

# MICHIKO “MIDGE” AYUKAWA

Pronunciation: Me-chee-koh Mih-dj Ah-you-kah-wah

## ANSWER KEY:

### ■ LEMON CREEK, BC

1944: Graduates from Grade 9 at a makeshift high school in the Lemon Creek internment camp.

### ■ NEYS, ONTARIO

1946: Lives in a former prisoner of war camp for about six weeks. Then resettles in Hamilton and enrolls in school there.

### ■ OTTAWA, ONTARIO

1953: After graduating from McMaster University with an honours bachelor's and master's degrees in Chemistry, starts a prestigious research job at the National Research Council.

## CHECK IT OUT:

### ■ NIKKEI IMAGES

Read Karen Kobayashi's eulogy of Midge in the Spring 2014 issue of Nikkei Images on the Nikkei Centre website.

<http://centre.nikkeiplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Volume-19-No.1.pdf>

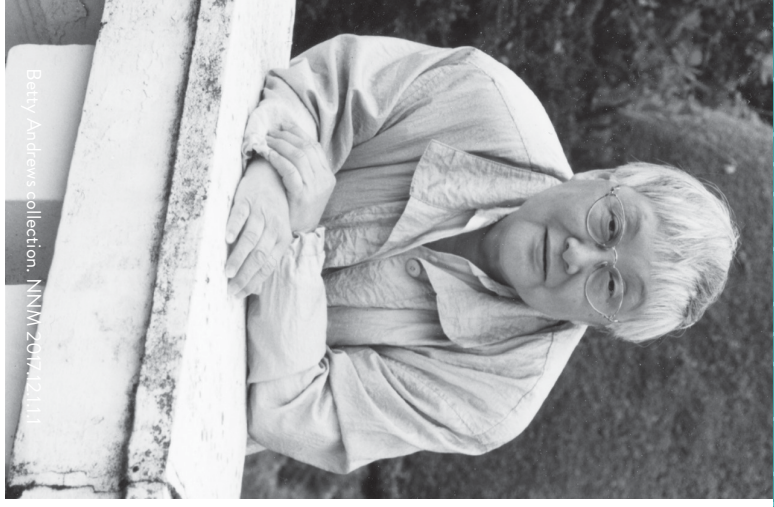
## FURTHER READING:

■ Midge Ayukawa. *Ohanashi: The Story of Our Elders*. Burnaby: Nikkei National Museum, 2008. DVD video interview.

■ “Interview with Midge Ayukawa”. Japanese Canadian Oral History collection, 1991. Audio recording. <http://digital.lib.sfu.ca/johc-44/interview-midge-ayukawa>

Pronunciation:  
Mih-dj Ah-you-kah-wah

MIDGE AYUKAWA



Betty Andrews collection. NNM 2017.02.11.1

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

## MICHIKO “MIDGE” AYUKAWA

Michiko “Midge” Ishii was born in Vancouver on June 26, 1930. Her parents were immigrants from Hiroshima prefecture in Japan. Her father was a carpenter, and she had three brothers. Her family lived in a house on East Georgia street in the Strathcona neighbourhood. Strathcona was next to the Powell Street area which was the centre of the Japanese Canadian community. Midge remembers playing with children of all backgrounds in her neighbourhood, and English being the common language amongst them. When she played with other Japanese Canadian children at Lord Strathcona Elementary School or the Vancouver Japanese Language School, she had trouble understanding their English mixed with Japanese.

In 1942, Midge’s father and eldest brother were separated from the family and sent to a road camp where they were forced to work on highway construction, and then later to Lemon Creek to help build an internment camp. The rest of the family joined them in the fall of that year, but since their house was not yet ready, they had to live in a tent with a dirt floor for a number of weeks.

Midge’s schooling was interrupted by her family’s forced relocation. After leaving Vancouver, she was unable to attend school until Lemon Creek Public School was set up in April of 1943. The students had to accelerate their studies to not fall behind by a year. [Midge was able to make up for the lost time and finish Grade 9 in June of 1944.](#) She was also active in the community, participating in school plays and playing the church organ for weddings and Sunday school.

Midge and her family were finally able to leave Lemon Creek in July 1946. They chose to stay in Canada, and move east of the Rocky Mountains, rather than be deported to Japan. [On their way to finding a more permanent home in the East, they spent about six weeks living in a camp that was formerly for German prisoners of war in Neys, Ontario. The camp had been turned into a resettlement hostel for Japanese Canadians after the end of the war.](#) Once they arrived at their new home in Hamilton, they had to report to the RCMP because they were Japanese Canadian. Readjusting to life outside the camps was difficult for teenaged Midge. She had gotten comfortable speaking in a mixture of Japanese and English with her friends in Lemon Creek and had to get used to speaking only in English. She was also determined to get the most out of her education, even though she experienced racism at her new school.

[After finishing high school, Midge worked to put herself through university, and earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees in chemistry in 1952 and 1953.](#) After completing her master’s, she moved to Ottawa by herself to work, starting a prestigious position at the National Research Council where she was the first woman to be hired in her department. She married Kaoru “Karl” Ayukawa in 1955 and had five children: two sons and three daughters.

In 1980, the Ayukawas returned to the west coast to live in Sooke, near Victoria on Vancouver Island. Karl became ill and passed away in 1981. In 1983, Midge travelled to Japan, where she became inspired to start a new career, studying Japanese Canadian history at the University of Victoria and eventually earning her PhD in 1997. Her master’s thesis looked at the experiences of Japanese Canadian picture brides. Her PhD dissertation was later published as a book, *Hiroshima Immigrants in Canada 1891-1941*. In her retirement, Midge had become a highly respected scholar and elder in the Japanese Canadian community. She passed away in 2013.

**TOMEKICHI HOMMA**

Pronunciation:  
Toh-meh-kee-chee Hoh-m-mah



# TOMEKICHI HOMMA

Pronunciation: Toh-meh-kee-chee Hoh-m-mah

## ANSWER KEY:

### ■ VANCOUVER, BC

1897: Opens a boarding house at the corner of Carrall and Pender streets for new Japanese immigrants.

### ■ VANCOUVER, BC

1900-1902: Challenges a provincial law that bars people of Asian ancestry from the right to vote. The Supreme Court of Canada agrees that the law isn't okay, but the Privy Council in London reverses the court's decision.

### ■ WEST VANCOUVER, BC

1915-1922: Conducts research and interviews for a Japanese encyclopaedia about Japanese immigrants who settled in Canada.

## CHECK IT OUT:

### ■ NIKKEI STORIES

Go to <http://nikkeistories.com/> and scroll down the page to find a video about Tomekichi Homma under the “Steveston” section.

## FURTHER READING:

- Homma, K.T., and C.G. Isaksson. *Tomekichi Homma: the Story of a Canadian*. Surrey: Hancock House Publishers Ltd, 2008.

# TOMEKICHI HOMMA

Tomekichi “Tomey” Homma was born in 1865 in Chiba-ken, Japan. He came to Canada in 1883, at the age of eighteen, and went on to become an important leader of the early Japanese Canadian community. As the first president of the Japanese Fishermen’s Benevolent Society from 1887-1899, he helped establish the first Japanese language school in Richmond, as well as the Fishermen’s Hospital. The Fishermen’s Hospital provided public health care for Japanese and non-Japanese community members alike, decades before the government of Canada introduced their public system.

Tomekichi became a naturalized British subject (a Canadian citizen) in 1896. In 1897, he got married and moved from the fishing community of Steveston to Vancouver. In Vancouver, he kept busy by helping to publish the community newsletter *Dai Nippon*, manufacturing and selling tofu, and starting a social club. [He also ran a Japanese restaurant and a boarding house at the corner of Carrall and Pender streets for new Japanese immigrants.](#)

In 1900, Tomekichi tried to have his name added to the provincial voters’ list for government elections, but he was rejected because of his Japanese heritage. Even though he was Canadian, there was a law in British Columbia at the time that barred anyone of Chinese, Japanese, or South Asian heritage from voting in elections, even if they had sworn loyalty to Canada and the British Empire like Tomekichi had. [Tomekichi decided to challenge this racist law by taking his case to the Supreme Court of Canada.](#) The Supreme Court agreed with Tomekichi that the law was a bad one, but the province then took the case to the Privy Council in England. Because Canada was a colony of Britain, the British Privy Council had the final word on anything to do with Canada. The Privy Council agreed with the government, and let them continue to treat Canadian citizens differently based on race.

Tomekichi moved to West Vancouver in 1909 with his wife and children, where he worked as a night watchman for the Great Northern Cannery. [He continued to be active in the community by gathering information and conducting interviews for a Japanese-language book about immigrants to Canada. The book was published in Tokyo.](#) In 1929, he suffered from two strokes, and needed to be cared for by his family afterwards. In 1942, he, along with his wife, three of his children, and his eldest son’s family were forced to leave West Vancouver for Popoff internment camp; the rest of his children were sent to other camps. Tomekichi was again disappointed in the way that the Canadian government refused to treat him like a true Canadian, a status he had held proudly for over forty years. He died in 1945, still living in internment.

Tomekichi’s legacy continued after his death: in 1949, Japanese Canadians were finally granted the right to vote. Tomekichi’s son Seiji, by that time president of the British Columbia Japanese Canadian Citizens’ Association, was among the first to hear the news. And in 1991, Tomekichi Homma Elementary School in Richmond, BC was named in his honour.

# KOICHI “KAYE” KAMINISHI

Pronunciation: Koh-ee-chee Kay Kah-me-nee-she

## ANSWER KEY:

### ■ VANCOUVER, BC

1942: Knowing that young Japanese Canadian men are being forced to build highways in the interior of BC, hides from government authorities for two months to avoid being taken away to a road camp.

### ■ EAST LILLOOET, BC

1943: While living in a self-supporting internment camp, organizes a baseball team which plays friendly games with the townspeople of Lillooet.

### ■ KAMLOOPS, BC

1947: Plays baseball for the Kamloops CYO in the Okanagan City League, and is the only Japanese Canadian on the team.

## CHECK IT OUT:

### ■ NIKKEI STORIES:

Go to <http://nikkeistories.com/> and watch the video “Asahi”

## FURTHER READING:

■ *Asahi: Canadian Baseball Legends*. Nikkei National Museum online exhibit. <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/virtual-exhibits/exhibit/asahi-canadian-baseball-legends/>

■ Shimokura, Howard. “The Last Living Asahi: Kaye Kaminishi”. *Nikkei Images* 20.3: Fall 2015. Nikkei National Museum. <http://centre.nikkeiplace.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Volume-20-No.3.pdf>



Reggie Yasui collection, NNMW 2010.26-31

Pronunciation:  
Kay Kah-me-nee-she

KAYE KAMINISHI

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

# KOICHI “KAYE” KAMINISHI

Kaye Kaminishi was born in Vancouver in on January 11, 1922. He was sent to Japan as a child for his education. His father, Kannosuke Kaminishi, was a prominent businessman who co-owned the Japanese Canadian-run Royston Lumber Company on Vancouver Island. His father died when Kaye was 11, so Kaye returned to Canada to be with his mother and help her run the family's boarding house on Dunlevy Street in East Vancouver.

Kaye had learned to play baseball in Japan, and when he got to Canada, he soon joined the local Buddhist league of Japanese Canadian youth teams. His heroes were the members of the Asahi team, an all Japanese Canadian team who won citywide championships against bigger white opponents. The Asahi were admired by both Japanese and non-Japanese Canadians for their skill and strategy. In 1939, Kaye's dream came true and he joined the Asahi baseball team. He played with them for two seasons. In 1941, he travelled to Japan with his mother. It was hard for them to return home, but they caught one of the last boats to Vancouver in October 1941. Soon after, Kaye's Asahi days were permanently cut short when Canada declared war on Japan in December 1941, and subsequent racist policies forced Japanese Canadians to leave their homes on the west coast.

In 1942, the government started to force young Japanese Canadian men to go to the interior of BC and build roads. **But Kaye knew he needed to help his mother put their boarding house in order before they both had to leave the coast. So he hid from the government for two months while they prepared to leave.** Kaye and his mother eventually went to the East Lillooet self-supporting internment camp in the interior of British Columbia. Self-supporting meant that residents had to pay for everything themselves instead of getting help from the government. In return, they had slightly more freedom than in government-run internment camps. It also meant that Kaye was allowed to stay with his mother, rather than go to a road camp.

The new camp settlement of East Lillooet was connected to the existing town of Lillooet by a bridge across the Fraser River. At first, the people living in Lillooet did not let Japanese Canadians into their town. **It was only after Kaye organized a softball team of East Lillooet residents and challenged their neighbours in Lillooet to a friendly game that Japanese Canadians were allowed across the bridge.** This was the beginning of friendly relations between the two towns.

In 1947, the war was over, but Japanese Canadians still weren't allowed to return to the west coast. Kaye's father's business had been sold by the government without Kaye or his mother's permission. They got almost no money from the sale, even after appealing to the government through the Bird Commission. **At age 25, Kaye left East Lillooet for Kamloops. He joined the Kamloops CYO baseball team in the Okanagan City League. Unlike his Asahi days, Kaye was the only Japanese Canadian on his team.** Here, he got the nickname "The Vacuum Cleaner" for his skill in the field. As he got older, Kaye retired from baseball, got married, and raised a family. He continued to play sports, however, including competitive badminton: for ten years from 1971-1980, he and his partner were men's doubles champions in the BC Senior Games.

In 1992, Pat Adachi published the book *Asahi: A Legend in Baseball* about the history of the Vancouver Asahi baseball team. The book about Kaye and his teammates inspired movies, books, and museum exhibits in Canada and Japan. The Asahi were also inducted into the BC Sports Hall of Fame and Canada's Baseball Hall of Fame. Kaye himself was inducted into the Kamloops Sports Hall of Fame in 2011.

In 2017, Kaye Kaminishi, who still lives in Kamloops, is the last surviving member of the Asahi baseball team. He is something of a celebrity with all the recent interest in the Asahi team, and has been invited multiple times by the Vancouver Canadians baseball team to throw a ceremonial first pitch at their games.

# TSUKIYE “MURIEL” KITAGAWA

Pronunciation: Tsoo-kee-eh Myou-ree-elle Kee-tah-gah-wah

## ANSWER KEY:

### ■ VANCOUVER, BC

1942: Receives special permit to relocate with husband and children to Toronto.

### ■ TORONTO, ONTARIO

1943: House in Vancouver is sold by government without permission. Writes letters to government officials protesting this violation of citizenship rights.

### ■ TORONTO, ONTARIO

1947: Becomes managing editor for *Nisei Affairs* magazine.

## CHECK IT OUT:

### ■ REMARKABLE WOMEN:

<https://remarkablewomen2014.wordpress.com/>

Find Muriel's profile on this website honouring remarkable women who lived in Vancouver.

## FURTHER READING:

- Kitagawa, Muriel. *This is My Own: Letters to Wes & Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-1948*. Ed. Roy Miki. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985.

Pronunciation:  
Myou-tree-elle Kee-tah-gah-wah

MURIEL KITAGAWA

Kitagawa family photograph. NNM.2017Z.1.1



UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

# TSUKIYE “MURIEL” KITAGAWA

Muriel Kitagawa was born Tsukiye Muriel Fujiwara in 1912 in Vancouver. She was the eldest of five children born to Japanese immigrant parents. Her family moved many times in her childhood to different places around the coast of British Columbia, looking for ways to support themselves. As a young adult, Muriel became a voice for her peers, the *nisei* (Canadian-born generation of Japanese Canadians). She helped start the monthly community newspaper *The New Age*, which was by and for the younger generation of Japanese Canadians.

Muriel married Ed Kitagawa, star player of the well-loved Japanese Canadian Asahi baseball team and one of her colleagues from *The New Age*, in 1933. *The New Age* only lasted one year, but after that another newspaper, *The New Canadian*, started, and Muriel wrote for them.

In 1941, Muriel was a young mother of two, and bedridden because of a difficult third pregnancy. In January 1942, she gave birth to twins. This was right after Canada declared war on Japan. Japanese Canadians were worried and uncertain at this time because the government was putting many new restrictions on them. Muriel's letters from this time show her concern for her brother, Wes, who was in Toronto studying to be a doctor, as well as for her father and two other brothers. Moreover, Muriel and her family were cut off from all news of her mother and sister, who were visiting Japan at the time of Pearl Harbor.

When Japanese Canadians were ordered to leave their homes on the west coast, [Muriel and her family were able to get special permits to join her brother Wes in Toronto](#), so they were able to avoid the extreme conditions of the internment camps in the interior of BC. Muriel and her husband Ed had to leave behind their East Vancouver house. It was supposed to be held in trust by the government along with other major assets belonging to Japanese Canadians. [In 1943, the government sold these assets, such as houses, farms, fishing boats, and cars, without the permission of their owners, and for much less than their market value.](#) Muriel was among hundreds of Japanese Canadians to protest the loss of their hard-earned property, and to try to get it back, without success.

Muriel became involved with the displaced Japanese Canadian community in Toronto. [She became a writer and later managing editor for the newsletter \*Nisei Affairs\*](#), published by the Japanese Canadian Citizens for Democracy. She lived in Toronto for the rest of her life. She found many ways to keep busy: she read avidly about history and politics, listened to opera and classical music, and learned how to design dresses. She sewed many items of clothing for her family and friends, including wedding gowns for two of her daughters. She also became active in the local Catholic community, and worked for several years at the Catholic Communications Centre. She passed away in 1974 just before what would have been her 62nd birthday.

In 1985, Roy Miki, with the support and help of Muriel's widowed husband Ed and her brother Wes Fujiwara, gathered some of her writing from the 1940s. This included articles she wrote for *The New Canadian* and *Nisei Affairs*, parts of unpublished manuscripts, and personal letters. Roy introduced this body of work with a biography of Muriel and an introduction to the historical context of her writing. He also included the National Association of Japanese Canadians' Call for Redress, part of their campaign for the government to acknowledge the injustices committed against Japanese Canadians like Muriel in the 1940s. Eleven years after her death, Muriel Kitagawa became known as an eloquent voice for her generation, the hardships they endured, and the case for redress, which was successfully achieved in 1988.

Pronunciation:  
Ah-rt Mee-kee

ART MIKI



# ARTHUR “ART” KAZUMI MIKI

Pronunciation: Are-th-ur Ah-rt Kah-zoo-mee Mee-kee

## ANSWER KEY:

### ■ STE. AGATHE, MANITOBA

1942: Living on a sugar beet farm with extended family: seven adults and three children live in a four-room house. Mother needs special permission from RCMP to travel to Winnipeg to give birth to younger brother, Roy.

### ■ WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

1962: Graduates from teachers’ college and becomes a teacher, later a vice principal and principal.

### ■ OTTAWA, ONTARIO

1988: As president of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, signs a Redress agreement with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. The agreement acknowledges the injustices committed against Japanese Canadians under the War Measures Act and provides community and individual compensation to all affected Japanese Canadians who are still alive.

## CHECK IT OUT:

### ■ NIKKEI STORIES:

Go to <http://nikkeistories.com/> and find the video about Redress.

## FURTHER READING:

- Ibuki, Norm. “Art Miki: Canadian Redress Leader and Human Rights Champion”. Parts 1-3. *Discover Nikkei*. Japanese American National Museum, January 2016. <http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/2016/1/12/art-miki-1/>

UNFOLD FOR ANSWER KEY

## ARTHUR “ART” KAZUMI MIKI

Arthur “Art” Miki was born in Vancouver in 1936. He was the firstborn child, followed by younger brother, Kunio, and sister, Joan. When his family was living in a logging camp, he was seriously hurt in an accident as a very young child. After that, they went to live on his grandfather’s farm in the Fraser Valley, where he started kindergarten. **In 1942, when Art’s family was forced to leave the coast, they made the choice to work on sugar beet farms in the rural settlement of Ste. Agathe, Manitoba rather than go to camps in the interior of BC.** On the sugar beet farms their family could stay together and would not be sent into separate camps. During this time, his mother gave birth to another younger brother, Roy. Because of rules restricting travel for Japanese Canadians, Art’s mother had to get special permission to travel to the hospital in Winnipeg where she could safely give birth.

In 1948, Japanese Canadians didn’t have to get special permission to live within Winnipeg city limits anymore, and so Art’s family bought a house in the poor part of town. Art worked part-time jobs while he was in high school, and paid his own way through university. **Originally planning to become an engineer, he soon switched to teaching, and graduated in 1962.** Art later got a degree in Science as well as a Masters in Education while working as a teacher. He eventually became a vice-principal and then a principal.

Art was also heavily involved in the Japanese Canadian community. He first joined the board of the Manitoba Japanese Canadian Citizens’ Association at the age of 26, and went on to serve two separate terms as president. In 1984, he became president of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC). As NAJC president, he led the campaign to lobby the Canadian government for redress - compensation for the Canadian government’s unjust treatment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. **In 1988, after years of campaigning for support among Japanese Canadians and the general public, as well as negotiations with the government, the NAJC signed a redress settlement with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.** The settlement awarded each individual Japanese Canadian affected by the government’s discriminatory policies a symbolic compensation of \$21,000 for the loss of their basic and legal rights.

Art became a member of the Order of Canada in 1991. Here is his citation:

A Winnipeg school teacher by profession, he has been involved in many educational initiatives and has also played an active role in multicultural organizations at the local, provincial and national level. As the President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, he was a respected spokesperson during the negotiations for redress for Japanese Canadians.

Art retired from teaching in 1993. From 1998-2008, he served as a Canadian citizenship judge. In this role, he helped thousands of people become Canadian citizens. He also shared his family’s story with these new Canadians.