



Nikkei Images

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Preserving Family Photographs

by Shane Foster, JCNMAS Archivist

Background

Traditionally, people have considered photographs to be among their most cherished possessions. They represent a continuity to their past and are reminders of important events, activities and people in their lives. The photographic collection in the Japanese Canadian National Museum & Archives Society is our most frequently used type of archival resource. Researchers coming into the Archives often sit for hours viewing our images, visually obtaining insight into the Japanese Canadian community.

One of the major responsibilities of the JCNMAS is to preserve our photographic collection for the benefit of future generations. Once photographs are donated to the JCNMAS, it is our duty as a professional institution to minimize the deterioration process. Through experience, we have found that most people are unaware of how to preserve their own photographic collections that are often stored in dresser drawers, basements and on bookshelves.

During the past 100 years, different types of photographic equipment and processes have been used. Albumen prints that were common at the end of the last century do not resemble Polaroid

prints of today with regard to compositional makeup. Although this makes preserving photographs a challenge, there are some basic steps which can be applied to preserving all graphic images. The collections of photographs donated by individuals and families to the JCNMAS come in various states of condition, size and type. We often receive images which have been gathered together in a shoebox or album, and are in good or bad condition depending on the attention that they have received from their owners.

Photographic Preservation

One of the first steps in photograph preservation is to assess the condition of a collection. For example, I check to see whether photographs are being damaged by the way they are stored, or whether damage has occurred to a photograph by ink, humidity, glue, scotch tape, insects, or mould. For individuals with their own collection at home, it is important to pay attention to any signs that your collection is deteriorating. The best method to pre-

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vent deterioration is to properly care for and store images from the start.

Knowing how to preserve a collection of photographs is to know

Knowing how to preserve a collection of photographs is to know what not to do.

what not to do. Like all paper based products, photographs are easily damaged by humidity, acidity and light. Photographs need to be kept in a dark, dry, safe place that is not infested by insects or rodents. Because of the many chemicals such as bleaches and dyes that are used to make paper products, photographs do not react well to acidic conditions. Keeping photographs in regular mailing envelopes, office file folders, plastic binders or in dresser drawers will cause the images to react to other chemicals emitted by their environment. To ensure the lifespan of an image, it is important to store photographs in acid free envelopes or in albums. Acid-free envelopes can be purchased from a local distributor of archival supplies or from various photographic businesses.

Contact the Museum & Archives office for other archival tips and for information on where to find acid-free photographic products.

"Peel and Stick Albums"

One of the most harmful practices of storing photographs is to put them into "peel and stick albums". Due to various chemical reactions, the adhesive which is used on the album pages will "eat"

album pages as tape and glue also cause chemical deterioration.

Evidence of damage is regularly seen at the Japanese Canadian Museum and Archives. When the Archives receives a donation, nine times out of ten, the images in "peel and stick" albums will be faded and/or stuck to its' pages, while photographs in older albums with



Peel and stick albums will destroy your photographs. A "plain" album with "corners" will keep your photographs in better condition.

through the backing of photographs, ultimately destroying them. Likewise, the plastic which overlays the photograph is also chemically unstable, and will cause the image to fade. The plastic covering also reacts with the adhesive and over time, will become brittle and crack.

An alternative to using a "peel and stick" type of album, is to use a plain album which uses "old-fashioned" paper corners to hold images. In fact, many photography stores sell these "plain" albums along with acid-free pages to insert in them. Using "old-fashioned" corners is far better than using scotch tape, glue or other kinds of adhesives to stick your photographs to

corners will be in almost perfect condition.

Documenting your Photographs

When writing down the names of people, places and dates on a photograph, it is very important not to write on the image (the front side of the picture) in ink. The chemicals in ink will cause it to deteriorate. In addition, by altering the front of an image, one is ultimately harming its integrity by changing it for the use of others. Instead, by lightly writing in-

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formation with a very soft leaded pencil (such as a 6B) on the back of a photograph, important facts can be noted without potentially harming the image.

Colour Photographs

Since the 1950s and 1960s, there have been billions of colour photographs produced. Prior to these dates, taking a photograph was primarily considered a means to formally document important individuals or events. Taking photographs is no longer a luxury — almost everyone owns a camera, snapping pictures of everything in sight.

As a result of the proliferation of colour photographs, problems have occurred in preserving them. The processes for developing colour photographs are much more complicated than their black and white counterparts. The chemicals which are used

to produce colour are extremely unstable, making the life-span of photographs much shorter than those taken in the early 1900s for example.

There are very few practical solutions for ensuring the longevity of colour images. Aside from storing them in an acid-free environment, the only other method is to store them in "cold-storage". In many archives, colour photographs are kept in cold storage envelopes in a frost-free deep freezer. This can increase the longevity of an image up to 50 years or more. Most people with photographs in their home would not consider this to be an option. Considering the amount of colour photographs that are taken every year, who has the time or energy to freeze them? A more practical approach would be to store colour photographs in a dry and cool place and away from bright light. This will help to decrease the speed of their deterioration.

Summary of Tips for Preserving Photographs

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☞ Periodically check photographs to see if they are being damaged by their environment. | ☞ rodents. |
| ☞ Store photographs in acid-free envelopes, boxes or albums. | ☞ Do not store photographs in "peel and stick" albums. |
| ☞ Do not store original photographs in a lighted environment. | ☞ Use "old-fashioned" corners, not glue or tape to place photographs in albums. |
| ☞ Store photographs in a cool, dry location. | ☞ Only write on the back of a photograph when necessary by using a soft-leaded pencil. |
| ☞ Store photographs in a location which is not infested by insects or | ☞ Store negatives and prints separately. |
| | ☞ Do not touch negatives with bare hands. |

Negatives

Like photographs, negatives have their own preservation needs. It is very important not to handle a negative with bare hands or write on the surface of a negative with ink as these actions will damage it, leaving noticeable marks on a print. It is also important to remember to store negative separately from photographs, as there can be a chemical reaction between the two. Store negatives in either acid-free envelopes or in acid-free negative holders, both of which can be purchased from either photography or archival supply outlets. This option may cost a bit more and take more time than other methods, but the benefits far outweigh the effort.

Conclusion

While there are many factors to consider when preserving your photographic collections, do not become intimidated — photographs are meant to be enjoyed, not feared. By attempting to practice at least some of these practical guidelines, you will be able to maintain your images for years to come.

If you have any questions about preserving your own family collection of photographs, please contact us at the JCNMAS office or phone your local community archives.





Welcome to our New Board Members!

On October 5, 1997 the JCNMAS had its Annual General Meeting. We say good-bye to some of our dedicated Directors who have greatly assisted us over the last year, and look forward to becoming acquainted with the new Directors of our Society.



*Many thanks to the 1996-97 Board of Directors.
back, l to r: Eric Sokugawa, Yosh Kariatsumari, Frank Kamiya, David Yamaura, Ray Ota; front, l to r: Wes Fujiwara, Mary Seki, Suzi Nitta Petersen, Judy Inouye;
absent: Art Miki, Dick Nakamura and David Fujiwara*



*Our Board of Directors for 1997-1998.
back, l to r: Eric Sokugawa, Frank Kamiya, David Yamaura, Ray Ota; front, l to r: Marilyn Sakiyama, Yosh Kariatsumari, Joseph Fry, Midge Ayukawa;
absent: Art Miki, Dick Nakamura, Roy Hamaguchi, Karen Hayashi and Toyo Takata.*

Here are the biographies of the new Directors on our Board.

Midge (Michiko) Ayukawa (nee Ishii) was born in Vancouver and spent the war-time years in Lemon Creek, B.C. After earning her Masters of Science degree in Chemistry from McMaster University, she worked at the National Research Council in Ottawa, resigning in 1955 to raise her family. Since the 1970s she worked part-time as a chemistry laboratory instructor at Carleton University and at the University of Victoria. From 1984 Midge studied history at the University of Victoria and received her PhD in 1997 on the history of Hiroshima immigrants to Canada.

Midge is now devoting herself to Taoist Tai Chi, volunteer work, and her

special interest, Japanese Canadian history.

Joseph Fry was born and raised in Northern Ontario, moving to Vancouver in 1994 after graduating from the University of Guelph Landscape Architecture program. Since arriving on the west coast, he has been involved in various events in the Japanese Canadian community including the Powell Street Festival and briefly with the Katari Taiko Drum Ensemble. Joseph has also pursued projects that will commemorate the Japanese Canadian internment through garden design and landscape architecture, both

in British Columbia and Ontario.

Joseph, whose grandparents (John and Ruth Maebe) lived in the Powell Street area prior to the war, looks forward to contributing to the JCNMAS and talking about heritage issues with members of the Japanese Canadian community, particularly with others of the Sansei generation.

Roy Hamaguchi was born at Steveston, B.C. and was educated at the University of British Columbia in Engineering Physics and at the University of Rochester at Rochester.

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JCNMAS Oral History Project

By Minnie Hattori, JCNMAS Oral History Coordinator



The JCNMAS Oral History Project began in 1981 and has endeavoured to preserve the life stories of our elders for future generations. Today, our collection consists of approximately 350 oral history interviews. These resources at the Japanese Canadian National Museum and Archives provides students, scholars, film makers and the general public with a wealth of information and first hand accounts of Japanese Canadian history.

Through the spoken word, artifacts, documents and photographs, the JCNMAS can help retrace the challenges faced by Japanese Canadian pioneers. The oral histories begin with dreams of a new life in a new country and chronicles the building of families and communities, as well as contributions made to the fishing, farming and forestry industries. The collection also includes accounts of the hardships experienced

during the Internment era and the Community's subsequent resettlement. We must pass on these stories because they are a part of us.

The JCNMAS continues to conduct interviews and needs your assistance. If you are interested in volunteering to take part in conducting interviews please contact Minnie Hattori at (604) 591-3177. Also, to help us gather more information on the history of Japanese Canadians, do not delay in talking to your parents, grandparents and other relatives. Write down as much information as possible. If this information is not gathered, your descendants and future generations may never know about their ancestors. It is an important legacy to pass on to your children and your children's children.

The JCNMAS records the life stories of people in our past, so that we may share them with the those in the present and future.

Excerpt from Tosh Mukaida and Frank Araki Oral Interview

"... Falling was the most dangerous if you didn't know what you were doing. It's probably still the most dangerous... This camp on Vancouver Island, they used to kill about a faller a week. Now-a-days when someone gets killed, you shut the whole operation down. In the old days if someone gets killed they just drag them to one side and then they'd take them down when the crew goes down ..."



*Tosh Mukaida (left) and Frank Araki (centre) being interviewed by Minnie Hattori (right) on March, 1994. The interviewees talked about their experiences in Mission City and Whonnock, B.C. Both men were involved in the sawmill and logging industries.
Photo: Yosh Kariatsumari*

Minnie Hattori has been involved with our organization as a Committee Member since 1991. She is currently the JCNMAS' Office Assistant



Powell Street — A Photographic Record

by Judy Inouye

After the recent JCNMAS Annual General Meeting, Judy Inouye and Shirley Kakutani presented a slide tour of the pre-war Powell Street area. Shirley and members of the audience provided a lively commentary to the program and told many stories about life in the pre-war community. The slides included those made from archival photographs and new slides which are a part of a JCNMAS project to make a photographic record of the still existing pre-war Powell Street area buildings.

For a number of years, JCNMAS and its predecessor organizations have felt an urgency to record the images of these old buildings. Many buildings have already fallen under the wrecking ball to make way for redevelopment and others are in various states of deterioration. So, when Roy Hamaguchi, a professional photographer (and recently elected Board member of the JCNMAS) offered his services to take on the project, we jumped at the chance.

In September, Roy, accompanied by Beverley Inouye as advisor, went down to Powell Street to work on the Project. Beverley watched for traffic as the intrepid photographer stood out in the middle of the busy street to capture the best shots; Roy — ever the professional, asked Beverley to make sure that she rescue his camera if he were run over by a truck! Beverley, who has been a tour leader of the Powell Street Historical Walking Tour over the past two years, advised

Roy on which buildings to photograph and relayed to him the stories told on the Tour. Roy and Beverley went down to the Powell Street area on two days and took approximately 70 black and white photographs and slides. All of the pre-war buildings in the 100 to 400 blocks of Powell Street were documented as were significant buildings on Alexander, Cordova, Dunlevy, Gore and Princess.

From information provided to us



by Dr. Audrey Kobayashi (Director of the Institute of Women's Studies and a Professor of Geography at Queen's University) during the Powell Street Festival, we gained an appreciation of the significance of features in dating the buildings. Consequently, Roy was asked to take close-up shots of features such as wooden sidings and roof ornamentation. According to Audrey, the type of wooden siding used on a building indicates when a structure was built: shiplap siding was used on pre-1900 buildings and clapboard siding dated buildings from 1900-1910. Roof ornamentation also reveals when a structure was

built. Add-ons are another interesting feature of buildings in the Powell Street area. Some buildings started out as residential buildings with yards in front and back. As these were turned into shops, the buildings were added onto, and in many instances, false fronts were added to provide a commercial look. Roy's photographs have captured some interesting examples of this type of structure.

With the completion of the photographic part of the Project, the JCNMAS has gained a valuable resource. The next stage will be to collect and write the histories of the buildings. To do this we will need the assistance of the Japanese Canadian community. If you have any information on pre-war Powell Street, please contact us at the JCNMAS office.

Many thanks to Roy Hamaguchi and Beverley Inouye for their work on the Project and thanks to Shirley Kakutani and audience members for their participation in the slide Tour of Powell Street.

Roy Hamaguchi is a new Board Member of the JCNMAS. You can read about him on page 4.

Beverley Inouye is a volunteer of the JCNMAS and is the co-Chairperson of the Japanese Canadian War Memorial Committee.



(Continued from page 4)

New York in Optical Engineering.

Roy was employed in Aerospace and high-tech companies in eastern Canada and in B.C. Presently, his interests include natural history, nature photography and Arctic travel. Roy is currently represented by an international stock agency for his photographic work and has visited the Canadian high Arctic four times.

Karen Hayashi is currently a PhD candidate in Social Gerontology at Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B.C. Her research is related to ethnicity, aging, and family. Prior to her doctoral studies, she was actively involved in the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto and was the Project Director for Support Service and Program Development at the Momiji Seniors' Centre.

In her studies into aging in Asian Canadian families, she has long recognized the importance of documenting and recording the individual and collective historical experiences of all generations of Japanese Canadians. As a Sansei academic, she hopes that her knowledge and research capabilities will be of benefit to the JCNMAS as it moves toward the establishment of a national museum and archives for the Japanese Canadian community.

Marilyn Sakiyama is originally

from southern Ontario, but has lived in Steveston with her husband, Butch, for the past 9 years. Her interest in JC history grew from the stories she had heard from neighbours, friends and her extended family about the experiences of Japanese residents of Steveston.

Marilyn is the Director of Client Services for the Muscular Dystrophy Association of Canada and has considerable experience working with boards of non-profit organizations. She has a B.A. in psychology and has recently completed a certificate program in Non-Profit and Voluntary Organization Management at Simon Fraser University.

Toyo Takata is a Nisei born in Esquimalt, B.C., where he had spent most of his early years until the Internment era during World War II.

The author of the acclaimed book **Nikkei Legacy**, Toyo was the English editor of *The New Canadian* newspaper between (1948-52) and has been active with the Japanese Canadian community in Toronto. Toyo has served as the President of the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre and was instrumental in originating the Japanese Canadian Centennial in 1977. Toyo currently lives in Don Mills, Ontario. (Information obtained from a biography about Toyo Takata in **Nikkei Legacy**).

Topaz '98 Reunion and Bus Tour

On May 29-31, 1998, former members of the Topaz California internment camp will be having a reunion at San Jose, California. In 1997, the Topaz Reunion was held in Vancouver and a dinner was partly sponsored by the JCNMAS. The Topaz '98 Reunion Committee has cordially invited individuals from Canada to attend next years event.

Depending on the level of interest, the JCNMAS will be organizing a bus trip to the reunion at San Jose and then to visit the Japanese American National Museum at Los Angeles.

If you are interested in a bus tour or in the reunion itself please contact either Frank Kamiya (604) 929-4476 or the JCNMAS office (604) 874-8090 for more information.



JCNMAS Wish List

We are desperately seeking the following items for our Museum & Archives. We appreciate all of your generous donations (A tax deductible receipt can be supplied upon request for certain items):

Collection Supplies

- Polaroid camera
- audio tape transcriber
- audio-visual cart on wheels

Exhibition Supplies

- pliers
- hammer

- wrench
- electric drill
- hand saw

Education Supplies

- slide projector and screen
- VHS video-tape recorder
- overhead projector

- English dictionary and thesaurus

Office Supplies

- printer switch box
- printer cables for IBM computer
- automatic drip coffee maker
- legal size file cabinet



Thank you from the JCNMAS

Financial Donors (May/97-October/97)

We gratefully acknowledge the receipt of financial donations from these individuals and organizations:

| | |
|--|---|
| Mr. Mark T. Ando | Ms. Florence Mitani |
| Mr. and Mrs. Tsuguo and Grace Arai and Family | Ms. Lillian Morishita |
| Mrs. Midge Ayukawa | Mr. George Nakamura |
| Canadian Business English Institute Inc. | Mr. and Mrs. Toshio and Naraye Odamura |
| Mr. and Mrs. Alan and Ruriko Davis | Mr. and Mrs. C.H. and Setsuko Okabe |
| Mr. David Fujiwara | Mr. and Mrs. Toyo and Martha Takata |
| Mrs. Susan Hidaka | Mr and Mrs. Frank and Mary Takayesu |
| Ms. Beverly Inouye | Mr. Sam Yamamoto |
| Mr. and Mrs. Peter and Marie Katsuno | |
| Mr. Masanobu Kawahira | |

New and Renewing Members of the JCNMAS (May/97-October/97)

| | |
|--|--|
| Kamloops Chapter of the NAJC | Ms. Lillian Morishita |
| Mr. and Mrs. Tsuguo and Grace Arai and Family | Mrs. Kassie Sanmiya Nakamura & Shirley Nakamura |
| Dr. Midge Ayukawa | Ms. Liz Nunoda |
| Mr. and Mrs. Alan and Ruriko Davis and Family | Mr. and Mrs. Toshio and Naraye Odamura |
| Mr. Joseph Fry | Ms. Iko Ohashi |
| Drs. Wesley and Misao Fujiwara | Mrs. Marilyn Sakiyama and Family |
| Mr. and Mrs. Randy Kamiya | Dr. Toshiji Sasaki |
| Mr. and Mrs. Peter and Marie Katsuno | Mrs. Mary Seki |
| Ms. Mary Kawamoto | Ms. Yuki Shimomura |
| Mrs. Mary Kazuta | Mrs. Gloria Stevenson |
| Dr. Audrey Kobayashi | Mr. and Mrs. Toyo and Martha Takata |
| Ms. Karen Kobayashi | Mr and Mrs. Frank and Mary Takayesu |
| Mr. and Mrs. James Lee and Family | Mrs. Michiko Uyeno |
| Ms. Cathy Makihara | Mr. Sam Yamamoto |
| Mrs. Reiko Matsuo | |
| Ms. Florence Mitani | |

Events Calendar

December 29, 1997: 12:00-4:00
P.M. **Mochitsuki Taikai**.
Vancouver Japanese Language
School & Japanese Hall (475
Alexander Street). Contact
Japanese Language School for
further details. Tel.: (604) 254-
2551

February, 1998. **JCNMAS Open
House**. Contact JCNMAS for
date and time.

May 29-31, 1998. **Topaz
Internment Camp Reunion** at
San Jose, California. Contact
JCNMAS for further details.

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