Denver each summer. For four years, she taught everything from Grade 1 to high school, earning her teaching certificate along the way.

When the war ended, Marie's father wanted to return to Japan. Since they could not return to their home in Burnaby, Marie and her mother agreed to go with him. Marie, as an only child, also felt like she had to stay with her aging parents to help support them. Marie remembers sleeping in a former Japanese naval base when she first arrived in Japan, and later going to live with a relative in a suburb of Yokohama. The city itself had been flattened by bombs, a shocking sight that Marie never forgot.

Marie got an office job with the American military in Japan, and later worked for an American freight company. She met Peter Katsuno through this job. Peter was a Japanese American who had been visiting family in Japan when Pearl Harbor was attacked, leaving him stranded without a way to go from Japan to the United States. He was made to serve the Japanese army in China as an intelligence agent because of his English language ability. Peter and Marie got married in 1948 and had two children.

Although Marie still felt Canadian and Peter still felt American, they stayed in Japan to raise their family. This was partly because Peter had a successful career in international trading, and also because he had lost his United States citizenship. The United States revoked his citizenship because the Japanese government made him join their army and fight against the United States when he was stuck in Japan during the war. Peter tried to regain his US citizenship more than once, but his request was always rejected.

While Marie raised her two children with Peter, she also did freelance work as a stenographer in Tokyo for a variety of international conferences being held there. Marie has many exciting memories from this time, including working with United Nations Secretary-General U Thant, being part of the first foreign delegation to Korea after the Korean War, meeting Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau when he visited Japan, and attending a flag-changing ceremony at the Canadian embassy when Canada adopted its official flag.

Marie sometimes found it difficult to live and raise her children in Japan, because she didn't read Japanese very well and didn't always understand the culture, since she had grown up in Canada. But she enjoyed being active socially with other Canadian expatriates. She helped found the Canadian Women's Club in Tokyo, and volunteered with the Maple Bunko to help Japanese children with their English language skills.

In 1994, with the support of their children, Marie and Peter decided to return to North America to retire. They chose to settle in West Vancouver, because Marie was still a Canadian citizen, so it was easier than going to the United States where Peter's family was. Many of their neighbours in West Vancouver are former classmates of Marie's or went to the same high school. Marie and Peter's children and grandchildren live in Japan, but have visited Canada several times.

HIDE HYODO SHIMIZU

Pronunciation:
Hee-day Heeyoh-doh
She-me-zoo

Isami (Sam) Okamoto fonds, NNM 2000.14.1.1.1

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

HIDE HYODO SHIMIZU

Pronunciation: Hee-day Heeyoh-doh She-me-zoo

ANSWER KEY:

VANCOUVER, BC

1942: Commutes between Steveston and Hastings Park, pulling double shifts for work to make sure children held in Hastings Park are able to continue their education.

NEW DENVER, BC

1942-1945: While living in New Denver internment camp, travels between different camps in the BC interior to create curriculum and train volunteer teachers to run schools in these remote locations.

TORONTO, ONTARIO

1948: After moving to Toronto to go to art college, marries Reverend K. Shimizu, a widower with four children, and becomes active in the United Church community.

CHECK IT OUT:

NIKKEI STORIES:

Go to http://nikkeistories.com/ and scroll down the page to find a video about Hide Hyodo Shimizu under the “Steveston” section.

FURTHER READING:

- “Hide Hyodo Shimizu”. *Sounds Japanese Canadian to Me.* Nikkei National Museum. Podcast. http://centre.nikkeiplace.org/sjctm-podcast/episode-10/
- Moritsugu, Frank, and the Ghost Town Teachers Historical Society. *Teaching in Canadian Exile*. Toronto: The Ghost Town Teachers Historical Society, 2001.

HIDE HYODO SHIMIZU

Hide Hyodo was born in 1908, the first of eight children, and grew up in South Vancouver. She enrolled at the University of British Columbia in 1924, but left after one year to find work to help support her family. She ended up going to the Vancouver Normal School to get her teacher's certificate. After graduating, she couldn't find a job at first, but was later hired at Lord Byng Elementary School in Steveston. Hide soon realized that she had been hired because many of her young students were Japanese Canadians who spoke Japanese at home. White teachers at the school were having trouble communicating with them in English. The school assumed that Hide would be able to communicate with them in Japanese. However, Hide and her family had not had much interaction with the Japanese Canadian community while living in South Vancouver, which was far from the close-knit Powell Street neighbourhood. Hide only spoke English! Ironically, this incorrect assumption led to her becoming the first Japanese Canadian to work as a teacher in BC. Other Japanese Canadians who trained as teachers hadn't been able to find jobs because of anti-Japanese racism.

Hide became more involved in the Japanese Canadian community. In 1936, she joined a delegation of second-generation Japanese Canadians sent to Ottawa by the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League. They went to speak to a special parliamentary committee that was considering undoing restrictions that barred Japanese Canadians from the right to vote in elections. At the time, even people born in Canada were not allowed to vote if they had Japanese heritage. Hide joined Dr. Samuel Hayakawa, a linguistics professor, Dr. Edward Banno, a dentist, and Minoru Kobayashi, an insurance agent. The four of them were considered exemplary representatives of the kinds of citizens Japanese Canadians could be. The delegation made a very good impression on the parliamentary committee, who were surprised at their excellent English, but unfortunately, the anti-Asian MPs convinced the others not to reverse the restrictions on their voting rights.

In 1942, the Canadian government told Japanese Canadians that they had to move at least 100 miles inland from the coast. While they were getting internment camps ready, the government took thousands of Japanese Canadians from their homes and made them live in Vancouver's Hastings Park. Hide began to split her time between her classroom in Steveston and a makeshift school in Hastings Park, where she tried to keep the children there from having their education interrupted. As more and more Japanese Canadians were shipped off to internment camps and elsewhere, Hide's class in Steveston became almost empty. She ended up leaving her job there before the end of the school year to focus on teaching the growing number of children in Hastings Park. She stayed there even after her family had to leave for the Kaslo internment camp.

Eventually, Hide had to leave the coast as well. She went to the New Denver internment camp, where she became supervisor of education in all the camps. She created a concentrated teacher training program to prepare hundreds of brand-new teachers to teach school in the various internment camps with just two weeks of training. This "crash course" was later supplemented with intensive summer school for the teachers.

After leaving New Denver, Hide moved to Ontario, where she continued to help set up schools for Japanese Canadian children in more temporary camps, such as the former POW camp in Neys. After the end of the war, lots of places in Canada made rules against Japanese Canadians coming to live in their cities or towns, including Toronto. But Hide got special permission to move to Toronto to go to art school there. Later, she married Reverend Shimizu, and took on many responsibilities related to the United Church community. In 1982, she became a member of the Order of Canada for her remarkable work supervising the education of thousands of children in the internment camps.

MITS SUMIYA

Pronunciation:
Mih-ts Soo-me-yah

Mits in his UBC graduation regalia with wife Gloria (left) and Mary Kitagawa. NNM 2013.5.2.11

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

MICHIYOSHI "MITS" SUMIYA

Pronunciation: Mih-ts Me-chee-yo-she Soo-me-yah

ANSWER KEY:

VANCOUVER, BC

1942: Expelled from the University of British Columbia after one year of studies, and good marks, due to Japanese heritage. Refuses to be sent to road camps, naming rights as a loyal Canadian-born British subject.

ANGLER, ONTARIO

1946: Released from prisoner of war camp with a train ticket and $12 to help with transportation costs.

TORONTO, ONTARIO

1962: Takes time off from job at a lighting manufacturer to travel to Japan. Visits dying father and sees mother and siblings who were deported from Canada in 1946.

CHECK IT OUT:

UBC'S INTERVIEW WITH MITS SUMIYA

https://open.library.ubc.ca/clRcle/collections/ubclibraryandarchives/43377/items/1.0107961

FURTHER READING:

- Sumiya, Mits. "My UBC Convocation". *The Bulletin*. 30 Aug. 2012. http://jccabulletin-geppo.ca/my-ubc-convocation/
- *Sedai Project*: video of Mits. http://www.sedai.ca/archive/videos/mits/

MICHIYOSHI "MITS" SUMIYA

Mits Sumiya was born on November 22, 1922 in Cowan's Point, Bowen Island, a small island near West Vancouver. His father worked in the logging industry, so Mits and his family lived in a float house. The float house was built on top of four cedar logs tied together and floating in the ocean. Their house would be towed by tugboat to each different logging camp his father worked at. In 1930, Mits and his family moved to Vancouver so that Mits and his younger brothers and sisters could go to school. They attended Vancouver Central School and Lord Strathcona Senior Public School with a mixture of Japanese Canadian, Chinese Canadian, and European Canadian children. In Vancouver, Mits' father became a gardener, and his mother ran a rooming house.

When Mits was just eleven years old, he started working at a bowling alley every day after school and on Saturdays. He was saving up money so that he could go to university. In 1941, Mits graduated from Vancouver Technical School, and enrolled in the University of British Columbia. He planned to study engineering and become one of the first nuclear physicists. He had been a cadet at Vancouver Technical school, and he also enlisted in the basic training corps at UBC. Canada was at war in Europe, and Mits always thought he would eventually go overseas to serve his country.

After Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941, and Canada declared war on Japan, Japanese Canadians were not allowed to be outside after dark. This was particularly difficult in the dead of winter, and Mits regularly broke curfew so that he could continue to go to classes and write his final exams. On January 7, 1942, Mits and his fellow Japanese Canadians were expelled from UBC's military training corps. They were given permission to stay in Vancouver to finish their studies until the end of the term, but only until June. Despite his good marks, Mits was expelled from the university, along with his Japanese Canadian classmates - 76 students in all.

With his studies brought to a halt, Mits was ordered to go to a camp in the interior of BC to build roads along with other young, able-bodied Japanese Canadian men. But he refused because after all, he was not Japanese, but a Canadian born in Canada who had sworn allegiance to the British crown. As such, he believed that being forced into leaving his family to work at a road camp violated his rights. Because of his protest, the government sent him instead to a prisoner of war camp in Angler, Ontario.

At Angler, Mits worked in the quartermaster store which provided supplies to the prisoners. Many of the prisoners were Japanese nationals or sympathetic to Japan, but some were like Mits, protesting the violation of their rights as Canadians. Most of the prisoners in Angler spoke Japanese more than English, so Mits had to learn Japanese there. The camp was run by the military, and Mits was treated the same way as if he had been an enemy soldier captured on the battlefield. He was released from Angler in 1946, the year after the war ended, with nothing to show for his time there but a train ticket and $12 to cover expenses during transportation. He used this to pay for a cab fare, and made his way to a farm where he found work. Meanwhile, his parents, along with his brothers and sisters, were deported to Japan. He did not see them until 1962, when he travelled to Japan to visit his father on his deathbed.

Mits moved to Toronto in 1950 and got a job in a factory that made fluorescent lights. He married Gloria Sato in 1959 and took a new job as a designer and manager of product development for a lighting manufacturer. After Mits' father passed away in 1962, his mother and sister returned to Canada in 1965.

In 2012, Mits returned to Vancouver to receive an honorary degree from the University of British Columbia. This was 70 years after he was expelled and his studies cut short for no other reason than his Japanese heritage. He was one of just ten graduates who were still living and able to make the journey to accept their degrees in person.