PNIKKEINIKKEI national museum & cultural centre IMAGES



Building B", Registration and Custodian Departments (formerly Horse Show Building)"; Hastings Park, Vancouver, BC 1942. Photographer Leonard Frank was assigned to photograph the Internment process and the photos were donated to the NNM by Alex Eastwood who worked for the BC Security Commission concerning the internment of Japanese Canadians, and graphically shows the conditions of the internees at various camps in British Columbia and Alberta, and in particular, Hastings Park. Alex Eastwood was quoted as saying "the whole thing was distasteful and unwarranted". NNM 1994.69.3.35



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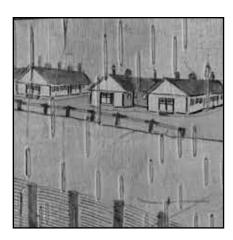
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Submissions



We welcome proposals of family and community stories for publication in future issues. Articles should be between 500 - 3,500 words and finished works 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 center.nikkeiplace.org/nikkei-images.

Stories of Internment are hugely popular and we appreciate your contributions, keep them coming!. We hope you enjoy this Commemorative 80th Anniversary of the Internment issue.

– Linda Kawamoto Reid

Land Acknowledgement

Signature of cardholder ___

We, the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples; and in particular, the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and Kwikwetlem First Nations on whose territory we stand.



Nikkei Images is published by the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre

Design: John Endo Greenaway

Subscription to Nikkei Images is free (with pre-paid postage)

with your yearly membership to NNMCC:

Family \$52.50 | Individual \$39.90

Senior Individual \$29.40

\$2 per copy (plus postage) for non-members

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A decade ago I co-curated an internment anniversary exhibit for the Nikkei National Museum with then DirectorlCurator Beth Carter titled *Yo-In: Reverberations* (https://centre.nikkeiplace.org/exhibits/yo-in-余韻) that attempted to demonstrate the effects of historical trauma on our community through the creativity of our artists of different generations. Five years ago, our exhibit *Hastings Park 1942*, in collaboration with Universal Limited Theatre, highlighted where the harshest internment incarceration including women and children took place on a Metro Vancouver public playground (https://centre.nikkeiplace.org/exhibits/hastings-park-1942/). This summer, in this year of the 80th anniversary of internment, the public can visit our *Broken Promises* exhibit, cocurated with the Landscapes of Injustice project, that investigates the dispossession of our community during that era at the Royal British Columbia Museum (https://centre.nikkeiplace.org/exhibits/broken-promises/).

In May 2022 the Government of BC made a historical commitment to contribute \$100million in funding to support legacy initiatives for the Japanese Canadian community in acknowledgement of past injustices that were committed by this province. Full parameters of that funding can be found on the BC Redress website (https://bcredress.ca). We are grateful for this acknowledgement that has been long overdue at a pivotal time in Japanese Canadian history to honour the ripples of the internment era in meaningful ways. And we continue to discover little-known stories of that time.

Three are captured within the pages of this issue of *Nikkei Images*. Please take time to read, reflect, and remember with us.

- Sherri Shinobu Kajiwara

Director|Curator, Nikkei National Museum



Japanese Canadian Redress: The Toronto Story The Story of Yukiharu Mizuyabu

by Yukiharu Mizuyabu

I was living in my birthplace, Nanaimo, BC, in December of 1941. My parents, both naturalized Canadians, had five other children—my two older sisters, two younger brothers and a younger sister, all born in Canada and, therefore, Canadian citizens. When Canada declared war on Japan, the citizenship of our family members was totally irrelevant to the politicians and bureaucrats who could only see our Japanese faces and our Japanese names. Through their racist eyes, we were all enemy aliens regardless of our citizenship status.

At Brechin School, the public school attended by almost all Japanese Canadian children, we were made to feel like we no longer belonged. We were immediately excluded from the cadet training which all the boys our age had been taking since the war in Europe. The German and Italian boys were allowed to continue their training, despite the fact that their ancestral countries were at war with Canada long before Japan entered the scene. It was obvious that we were being treated differently from all the other children. I don't think we were told not to come to school anymore, but we all dropped out some time after the fall of Hong Kong, which I recall as the last item of news about the war I heard on the school's newly installed PA system. Our Japanese language education was also brought to an abrupt halt as the government ordered the immediate closure of the Nanaimo Japanese Language School.

Like many other men in Nanaimo, my father was a fisherman. He was lucky because he owned a salmon trolling licence for summer and a cod-fishing licence for winter. These licences were coveted items since the government was perpetually tightening restrictions for "Japanese" fishermen. My father was a highly skilled fisherman. The income he earned from his catches was more than adequate to support his large family. He owned one of the biggest one-

man operated fishing boats in the Strait of Georgia, built less than three years earlier at the famous Kishi Boatbuilding Yard in Steveston. In addition, my father was able to buy us a newly built house on a large double lot.

Our relatively tranquil life took an unexpected turn when the war with Japan started. All Japanese fishermen were ordered to stay in port. Soldiers equipped with bayonets on their rifles stood along the waterfront road to ensure that the Japanese Canadians abided by the curfew imposed upon them. A few weeks later, my father and all other Japanese Canadians fishermen were ordered on to their boats and escorted by the Canadian Navy to the mouth of the Fraser River near New Westminster where the boats were impounded. They were then forced to return to Nanaimo by ferry, possibly never to see their boats again. Without their boats, all JC fishermen were suddenly deprived of their only source of income, but the callous politicians made no provisions for the families affected by these actions.

Leaving Nanaimo

Around March 1942, we began to hear rumours of Japanese Canadians in the outlying coastal areas being rounded up and sent to internment camps. Soon, JC families in Nanaimo began to slip away, one after another, with intentions of joining relatives in Steveston or Vancouver or even the BC interior, perhaps naively believing that they could avoid expulsion and internment by living with relatives on the mainland.

After mid-March, the only Japanese Canadians left in Nanaimo were our family and a childless couple, who were waiting around for the balance of payment for their recently sold property. The husband was an ex-fish buyer who had carried on a lucrative business before the war.



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| Port of Registry (全 元 卷 名) Nanaimo, B. C. | Date of Registry (登起期日) May 16, 1939 |
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| Registered Owner's Name (登錄數主義) Tsuneziro 網zuyabu | Actual Owner's Name (現實所有者名) Tsuneziro Mizuyabu |
| ADDRESS (住院 \$38 Chelsea St., Nanaimo, B. C. | ADDRESS (48%) 238 Chelsea St., Nanaimo, B. C |

My father was puzzled about our next step so we visited the local provincial police station to ask what we were supposed to do. The police officer pointed his finger at my father and then, turning to me, a thirteen year old interpreter, he uttered, "You tell your father he has to leave right away!" But what about the rest of our family? According to the police officer, the rest of us were allowed to stay. My father had no intention of seeing his family split up, but he instructed me to tell the police officer that he would comply with government orders.

A week or so later, the childless couple who were still in Nanaimo apparently received the balance of the payment for their property. They had been staying with us in our attic since the sale of their property. They suggested that the two families leave together for Vancouver. But before leaving, my father thought that we should let the police know he was now going, so he and I again went to the local BC police station. The same police officer was there. As soon as he saw my father he shouted, "What? You still here!" I remember the rage in his eyes. I was terrified that violence might erupt. I don't know exactly how I managed to placate the angry police officer, but I think I said something like, "We're all going now—for sure."

My father had already arranged with a real estate agent to have a white Canadian family rent our house as soon as we left. We moved all our belongings, including some of my father's fishing equipment, into the basement, leaving the main floor and attic to the tenants. And then we waved good-bye to our cherished home and boarded the CPR ferry Princess

NNM 2010-4-4-1-867 The ledger page recording Tsuneziro Mizuyabu's boat T.M. which was sold against his will. The boat was sold on May 27, 1942, by FORCED sale (written), to J.De Rousie for \$1650 in spite of being worth \$2100. Kishizo Kimura's entire collection of documents during his time on the Japanese Fishing Boat Disposition Committee were donated to the Nikkei National Museum by his son Ed Kimura.



Elaine for the journey across the strait to Vancouver. During the crossing, the ex-fish buyer's wife promised my mother that our two families would stick together, but the promise was short-lived. As soon as we landed, RCMP officers, who appeared to have been waiting for us, shoved our family of eight into two taxis. We were whisked away to the infamous Hastings Park, home of the Pacific National Exhibition. This was the holding area for Japanese Canadians before being carted off to their more permanent camps in the BC Interior.

Remembering the Degradation

Food and accommodations at Hastings Park were very poor by Canadian standards, even for that time, but obviously the government deemed them good enough for "enemy aliens". Hundreds of women and children were squeezed into the livestock building, each family separated from the next by a flimsy piece of cloth hung from the upper deck of double decked steel bunks. The walls between the rows of steel bunks were only about five feet high, their normal use being to tether animals. There was no barrier to reduce the noise of crying babies or the sound of animated conversations. Until I got adjusted to the constant cacophony of voices, it was impossible for me to sleep.

Our "toilets" were sections of a long metal trough with running water, attached to the outer wall in one part of the building. Pieces of 2 x 4 lumber, attached to the edge of the trough away from the wall, functioned as our toilet seats. Stalls with no doors separated the users from each other. It goes without saying that responding to the call of nature was no longer a private act. The lack of sanitary, private toilet facilities became an even more degrading experience when we were fed what we suspected was rotten hamburger meat. Many of us were unable to reach the metal troughs in time. After the second outbreak of diarrhea, there was a minor riot. Eventually, they stopped feeding us "rotten" meat.

While the government had planned nothing for the education of the children at Hastings Park, young, better-educated *nisei* who were still living freely on the outside volunteered to teach the children. A school was started in the indoor basketball stadium. Our teacher was Mr. Namba who was too passive and good-natured to discipline the boys in his class. One day when the boys refused to obey his instructions to get up on the stage with the girls to rehearse for a

school concert, we had exhausted his patience and he sent us to the principal for punishment. He lined us up in a row with our palms held out and hit each of us once or twice. He struck very hard and when it was all over the stick had broken into three or four pieces. It was so painful that one boy sobbed audibly, while the rest of us did our best to conceal our pain. I remember being struck one extra time simply for answering a negative tag question, quite unconsciously, in the Japanese way, instead of the English way. The guestion was something like "You won't disobey a teacher again, will you?" The Japanese way is to agree that you won't by simply saying "yes", meaning "yes, that is so." On the other hand, the English response would be "no, I won't." So if the guestion is "You won't do it again, will you", then a "yes" response in Japanese means that you won't do it again. "No" means you will do it again. The reverse meaning is the case in English. Obviously, Mr. McCrae misunderstood me, interpreting my affirmative response as another act of defiance.

After our episode with the principal, many of the boys stopped attending this makeshift school. It was easy to get away with absenteeism since our mothers had no idea how we older children were spending the day once we got out of bed in the morning. We were relatively free to do as we pleased because our most important need, food, was provided at the communal mess hall and at our age we didn't have to be accompanied by an adult.

During our six-month internment at Hastings Park some of the children picked up bad habits. I was certainly no exception. Emulating some of the men who whiled away the time gambling, I soon learned how to play poker, gin rummy, and blackjack. We removed the price tags from 5-cent peanut bags to use as our make-believe money for our card games. Looking back, I often wonder how this early introduction to gambling affected the later lives of the children of Hastings Park.

While we were still at Hastings Park, a naval officer informed my father that his fishing boat had been sold. My father was outraged. "Who gave the consent?" The officer replied that it had been a man named Kimura who was one of the Japanese Canadians appointed by the government to advise on the disposal of Japanese Canadian fishing boats. The government had empowered itself to sell JC-owned boats with or without consent. But to cover up the injustice of their



actions, the bureaucrats responsible for the liquidation of JC property engaged some Japanese Canadians to act as token consultants. They probably felt that if they mentioned a Japanese name as the person who advised the sale, the owner would be more agreeable to signing the agreement of sale. Venting his anger against Mr. Kimura, my father refused to sign the document. Although I was only 13 years old at the time, I remember thinking that my father's anger was misplaced. Whoever this Kimura was, he was unable to defy the government when asked to be an advisor.

A Bizarre Excursion

My parents had not expected to be away from home for such a long time. When our stay at Hastings Park grew into months, they became obsessed with the thought that they might never see the money that they had buried in the basement. So they contacted a JC middleman in Vancouver, a man who was in the business of assisting Japanese Canadians in their dealings with the authorities. I don't know the details of the negotiations that transpired between this man and the RCMP, but it was all pretty fascinating to me.

One day, my parents were called out to the main gate of Hastings Park. I accompanied them as an interpreter. An RCMP officer in civilian clothes, accompanied by his wife, was waiting for us. They beckoned us into their private car and we were driven to the CPR wharf to catch the ferry to Nanaimo. Surprisingly, after disembarking, the RCMP officer and his wife departed in an opposite direction, perhaps for a sightseeing tour of Nanaimo. We felt bewildered by the fact that we were not being treated as dangerous criminals out on day parole. Left to ourselves, we walked the streets of Nanaimo freely and headed for our house north of the city. It was bizarre. We were supposed to be "enemy aliens", inscrutable saboteurs, yet here we were on Vancouver Island again without an armed guard. Apparently, no one who knew the Japanese Canadians on an individual basis truly believed the government propaganda describing us as "threats to national security"—not the RCMP officer, not his wife and not any of the people who saw us as we walked to our house.

The woman of the family renting the house ushered us into our home, seemingly unalarmed by our presence in town. While I did my best to keep her engaged in conversation, my parents went to the basement to dig up the money. We then returned to the Nanaimo

CPR wharf as scheduled to meet the RCMP officer and his wife for the return trip to the mainland. The entire excursion was actually fairly pleasant and civilized. After we got back to Vancouver, the officer and his wife drove us back to Hastings Park where we resumed our life as internees in a prison for Canadian citizens who had committed no crimes.

Our Lemon Creek Shack

Around September 25, 1942, we finally left the stench of Hastings Park and boarded a train for the overnight trip to Slocan City, a cluster of old, Wild West type wooden buildings on the south end of Slocan Lake, approximately 300 miles from Vancouver. From there we were transported by truck to an open field two miles away. Our family of eight was assigned temporary accommodation in a canvas tent measuring 12 X 12 feet. This ordeal lasted for two weeks until we were loaded into a truck again to be taken to Lemon Creek, a camp about five miles away. Here the government, using the labour of JC internees at 15 to 25 cents per hour, had built hundreds of shacks for about 1,700 people.

Each shack measured 14 x 28 feet and was divided into three sections, a 10 x 14 foot section at each end and an 8 x 14 section in the middle. The walls separating the sections had doorways but no doors. The end sections had double decked wooden beds with strawfilled mattresses. The middle section, our combination living room and kitchen, had a wood burning stove for heating and a wood-burning kitchen range. There was no plumbing and no electricity. Several families shared an outhouse behind the shacks and a water tap located beside the road in front of the shacks. Because our family consisted of more than five individuals, we were the lucky ones. We did not have to share a shack with another family. Lemon Creek was extremely cold in the winter and quite hot in the summer. But the shacks had no insulation. The walls of our shack were one layer of thin wooden board covered with two-ply paper sandwiching a flimsy layer of tar. There was no ceiling below the roof. In the winter, moisture condensed on the inside of the cold walls and turned to ice.

After the tent mess hall was closed, the internees were required to cook their meals using the cast iron, wood-burning cook stove installed in each shack. They purchased food from the two stores set up in the camp for internees to purchase food and other



NNM 1995-135-2-4- A Group Portrait of the Lemon Creek High School Grade Eleven Class; Lemon Creek, BC, April 1946 Lemon Creek, BC In the front row from left to right is Michiko (Midge) Ayukawa (nee Ishii), unidentified, unidentified, Mr Joseph Grant (teacher), Lil Higo, Fumiko Takahashi, Margaret Shikatani and unidentified. In the second row from left to right is Akira Otsuka, Fumio Nakagawa, Peggy Kanemitsu, unidentified, unidentified, unidentified, Akiko Tsujimoto, Ben Fujin and Gaby Matsuba. In the third row from left to right is Kunio Suyama, Tad Ogura, Eizo Nose, Fujino, Yuki Mizuyabu, unidentified, Shogo Kobayashi, John Tokiwa, unidentified and Sam Hori?. In the fourth row from left to right Ako Matsubayashi, unidentified, unidentified, Aki Koyanagi, Yoshiaki Tsuji and unidentified

essentials. Those who had no personal funds that penitentiary of the world. the government was aware of were given a living allowance for food and clothing. Our family was refused the allowance because the government was holding the net proceeds from the sale of my father's boat until he signed the papers consenting to the sale. The money held for him was increased while we were in Lemon Creek, when the government sold his house. Again, as in the case of his boat, the sale was made against the expressed wishes of my father. The government officer who denied him living allowances for his family told him that he would receive \$75 a month from these funds if he would simply sign the consent papers. Refusal to comply meant that we would starve. Given this ultimatum, my father finally gave in and we received \$75 of our own money every month. Thus, we were forced to pay for our imprisonment out of our own pockets – a requirement not even imposed upon hardened criminals in any

Although Lemon Creek had no barbed wire fences, it was situated in a narrow valley enclosed by mountains, making it difficult for anyone to escape. A mile or so south of the camp, there was an RCMP post on the only route for vehicles. As a thirteen-year-old, looking up at those huge mountains that surrounded the camp, I felt like I was looking at unscalable prison walls. I remember wondering when I would ever be released from this natural prison.

The government provided a semblance of education for elementary school children in the camp, but nothing for high school students. So we were forced to build our own high school using leftover scraps of lumber. A church in Eastern Canada sent us two male and two female teachers; in addition, one or two teachers were recruited from among the more educated internees. When the school was ready to





receive students, I had a lot of catching up to do since I had already lost a whole year of schooling.

From about 1944, the internees were allowed to leave the camp to work as farmhands in interior BC communities because Canada, like many countries involved in the war, was suffering a labour shortage. In the summer of 1945, I left the camp for the first time to work in Kamloops. While working there on a Chinese Canadian owned farm, I learned of Japan's surrender. World War II had come to an end. Automatically assuming that we could now begin to rebuild our lives back in Nanaimo, I returned to Lemon Creek to reunite with my family. I was surprised to discover that the ordeal was not over yet. The government refused to release us from our imprisonment unless we agreed to relocate east of the Rockies – or repatriate ourselves to Japan. The rationale behind these ridiculous conditions could no longer be attributed to "national security". Clearly, the only reason was to satisfy the racists who wanted to banish us forever from the Pacific coast of Canada.

The level of racial hatred generated by BC politicians and journalists at the time was incredible. Newspapers reported that they had received letters from the public urging the removal of Japanese Canadians. Roy Ito notes in *We Went to War*: "Bruce Hutchison of the *Vancouver Sun* informed the office of the Prime Minister that the newspaper was 'under extraordinary pressure from [its] readers to advocate a pogrom of Japs. We told the people to be calm. Their reply was a bombardment of letters that the Japs all be interned."

The word, "pogrom", as I understand it, means "organized massacre". Today, Canada is so quick to condemn "ethnic cleansing" when it occurs in other parts of the world, but just 50 years ago, Canada was itself guilty of "ethnic cleansing" by driving us out of our places of birth on the coast of British Columbia, herding us like cattle into prison camps and then forcing us to relocate east of the Rockies.

Exiles in Japan

By the summer of 1946, the government was still denying us freedom of movement in this country, our native land. I had had enough of this shabby treatment and so I chose to be exiled to Japan along with the rest of my family. The Canadian government liked to use the euphemism "repatriation", but this was a misnomer. "Repatriation" means returning to one's

home country, not going to a country that you have never seen before. Until 1946, I had never known any country but Canada.

When we arrived in Japan in August 1946, the country was in ruins. Indiscriminate bombing had flattened all the major cities, except for the ancient capital of Kyoto. Tokyo and Osaka were mounds of rubble. In addition, the military forces of the United States and her allies now occupied Japan. Despite the presence of the occupation forces, I felt free for the first time since being imprisoned in Hastings Park at the start of my teenage life. I was now 17½ years old.

Life in Japan during those post-war years was harsh. Bare necessities were scarce. Compared with our prewar life in Nanaimo, we were living in abject poverty. But we were free and treated fairly. Although we were soon showing signs of malnutrition, I refused to entertain thoughts of returning to Canada or applying for a job with the American occupation forces. The mistreatment I had received from the Canadian government had made me regard Americans with the same disdain I held for Canadian politicians. However, after almost two years of starvation existence in my father's old village, I succumbed to the lure of a full stomach of nourishing food and went to work for the American military.

I was surprised to discover that the Americans respected my Canadian birthright and treated me not as a recent enemy, but almost as an ally. Japanese Canadians working for the American military, to the chagrin of Canadian officials, were treated not as Japanese nationals, but as "foreign nationals". As the Canadian government's post-war policy was not to allow any persons of Japanese ancestry to return to Canada, regardless of their Canadian citizenship, the Canadian officials were concerned that the "foreign national" identification cards, given to Japanese Canadian employees of the American military, might somehow be used as travel documents to return to Canada. The American authorities assured them that the cards could not be used as such. Getting to know the American military men on a personal basis, I gradually broadened my perspective and changed my previously one-dimensional view of white people. I realized that in every group, there are good ones and bad ones, while the majority fall into various categories in between.

While working for the Americans, I learned that the Canadian government had finally given its citizens of Japanese ancestry the right to vote and was willing to accord them the same status as any other citizen of Canada—on paper at least. I was also informed that the Canadian government office in Tokyo was accepting applications for "clarification of Canadian citizenship" from all Japanese Canadians living in Japan, including those who lived through the war in Japan and those "repatriated" to Japan after the war. To me, an exile who had been goaded into signing a statement renouncing my Canadian citizenship prior to my so-called "repatriation" to Japan, the purpose of the application seemed rather whimsical. If the government had legitimately extracted my renunciation statement, it should be demanding that I now apply for a pardon (for whatever wrong I had committed against Canada) and a restoration of my citizenship. Perhaps the politicians in Ottawa were now trying to hide from the rest of the world the shameful manner in which they had driven us into renouncing our Canadian citizenship. Perhaps they wanted to avoid the publicity that might result if the government were to require us to plead for the restoration of our citizenship in court.

I gave considerable thought to this change of heart in my native land. The Japanese people had been very good to me. Despite the harsh post-war conditions, they had let us share equally in the meagre amounts of necessities of life available. Food at that time was in such short supply that, in my parents' village, the daily ration provided only 1,000 calories and consisted of some food that was so unpalatable that I could not swallow it. I was getting used to life in Japan and I appreciated the politeness and general sense of honesty and fairness in the society. However Japan was crowded. I missed the wide-open spaces of Canada – an environment that would probably be better for raising children. I also felt a growing need to return to Canada to fight for my rights, rights that had been ruthlessly trampled on. So, in 1951, five years after vowing never to return, I applied for "clarification" of my Canadian citizenship and received a Certificate of Canadian Citizenship from Ottawa.

Many years later, during the days of the Redress movement, I learned that this so-called clarification of Canadian citizenship still did not give me exactly the same rights as a European Canadian residing outside of Canada. For example, German Canadians who had



NNM 1995-147-1-8-8-3 Professional photo of Yukihara Mizuyabu at the 1992 Homecoming conference in Vancouver BC, 1992.

been abroad during the war were offered governmentpaid passage back to Canada if they had no funds of their own. There was no similar offer of financial aid to destitute Japanese Canadians wanting to return to Canada. In fact, even after 1949 when Japanese Canadians were supposedly given the same rights as other Canadians, any Japanese Canadian who wished to return had to have someone act as a sponsor as an assurance that he or she would not become a public burden. Thus, we would be treated like new immigrants even though we were coming back to our native land. Many Japanese Canadians returned to Canada by entering into labour contracts with Ontario mushroom farmers who paid their passage and acted as sponsors in exchange for a guarantee of three years of labour.

In order to pay for my passage back to Canada, I went to work for a Japanese construction company in Okinawa in 1952. It was one of the many Japanese and American construction companies engaged by the U.S. government to convert Okinawa into what





the Japanese press called an "Unsinkable Aircraft Carrier". Four months into the job, the Americans asked me to work for them directly, offering to pay me a salary that I could not refuse. This well-paying job kept me in Okinawa for another nine years, but I never abandoned my original plan of returning home to Canada. During those nine years, I ended up marrying a woman from Okinawa and becoming the father of two boys. By 1961, when I finally decided to return to Canada, the U.S. military – continuing to respect my Canadian citizenship – offered my family and me free passage to wherever my home in Canada happened to be. I gave the address of an uncle who by then had returned to Vancouver.

Assessing the Past

Personally, I feel fortunate to have survived the hardships of my exile in Japan. I will always feel deeply indebted to the United States government for reversing my fortunes after I was kicked out of Canada by my own government. I also feel indebted to the people of Japan for welcoming me, for helping to alleviate my feelings of rejection, for allowing me to share equally in the very little food available in Japan during the immediate post-war period.

When I wonder what might have been, I think of my late father as well as many other JC fishermen. If the mass expulsion had not occurred, I suspect that he would have become a millionaire in his profession, instead of being dependent in his final years on the meagre federal Old Age Security and provincial supplement for his living after he and mother followed me, their eldest son, back to Canada in 1961.

I know that I would have been able to receive a higher education, increasing my chances for a better career. To prove this to myself, I started night courses at York University in 1991, at the age of 62. Five years later, despite the fact that I was not functioning as well as I did in the makeshift high school in Lemon Creek as a teenager, I managed to graduate with a Bachelor of Administrative Studies degree. In the same month of June 1996, I became a grandfather for the first time to a child half white and half Japanese. Hopefully, the blending of races that seems to be an inevitable and rapidly increasing trend in Canada will soon make racism a thing of the past.

Traumatic experiences cannot be easily erased. Re-examining these events in my life, I find that the passage of time has not diminished my sense of outrage. I do not feel bitterness towards ordinary Canadians. During the war and for years after the war, many of them fell under the influence of hatemongering politicians who tried to convince the nation that Japanese Canadians were enemy aliens not to be trusted. What these politicians and bureaucrats did to Japanese Canadians on the basis of our ancestry is a vile example of institutionalized racism that should never be forgotten-just like the Holocaust of the Jews in Europe should never be forgotten.

CANADIAN CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

Main entry under title: *Japanese Canadian Redress:* The Toronto Story

ISBN 0-9699502-3-3

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*This story was submitted on the suggestion of Lynn Deutscher Kobayashi, president of the Toronto Chapter of the NAJC for publication in *Nikkei Images* commemorative 80th Anniversary of Internment issue.



Stan with his boy scout troupe in Vernon, ca. 1944. Photos courtesy Fukawa family.

Being a Japanese Canadian Kid in Second World War Canada

Recollections of My Childhood in Vernon

by Stanley Fukawa

During our banishment period, from my family's forced move from Mission, BC to Vernon, BC in the Spring of 1942, to our move back to the Pacific coast in the fall of 1949 – a period of seven-and-a-half years – we were designated "enemy aliens" and were at the mercy of the powers assumed by the Canadian federal government under the War Measures Act and the Emergency Measures Continuation Act. The government did not go to the trouble and expense of trials in a court of law to do this. They just used their "common sense" and assumed that anyone who was of the Japanese race must be guilty of treasonous intent and carried out the measures necessary to protect the "obviously good people" from the

"obviously bad." This included the confiscation and disposal of our farm and truck and our banishment from territory within a hundred miles of the Pacific Ocean. Part of the justification seemed to be that if it was good enough for the USA, it ought to be good enough for Canada.

It was personally distressing that our family was included to be among the nasty, squint-eyed enemy in the propaganda ads distributed in school who were shown wielding guns and threatening the lives of patriotic Canadians who were encouraged to fight back by purchasing government Victory Bonds and in school the Victory Stamps. And of course, we ethnic Japanese in Canada were bullied into





purchasing the same bonds or risk being called the traitors we were considered of being anyway. They had us coming and going.

We Japanese can usually tell which people of Asian descent are Chinese and which were Japanese, even though most white people cannot. So, it was interesting to see that cartoon propaganda which pointed out how you can tell the difference between the treacherous Jap enemy and the honest and trustworthy Chinese allies--whose cartoon representations looked pretty indistinguishable to me.

Nothing you could say or do would change anyone's mind because they were convinced that we were the enemy and to think otherwise was unpatriotic and deny the truth for which "our boys" were sacrificing their lives. Anyway, no sane person would trust a Japanese Canadian person because we were known to be "sneaky" and bald-faced liars.

The racial abuse was not a constant 24/7 and the teachers I had were quite scrupulously careful not to accuse Japanese Canadians of improper behaviour or traitorous thoughts in class although they had to distribute the War Bonds and Stamps with the racist imagery of the treacherous enemy. The academic side of school was a welcome respite from any subject matter which included racial overtones. During wartime, a lot of time was taken with what was happening at the front and the horrible behaviour of the enemy which was explained by their racial origins. We did not seem to worry much about kids with Germanic surnames because it was hard to tell them apart from the other white kids and their families had usually been in Canada as long as anyone except the natives.

Anti-Asian prejudice has a long history in BC and during the Second World War, the Chinese enjoyed the luxury of being portrayed as the British Empire's and the Americans' noble allies in East Asia. It was not until I got to university that I learned about how the supposedly "morally superior" British had used military might to force the Chinese to import the opium that had been grown in British India, a drug that the Chinese did not want to accept because opiate addiction was bad for their people and for their economy.

Of course, wartime is especially bad for ethnic comparisons, especially for those of us of the enemy

races. First of all, in the propaganda material, it seemed that all Japanese and Nazis were ugly and hateful-looking. I think that I was a cute-looking kid but since it was wartime and beauty is in the eye of the beholder, my cuteness did not prevent me from being picked-on as a Japanese Canadian kid, which happened from time to time.

Since my surname begins with "F-u-k," class-mates didn't even have to resort to references to my race if they wanted to insult me. They literally had a field day.

Teacher Makes Me Sanitize Dad's Image

I learned several important lessons on the first day of school. I had just been enrolled at Coldstream Elementary outside of Vernon, BC in September of 1944. The Second World War was still on. Our family had been uprooted from coastal BC declared "enemy aliens" and forced to leave the "security zone" within one hundred miles of the Pacific Ocean.

I do not remember the incident which led to my calling someone a "bad name," but the first lesson was that pupils were not allowed to swear in school. It puzzled me because I had merely repeated what I had heard my father say when he was angry. This was reported to my teacher. When the teacher asked what I had said, I told her honestly that I had called a harassing classmate, a "son-a-ka bitch."

This turned into a brief argument between the teacher and me about whether my father had actually used those words. Her steadfast assertion was that he would NEVER use such language. She kept saying, "He would NEVER say that!"

And I kept responding, "Yes, he did!"

As a punishment for swearing and then lying about my father's use of foul language in such situations, I was made to stand in front of the class with my hands on top of my head, fingers interlaced, until I was ready to recant my version of the situation and apologize. I was surprised at how unpleasant and tiring it was to be in that posture for even a few minutes. I quickly understood how experienced teachers can discipline uncooperative students and make them fall into line. I had to agree that "No, indeed, my father could NEVER have used such ungentlemanly language." And, so, with my own father's reputation now also arrayed against me, I succumbed.

The important lesson for this Asian working-class

kid was that I had to learn the middle-class ways of the school in order to be acceptable in that polite society. We all had to pretend that the world was one in which even immigrants who had learned their English in the uncouth environs of sawmills staffed almost entirely by men who had never spent a day in a Canadian school could actually converse without using any swear words.

The incident also pointed out that despite the existence of a student culture that encouraged all students not to "rat" on other students, in this case, it was more important for mainstream students to see the "Jap" kid put in his place. This one had, after all, called another mainstream student, a bad name.

Coldstream Christmas Concerts included a Chinese Skit

In my memory of the school year activities in the 1940s in the village of Coldstream, the annual elementary school Christmas Concert seemed to be quite an important community event. I can still remember how beautifully one lad sang "O Danny Boy"-- his strong tenor voice ringing through the Women's Institute Hall. It was the first time that I had heard it sung properly and I still think of it as the most moving rendering I had heard to that point in my life. Of course, it was in an era before television and this made the Christmas Concert important because, compared to the situation today, we were so deprived of entertainment--there were so few radio stations, there was no TV and none of the current technology that surrounds us with portable visual and sound recordings.

The teachers were, of course, very concerned with how well their charges behaved and performed. The display of not just of cuteness, but also of talent and deportment provided a reassuring measure of how well the school staff were performing their duties. A good showing could provide the teachers with the approval and support of the community. It was definitely a much more important community event than it is today, 70 years later.

I remember fondly the Christmas carols that we rehearsed in class and sang enthusiastically at every opportunity. I wondered how often classes asked their teachers to be allowed to sing in order to avoid schoolwork and lessons. It was wonderful to hear and see some of our school-mates' impressive talents in



Stan listening to his radio in the living room of his Vernon home, ca. 1945

singing and dancing that we would not have found out about just in our regular classes in school.

One might have thought that this kind of event would not provide many opportunities for a Japanese Canadian kid because our people had, after all, been declared enemies of the state and most Canadians assumed that we must have been proven to be so because that was the reason we had been banished from the Pacific Coast. In those days, the authorities were always right.

Nonetheless, for the five Christmases that I attended Coldstream School, I remember having had a relatively important part in the annual yuletide festivities. This was due to the fact that in those years, I had one of the best memories of all the kids in the school. The teachers would choose several Christmas plays and ask the pupils who wanted to perform the various roles. After a number of rehearsals, it would become apparent whose reach had exceeded their grasp and sometimes we would go through several changes in the lead and narrator roles in our rehearsals before the final choices were made. At the beginning, I





knew better than to push myself to the fore because as the weeks went by, I would survive the attrition and be at the forefront in my age group.

From my personal experience, I saw that the teachers tried to be scrupulously fair and unprejudiced in their treatment of us Japanese Canadian kids in their classes, even during the war years. Only once, had a teacher mentioned, mistakenly, that we had been banished from the Pacific Coast because of spying activity for Japan--although it is understandable that he could not even have guessed that there had not been one Japanese person in Canada charged with disloyal acts over those years of wartime.

There was one racist skit that I remember performing in, although it was one based on a stereotype of Chinese people. As there were no Chinese kids in the class, two Japanese boys (Goro Nishimura and I) and an East European kid (Joe Nikolai) who was probably chosen because of his darker complexion, sang a horrible song whose lyrics and music I can still remember. It went "I like chop suey velly, velly nice. Run-ee down-ee cellar, lots of rats and mice." Nowadays, such a song would not be allowed, and rightly so.

I knew that there were Chinese men in the community because I had seen them in Vernon, most often at the Chinese restaurant we patronized for the Asian food but we seemed to see only Chinese men. I do not remember seeing Chinese women or children. My father would talk with them in broken English. He felt friendly toward the Chinese people although China and Japan were at war. He had worked with them in sawmills and had done business with Chinese fruit buyers in Mission. Occasionally, he would buy a local Chinese numbers lottery ticket and trusted them to treat him honestly although I didn't understand how he could be sure of that in an unofficial game run by people he didn't know. He said he felt sorry for the Chinese men who could not have wives.

I remember meeting my first indigenous person in that restaurant and also learning about Larry Kwong, the first Chinese Canadian hockey player in the NHL who was from Vernon.

My Classmate, My Hero (Heroes Come in All Sizes)

Looking back over my 76 years of life, I'm still awed at the moral authority of a friend--still a child--who



Stan in his boy scout uniform, Vernon, ca. 1944

stood up to defend me when I was about to be attacked by schoolyard bullies. They felt justified in ganging-up on a "Jap-kid" who represented to them, the enemy races that their country had fought and just defeated. There were still constant reminders in the media about the atrocities committed by the Nazis and the Japanese against whom all good people could freely vent their hate. They saw in me an opportunity to act out some of the revenge which was only a pay-back for being born of an evil race.

It was in 1946 or 1947, at Coldstream Elementary School. I was in the schoolyard playing with my usual play group, the boys who, most days, walked together to the school from the Coldstream Ranch side. I was the only Asian kid in the group.

I was surrounded by a menacing group of boys whose antagonism had been aroused by some of their number. When I was pushed, the unofficial leader of our group, Bob Schram, asked the standard schoolboy question, "What did he do to you?" The

response was, "He's a Jap, you know that," implying that all people of Japanese descent were fair game for vengeance for being bad people.

Bob's voice was authoritative. "So, what. He's just as good as you are. Leave him alone." They backed off.

I still marvel at the status that Bob conferred upon me without hesitation--that I was as worthy as the other kids who were white. Having been exposed to anti-Japanese propaganda in the Hollywood movies, on the radio, in school in the Victory Bonds and Stamps campaigns, war propaganda films, and in the print media, although I knew inside that I was a good person, as were members of my family, I did not have confidence in the goodness of all ethnic Japanese I did not know personally. I was not immune to the racist propaganda that I saw and heard all around me. Like most children, I learned early how minorities were viewed by the majority and largely accepted the biases in the public mind. Before that moment my own mind was not independent enough to believe and assert what Bob had said about my own worth.

It was a huge boost to my self-confidence and sense of self-worth to be supported publicly at a crucial time. A friend and respected schoolyard leader had spoken up to say that I was a good person.

It was just an incident in Grade 3 in a country schoolyard but I have always remembered it, felt grateful for it and tried to follow the example of my heroic friend by speaking out in similar situations. In our multi-ethnic society with its racial and religious diversity, it constantly surprises me how we seem to be able to find any number of reasons to dislike or be suspicious of those who are even the slightest bit different to ourselves. It taught me that even one child's opinion, simply stated, can make a huge difference in our lives. I have remembered this for a lifetime.

Radio and the Silver Screen, 1946-49

I don't remember the moment when Japanese were allowed to have radios at the end of the war but it must have been in 1945 after the A-bombing of Hiroshima. I clearly remember the day when Mr. Dolphe Browne brought a radio to our shack and plugged it in with a flourish. It was a very exciting moment and that radio and its successor were a great source of comfort and education, including



Stan and his parents in a studio photo, when they were living in Vernon BC ca. 1944

knowledge of North American English and culture. By then, Mr. Browne had sold the farm on which my family was employed to Mr. Hemsley, but he came back to do what he did and must have had some contact with the local representative of the so-called Custodian of Enemy Alien Properties because he brought us a radio that had been confiscated from a Japanese family in 1942.

The radio behind me in the photo was not that older, cheaper radio. This new one was purchased by father to receive short-wave broadcasts of the baseball games that an older Japanese could understand and appreciate. They were broadcast by the US Armed Forces Radio Network and many *issei* men seemed to be willing to spend a bit of money on the fancier radios. Baseball was slow and simple enough that our *issei* fathers could follow what was happening in the English language.

It helped the English-second-language crowd that the announcers tended to repeat the same hackneyed phrases over and over such as--"a swing and a miss,





strike three," "three up and three down," and the special names for the heroes such as "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio." The action was slow enough that even before TV, they could follow what was happening most of the time. From time to time, I had to augment the information in Japanese.

As an only child, I spent a lot of time listening to the mainly US stations with their powerful transmitters providing us with network programs that turned us culturally into Americans. Besides the radio, US comic books, and movies reinforced the indoctrination. Of course, US radio also included a Sgt. Preston of Canada's North West Mounted Police, but he was featured in an American-scripted program. Canadians also learned the radio-broadcast version of the black urban ghetto world of Amos and Andydoubtless written by white script-writers.

Many people seemed to have adopted the habit of going to the cinema every week. Mr. and Mrs. Hemsley, our employers went every Friday night.

It was a time when all of English speaking North America went to see the same Hollywood films. Before the advent of coast to coast television, the choices were not that many so that this was the period when Hollywood's interpretation of the world was broadcast uncontested over a whole continent.

Mrs. Hemsley complained that her husband fell asleep and had to be woken up by her after the movie ended. It was understandable that he was tired after a busy week on the farm doing hard physical labour. Mrs. Hemsley had her daily chores, too, but to my mother, they seemed a piece of cake. Which is why she, a Buddhist, often said that in her next incarnation, she was coming back as a Japanese man or a white woman. Japanese women had to work all day doing farm work and then come home and do the housework.

The kitchen table was the only table in the shack and that's where I did my homework. So, I fell into the habit of listening to the radio while studying which I do to this day.

Waiting for the Bus, Mother Frantic

From our home in Coldstream, we took the bus into Vernon to do our shopping and to report to the RCMP regularly as "enemy aliens" were required to do on a regular basis during the war years. One day, my mother became frantic while searching through her

purse for bus-fare.

"Mother, what's the matter?" I asked. She said she needed to have the 35 cents for the fare but she only had 50 cents change. When I questioned her further, it turned out that the previous time she took the bus, she had paid with 50 cents and the bus driver just harrumphed at her when she asked for her change and she didn't understand him either. Since she could not make herself understood, she was afraid that she would face the same situation again.

I was surprised that even as a kid, I had not faced that kind of problem. If I did not receive the correct change, I would question it. Since her English was poor, it was not easy for her to make herself understood. If the same thing happened this time, though, I would have interpreted for her and there would not have been a problem.

I still have not decided whether mother had been shortchanged the first time or not. She said that she had no worries about the employee driver but just the owner driver. Anyway, the problem never came up again as she always made sure she had the correct change every time.

It did remain in my mind as a simple incident which was made frightening for someone who couldn't speak English and knew she was a second class enemy alien.

Weekly Shopping Trips, Aged 9-11

Saturday was shopping day for the family because in those days, there was no Sunday shopping. My mother or my dad would take the Lumby-Vernon bus into Vernon during the day if it were not the apple picking season. I was too young to remember how we coped in the summer when I was only 8. We may have shopped later on Saturdays. From the summer of 1947, I was entrusted with the task every week.

I remember beginning in the summer of 1947 I went into town with my mother's homemade cloth shopping bag. I had accompanied my parents regularly so that it was not an unusual or difficult experience. It was a challenge and not a worry. I was a whiz at arithmetic.

First, I would go to the Safeway store and buy the bread and breakfast makings. I would stop by the butcher shop and those were the regular stops. A big contrast with prices today was the price of chicken. It was before the breeders had developed



Stan's class in Coldstream Elementary, Division one, Vernon 1947.

the fast-maturing fryer and so the deluxe dinner was roast chicken. Chicken cost more than beef. At other times, I would go to the drugstore or to the shoe repair shop or the post office, as required. There was a small general store almost next to the Coldstream Elementary School that I attended during this time, so we didn't have to go to Vernon for everything.

My treat for being the family shopper was the 15 cents I was given for looking after the provisions. It turned out that I had several quite wonderful choices for spending this. There were two movie theatres in Vernon and the matinee feature was 15 cents for either. The Capitol Theatre ran the feature Hollywood films although they came a bit later than in the big cities. A lot of the adults seemed to go every week and saw all the films, although even then, many of the men slept through a lot of them. This was years before the advent of television and, in those days, most of the people in North America seemed to see all the same movies and to listen to the same radio broadcasts. Musicals were usually shown at the Capitol.

The other movie theatre was the Empress, and it ran a regular diet of double feature Westerns. It was the usual cowboy heroes – Gene Autry, Roy Rogers, Johnny Mack Brown, Lash Larue, the Cisco Kid, the Lone Ranger, and some even older heroes. Not quite so frequent were the comedies of the era – Abbot and Costello, Our Gang, the Bowery Boys – and the super heroes like the Green Hornet.

If I didn't spend the whole 15 cents at the movies, I could buy a comic book for a dime and take the bus home early. Sometimes, I would buy a milk shake (which jumped from 10 cents to 15 during this period) or an ice cream cone. In this era, adults paid a nickel for coffee or a phone call. I don't think I often saved any of my shopping day spending money but if I did, I had to save up 25 cents for a banana split. I used to envy the rich kids who could afford to buy French fries.

I did have a queasy tummy, though, and my first worry was whether or not I would get sick from the diesel fumes of the bus. That was the only bad thing that could happen on those shopping expeditions which were exciting for a country kid.











A Japanese Canadian Internment Story: New Denver, BC

by K. Uchida

'Rose' Masako Uchida (nee Suzuki), passed away in April of 2020 in Hamilton, Ontario, at the age of 97. She was a *nisei*, the first generation of Japanese Canadians to be born in Canada. She outlived her husband Dewey by 14 years and was survived by four children, two grandchildren, and a recent great-grandson.

Rose left behind an antique steamer trunk that had been sitting for years in her basement. The main contents revealed a collection of albums that contain old black and white photographs, postcards, print materials, government correspondence and several identification documents for herself and her family in the first half of the 20th century in Canada.

Four photo albums portray the life of the Suzukis (who arrived in BC in 1903), a family of fishermen in two distinctly different geographical places and periods in British Columbia. In two albums from 1911, with the first family portrait of the Suzukis in Victorian clothes, to the spring of 1942, photos portray a Japanese immigrant family and their growth in a small fishing village called Terra Nova in coastal BC centered around a commercial cannery on the mouth of the Fraser River. In another two albums, from late 1942 to the summer of 1946, the photos and documents narrate the family's four years in an internment camp called New Denver located in BC's south-eastern interior, in the Slocan valley by a lake of the same name, surrounded by the natural barrier of mountains in a region called the West Kootenays. This is an uncommon collection for Japanese Canadian families as most left their family albums and heirlooms behind when incarcerated on short notice with strict luggage restrictions, into the internment camps. Cameras were not allowed

and were supposed to have been confiscated and surrendered to the RCMP (eventually cameras were allowed in April of 1944). Rose, a teenager, packed and smuggled in the family box camera she loved.

This story is one young woman's experience of living through a dark, traumatizing period in Canadian history – the mass uprooting, incarceration, dispossession and dispersal of the Japanese Canadians in BC in the 1940s – through the images, documents and recordings she left behind.

The daughter and grand-daughter of fishermen, Rose was born Masako Suzuki, the 3rd child to Sukesaburo and Ko in Terra Nova, BC. Rose had two older sisters, Fuji and Kim, and six younger siblings by 1940. Like her sisters and the other children of Terra Nova, Rose attended integrated Lord Byng Elementary school. It was a close-knit community and Rose had extended family of paternal grandparents; two aunts, Teru and Yoshi; and an Uncle named 'Harry' (Itaro) who lived nearby.

Racism against Japanese Canadians in BC existed long before the attack by Japan on Pearl Harbour. Non-white and Indigenous people were not allowed to vote and there were many economic and social restrictions. In the 1930s during a period of aggressive nationalism, highly militiarized Japan invaded and colonized neighbouring Asian countries and islands. Consequently racism and public discrimination intensified against Japanese Canadians in BC. Rose was 18 in April 1941, and had been babysitting and working for 4 years to help her large family, and was enrolled in a nurse's aide course. The same year, Rose's father became disabled after a tragic fire on his fishing boat. She was taking a nurse's aide course.

Left, top: Suzuki family portrait, 1939 (taken at Columbia Studio in Vancouver); Front row, left to right, Nobuo, Sukesaburo, Taduo, Ko with baby Chiyoko, Eiji, Back row: Shoichi, Kim, Rose, Fuji. Uchida family photo.

Left, bottom: Terra Nova, BC, April 1941. In front of Rose's house, Back row,: Kim, Rose, Ko Suzuki and her two youngest children, (last photo in Terra Nova). Uchida family photo.



By this time, her aunt Teru had married a man named 'George' Junji Ito, and they had moved to Vancouver, had two children (Robert and June) and bought a house. Aunt Yoshi was a successful business owner and ran her own women's sports clothes store in Nihonmachi. She had also bought two properties in Terra Nova, likely the nice house for her mother with the large front gardens in many photos. Her Uncle Itaro also married and had a son Kanao who was very close to Rose and her siblings. Romances developed in the village of Terra Nova amongst the nisei, the Canadian born generation; Fuji Suzuki, Rose's eldest sister started to go out with a young fisherman called 'Scotty' Shigi Harada. And Rose started to go out with Ryushin Koyanagi, another fisherman who lived with his parents and younger sister nearby. For social fun, they would have a beach outing at Crescent beach or visit Vancouver's Little Tokyo.

Beginning in March of 1941, the RCMP started an operation to register all Japanese Canadians over 16 with an identify card. Rose's stamped wallet-sized card reads, "RCMP registration card dated April 28 1941" with her photo, age 18, occupation: student, serial number and thumbprint, printed "the bearer, whose photograph and specimen of signature appear herein,

has been duly registered in compliance with the provisions of Order-in-Council P.C. 117". This was seven months before the attack on Pearl Harbour and subsequently Canada declaring war on Japan. After this foreboding event, Rose, family and friends started to take photos of themselves and exchange them, including her Sunday School teacher Sarah O'Sullivan and Mrs. Sullivan, her sister's Kim employer.

On December 7, Japan attacked Pearl Harbour. Over the next three months punitive racist policies were enacted and enforced to remove the majority of Japanese Canadians along the west coast of BC. Immediately, fishing boats were impounded. Three Japanese language newspapers shut down and only one allowed to remain, *The New Canadian*, an English language newspaper. A dusk to dawn curfew was enacted. Canadian-born Japanese men were not

allowed to enlist in the army. There were over 22,000

Japanese Canadians living in BC and though over 65% were born in Canada, they were all branded as 'enemy aliens' based on race. A 100 mile protected zone along the BC coast was declared. In March of 1942, the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) was established to oversee the "evacuation" (an euphemism for uprooting) of all "people of Japanese race" in the protected zone. All able bodied men that lived in the protected zone between 18 to 45 years old started to be rounded up by the RCMP and sent to road camps. At first, it was only men who were born in Japan, a month later they started to round up Canadian-born men as well. The government planned to incarcerate the women, children, and elderly in internment camps. The BCSC also gave the option to families to stay together and be sent to work in sugar

Ryushin Koyanagi, Neys Camp Ontario, April 1946.



beet farms in Alberta, where they faced the worst conditions and exploitation of the internment period.

In Terra Nova all the men were fisherman and that was

the main income supporting the families. The wives had no idea where their husbands were taken. An association called NMEG, the Nisei Mass Evacuation Group, was formed in Vancouver by some young nisei - Canadian born men - who advocated to keep families together and tried to negotiate with an unhearing government. They were branded as agitators and militants by the press and government. Many young *nisei* joined the protest and tried to avoid capture by the RCMP who would send them to the road camps. This included the young men from Terra Nova such as Ryushin, Shigi and his younger brother Yoshio and others. In the album, there is a defiant photo of Ryushin Koyanagi walking with purpose dated April 7, 1942 in what looks like downtown Vancouver. He may have attended a meeting of the NMEG held that day. The photo is followed by two uncensored postcards from Ryushin sent to the Suzukis with scenic pictures of Banff Alberta on one side. The first postcard dated April 25, 1942 was addressed to "Misses Fujiko, Kimiko and Masako Suzuki, R.R.#1, Eburne. Thanks for lets and everything. Am enjoying the trip. Everybody fine. Tell my mother not to worry". The 2nd postcard dated April 27, 1942 addressed to Mrs and Mrs. S. Suzuki, he wrote "Expect to reach camp tomorrow morning. All's well. Best regards to everybody". Perhaps he was on his way to imprisonment in northern Ontario or on the run from the RCMP. Eventually, the young men were all captured. Hundreds of these young innocent men were arrested by the RCMP and sent by train to be imprisoned in the harsh Angler or Petawawa POW camps in remote northern Ontario, surrounded by barbed wire and 24/7 armed guard. They were outfitted with prison uniforms with large red circles on the backs, making them easy targets to shoot at if escape was attempted. Ryushin, Scotty (Shigi) Harada and his younger brother Yoshio (Muni), and at least one other young man from Terra Nova, all spent four years in a POW camp.

There are no photos after the end of May of 1942 in Terra Nova. The fishing docks were empty and all the men, husbands, fathers of young, young adult sons, the breadwinners, had been disappeared. It was a village of anxious and fearful mothers and children and the elderly. A last photo taken in front of Rose's

grandmother's house, with its large front garden, shows Rose, her sister and mother, looking grim and unsmiling with two very young girls. Sunday school continued from the photos. Eventually, the Suzukis and all the remaining residents of Terra Nova, including babies and elderly grandparents, were uprooted and sent to the nightmare awaiting them at Hastings Park, the processing centre or pool. Some Japanese Canadians were forced to leave their homes with as little as 24 hour notice. They were restricted to one piece of luggage each, with weight requirements according to age: adults up to 150lbs, children 50-75lbs. A single pedal sewing machine was allowed per family. Rose ensured the camera and radio were hidden and packed along with family treasures, such as her mother's tea set from Japan. There are obviously no photos from the horrible summer period spent imprisoned under RCMP quard inside the inhumane cattle livestock building at Hastings Park where the PNE still stands in Vancouver. Rose remembered the "horrible stench" they had to live and breathe in and being fed "porridge and a type of stew". They separated men and boys 12 years and up from the women and children. Rose remarkably kept and preserved one document in her albums from Hastings Park, the typed order from the BC Security Commission that reads, dated "Sept 7, 1942" with the typed order "the undermentioned are hereby authorized to leave Hasting Park Clearing Station to proceed to "A Building to be entrained at Hastings Park Siding for the purpose of being evacuated to New Denver on September 10, 1942", with "serial number 06812 for Suzuki, Masako".

Most of the Terra Nova families received the same order for New Denver as the Suzukis. Their neighbours, the Okino's, opted to be interned in a self-supporting camp, East Lillooet, where wealthy families were allowed to build their own homes. In the internment camps that the BCSC administered, money was provided for housing materials and to pay for the labour of the Japanese Canadian men who help construct the cabins or retrofit old abandoned buildings for habitation. Often those men had no building or carpentry experience. The Japanese Canadians were expected to pay for their own food and clothing from their savings. Initially, the BCSC attempted to fill the internment camps according to the religion of the internees. The Suzukis were one of the





New Denver Internment camp 1946, Rose and friend Mitzi with two unidentified nisei army soldiers on leave visiting the camp. Uchida family photo.

first families to be sent to the New Denver internment camp. They were packed on trains and the last leg of the trip was on trucks up rough mountain roads. The crude cabins were not built yet in the former apple orchard beside Slocan Lake outside the small town of New Denver. The family along with many others were housed in rows of army tents (Rose referred to them as civil war tents) and suffered through the cold fall and winter weather of the high altitude mountainous region. Rose recalled how they would wake up to frost and ice on the inside of the tent (and also reported the same experience in the cabin the first winter). Fuji, the eldest sister, had been sent alone to Rosebery from Vancouver, another internment camp, four miles away from New Denver on Lake Slocan. Kim quickly arranged for their grandmother, the widow Fusa Suzuki, then 78 years old, to board in a real house just outside the town of New Denver. There are many later photos taken in front of this house by the visiting Suzukis and friends. Rose's aunt Teru and her children Bobby and June went sent to Tashme and her husband Junji Ito

joined them after winter was over, when the BCSC rescinded former policies of separating families and allowed married men to return from road camps and join their families. My mother's wealthy aunt Yoshi and her brother Itaro (called 'Harry') and son Kanao were also sent to New Denver. The two siblings were able to rent a decent large house farther up the mountain on Lake Slocan.

There are two photo albums of pictures of the Suzuki's during the period of internment in New Denver. On the first page is a map of the camp, which the internees called 'The Orchard' and is so titled. Two large aerial photographs of the camp follow, one taken of the view of the Sanatorium built to treat Japanese Canadian tubercolosis (TB) patients. The BCSC appointed an internee named Dave Murakami to be the official photographer of the New Denver and Kaslo Internment Camps. There are a few panoramic professional, photographs in the album he may have given to Rose. Rose wanted to work in the Sanatorium as a nurse's aide but her parents forbade it. Eventually,



 $New\ Denver\ Meat\ Market\ 1943-44\ ,\ markt\ staff\ with\ hired\ JC\ workers\ Rose\ and\ Mitzi.\ Uchida\ family\ photo.$

in November of 1942, the Suzukis were given one of the larger cabins (they came in three sizes, one family: 16 x 16 ft; two families: 16 x 24ft; two large families: 16 x 28 ft.), for their big family. The cabins or crude homes were made of wood and provided no insulation (as the years progressed, improvements were made). There was no running water or electricity, and everyone had to sleep in single and double bunk beds. The Suzuki house was on an incline on very rocky ground. Sukesaburo, being older and physically limited with his burned hands, was not sent to a road camp and he took on the role of watchman for the ofuro (bath houses) that were built for the camp. The first photos display the harsh environment of their new cabin homes, followed by photos Rose took of her siblings in a snowy backdrop. No photos were ever taken of interiors. There are no photos of her father or grandmother in the internment camp.

As money ran out for the Japanese Canadians in the internment camps to buy food and necessities for themselves, many had to turn to subsistent government relief.

Rose and her sister Kim were fortunate to find jobs in the small town of New Denver to help support their family and six younger sibings. Kim worked at the dry goods store called 'Cash Service Store' with two other hired Japanese Canadian girls. Rose and another girl were hired to work at the New Denver Meat Market, a butcher shop.

Educating incarcerated children was not part of the BCSC racist plans and an entire year of education was lost to all the Japanese Canadian children. Universities shut their doors as well. The BC provincial government refused to help and the BCSC passed the responsibility onto the Japanese Canadians themselves, providing little funding and orders to





restrict classes to only grades 1 to 8. The BCSC hired the only Japanese Canadian teacher who had been hired in BC, Hide Hyodo, as supervisor. Along with assistant Teruko Hidaka, Hyodo accomplished the monumental task of organizing and training university and high school graduates to teach children in the camps.

New Denver ended up being the site of four-week summer teacher training classes for the young nisei teachers, the majority of whom were females, as most young men had been sent to road camps or incarcerated in POW camps in northern Ontario. These young students, the majority just teenagers, fanned out to teach at all the internment camps. The summer teacher training classes were held behind the Suzuki cabin (Rose referred to it as their "house"). Rose's mother Ko Suzuki would keep their back door open and provided water and cooked rice and access to their privy to the young teacher trainees. Rose took a number of photos of young teacher trainees that they got to know. The United Church and Roman Catholic Church made up the shortfall for the missing grades. The United Church taught kindergarten and Sunday school as well and taught high school in the town's one-room United Church. Catholic nuns established a high school in two rooms in a building in the town of New Denver that they called 'Notre Dame High'. Rose's brothers, Shoichi, Eiji, and cousin Kanao attended the Catholic high school, while the younger children attended the elementary classes taught by the Japanese Canadian teachers. Rose's younger sister Chiyoko (who went on to graduate from McMaster University), was able to attend the first kindergarten held in New Denver internment camp and there are photos of her in a graduation gown and hat and a large class photo.

During the long period of internment, Rose and Ryushin wrote to each other almost every day. Mail was heavily censored so it would take days, even weeks, for mail to be delivered. Rose had a friend take photos of herself to send him. She had doubles of her film developed. No doubt her eldest sister Fuji in Rosebery was writing to her boyfriend as well in a POW camp far away. Her sister Kim had met her future husband Rob Nagai in the New Denver camp. His younger sister Mary Nagai trained to be a teacher and became principal for the New Denver school (there are a couple of photos of her). The majority of photos

are centered on children – Rose's siblings – and recording their progression, as well as photos of the friends she made. Included are photos of neighbours in New Denver, and photos of their close friends from Terra Nova, the Shimanos and Okinos.

As a further, outrageous injustice, the Japanese Canadians learned that the homes and belongings they were forced to leave behind - and were told would be taken care of – were auctioned off and sold by the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property. They received a small percentage of the actual worth of their assets and were expected to use it to pay for their food and expenses in the camps. They were now completely homeless. A number of Japanese Canadians wrote protest letters to the government at the time and Ryushin, Rose's boyfriend, was one of them. In his letter dated Aug 5, 1944, he wrote "...I know now that my cousin who fought and died in France for Canada during the last war died in vain.... you have taken a step which reminiscent of Nazi Germany. Is that what Canada is fighting for?"1

In 1946, Kim and Rob Nagai married in the nearby village of Nakusp and were allowed to rent a house. There is a photo of them on their private wedding day in the album.

Rose kept three photos dated April 1946, sent to her by Ryushin that revealed he had been released from Angler POW Camp and had been transferred nearby on Lake Superior in remote northern Ontario to Neys Camp 78 and was working for a logging company. Nevs was a remote POW camp for high-ranking German officers sent from Germany during WWII. It was shut down in March of 1946. The Federal government then used it as a hostel, first for the young Japanese Canadian men recently released from Angler as they were hired to work for a logging company, still under the control of the government. Subsequently, Neys was used for the released internee families from the BC internment camps. The BC government had begun an intimidation campaign the year before, trying to force Japanese Canadians to leave Canada and go back to Japan. The second choice they were given was enforced dispersal across Canada; they had to leave BC and go 'East of the Rockies'. Rose preserved the kind letter of recommendation her employer of the New Denver Meat Market (D. Lever) wrote for her dated July 6, 1946 "... She leaves to make her home east of the Rockies and any kindnesses rendered to

her will be much appreciated by the writer and many friends..."

Rose took a bus, all alone, from BC to Northern Ontario to be reunited with Ryushin, but to her shock, he was not there as planned. While on her way to meet him, with no phones or any way to reach each other, Ryushin, had received a letter from his parents ordering him to return to them in BC as they had made the decision to repatriate, move to post-war Japan. Ryushin had never lived in Japan. He was the only son and his parents were old, his father in his 70s, their savings and home in Canada now gone, he was obligated to look after them. After enduring four years of being separated and incarcerated, thousands of kilometres apart, writing to each other through censored letters, Rose was now separated even further from her boyfriend by racist government policy. Ryushin and his parents were sent to Lemon Creek Internment camp and exiled to Japan on August 2, 1946.

The Suzukis eventually made their way east and rebuilt their lives in Hamilton Ontario. Fuji and Scotty arrived first and married soon after. Ko, Bachan Fusa and her youngest children spent months in the Neys hostel then later Fingal Hostel, a former Royal Air Force Training station outside of St. Thomas in southern Ontario. The rest, including Rose, worked in Hamilton, shared rented rooms and saved money to acquire an appropriate home in Hamilton to accommodate everyone. They still had to report to the RCMP. In 1947, the Suzuki's moved into a nice warm brick spacious Victorian house. The children enrolled in public schools. Kim and Rob Nagai, found work in Toronto, had a son the next year and in two years moved back to BC and settled in Kamloops where they built their own house. The Ito's re-settled in Montreal and had another son.

Ryushin Koyanagi remained in Japan with his parents.

He married in 1950, had one son, and never returned to Canada.

Footnotes

¹ Koyangi, Ryushin, 1944, protest letter from Landscapes of Injustice archives

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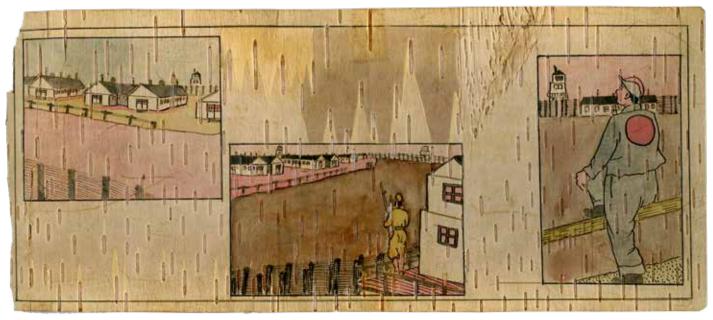




Treasures from the Collection



Hand Drawn Prisoner of War Illustration



Found in the Nikkei National Museum Collection. NNM 2019.31.1. Circa 1942.

This object is a hand-drawn illustration on a fragile piece of birch tree bark, depicting three views of the prisoner of war camp (POW camp) located in Angler, Ontario.

We do not know who the artist of the drawing is, nor the intention behind its creation, but we use the illustration to draw inferences about the lives of those wrongfully incarcerated as prisoners of war during the Second World War.

The image on the left of the white buildings in a row encircled by a twelve-foot barbed wire fence shows the starkness of the terrain in Eastern Ontario. There were five sets of connected buildings, as seen in the image, totalling ten buildings inside the camp. The image in the centre portrays that Angler was indeed monitored by armed guards stationed in a lookout raised above the camp so they could see all entrances and exits. The guards' accommodation was outside the camp. The image on the right shows the prisoner's attire with a large red circle painted on their camp-issued wear. Should they attempt to escape, the guards had a clear target to shoot at.

Angler had been used as a POW camp in the First World War, and was repurposed in the Second World War. It was also known as POW Camp 101, and ended up being an all Japanese Canadian POW camp. Essentially, men ended up there for either protesting the split up of families in

early 1942, or being arrested for resisting the Orders in Council that came down from the Federal Government to report to the RCMP, or in some cases were rounded up as 'trouble makers'.

A total of 769 men ended up in Angler, of which 232 were Japanese Nationals, 468 were Canadian-born *nisei*, and 43 were Naturalized Canadians. Another 20 renounced their citizenship and four were American citizens.

Angler closed in 1946, and the men who remained in camp either were exiled to Japan, sent to Moosejaw Hostel, or released. No man had a charge against him, a criminal record, or stood trial.

Today, this item remains in the Nikkei National Museum's archives where we can ensure its preservation. Birch bark is very fragile and cracks and breaks easily. Overtime, damage to the birch bark may cause fragments of the illustration to break off, losing the image. In 2022, we worked with Revival Conservators to carefully restore the item by manually removing old tape and adhesive residue, repairing the cracks with *washi* paper, and creating a custom storage enclosure to reduce stress during handling.

If anyone has any information regarding this item, please contact our collections manager Lisa Uyeda at luyeda@nikkeiplace.org or call 604.777.7000 extension 140.