



**Japanese Canadian Histories of
Powell Street, Vancouver, British Columbia
&
Steveston Village, Richmond, British Columbia**

A Study Guide for the interactive online resource:

www.nikkeistories.com

For English Language Arts & Social Studies grades 7 - 10 curricula

authored by Naomi Horii , BEd



Acknowledgments

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Gratitude to the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, who are the keepers of the unceded lands on which the Powell Street and Steveston stories were filmed, and from which this Study Guide draws resources.

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Introduction

The *Nikkei Stories* Study Guide provides teachers with a rich resource that is adaptable to elementary and secondary classroom lessons on Human Rights, Canadian, and Immigrant History, Japanese Canadian History, Multiculturalism, Democracy in Canada, and Local Histories.

The study guide references the interactive website www.nikkeistories.com produced by Orbit Films Inc. -- wherein students can explore stories the form of short films about the people, places, events, and cultural life of the Japanese Canadian communities of Powell Street and Steveston, British Columbia.



click the 'information' icon on www.nikkeistories.com and a window will pop up describing the various toggles to use to navigate the site.

Here we present a Unit Plan for Japanese Canadian history; however, we invite teachers to incorporate the videos from the Nikkei Stories website into any other unit plans on Canadian history. For example: Canadian women's histories, BC resource industry histories, etc.

The *Nikkei Stories* Japanese Canadian History Unit Plan Overview:

This Unit Plan consists of five lesson plans, wherein teachers can select from and adapt the material to suit the needs of diverse learners, while making curriculum connections for Social Studies and English grades 7-10.

Students will thread each lesson with journal reflections in order to develop their own thoughts and opinions on the local histories of Powell Street, Steveston, and critically reflect on the history of democracy in Canada. We hope that this focused study guide will provide opportunity for students to dovetail what they learn about Japanese Canadian history with Indigenous histories and various immigrant histories in Canada.

Lesson One: Welcome to the Neighbourhood

Students learn the geographical areas of Powell Street and Steveston, and why these areas are significant to Japanese Canadian communities. Students will practice research and response, and how to use the website.

Lesson Two: Early Years

Students compare and contrast both “First Immigrants” stories from Powell Street and from Steveston and research general facts of Japanese Canadian History. Students respond to general challenges and triumphs of both communities.

Lesson Three: Zooming in on the Neighbourhoods

Students take a closer look at the stories of the neighbourhoods and some of the specific histories that took place. Students have the opportunity to place themselves in the histories.

Lesson Four: Hero Story

Students learn about some of the significant people of the rich history of Powell Street and Steveston, and practice research and reflection on their inspiring challenges they have faced.

Lesson Five: Honouring the past, Looking Forward

By looking into the Redress movement and how the Japanese Canadian community moved forward after the war years, students will gain an appreciation for our precious human rights, and what we can do to protect them.

Curriculum connections

English Language Arts 7-10

- recalling, summarizing, and synthesizing
- drawing inferences & conclusions
- distinguishing between fact & opinion
- demonstrate comprehension of visual texts
- express opinions & make judgments supported by explanations and evidence
- use writing and representing to critique, express personal opinions and respond to experiences

Social Studies 7

- apply critical thinking skills including comparing, classifying, inferring, imagining and verifying
- summarizing and drawing conclusions to a number of problems and issues

Social Studies 8

- locate and describe current and historical events on map
- compare daily life, family structures, and gender roles in a variety of civilizations
- describe how societies preserve identity, transmit culture, and adapt to change
- describe various ways individuals and groups can influence legal systems and political structures
- analyze how people interacted with and altered their environments, in terms of population, settlement patterns, resource use and cultural development

Social Studies 9

- assess how identity is shaped by a variety of factors, including family, gender, belief systems, ethnicity, nationality

- analyze roots of present-day regional, cultural, and social issues within Canada
- describe a variety of diverse cultural traditions and world religions

Social Studies 10

- apply critical thinking skills, including questioning, comparing, summarizing, drawing conclusions, defending a position
- identify the influence of immigration on, and the contributions of immigrants to the development of Canada
- describe the factors that contributed to a changing national identity
- describe the evolution of responsible government in Canada in terms of governmental structure and key contributing events.

Why teach Japanese Canadian History?

by Masako Fukawa, MEd

Nikkei stories are lessons for life. They have immediate relevance to our daily life and experience. They can empower individuals to contribute to the achievement of a just society in a multicultural Canada and in a global community where all persons are valued and respected.

Teachers and students are presented with extensive digital archives from museums, historic photographs, maps, documents, newspaper articles, videos and oral interviews to engage their empathy and morals, challenge their assumptions, develop their critical thinking, both cognitive and affective learning, and integrate concepts like human dignity and equality into their everyday experience. Students learn that respect for differences of experience and opinion and active engagement in ongoing learning are essential to building and maintaining a democratic society.

From the study of Japanese Canadian history students learn how fear, racism, mass hysteria, and the failure of leadership led to the wrongful incarceration of Japanese Canadians and how knowledge, common sense, decency and adherence to democratic ideals can prevent history from repeating itself.

Through the study of local history, Powell Street and Steveston, students learn that there was a significant Nikkei population in these two communities before The Second World War and understand how these communities came to disappear. Students learn to connect the present day events to the past and recognize the social injustices that have been inflicted by creating a thoughtful, deep awareness about these communities and their own.

Personal stories of Nikkei give eyewitness accounts of significant issues and events in our country's history. They present many perspectives and contribute to documenting and furthering our understanding of ourselves, our community and the world.

Through the study of the Redress movement, students will come to understand that historic wrongs can be redressed and that civil liberties can only be protected in a society that is open; and in a democracy where participation is expected and exercised.

*Masako Fukawa, MEd
August 2015*



Background on Powell Street

“It was an incredibly vibrant place.” Those are the words of Grace Eiko Thomson, who grew up near Powell Street, the neighbourhood where Vancouver was born in 1865 when the Hastings Mill was built at the foot of Dunlevy. Japanese immigrants, also known as Nikkei, were part of the Powell Street neighbourhood since its beginning. By 1900, they had developed their own institutions — schools, shops, hospitals, temples, unions and cooperatives.

But like other minorities in BC, Japanese Canadians faced major set backs – such as the Anti-Asian Riot of 1907, internment during WW2, denial of the right to vote and exclusion from most professions. When Japan bombed Pearl Harbour in 1941, the Japanese-Canadians community on Powell Street disappeared nearly overnight. When they were allowed to return to the coast in 1949, few returned to Powell Street and the neighbourhood never recovered.

Today, after years of neglect, the Powell Street area is undergoing a boom in social housing and a commercial redevelopment with many knowledge-based companies moving into the area for its cheap rents and character buildings.

Although much of “Japantown” has been lost, traces of the Japanese Canadian neighbourhood still remain. The Art Deco-style building at 369 Powell Street was once the heart of a business empire owned by the Maikawas, one of the most prominent families on Powell Street. Grace Eiko Thomson hopes some of the community can be saved. “Before 1942 there was a thriving Japanese-Canadian community, there was a town there. But if you have no trace of it, the community disappears.”



Background on Steveston Village

The first known Japanese immigrant to British Columbia, Manzo Nagano, arrived in 1877 hoping to escape a life of poverty. A decade later, Gihei Kuno, a fisherman from the Wakayama prefecture in southern Japan, recruited fellow fishermen to settle in the village of Steveston, one of BC's oldest communities at the mouth of the Fraser River.

By the early 1900s, thousands of Japanese Canadian immigrants, also known as Nikkei, had formed a large part of the population of Steveston. Fishing the BC coast became a way of life for Nikkei families and it allowed them to build and maintain a flourishing community.

But the history of the Nikkei in Steveston is filled with drama and violence, pitting individuals and the community in epic struggles against discrimination and injustice. Other fishermen and governments used racist policies in an attempt to exclude them from fisheries entirely.

During World War II, 22,000 Japanese Canadians were forcibly relocated from the coast, their property confiscated and their livelihoods taken away. Their internment was a massive injustice and a severe blow to the community. After the war some Japanese Canadians returned to the coast and today a sizeable and active community lives in Steveston.

The post-war years brought new challenges for Nikkei, but also major triumphs like the achievement of redress in 1988. Japanese Canadians have shown that even in the face of inequity and prejudice, ordinary people can possess an indomitable spirit and accomplish the extraordinary.



Lessons Plans

Welcome to the Neighbourhoods

Early Years

Zooming in on the Neighbourhoods

Hero Story

Honouring the Past, Looking Forward

Welcome to the Neighbourhoods

LESSON **ONE** | NIKKEI STORIES | JAPANESE CANADIAN HISTORY UNIT

Look at the handout map of BC. Locate where Powell Street and Steveston are on the map, and make your own drop pin and label those locations using coloured pencils/markers.

Teacher facilitates 3 min talk back on if anyone has been to either location. What is there now? How far away is it from here and how do we get there?

Use this map of BC in conjunction with the street maps on the website.

Individually or groups of 2:

Go to the interactive map on the *Nikkei Stories* website and choose any **four** videos to watch: **two** from Powell Street and **two** from Steveston.

Answer the following questions:

- 1) Why do you think Powell Street and Steveston are **important places** in Japanese Canadian History?

Answer:

2) Give an outline of the four videos that you watched:

Video title	What is it about? For example: <i>“This video is about the history of... which is located in...”</i>	3 facts about the story (point form)

3) Choose 1 fact for each video that is new information to you and circle or highlight here in this chart.

Teacher facilitates students to share with their findings with each other.

Teacher facilitates a discussion about ethnic parts of Vancouver and/or Richmond. Are there other places with an ethnic concentration in Vancouver? (South Asian, Chinese, Filipino, Greek, Korean, Italian, Ukrainian, etc.) Are there any other ethnic areas in other cities that students have visited?

Class wrap-up:

Teacher asks: Why do you think any ethnic community settles together in a city after immigrating to a foreign place?

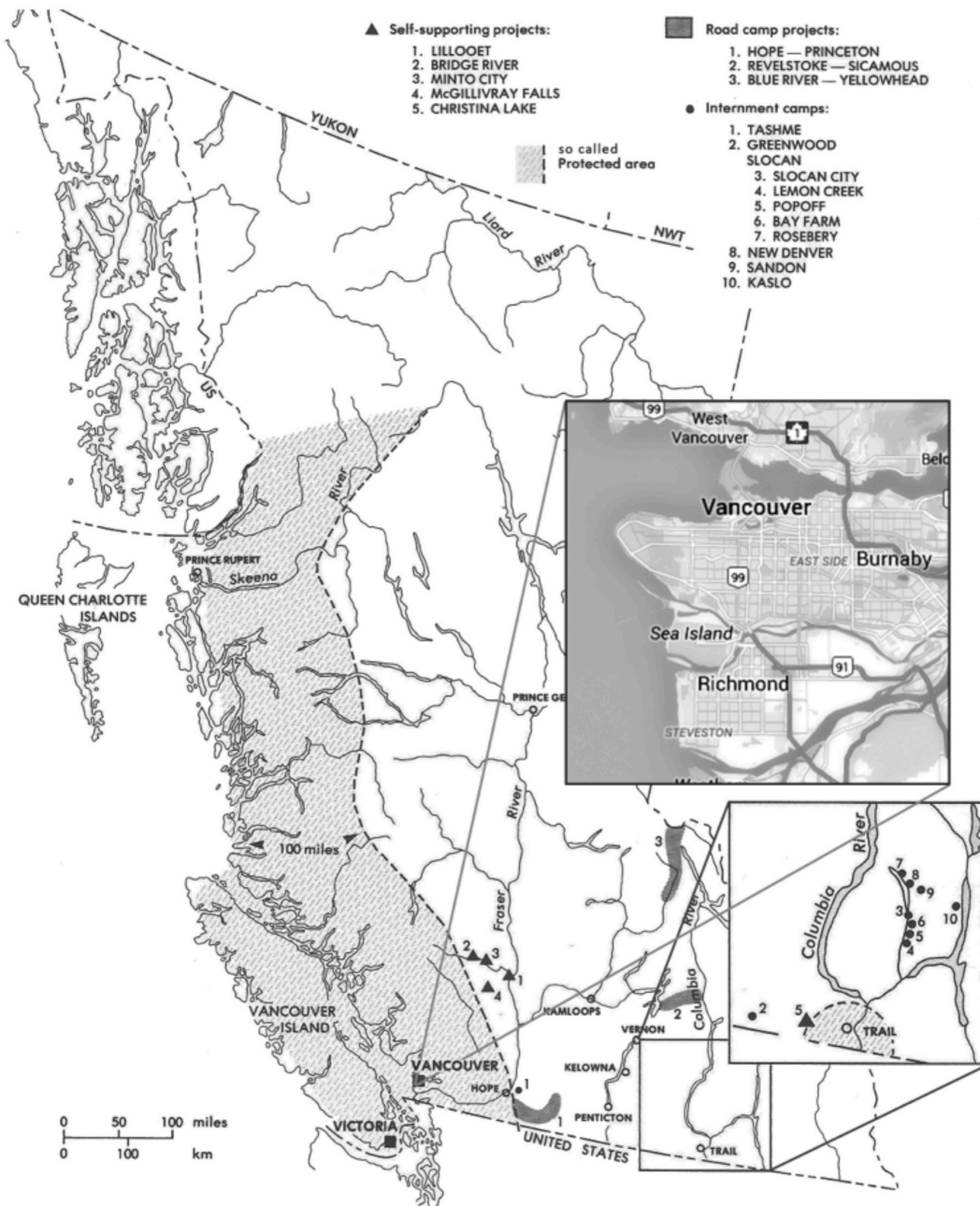
What kind of impacts do you think Japanese Immigration has on Aboriginal communities? Teacher must be prepared to talk about colonial and Indigenous history with this question.

Journal reflection:

Where is your family from? Did they originally immigrate to Canada? Interview a family elder to find out if you don't know. Answer the following questions:

- 1) Where are your ancestors from?
- 2) What are some of the challenges they faced having a family and community here, if any?

Nikkei Stories Reference Map *



* This map was originally put together by the contributors of *Justice In Our Time*, and has been modified here for the *Nikkei Stories* study guide. To source the map in its original form, see *Justice In Our Time*, 1991, Talonbooks, Vancouver.

Early years

LESSON **TWO** | NIKKEI STORIES | JAPANESE CANADIAN HISTORY UNIT

Go to the *Nikkei Stories* website and watch both the “First Immigrants” videos of Steveston and Powell Street.

After watching both “First Immigrants” videos, answer the following questions:

- 1) What initially brought Japanese people to:

Powell Street: _____

Steveston: _____

- 2) What do communities need to gather, learn, grow, eat, stay connected... etc.?

- 3) Define the following:

Issei:

Discrimination:

- 4) What were the *Issei* **hoping to achieve** by leaving Japan? What was the “dream” or goal?

5) What kinds of discrimination did Japanese Canadians experience in those early years of immigration?

Powell Street:	Steveston:
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Class wrap-up:

Teacher facilitates discussion: What kinds of discrimination do you see happening around you now? Consider all ways that we may be considered 'different', or in ways in which individuals or groups are stereotyped.

Journal reflection:

If you were 16 years old, how would you feel moving to an unknown place, with an unknown language by yourself, without your family? Describe some of the emotions you might feel. What would be the first thing you would want to do upon your arrival in a foreign land?

Zooming in on the Neighbourhoods

LESSON **THREE** | NIKKEI STORIES | JAPANESE CANADIAN HISTORY UNIT

Go to the *Nikkei Stories* website and choose **one** video from the following:

Internment (Steveston)	Maikawa Brothers	Internment (Powell Street)
Asahi	Japanese Language School	Women at Work
Creating Community	Martial Arts	Boat Builders

*Use the written transcript of your chosen video to help you with details of the story.

Activity: Postcards From the Neighbourhoods

Imagine you just moved to Vancouver from Japan, and you are **sending a postcard** to a loved one. This could be one of your family members in Japan, or to a friend who lives elsewhere in the world.

To create the postcard, you will need:

- card stock, cut 4.25 inches X 6 inches, standard postcard size.
- scissors
- glue
- pens/pencils/colours
- at least 4 archival images printed from the *Nikkei Stories* website, found in the “chronology”. Make sure they are images that are related to your chosen video.

Once you’ve gathered all that you need, **make a collage out of your images on one side of the postcard**. You can use other images from other sources if you like.

On the blank side of your postcard, write a letter to your loved one, telling them about where you are. When you describe where you are, **keep in mind sights, smells, feelings, what you hear, what you experience**.

Sign it from a fictional character’s name.

Class wrap-up:

Teacher receives all the completed postcards, and re-issues them randomly to students. Teacher facilitates the sharing of postcards with the class by perhaps getting some students to present the one they have received. Create a wall (or another way) for the class to view all the postcards.

Watch both Internment videos of Steveston and Powell Street as a whole class, and discuss: How did the Internment of Japanese Canadians affect the neighbourhoods of Powell Street and Steveston?

Teacher facilitates a discussion around the question: What are the neighbourhoods like now, versus before the Second World War?

Journal reflection:

Describe your own neighbourhood. Think about where you live. Does the building you live in have history? Does the land have history? Do you think it is important to keep or restore old buildings in our cities? Why or why not? Do you think Vancouver and Richmond do a good job in preserving old buildings or places?

Hero Story

LESSON **FOUR** | NIKKEI STORIES | JAPANESE CANADIAN HISTORY UNIT

Go to the *Nikkei Stories* website and choose **one** video from the following:

Masumi Mitsui
Tomekichi Homma
Lives of Women

Tom Shoyama
Rintaro Hayashi

Etsuji Morii
Hide Hyodo Shimizu

*Use the written transcript of your chosen video to help you with details of the story.

Pick five words that are new to you from your chosen video to **define** and fill the following vocabulary chart:

	<i>word:</i>	<i>word:</i>	<i>word:</i>	<i>word:</i>	<i>word:</i>
<i>what kind of word? ex: verb, adjective, noun...?</i>					
<i>synonym</i>					
<i>antonym</i>					
<i>use in a new sentence</i>					

Activity: A Hero's life - Graphic Story

Follow the steps and get to know the hero in the video by animating their life story through images and text. Share with your community the story of an inspiring individual.

To create the Graphic Story, you will need:

- soft pencil
- eraser
- black ink pen
- ruler
- colours (optional)
- Hero Profile handout
- Storyboard handout

1) Hero Profile

First we need to take a close look at their story, and try to get a sense of their personality by building a 'hero profile'. If you would like to add to your hero's profile with more details or information, simply add more to the table below.

2) Building the storyboard: write the storyline

Choose **either**: **follow the storyline of the video** presented to explain your hero's personality, strength, challenges, and words of wisdom.

- or -

write your own storyline, using information in the video presented. That might be focusing on one aspect of your hero's life, to explain your hero's strength, challenges, and words of wisdom.

Use the transcript for your chosen video as a resource if you need. You can underline or highlight parts of the story you want to use in order to develop your idea.

Use the Storyboard Template below, and start writing the storyline frame by frame, in the lines under each frame.

3) Completing the Storyboard: the finished graphic story of your hero

Draw each frame to correspond to the text you have created below. When drawing your story, keep in mind the hero's experiences, what s/he sees tastes, smells, feels, hears, the hero's environments, the hero's people in her/his life.

Use the chronology from the website to **look at some archival photos** to help develop your own visual ideas.

Before you outline the pencil in black ink and erase the remaining pencil for your good copy, check if your story:

- **speaks truth** about the hero of the story
- includes the **hero's experiences** (how they feel, what they did, how they think...)
- explains **words of wisdom** from your hero

Class wrap-up:

Students put up the graphic story up on the wall, or make photocopies to make a graphic book of heroes to share. This could be put together for the school library, or for students to take home.

Teacher facilitates discussion on the power of action. What actions did Japanese Canadian heroes take to change the course of history? Who are some non-Japanese Canadian heroes that did inspiring things to protect human rights in Canada, outside Canada, or the world? Why do you think many of these heroes presented are mostly all male?

Journal reflection:

What can we do if we see a person's or group's human rights being violated? Give examples.

What can we do when we feel like we've been treated poorly?

Hero Profile

Hero's name:	
When she/he came immigrate to Canada?	
3 words to describe the hero. Be descriptive.	1) 2) 3)
3 facts about his/her life:	1) 2) 3)
If this hero were an animal, what kind of animal would they be? Explain why.	
What kind of challenges did she/he face?	
What would be words of wisdom from this person?	

Use the storyboard templates to draw out the story of your hero's life. Use as many sheets as you need.

nikkei stories graphic story title _____

name: _____ *page* _____

Honouring the Past, Looking Forward

LESSON *FIVE* | NIKKEI STORIES | JAPANESE CANADIAN HISTORY UNIT

Go to the *Nikkei Stories* website and watch both:

Redress Back to Steveston

*Use the written transcript of your chosen video to help you with details of the story.

Define:

Redress:

Dispersal:

Give an outline of the four videos that you watched:

Video title	What is it about? For example: <i>“This video is about the history of... which is located in...”</i>	3 facts about the story (point form)

Answer the following questions:

- 1) In both videos “Back to Steveston” and “Redress”, what are the years that the videos are talking about?

from the year _____ *to* _____

- 2) The Japanese Canadian Community lost many important aspects of what makes a community strong, because of Internment and dispersal. List some below what communities need to gather, learn, grow, eat, stay connected... etc.

Make a list:

- 3) Write a persuasive essay on **one** of the following topics:

What is the Powell Street Festival? In your opinion, explain why you think it is so important to Japanese Canadians. In addition, explain why you think it is important to Vancouver and Canada.

- or -

What is the Japanese Canadian community doing to protect the human rights of the communities that now live in the Powell Street neighbourhood? In your opinion, why is this important to Japanese Canadians? In addition, explain why you think it is important to Vancouverites, and all Canadians.

Use conventions of creating a persuasive essay, with an opening statement, supporting details, and conclusion.

Use the written transcripts of the videos to help you with details of the story.

Teacher facilitates a discussion on the differences between *Apology* and *Acknowledgement*.

Apology: an expression of regret for doing something wrong.

Acknowledgment: an admission of the truth or the existence of something. Usually acknowledges the person's or group's grievances.

Teacher facilitates discussion with examples.

For example:

Apology	Acknowledgement
<i>I'm sorry for being late</i>	<i>I'm sorry for being late. I realize your time is valuable and that it seems like I disrespect your efforts to make it on time.</i>
<i>I'm sorry you're upset.</i>	<i>I am sorry for making you upset. I have obviously hurt your feelings by not listening to what you had to say.</i>
<i>I'm sorry you feel that way.</i>	<i>I'm sorry I've made you feel uncomfortable. I realize now that my behavior is not appropriate, for which I apologize.</i>

- 4) Write a persuasive essay addressing the following question:

In what ways did the government of Canada express or not express an *apology* and *acknowledgement* to Japanese Canadians?

Use conventions of creating a persuasive essay, with an opening statement, supporting details, and conclusion.

Use the written transcripts of the videos to help you with details of the story.

Activity: What makes an Apology

In pairs, choose who will be person 'A' and person 'B' and act the following script. This can be played out in front of the class or in individual pairs.

Together, complete the script by filling in the blanks and then act it out:

- ACT I -

PERSON A: "Hey _____, how's it going? [*trips and falls over, and breaks PERSON B's* _____.]

PERSON B: [looks surprised, upset, sad, hurt, _____, _____,]

PERSON B: [responds]: _____
 _____!!!

- ACT II -

PERSON A: [responds with a simple apology. Acts unfriendly and defensive]

 _____!

PERSON A: [leaves]

PERSON B: [alone, and looks upset, sad, hurt, _____, _____.]

- ACT III -

PERSON A: [returns]

PERSON B: [alone, and looks upset, sad, hurt, _____, _____.]

"I know you were sorry, but I still don't feel ok. I still feel hurt that you broke my _____.
 It doesn't feel like you understand what it meant to me that you broke my _____.

PERSON A: [looks sympathetic responds with an apology and acknowledgement.]

 _____.

PERSON A and PERSON B: [make up and leave]

Class wrap up:

Teacher facilitates discussion around the question: Have any of you had something happen, but then didn't feel fully ok after? Why not? Have any of you had something happen to you, but did feel resolved? What made you feel better?

Do you think the government needs to express a formal apology and acknowledgment to any other ethnic group for failure to protect their human rights? Teacher must be prepared to talk about Indigenous history.

Journal reflection:

When it comes to human rights, how can you make a person/group of people feel valued and respected? How can you restore their dignity and pride?

Make a personal manifesto on what you will do to protect every human's right to equality.



Appendix

Nikkei Stories Chronology

Transcriptions

Glossary

Study Guide Image Lists

Nikkei Stories Credits

Nikkei Stories Chronology

The Early Years 1833 - 1907

- 1833 First recorded instance of Japanese shipwrecks off the west coast of what would become British Columbia.
- 1842 Ranald MacDonald, son of an aboriginal woman and white man, travels to Japan in search of people like himself, after seeing castaway Japanese sailors off the coast of British Columbia.
- 1854 Japan establishes diplomatic relations with the West and ends period of self imposed isolation by signing treaty with U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry.
- 1968 The Meiji Restoration is responsible for the emergence of Japan as a modernized nation, but causes poverty by raising taxes and enforces conscription into the newly formed Imperial Army.
- 1877 Manzo Nagano, age 22, leaves Yokohama and lands in New Westminster, BC, the first Japanese person known to land and settle in Canada.
- 1879 Steveston becomes a municipality.
- 1882 Thirteen canneries operate on the Fraser River with Phoenix Cannery being the first on the Steveston waterfront, built between No. 1 Road and No. 2 Road.
- 1883 Tomekichi Homma, an educated son of a former samurai, settles in Steveston and begins fishing with other early Japanese immigrants.
- Takezo (surname unknown) is the first Japanese immigrant employed at the Hastings Sawmill in Vancouver, later the largest employer of Japanese immigrants in Canada.
- 1886 Yasukichi Yoshizawa is the first boss hired to supervise the Japanese Canadian work force at Hastings Sawmill.
- 1887 Gihei Kuno, a Japanese fisherman impressed by the abundance of salmon in the Fraser River, returns to his village of Mio in Wakayama Prefecture to recruit fellow fishermen, beginning the flow to immigrants from Mio to Steveston.
- Yoko Oya is the first Japanese woman to settle in Canada and with her husband, Washiji Oya, opens the first general store to serve the Nikkei community at 457 Powell Street.

1889 Yoko Oya gives birth to Katsuji, the first Japanese Canadian child born in Canada.

The first Japanese consulate opens in Vancouver.

1889 First shipment of canned salmon leaves Steveston for London, England.

1890 Japanese Canadians establish boarding houses and other businesses along the streets adjacent to the Hastings Mill, especially on Powell Street. This neighbourhood becomes the major settlement of Japanese Canadians until World War II.

1891 Jukichi Hayakawa is the first Japanese in Steveston to receive a formal fishing license.

1892 Manzo Nagano moves to Victoria, where he becomes an influential member of the Japanese Canadian community.

1893 Caucasian and First Nations fishermen stage a strike demanding a reduction in the number of fishing licenses issued to Japanese fishermen.

1894 The first Christian church for Japanese immigrants opens in Vancouver.

Gulf of Georgia Cannery is built in Steveston, (originally named the Malcolm and Windsor Cannery)

1895 Government of British Columbia denies the franchise to citizens of Asian descent.

Japanese fishermen and volunteers build the Japanese Methodist Mission in Steveston to improve social conditions for the community.

1896 Rev. Kaburagi Goro becomes the first ordained minister of the Japanese Methodist Church in Vancouver, and establishes a Japanese language weekly, the Bankuba Shuho.

1896 During an outbreak of typhoid fever in Steveston, the Methodist Mission is used to care for the sick, mostly Japanese and First Nations, and becomes known as the first hospital.

Japanese Fishermen's Association is formed to advance the interests of Nikkei fishermen.

- Tomekichi Homma is elected the first President of the Japanese Fishermen's Association.
- 1897 R. W. Large, a medical doctor and minister, arrives in Steveston to serve fishermen and cannery workers at the Methodist Mission hospital.
- Steveston builds first school.
- 1899 Two hundred Nikkei men are employed at Hastings Mill in Vancouver.
- Harold Steves Sr. is first Caucasian born in the Japanese Fishermen's Hospital at the Phoenix Cannery site in Steveston.
- 1900 The second Japanese Fishermen's Hospital, built by Japanese Fishermen's Association, opens on No. 1 Road in Steveston, and offers a type of universal Medicare - the first in Canada.
- Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society is formed, a new version of the Japanese Fishermen's Association formed in 1896.
- A fishermen's strike over the price of fish leads to tension between Aboriginal, white and Japanese fishermen.
- Tomekichi Homma, discovering that he is not allowed to vote in British Columbia, launches and wins two legal challenges with the province.
- 1902 Tomekichi Homma is defeated when the Privy Council of Britain rules that the Province of British Columbia has authority over civil rights, thus restricting the right to vote, hold public office or become a lawyer, pharmacist, architect, chartered accountant or teacher.
- 1903 The Government of British Columbia, amid increasing public agitation against Asian immigration, makes a first attempt to require immigrants to pass a written English examination.
- The Bankuba Shuho weekly newspaper becomes a daily, the Kanada Shimpo.
- 1904 Japanese Methodist Mission offers kindergarten, primary classes in Japanese and Sunday School.
- 1905 The first Buddhist temple in Canada opens at the Ishikawa Hotel on Powell Street, Vancouver.

Tsunematsu Atagi opens the Atagi Boat Works, one of the earliest of many shops in Steveston to build wooden fishing vessels.

1906 The Vancouver Japanese Language School is established at 439 Alexander Street.

At Lord Strathcona School in Vancouver, Japanese Canadian students are enrolled in a public school alongside white students for the first time.

Japanese immigration to Canada increases as a result of unemployment following the Russo-Japanese War, and widespread crop failure in Japan.

Richmond School Board mandates that only children of property owners could attend public school. Most Japanese Canadians lived in cannery-owned houses so their children were excluded until 1923.

1907 An Anti-Asian Riot causes severe damage to Japanese Canadian businesses and homes in the Powell Street area (September 9th).

W.L. Mackenzie King, Minister of Labour, is appointed to head a Royal Commission to assess the damages, and awards \$9,000 for losses.

The Tairiku Nippo newspaper begins publication.

Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society builds the first Japanese primary school on the grounds of the Japanese Hospital in Steveston because Japanese children are not allowed to go to regular school.

1908 The Hayashi-Lemieux "Gentlemen's Agreement" restricts Japanese immigration to 400 male immigrants and domestic servants per year, plus returning immigrants and their immediate family members.

The picture bride system, a type of arranged marriage where women in Japan would exchange pictures with Japanese men in Canada, becomes widespread.

The Building Years 1909 - 1941

1909 A directory of Japanese immigrant businesses shows hundreds of businesses in the Powell Street area.

The Steveston Japanese School opens at Number One Road and Chatham Street near the Japanese Hospital.

1914 The Asahi baseball team, famous for its sacrificing, base-stealing and fielding, is formed.

1913 Rintaro Hayashi, age 12, is brought to Steveston from Japan by his father and begins fishing on the Fraser River.

1914 Outbreak of World War I.

The Kishi Brothers open Kishi Bros Boat Works in Steveston to build wooden fishing vessels for fishermen and floats for community celebrations.

The first kendo club in Steveston is founded, making it the birthplace of kendo in Canada.

1916 Over 200 Nikkei volunteers attempt to enlist in the Canadian Army. After being rejected in BC, they travel to Alberta to join Canadian battalions of the British army and are shipped to Europe.

Chitose Uchida is the first Nikkei to graduate from a Canadian university, qualified as a schoolteacher. She is unable to find employment, except teaching English in the Nikkei community.

Of the 225 Japanese Canadian soldiers who saw action in Europe, nearly one quarter were killed. Thirteen received the Military Medal of Bravery, including Masumi Mitsui.

1917 Surviving WWI Nikkei veterans are promised the right to vote.

1919 Japanese Canadian fishermen hold 3,267 fishing licenses, nearly half of all licenses in BC.

1920 The Japanese Canadian War Memorial is officially unveiled in Stanley Park on the third anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge.

Rintaro Hayashi becomes head instructor of the Steveston Kendo Club.

1921 Tsutae Sato becomes principal of the Vancouver Japanese Language School where he, with his wife, Hanako, teaches thousands of students.

1922 Steve Sasaki, the father of judo in Canada, opens first judo club in Vancouver.

1922 Duff Commission targets Japanese Canadian fishermen by recommending a reduction in fishing licenses to all fishermen “except white residents, British Subjects and Canadian Indians.”

1923 Manzo Nagano, after losing all his possessions when his business in Victoria is destroyed by fire, returns to Japan and dies at age 68.

The "Gentlemen's Agreement" is reactivated after intense pressure placed by the British Columbia government upon the federal government, and further immigration is limited to 150 per year.

1923 The Richmond School Board approaches the Japanese Canadian community to help with construction costs of an addition to the four-room Lord Byng School. The Nikkei community agrees, and the Board begins accepting children of Japanese Canadians who are not property owners.

1924 The number of fishing licenses granted to Japanese Canadians is reduced by 40%.

1926 The Asahi baseball team wins the Terminal League Championship, the first of several league championships over the next 15 years.

Hide Hyodo Shimizu, the first Japanese Canadian to receive a teaching certificate in British Columbia, is hired to teach at the Lord Byng School in Steveston.

1927 Yuichi Akune comes to Steveston from Japan, and becomes head kendo instructor as well as a leading figure in kendo in Canada.

1928 The Vancouver Japanese Language School expands to a new concrete building at 475 Alexander, directly east of the original school.

Japan and Canada agree to establish diplomatic relations, and Japan opens a legation in Ottawa.

The Steveston Buddhist Temple opens on First Avenue, giving Nikkei a place to perform funeral rites and to celebrate marriages.

1929 Canada opens its first diplomatic office in Tokyo.

1930 The first judo club started in Steveston with the help of Vancouver-based Steve Sasaki.

A new Lord Byng School, with 14 rooms, is built in Steveston with the Japanese community donating \$20,000 of \$48,000 total cost.

1931 Sgt. Masumi Mitsui and other World War I veterans become the only Japanese Canadians permitted to vote in Canada.

1934 The Homba Buddhist Church is built at 604 Cordova Street.

- 1936 Hide Hyodo Shimizu, with a delegation from the Japanese Canadian Citizens League, travels to Ottawa to petition for the right to vote. The petition is unsuccessful.
- 1938 The New Canadian is established as the first English-language Nikkei newspaper with the motto, “The Voice of the Second Generation”.
- 1939 Tom Shoyama, after graduating from UBC with a degree in economics, joins the staff of The New Canadian newspaper.
- Tomekichi Maikawa, of the Maikawa family of entrepreneurs, opens a new Art Deco-style department store at 369 Powell Street.
- 1939 Canada declares war with Germany (September 10).
- Japanese Fishermen’s Association and other kenjinkai (associations dedicated to mutual aid) support the war effort with donations and offers of assistance.

Internment and Dispersal 1941 - 1949

- 1941 The federal government recommends that Japanese Canadians not be allowed to volunteer for the armed services on the grounds that there is strong public opinion against them (January 7).
- Japan attacks Pearl Harbour. Canada declares war on Japan (December 7).
- Twelve hundred fishing boats owned by Japanese Canadians are impounded (December 8).
- Japanese language newspapers and schools close (December 8).
- Order-in-Council P.C. 9760 requires all persons of Japanese origin, regardless of citizenship, to register with the Registrar of Enemy Aliens (December 16).
- 1942 Tom Shoyama uses The New Canadian newspaper, the only Nikkei paper allowed to publish during WWII, to advocate for the rights of Japanese Canadians and becomes an important communication source.
- The light atop the Japanese Canadian War Memorial is extinguished.
- Order-in-Council P.C. 365 creates a 160-kilometre exclusion zone on the coast of British Columbia from which male “enemy aliens” could be excluded (January 16).

All male "enemy aliens" between the ages of 18-45 are forced to leave the exclusion zone before April 1. (February 7).

Order-in-Council P.C. 1486 empowers the government to remove all persons of Japanese origin from the exclusion zone, regardless of citizenship (February 24).

Japanese Canadians are restricted in areas of employment, communication and association with other persons, and denied possession of cameras, firearms and radios.

The federal Minister of Justice orders all persons of "the Japanese race" to leave the coast (February 26).

All property that cannot be carried is placed in the custody of the Custodian of Alien Property as a "protective measure only".

B.C. Security Commission is established to plan, supervise and direct the expulsion of Japanese Canadians (March 4).

Japanese Canadians from the coastal area arrive at a temporary detention centre in Hastings Park, an agricultural exhibition ground, in Vancouver (March 16).

B.C. Security Commission begins assigning men to road camps and women and children to ghost town detention camps in the BC interior (March 25).

Entire Japanese population of Steveston (250 families totaling 2000 people) is interned, leaving Steveston a near ghost town (May).

The number of students at Lord Byng School in Steveston drops from 550 to 137.

P.C. 5523 - The Director of Soldier Settlement is given authority to purchase or lease farms owned by Japanese Canadians. He subsequently buys 572 farms without consulting the owners (June 29).

A total of 22,000 Japanese Canadians of whom 75% are Canadian citizens (60% Canadian born, 15% naturalized) are uprooted forcibly from the BC coast (October).

Hide Hyodo Shimizu, interned at the New Denver, trains high school graduates to teach in the camps, and while travelling to seven separate camps, supervises the education of thousands of children.

1943 Order in Council grants the Custodian of Enemy Alien Property the right to dispose of Japanese Canadian properties in his care without the owners' consent (January 23).

1944 The federal government announces a program to disperse Japanese Canadians throughout the country, to separate those who are “loyal” from those who are “disloyal”, and to deport the disloyal to Japan.

Prime Minister King states it is desirable that Japanese Canadians are dispersed across Canada (August 4).

1945 The New Canadian newspaper moves to Winnipeg.

At the request of the British government, Japanese Canadians are allowed to enlist in the Canadian Intelligence Corps.

Tom Shoyama, editor of the New Canadian newspaper, along with one hundred fifty Japanese Canadians, volunteer for service with the Canadian Intelligence Corps in the Far East.

Tomekichi Homma dies in the Popoff internment camp at the age of 80.

Japan surrenders after atomic bombs are dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (August 15).

Approximately 10,000 people remaining in the camps, facing uncertainty and unable to confirm new residences east of the Rockies, sign deportation forms. Nearly half later apply to rescind their signatures.

Orders-in-Council P.C. 7335, 7356 and 7357 empower the government to assess the loyalty of Japanese Canadians, order their deportation and strip them of citizenship.

1946 On expiry of the War Measures Act, the National Emergency Transitional Powers Act is used to keep the measures against Japanese Canadians in place (January 1).

Boats begin carrying exiled Japanese Canadians to Japan (May 31).

The Privy Council upholds a Supreme Court Decision that the deportation orders are legal (December).

1947 Deportation orders are cancelled but 4,000 Japanese Canadians have already been deported (January 24).

The Citizenship Act extends the franchise to Canadians of Chinese and South Asian origin, but excludes Japanese Canadians and aboriginal peoples (April).

The Bird Commission is formed to examine the losses sustained by Japanese Canadians (July 18).

1948 Bill 198 amends the Dominion Elections Act to remove the clause denying the franchise to Japanese Canadians (June 15).

1949 Japanese Canadians gain full rights of citizenship when restrictions imposed under the War Measures Act are lifted (March 31).

Japanese Canadians gain the right to vote in British Columbia, and are allowed to return to the west coast.

Buck Suzuki, a soldier in the Canadian army during World War II, and a fisherman before the war, returns to Steveston, buys a used boat and net, and along with 28 Nikkei other fishermen, fishes the 1949 season.

Rebuilding 1950 - 1977

1950 Order-in-Council P.C. 4364 revokes an order prohibiting immigration of "enemy aliens", and provides for some Japanese Canadians deported to re-immigrate to Canada. Eventually, about one quarter will return.

Bird Commission findings awarded about \$1.2 million and rejects the National Japanese Canadian Citizens Association appeal that further claims be considered as well as an indemnity for general losses.

1951 Rintaro Hayashi, after ten years of internment and displacement, returns to Steveston and resumes fishing.

1952 The Vancouver Japanese Language School, the only building to be returned to the Nikkei community following the war, reopens on Alexander Street.

1955 Japanese trading companies open their offices in Canada, marking the beginning of a mass business relationship between Canada and Japan.

1957 The B.C. Security Commission office in New Denver closes.

1958 The Bulletin, a bilingual publication published by the Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association, serves Japanese Canadians who have returned to the west coast.

- 1958 The Steveston Judo and Kendo Clubs reform and practice at the Steveston Community Centre
- 1964 Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre opens in Toronto.
- 1965 The Steveston Buddhist Temple opens at 4360 Garry Street.
- Vancouver becomes sister city to Yokohama
- 1966 Tsutae Sato, and wife, Hanako, retire from the Vancouver Japanese Language School after nearly 50 years of teaching.
- 1967 The federal government announces new immigration regulation - a point system for selection that no longer uses race as a category. As a result, a wave of new immigrants from Japan begins to arrive in Canada.
- 1971 Rintaro Hayashi retires from fishing, but maintains his commitment to the Japanese Canadian community and to the fishing industry.
- 1972 The Steveston Martial Arts Centre, with the first practice hall, or dojo, of it's kind outside of Japan, opens bringing kendo and judo clubs together.
- 1973 Richmond becomes sister city to Wakayama
- 1974 Rintaro Hayashi publishes *Beyond the Japanese Current*, detailing the early history of Nikkei fishing communities.
- 1976 *The Enemy That Never Was* by Ken Adachi is the first book to comprehensively document the Japanese Canadian experience.

Redress 1977 - 1988

- 1977 Japanese Canadians renew national community ties by celebrating the centennial of the arrival of Nagano Manzo, the first Japanese person known to land and settle in Canada.

Manzo Nagano has a mountain in British Columbia named after him.

Japanese Canadians begin to discuss seeking official acknowledgement and redress from the federal government for the injustices committed during and after World War II.

The first Powell Street Festival takes place at Oppenheimer Park.

A Dream of Riches, a photographic history of the Japanese Canadian community, is published by the Japanese Canadian Centennial Project.

- 1982 Hide Hyodo Shimizu receives the Order of Canada for ensuring the education of Japanese Canadian children during internment.
- 1984 Art Miki becomes president of the National Association of Japanese Canadian (NAJC) and begins a concerted campaign for redress.

The NAJC calls for a review of the War Measures Act to ensure that no Canadians will ever again be subjected to such wrongs.

- 1985 The American government makes an acknowledgement and pays \$1.37 billion in redress to Japanese Americans interned during World War II - \$20,000 to each of the estimated 66,000 survivors and \$50 million fund to educate the American public about the uprooting (September 17).

Price Waterhouse Associates assesses income and property losses by Japanese Canadians during WWII at more than \$443 million.

Kishi Boat Works, the last wooden boat works in Steveston, closes.

- 1988 Japanese Canadians, along with many prominent Canadians, rally on Parliament Hill in support of redress (April 14th).

Sgt. Masumi Mitsui, one of the last surviving World War I veterans, presides over the relighting of the lantern atop the Japanese Canadian War Memorial, almost 45 years after it was extinguished.

The War Measures Act is repealed (July 21).

The NAJC announces a Redress Settlement negotiated with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and the federal government, to acknowledge injustices against Japanese Canadians during and after World War II (September 22).

The Japanese Canadian Redress Foundation is established to administer the community funds. Over the next ten years, projects initiated across Canada include community centres and other facilities, cultural and artistic projects, and educational projects.

- 1988 Kuno Garden officially opens in Steveston, a project of the Wakayama Kenjinkai (association dedicated to customs and traditions)

Post Redress 1989 - 2015

1991 Tomekichi Homma, over a century after his arrival in BC, has a new school named in his honour in Steveston.

1992 Steveston Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre opens.

1996 The Canadian Race Relations Foundation is established.

The Census of Canada shows a Japanese Canadian population of 77,130, of whom approximately one third indicate multiple ethnic backgrounds, indicating an intermarriage rate of over 90% in recent decades.

1998 The Sakura-so seniors housing complex is opened, the first component of Nikkei Place in Burnaby (July 4).

Keiko Miki becomes the first woman president of the NAJC.

1999 The groundbreaking ceremony for the National Nikkei Heritage Centre is held in Burnaby, BC (March 26).

2000 Grand opening of the new Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall at 475 Alexander Street (June 25).

The National Nikkei Heritage Centre officially opens in Burnaby (September 22).

2002 September Nikkei Week 125 celebrates 125th Anniversary of Japanese Canadians in Canada.

Grand Opening of Nikkei Home, the final component of the Nikkei Place vision. The assisted living seniors residence is a place for seniors to maintain independence within a supportive environment.

2003 The 75th Anniversary of diplomatic relations with Japan.

2010 The last remnant of the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society complex of buildings is moved from its original site at No. 1 Road and Chatham Street to the Steveston Museum.

2012 Maple Residences, a senior's independent living complex opens on the former site of the Japanese Fishermen's Hospital in Steveston.

Acknowledgements

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Film Transcriptions



Powell Street Transcriptions

First Immigrants

I'm standing at 477 Powell Street, at the corner of Jackson Avenue. This building, dating back to the late 1800s, used to be a boarding house. It provided meals and accommodations for the first wave of Japanese immigrants who left Japan to escape a life of poverty. Mostly single men, they dreamed of making good, and returning home in a few years with "clothes of gold."

For many immigrants, that dream started at the Hastings Sawmill. Located on Burrard Inlet at the foot of Dunlevy Street, the Mill employed over 200 Japanese men by the 1890s. To provide services to Nikkei workers, a commercial hub developed on Powell Street, with more boarding houses, stores and restaurants. The community also established its first cultural institutions - in 1889, the Japanese Consulate, in 1906, the Japanese Language School, and in 1911, a Buddhist Temple. At the same, the number of Japanese immigrants continued to increase - over 8,000 arrived in 1907. To secure employment, they often had to accept lower wages than white workers. This caused whites to be displaced, feeding an existing anti-Asian sentiment. In 1907, this sentiment came to a head when the S.S. Kumeric arrived in Burrard Inlet. On board were nearly 1200 Japanese, renewing calls from white British Columbians to restrict Asian immigration. In September of 1907, a violent, anti-Asian riot left many Japanese properties in the Powell Street area extensively damaged.

Despite the riot, Powell Street continued to thrive. In the 1920s, the streets bustled with hundreds of ethnic Japanese stores and businesses. Families grew and prospered, and claimed this part of Vancouver as their own. But in the early 1940s, anti-Asian sentiment resurfaced. During World War II, 22,000 Japanese Canadians had their property confiscated, were forced from their homes and removed from the west coast. This injustice, and its aftermath, is a part of nearly every story in this series. But the series also celebrates how Japanese Canadians

overcame adversity to make their mark in Canada, and helped to affirm the rights of all individuals in a democracy.

Lives of Women

In the early years of Powell Street, Japanese Canadian women were outnumbered 32 to 1 by Japanese men. Officially, the first woman was Yoko Oya, who arrived in Vancouver in 1887. With her husband, Yoko started a business at 457 Powell Street. The building no longer exists, but at the time, it was the first general store to serve the Nikkei community. Not only was Yoko a pioneering businesswoman, she also gave birth to the first Japanese Canadian children born in Canada.

Unofficially, many of the first women to immigrate were ameyuki-san, young women who left Japan to earn money for their families. But they were deceived, smuggled into Canada, and put to work in establishments that catered to lonely Japanese working men. In 1908, when immigration rules restricted the number of Japanese males, and under growing pressure to eliminate the ameyuki-san, more women began arriving in Canada as wives. While a few, previously married men arranged for their wives to be brought over, single men, who couldn't afford to travel to Japan, had no marriage options in a racially prejudiced society. To overcome this problem, the picture bride system was developed. Picture brides were a type of an arranged marriage where women in Japan, would exchange pictures with Japanese men in Canada. If a couple agreed to a union, they were married by proxy in Japan, and the woman was then allowed to immigrate. On their arrival in Canada, brides met their husbands for the first time. The lives of picture brides varied, but most were put to work as soon as they stepped off the ship. While it was often men who were given credit for 'opening a business', it was women who worked behind the scenes. They also tended shops, ran rooming houses and raised the children.

Despite the hardships, by the time the picture bride system ended in the 1930s, women had transformed Powell Street. They created a stronger community by organizing women's associations. They brought a huge increase in Canadian born Nikkei children, and they created a family life and a commitment to Powell Street as a place to call 'home.' From Yoko Oya, the first woman on Powell Street, to the thousands who followed her, the desire of Japanese Canadian women to gain a better life in Canada took courage and determination.

Maikawa Brothers

Behind me, at 369 Powell Street, is an Art Deco-style building from 1939. A once fashionable department store, it was the heart of a business empire owned by the Maikawas, one of the most prominent families on Powell Street. Four Maikawa brothers were active in the community. Between them, they owned stores, garages, hotels and restaurants, all within a few blocks of one another.

The Maikawa brothers were from the Shiga prefecture in Japan, a region known for entrepreneurs. The eldest Maikawa brother, Tomekichi, came to Vancouver in 1897 and worked as a laborer. Within a few years, Tomekichi opened his first grocery store. As his business grew,

he became an active and well-respected member of the community. But it was this building that Tomekichi had designed and built in 1939 that left his mark on Powell Street. The second Maikawa brother, Sannosuke, owned several businesses, including a fish shop at 333 Powell. In 1933, Sannosuke opened the Fuji Chop Suey Restaurant across the street at 314 Powell, a neighbourhood landmark used for banquets, family get-togethers and weddings. The third Maikawa brother, Sadakichi, was also a gifted entrepreneur. In 1913, Sadakichi started a transportation company, one of the first to use trucks instead of horses. He also opened Nippon Auto Supply at the corner of Alexander and Dunlevy, one of the largest auto suppliers in Vancouver. In the 1930s, Sadakichi sponsored the trophy for the batting champion of the local baseball team - the Asahis. The youngest Maikawa brother, Bungoro, came to Vancouver after graduating from high school in Japan. Bungoro became one of the managers of the Maikawa Store, and in 1940, oversaw a major renovation and expansion. For the Maikawas, business was good.

But during World War II, when Canada declared war on Japan, the Maikawa store was considered 'enemy property' by the federal government. The store was emptied, confiscated, and its bank accounts were seized. Like much of Powell Street after the war, forlorn and forgotten, the Maikawa store was never reopened. Today, the store is one of the last reminders of the Maikawas, a remarkable family who helped make Powell Street one of Vancouver's most prosperous and dynamic neighbourhoods.

Masumi Mitsui

In the 1930s, 357 Powell Street - a building that no longer exists - was one the locations of the Japanese Canadian Legion. The Legion served as headquarters for Nikkei veterans, and as a base for their struggle to gain the right to vote in Canada. The President of the Legion was Sgt. Masumi Mitsui, a decorated soldier, and an advocate for human rights.

Twenty-five years earlier, at the beginning of World War I, Mitsui had joined the Japanese Volunteer Corps here on Powell Street. The Corps, two hundred men strong, was not yet part of the Canadian Army. Mitsui, and other Nikkei volunteers, hoped to be called to join. But after several months, when the government refused to enlist the men in BC, Mitsui traveled to Alberta, where he was finally accepted into the Canadian Army. Of the 225 Japanese Canadians soldiers who saw action in Europe, nearly one quarter were killed. Thirteen soldiers received the Military Medal of Bravery, including Mitsui, now a sergeant. After the war, Sgt. Mitsui and his fellow veterans took up the fight for the vote. In 1931, they were partially successful, acquiring the vote for veterans only. But victory was short lived. During World War II, when Canada declared war on Japan, veterans, along with all other Japanese Canadians, were classified as enemy aliens. Even Sgt. Mitsui, a decorated veteran, suffered the confiscation of his property and years of internment in Greenwood, in the interior of BC. It wasn't until near the end of the war, that the Canadian Army finally allowed Japanese Canadians to enlist and serve their country.

In 1985, the lantern on the Japanese Canadian War Memorial in Stanley Park, extinguished during internment, was relit. Leading the ceremony was Sgt. Mitsui, the last surviving Japanese Canadian veteran from World War I. Three years later, the Government of Canada apologized to

Japanese Canadians for unjust treatment during World War II. But Sgt. Mitsui never heard the apology. He had died, at one hundred years of age, just months earlier.

Internment

For Japanese Canadians, this building at 314 Powell Street, is infamous. In the 1930s, it was Fuji Chop Suey, a popular restaurant and meeting place for the community. But in 1941, after Canada entered World War Two, the BC Security Commission used the restaurant to direct the internment of 22,000 Japanese Canadians. After Pearl Harbour, Japanese Canadians had experienced the extremes of the War Measures Act as newspapers were shut down, property was impounded and a curfew imposed. Japanese Canadians believed calm would be restored as they were, after all, Canadian citizens. They were unprepared for the events that followed.

In January, 1942, the federal government designated an area 160-kilometers inland from the BC coast as an exclusion zone, and ordered the removal of Japanese Canadian males between the ages of 18 and 45. Within weeks, 1300 men were sent to road camps in the interior of BC. In February, the government ordered the removal of all Japanese Canadians from the exclusion zone. The removal started with men. Those who refused to leave their wives and children were sent to prisoner of war camps in northern Ontario. Until internment camps could be built in the BC interior, 8,000 Japanese Canadians were removed from the coast, and 'warehoused' in former stables and barns at Hastings Park in Vancouver. Conditions were overcrowded and degrading. A small group with family connections outside the exclusion zone was allowed to leave the coast on their own. A second group was given permission to relocate to 'self-supporting' sites in BC, like the East Lillooet camp, where internees had to pay for their own relocation and living expenses. A third group was sent to Alberta and Manitoba to work on sugar beet farms. Approximately 4,000 went to the prairies, where they endured harsh and primitive living conditions. Of all Japanese Canadians removed, the largest number, nearly 12,000, were interned in camps in the interior of BC. Three of the camps were former ghost towns - Greenwood, Sandon and Kaslo - where housing consisted of abandoned buildings. The remaining camps were built from the ground up on large tracts of land. The largest, Tashme, held over 2,500 people. Back on the coast, businesses, homes and personal effects of all Japanese Canadians were sold without their consent. Sold for a fraction of their value, proceeds were used to pay for the cost of operating the camps. The elimination of the Japanese Canadian community that had lived on Powell Street for over 50 years was now complete.

At the end of the war, the federal government gave internees the choice to move 'east of the Rockies', or be deported to Japan. Those who moved east, to Toronto and other cities, encountered discrimination and difficulty finding employment. Approximately 10,000 people, under financial and emotional duress caused by years of internment, chose deportation. In May 1946, nearly 4,000 Canadian-born Nikkei were sent to Japan, a war-torn country most had never known. In 1947, courts ruled that deporting citizens from their own country was a crime against humanity, and the deportations were stopped. It was not until April, 1949, four years after the war ended, that all restrictions were lifted from Japanese Canadians, leaving them to begin the difficult task of rebuilding their lives.

Tom Shoyama

In the late 1930s, a young man came here to 396 Powell Street for his first day of work. He was headed to The New Canadian newspaper, up on the second floor. That job was the beginning of the remarkable career of Tom Shoyama, one of the most accomplished and respected leaders of the Japanese Canadian community. Shoyama started his work life at a pulp and paper mill in Woodfibre, BC. His wages as a labourer allowed him to attend the University of British Columbia, where he graduated in 1938 with a degree in economics. But due to racial discrimination, Shoyama was not able to work as an economist, and had to return to his job at the mill.

In 1939, Shoyama got a huge break, when he was asked to join The New Canadian. Published in English, The New Canadian was the voice of the second generation of Japanese Canadian, caught between the expectations of their immigrant parents and the desire to join mainstream Canadian culture. In 1942, after Canada declared war on Japan, Shoyama used the paper to advocate for the rights of Japanese Canadians. At just 25 years of age, he showed insight and maturity far beyond his years. During internment, The New Canadian was moved from Powell Street to the town of Kaslo in the BC interior. The only Japanese Canadian newspaper allowed to publish during the war, The New Canadian played an important role in fighting isolation and sustaining morale. In 1945, Shoyama left Kaslo and enlisted in the Canadian Army, serving with the S-20 Intelligence Corps. After the war, he was finally able to find employment as an economist. Working for the government of Saskatchewan, under Tommy Douglas, Shoyama was quickly promoted for his grasp of complex issues, and for being an innovator. In the 1950s, as a close advisor to Douglas, he was a driving force behind the creation of Medicare. In 1964, Shoyama moved to Ottawa to work with the federal government. He again rose rapidly, and was eventually appointed Deputy Minister of Finance.

In 1980, Shoyama retired from the civil service, and began teaching at the University of Victoria. Over his lifetime, Shoyama received numerous honours and awards, including the Order of Canada. With his extraordinary career and his abilities as a leader, Tom Shoyama left a legacy that is an inspiration for us all.

Asahi

To Japanese Canadians, this park behind me is hallowed ground. The park was home field to the legendary Asahi baseball team. During the 1920s and 30s, the Asahi won every championship title in the Pacific Northwest, several times over. The Asahi were a great baseball team, but for Japanese Canadians, they were more than that. As the most popular team in the city, with all Vancouverites, the Asahi filled Japanese Canadians with pride. Whenever they took the field, local businesses closed down, and the stands were packed.

Playing for the Asahi became the dream of virtually every Japanese Canadian boy. Through the Asahi junior teams, set up to spot young talent, one boy got his dream...

Roy Yamamura.

The Asahi had many great players, but one of the greatest, and most popular, was Roy Yamamura. Roy joined the Asahi as a shortstop when he was just 15. Small in stature, but quick and agility, Roy was a typical Asahi. To take on the bigger, stronger Caucasian teams, the Asahi

had developed their own style of play - one that relied on defense and speed. Roy's ability to steal bases, as many as 50 a season, combined with the team's precision bunting and fielding, made the Asahi unstoppable. Beginning in 1937, the Asahi won a string of championships five years in a row. But in 1941, the winning streak came to an end. When Canada declared war on Japan, the federal government interned all people of Japanese descent, including the Asahi. After 18 years as a player, and three as a manager, Roy and his fellow teammates had to disband. They never again played together as a team. But the story of the Asahi and baseball has another chapter. After players were interned to the camps - little by little - balls, bats and gloves appeared. As teams formed, local townspeople gathered to watch them play. Soon Japanese Canadians were playing games with the locals, and leaving the camps to do so. During an incredibly dark and trying time, baseball had become a common bond, a beacon of hope. In the late 1940s, with the closure of the camps, former Asahi players moved across the country and began to re-establish homes and businesses.

In 1972, 30 years after the Asahi had played their last game here in the park, former players came together. The reunion was the beginning of the final chapter of the Asahi, one that recognized their impact on the Nikkei community and on the larger sporting community in Canada. Among the players was Roy Yamamura, now 65 and still active in baseball as an umpire for youth leagues in Toronto. In 2003, the Asahi team was inducted into the Canadian Baseball Hall of Fame, and in 2005, the BC Sports Hall of Fame. For the Asahi, it was recognition that skill, determination and the power of a game could transcend adversity and racial barriers.

Etsuji Morii

Here at 362 Alexander, there used to be a Japanese restaurant called Yoshino. The restaurant was owned by Etsuji Morii. Of all Japanese Canadians on Powell Street, Morii was the most controversial and mysterious. He arrived in Vancouver at the age of 16 in 1906, or it might have been at the age of 18 in 1908. He was born in Hiroshima to a wealthy family, or it might have been to a family of impoverished farmers. He controlled a criminal empire, yet was a close confidant of the RCMP. What is known is that Morii was just five-foot-four, but with a black belt in judo, he was dangerous. In fact, in 1921, Morii killed a man in broad daylight, yet beat the charge of murder.

In the 1930s, above the Yoshino Restaurant, Morii opened the Nippon Club, and used it as a base to control all gambling activities in the neighbourhood. From the proceeds, he funded martial arts schools to provide young men with health and fitness, but he also used the same young men as enforcers. Newspapers began calling Morii the 'Al Capone of Powell Street'. Yet he contributed to community fund-raisers and celebrations, and organized many of them. Although Morii was never trusted by most Japanese Canadians, outside the community he was considered a 'man of influence'. At the outbreak of World War II, the BC Security Commission appointed Morii to represent Japanese Canadians as it planned the internment. When Morii's appointment was challenged by Tom Shoyama, editor of the New Canadian newspaper, Morii lost face in the community. The same year, Morii was linked to the Black Dragons, a gang notorious for promoting Japanese nationalism. When the case broke down for lack of evidence, Morii, with an enigmatic smile, denied all allegations. After the trial, Morii was interned at Minto, a self-supporting site, for the remainder of the war.

In the late 1940s, after travel restrictions on Japanese Canadians were lifted, Morii returned to Vancouver. His days as a 'man of influence' behind him, Morii lived quietly. In 1972, after his wife died, he took her ashes to Japan and remained there until his own death sometime in the mid-1970s. Twenty years later, Morii's reputation was partially restored when former rival Tom Shoyama, well respected in the Nikkei community, claimed Morii had been unjustly vilified. Saint. Sinner. Racketeer. Philanthropist. Etsuji Morii was all these, yet to this day remains the enigma of Powell Street.

Japanese Language School

This building, at 487 Alexander Street, is the Vancouver Japanese Language School and Japanese Hall. The School is one of the great institutions built by the Japanese Canadian community, and has a rich and storied past. The original School, to the west at 439 Alexander, was opened in 1906 to teach Japanese culture and values to the first Canadian-born children. A teacher synonymous with the School was my grandfather Tsutae Sato. Mr. Sato became principal in 1921 and along with my grandmother, Hanako, taught thousands of students. Mr. Sato was a dynamic language teacher, but he also inspired students to become good citizens by combining the best of Canadian and Japanese cultures.

By the mid-1920s, the number of students had outgrown the original School. In 1928, a new concrete building was completed at 475 Alexander, directly east of the original. The words 'Japanese Hall' were added above the entrance to recognize the School's role as a centre for the community. The School held frequent music and theatre performances. It hosted a visiting Prince and Princess from Japan. It also took part in Canadian customs and celebrations. The School, and Mr. Sato, were part of the community's best moments. But in December of 1941, during World War Two, the School was forced to close. More than one thousand students, and their families, were ordered to prepare for internment. Both the original School, and the new School, were appropriated by the Canadian Armed Forces. The Sato's, removed from the west coast along with the rest of Powell Street, were sent to a farm in Alberta. In 1952, after years of negotiation, the Japanese Canadian community got the new School back. Of all property confiscated by the Canadian government, it was the only property returned.

In the early 1950s, few Japanese Canadians had returned Powell Street, but the larger community still believed the School was essential in rebuilding their children's sense of identity and pride. In 1952, Mr. Sato was asked by former students to reopen the School. The next year, it had its first group of students. When he retired in 1966, Mr. Sato, and his wife, had taught at the School for nearly 50 years. He always encouraged students to learn about Japan, and to help other Canadians better understand Japan. "You will be a bridge for understanding."

Redress


In 1977, Japanese Canadians held the first Powell Street Festival here in Oppenheimer Park. The community was celebrating the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrant to Canada. For the first time, Japanese Canadians looked back on their rich history. Around the

same time, a ban on access to government files from World War Two was lifted. Historian Ann Sunahara found documents revealing that during the war, neither the RCMP, nor the Canadian military, had regarded Japanese Canadians as a threat. This revelation, along with a renewed sense of pride, gave Japanese Canadians the courage to begin the fight with the federal government for redress.

Among the Japanese Canadians dispersed and interned during the war was Arthur Miki. As a child, Miki and his family were forced from their own farm near Vancouver, and relocated to sugar beet fields in Manitoba. In 1984, Miki became president of the National Association of Japanese Canadians, or the NAJC, with a mandate to seek individual compensation for Japanese Canadians who lost homes, businesses and other property during in the war.

The newly elected Conservatives, under Brian Mulroney, offered to make an apology to Japanese Canadians, but refused individual compensation. In 1986, Miki and the NAJC released the first study of property taken from Japanese Canadians during the war. The total loss was \$443 million dollars. Unmoved, the government still refused individual compensation. Talks broke down, and the prospect of a negotiated settlement began to fade. In one last attempt to rejuvenate their cause, Miki and the NAJC used their remaining funds to seek support from the Canadian public. Rallies were staged across the country, culminating in a massive gathering on Parliament Hill on April 14, 1988. The emotionally charge event was a turning point, capturing the attention of the entire country. In September 1988, a breakthrough occurred. The Mulroney government finally agreed to individual compensation, and to a fund to assist in rebuilding the Japanese Canadian community. Mulroney also delivered an apology for the wartime internment policy in the House of Commons. Finally, Japanese Canadians were the proud equals of all Canadians.

For two days every summer, the Powell Street Festival still takes place in this park, drawing thousands of people. But the rest of the year this neighbourhood is home to another community. Just as the Nikkei once were, this community is marginalized. Not for their race, but because they are poor in a city of wealth. Much to the consternation of many Vancouverites, activists shout, march and picket. Along with them, a number of Japanese Canadians stand in solidarity, to resist the forces that are displacing residents from their homes, like we once were.



Steveston Transcriptions

Tomekichi Homma

In the late 1880s, the village of Steveston was bustling with immigrants and fishermen. One of the first Japanese to settle in Steveston, in 1883 was Tomekichi Homma. Unlike his fellow immigrants, who were mostly working class, Homma was from a cultured family. His father, a former samurai, taught his son strict codes of conduct, including service to the community. From his mother, Homma learned several languages, and became an accomplished scholar. When Homma arrived in Steveston, he was surprised to see Japanese fishermen living in tents near the Fraser River. But along with them, Homma pitched a canvas shelter - his first home in Canada.

As Japanese immigrants, Tomekichi Homma and his fellow fishermen experienced discrimination. He saw how white-owned fishing companies paid them less than white fishermen for the same catch. To fight for change, Homma became the first president of the Japanese Fishermen's Benevolent Society. Homma probably worked out of this small building behind me - once the admin building for the Society, now a part of the Steveston Museum. After 14 years in Steveston, Homma moved to Vancouver in 1897, and opened a boarding house on the corner of Carrall and Pender Streets. In 1900, he married and started a family. The same year, he also discovered that, as a Japanese Canadian, he was not allowed to vote in British Columbia. Determined to once again fight for change, Homma launched a lawsuit against the province. His actions were controversial, attracting negative headlines. But when Homma's case was tried in a lower court in British Columbia, he won. When the province appealed to the Supreme Court of BC, Homma won again. As a last resort, the province took the case to the Privy Council in England. The Council ruled that the province had authority over civil rights, including the right to vote. In 1909, Homma moved his family to the Great Northern Cannery in West Vancouver. Over the next thirty years, as Homma worked at the cannery, he and his close-knit family prospered. But everything changed on December 7,

1941, when Japan bombed Pearl Harbour. Like thousands of other Japanese Canadians, the Homma family was sent to internment camps in the BC interior. Homma, his wife, and three children went to Popoff in the Slocan Valley, while three of his other children were sent to separate camps.

Tomekichi Homma had fought for the rights of Japanese Canadians for most of his life, but his efforts ended when he was interned. In 1945, at the age of 80, Homma died in the Popoff internment camp. In Steveston, in 1991, more than a century after Homma first arrived in BC, a new school was named in his honour. A place for education is a fitting tribute for a man who believed passionately in justice, dignity, and equality for all.

First Immigrants

In the late 1800s, Japanese immigrants first arrived in Steveston here at the corner of Second Avenue and Bayview Street. They had taken a ship from Japan to Vancouver, rode down to Steveston by stagecoach, and disembarked at the former Richmond Hotel. Their new home - once a small fishing camp at the mouth of the Fraser River - was quickly becoming the largest commercial fishery in Canada. Fifteen canneries produced millions of cases of canned salmon that were loaded up and shipped around the world.

One of first Japanese immigrants was Gihei Kuno from the village of Mio in the Wakamaya Prefecture. Impressed by the abundance of salmon in the Fraser, Kuno returned to Mio to recruit fellow villagers, and the flow of immigrants from Mio to Steveston began. By the early 1900s, nearly 2,000 Japanese came for the annual sockeye fishing season. Almost exclusively young men, they lived in cannery owned bunkhouses along the waterfront, and stayed together as family, groups of friends, or fellow villagers. They retained their Japanese culture, and most spoke only Japanese. The arrival of women, beginning in the early 1900s, transformed this 'village of men' into a 'village of families'. By World War II, Japanese Canadians accounted for approximately two thirds of Steveston's population. But despite their numbers, Japanese fishermen faced racial discrimination on the waterfront. Cannery owners, who paid them less than Caucasian fishermen, exploited them. And their 'willingness to work for less' was resented by others in the fishery.

Discrimination in the fishing industry grew into a broader anti-Asian sentiment in the 1940s. It culminated in 1942 during World War II with the confiscation of fishing boats, the dispossession of property, and the forced removal of all Japanese Canadians from the west coast to internment camps in the interior of BC. In the late 1940s, when the Nikkei were allowed to return to Steveston after the war, they had gained wider acceptance into mainstream Canadian society. Those who re-entered the fishery, experienced the 'golden age of commercial fishing'. That prosperity helped the Japanese Canadian community in Steveston grow to become one of the largest and most vibrant in Canada.

Rintaro Hayashi

Beginning in 1880, thousands of Japanese Canadian fishermen passed by this corner on the way to their boats moored on the Fraser River. One of these fishermen, who came to Canada as a

boy in 1913, was Rintaro Hayashi. As a young man, Hayashi experienced an industry that was going through a period of relative calm. He had missed the bitter Fishermen's Strikes of 1900 and 1901 when militias were used to quell violence. But over the next several years, Rintaro Hayashi would be front and centre for the difficult battles to come.

By the 1920s, Japanese Canadian fishermen dominated the industry, holding over half of the government issued fishing licenses. Caucasian and Native fishermen, backed by the federal Department of Fisheries, demanded change. As a result, over 1,000 Japanese Canadians lost their licenses and could no longer fish. Hayashi and his fellow fishermen fought these discriminatory practices in the Supreme Court of Canada, and the Privy Council of England - where in 1929 they won. But in 1941, after the attack on Pearl Harbour, Japanese Canadian fishermen were the first victims of the injustice that followed. The Canadian government treated them as enemy seamen, confiscated twelve hundred of their fishing boats, and sold them at below market prices without consent of the owners. During internment, the Hayashi family was sent to Kaslo, a ghost town in the interior of B.C.

To help boost morale, Hayashi turned to the Japanese sport of kendo. He had been a life-long member of the Kendo club in Steveston, and had served as head instructor. In Kaslo, Hayashi organized and help lead a club for local youth. In 1950, Hayashi returned to Steveston and resumed his life as a fisherman. A few years later, Hayashi and other members of the Nikkei community, were asked to help build the Steveston Community Center. Completed in 1957, the centre is a testament to Nikkei elders who put aside past injustices for the good of their children. Hayashi also helped reestablish the Steveston Kendo Club, worked to organize a permanent training hall, and became a Director of the Canadian Kendo Federation.

In the 1970s, after he had retired from fishing, Hayashi wrote two books. One of them - *Beyond the Japanese Current* - details the early history of Nikkei fishing communities. In his 80s, while still active in kendo, Hayashi was honoured with the Order of the Rising Sun by the Japanese government. When he passed away, at age 94, Rintaro Hayashi left a legacy that embodies the best qualities of early Japanese immigrants - hard working, courageous, humble and community-minded.

Women at Work

In the early years of Steveston, the lives of Japanese women were tied to the fishing industry. When they first arrived from Japan in the early 1900s, they lived with their fishermen husbands in bunkhouses owned by the canneries. Huge structures built for processing fish, the canneries were the largest employers in Steveston and paid the highest wages. Although Japanese women lived right beside the canneries and needed the work to help get established, they were, at first, excluded from working in them.

Hiring in canneries was controlled by Chinese bosses, who had long worked for the canning companies. They employed Chinese men for heavy work, and Native women for washing fish and filling cans. But in 1913, a shortage of washers and fillers opened the door for Japanese women. The absence of childcare forced women to take their children to work. With infants strapped on their backs, they kept a watchful eye on toddlers, and allowed their older children to work along with them. To accommodate their growing families, women moved out of the communal living quarters, into more private, cannery-owned, single-family houses. The higher

wages from cannery work helped pay for much needed nurseries and kindergartens. Major accomplishments for Nikkei women, kindergartens helped fulfill their desire to have their children learn to speak English. During low-catch seasons, or when their husbands were away fishing for months at a time, women were often the primary providers. On the waterfront, women mended nets, and provided meals and laundry service for single fishermen. They also worked as seasonal labourers on local berry and vegetable farms.

At a time when a woman's place was 'in the home', Japanese immigrant women challenged tradition to improve the economic well being of their families. They also helped create a different kind of Nikkei community in Steveston, changing it from a rough, male dominated place of work to one that was more family oriented and stable. Women expanded the possibilities for all Japanese Canadians in Steveston. No longer did they want to return to Japan, instead they overcame challenges and built new lives in Canada.

Hide Hyodo Shimizu

In 1993, a schoolteacher who first taught in Steveston sixty years earlier, was given a rare honour. The teacher was Hide Hyodo Shimizu... selected by the Canadian Status of Women for helping shape the history and evolution of Canada. Born in 1908, Hide attended school in south Vancouver, where she was the only non-white student in her class. In 1926, she received a teaching certificate, the first Japanese Canadian in British Columbia to do so. After graduation, at just 18 years of age, Hide began teaching at Lord Byng School in Steveston.

During the late 1920s, the first Lord Byng School was overcrowded forcing classes to be held at other schools in Steveston. Here on Chatham Street and Number 1 Road, Hide was one of the teachers who taught overflow classes at the former Japanese Language School. Over the next several years, Hide became a dedicated teacher and a popular member of the community. In 1936, Hide was invited to Ottawa to be part of a delegation seeking the right to vote for Japanese Canadians. The group appeared before a committee at the House of Commons, which was considering lifting the ban on the Asian vote. Hide and her fellow delegates gave strong presentations, but were unable to convince the committee to end the ban. In 1942, during World War II, more than 22,000 persons of Japanese origin in BC were uprooted and interned. At the beginning of internment, Japanese Canadians were sent to Hastings Park in Vancouver where they were held for months. To ensure Nikkei children continued to receive an education, Hide took on a huge challenge. While still teaching at Lord Byng, Hide travelled to Hastings Park after school, taught several more classes, then hurried home ahead of a 9 pm curfew. Hide was eventually interned at New Denver in the BC interior, where she recruited and trained high school graduates to teach in the camps. Each month, Hide travelled to several camps, supervising the education of thousands of children.

When the camps were closed in 1945 after the Second World War, Hide never returned to teach in Steveston. Because Japanese Canadians were not permitted to return to coastal BC until 1949, Hide had moved to Toronto. In 1948, she married Kosaburo Shimizu, a United Church minister, and continued to be an active community leader. In 1982, in recognition for ensuring the education of Japanese Canadians during internment, Hide received the Order

of Canada. In 2013, a Memorial Scholarship was established in her honor with the goal of enriching Japanese Canadian culture and community. In Steveston, Hide Hyodo Shimizu is remembered as a leader, an activist, and a gifted teacher who dedicated her life to the academic development of Japanese Canadians.

Creating Community

Behind me, here on Chatham Street, is a replica of the façade of the former Japanese Fishermen’s Hospital. Built in 1900, the hospital was one of the first institutions established by Japanese immigrants. As most early Japanese immigrants never intended to stay in Canada, the hospital was a turning point. It signaled that the Japanese community, to meet the needs of their growing population, wanted to create institutions of their own. But the Japanese community encountered many roadblocks. And those institutions, that proved they were in Canada to stay, took time to develop.

The notion of a hospital for Steveston started in 1897 when the Methodist Church established a Christian mission. Headed by R.W. Large, a minister and a medical doctor, the mission served the needs of fishermen and cannery workers. Shortly after the mission was completed, an epidemic of typhoid fever hit Steveston, and the mission was turned into a makeshift hospital. The mission hospital was so successful that the Japanese community decided to build a new, larger facility. From opening day, the Japanese Fishermen’s Hospital was a unique and innovative. For a small annual fee, families were provided with care and medication, making the Fishermen’s Hospital the first in Canada to have a type of universal Medicare. In 1900, there were few Japanese children in Steveston, but by 1907 they were the largest immigrant group. The same year, the Richmond School Board ruled that only children whose parents owned property were eligible to attend public schools. As most Japanese families lived in housing owned by canneries, most Japanese children were excluded from public school. To counter this ruling, the community built the Steveston Japanese School. With his wife, Mr. Takashima, the first principal and teacher, taught a curriculum adopted from the Japanese school system. But the longer the Japanese stayed in Canada, the more they wanted to assimilate into Canadian society. They started to petition for integration of their children into the public school system. In 1923 the Richmond School Board agreed to accept Japanese children in return for financial assistance in completing a new school. The Japanese community raised the money, and a few years later, the second Lord Byng School was completed.

In 1928, Japanese Canadians made an even deeper commitment to their community. Concerns that a Buddhist Temple would invite negative attention from local Caucasians were overcome, when a Temple was built on First Avenue, south of Moncton Street, giving the Nikkei a place to perform funeral rites and to celebrate marriages. The Temple was another community building block for future generations, and proved that Japanese immigrants were in Steveston to stay.

Martial Arts

The building behind me - at 4111 Moncton Street - is the Steveston Martial Arts Centre. Completed in 1972, the Centre was the culmination of a huge effort by the Nikkei community.

Back when young Japanese men first came to Steveston to fish in the late 1800s, there was little to do but work. The few non-work outlets were the martial arts. Some men were drawn to sumo wrestling. but Judo, and Kendo were more widely practiced.

The first kendo club in Steveston was founded in 1914, making it the birthplace of kendo in Canada. Also known as “way of the sword”, Kendo originated with the samurai class of Japanese warriors. In 1927, Yuichi Akune became head instructor of the Steveston club and went on to become a leading figure in kendo in Canada. Kendo involves using a bamboo sword to make contact with target areas on an opponent, all of which are protected by armour. Technical achievement in kendo is measured by a grading system called “dan” levels. Upper levels require years of rigorous study and practice, and are difficult to attain. Prior to World War Two, kendo in Steveston reached its peak when membership grew to over 200. The first judo club in Steveston was started in the early 1930s. Also called the “gentle way”, Judo was developed in 1882 in Japan by Jigoro Kano. To help organize the Steveston Club, members engaged Steve Sasaki, who became the “father of Canadian judo”. Judo involves throwing or taking down an opponent, immobilization with a pin, or forced submission with a joint lock. During the 1960s and 70s, the Steveston Club had a major influence on judo in British Columbia. The club had produced 45 black belts, along with several national- and international-level coaches and referees.

Although kendo and judo shared a number of makeshift practice facilities over the years, there was little crossover. You were either from a kendo family, or you were from a judo family. But in the early 1970s, kendo and judo came together at the Steveston Martial Arts Centre. The centre was the first practice hall, or dojo, of it’s kind outside of Japan. A calligraphy, made by the founder of judo when he visited Steveston in 1938, hangs in a place of honour. The calligraphy reads - “if you work hard and persevere, you can attain your goals”... a fitting motto for the twin dojos that stand as a testament to the drive and determination of the Japanese Canadian community.

Boat Builders

I’m at the Britannia Heritage Shipyard, a National Historic Site in Steveston. Behind me, is the Richmond Boat Works, one of two wooden boat building shops owned by the Kishi family. The Kishis, along with several other Japanese Canadian owned shops, built for fishermen their most prized pieces of equipment. Cedar planked and watertight, wooden fishing boats were twice as buoyant as fiberglass and lasted 50 or 60 years.

Three of the largest, and oldest, shops in Steveston were the Atagi, the Nakade and the Kishi Boat Works. Kishi Boat Works was started by two brothers, who were also fishermen. Their original shop was located along the Fraser River just a little to the west of Britannia. Not only did the Kishi shop build boats for work, they also made floats for community celebrations and parades. In the 1930s, a nephew of the Kishi Brothers, Saeji Kishi, opened the Richmond Boat Works. That building has been refurbished and preserved here at Britannia. The second of the big three boat works was the Atagi, started by Tsunematsu Atagi in 1905. Trained in Japan, and working with hand tools brought from Japan, Mr. Atagi was known as a perfectionist. Like a small factory, the shop had crews of hired carpenters who built several large wooden boats each year. Mr. Atagi’s three sons continued the family boat-building tradition for several

decades, building their last boat in the 1970s. In 1907, partners Nakade and Tanaka opened the third major boat works shop. One of the most prolific boat works in Steveston, the Nakades launched up to ten boats a year. By the 1930s, nearly all boat works on the Steveston waterfront were owned and operated by Japanese Canadians. In 1942, during World War II, when Japanese Canadians were removed from the coast, Steveston shipwrights lost everything they had spent decades building up. But even during internment, their craft was in such demand, that many continued to built boats in the BC interior, and had them shipped back to the coast. After internment, many of the boat building families returned to Steveston, opened new shops, and once again provided fishermen with top quality boats.

For decades, old-growth wood had been the only material used for fishing boats. But the scarcity of quality wood, and the lack of skilled shipwrights, forced builders to look for alternative materials. In 1985, the last of the master builders of wooden fishing boats in Steveston, Kishi Boat Works, closed their shop. After nearly one hundred years of building and rebuilding the BC fishing fleet, using the best materials and the finest craftsmanship, it was the end of an era.

Internment

The corner of Moncton Street and Number One Road was for decades the stop for the BC interurban tram. In the spring of 1942, at the start of internment, the tram played a major role in transporting Japanese Canadians out of Steveston. Prior to internment, on the eve of World War II, Japanese Canadians made up two thirds of the population of Steveston, and owned many of the businesses. But this vibrant community, a part of Steveston since its beginning, was changed forever on December 7th, 1941, when the Japanese Navy attacked Pearl Harbour.

The surprise attack shocked all Canadians, but it devastated Japanese Canadians. The day after Pearl Harbour, the federal government ordered all Japanese Canadian fishing boats to port. The boats were impounded and towed up the Fraser River for storage. By late December, 1941, the government had confiscated 1,200 boats owned by Japanese Canadians. By late December, 1941, the government had confiscated 1,200 boats owned by Japanese Canadians. Within weeks, the boats were put up for sale, creating a buyers market.

Within weeks, the boats were put up for sale, creating a buyers market. For the best maintained vessels on the coast, Nikkei fishermen received much less than what they were worth. In February, 1942, the federal government declared Japanese Canadians to be enemy aliens, and planned for their expulsion from the BC coast. In total, nearly 22,000 Japanese Canadians were removed in BC. Their properties - homes, furniture, businesses - were liquidated by the federal government. By May, 2,600 residents of Steveston had been interned, leaving a near ghost town. To keep their families together, many Nikkei worked on sugar beet farms in Alberta and Manitoba. Other families were sent to newly constructed camps in the BC interior like New Denver and Lemon Creek. Many of the makeshift three-room houses were still being built when internees arrived. Still other families were sent to the Kootenay Mountains, to abandoned mining towns like Greenwood. Empty hotels and businesses became one-room compartments for families. Overcrowding was severe, several families had to share kitchen and toilet facilities. Through the years, internees settled in as best they could. They organized an infirmary staffed by Japanese Canadian nurses, and converted the fire hall to a school. Greenwood was

transformed into a once-again bustling community where festivals, parades, and sporting events were a part of everyday life.

When World War II ended in 1945, Japanese Canadians were forced by the federal government to make difficult choices. They could remain in internment sites that weren't destroyed, like Greenwood, and begin to rebuild their lives. Two other choices, resulting in a second uprooting, involved moving east of the Rocky Mountains, or being deported to Japan, a foreign country to Canadian born Nikkei. It wasn't until 1949, seven years after the beginning of internment, that they were allowed to return to the west coast.

Back to Steveston

In the early 1950s, here at 3911 Moncton Street, there used to be a two-story stucco building. That building housed Hiro's Grocery Store, a local landmark and gathering place for the Japanese Canadian community. A few years earlier, in 1949, the last travel restrictions imposed on Japanese Canadians had been lifted, allowing them to return to the west coast, four years after the end of World War Two.

The first Japanese Canadians to return to Steveston were fishermen. After their boats, their homes and personal belongs had been sold during the war, they were forced to start over with few resources. Buck Suzuki, a soldier in the Canadian army during World War II, had been a fisherman before the war. In 1949, Buck purchased an old boat, a used net, and along with 28 other fishermen, fished for salmon. They did so well that fishing companies encouraged other Japanese Canadians fishermen to return to Steveston. With other community leaders, Buck succeeded, for the first time, in integrating his fellow fishermen into the United Fishermen's Union. After more than 70 years, Nikkei fishermen were finally part of the mainstream fishing industry. In the canneries, Japanese Canadian women, working to rebuild their lives, once again dominated the canning lines. By 1951, many Japanese Canadians who had been forced to leave Steveston 9 years earlier had returned.

As they had done since first arriving in Steveston in the late 1800s, Japanese Canadians began to establish institutions and contribute to the greater good of the community. In 1965, the new Buddhist Temple opened. In 1972, the Martial Arts Centre, with the first Japanese style training halls outside of Japan. In 1988, Japanese Canadians won Redress - acknowledgment and compensation from the federal government for injustices during World War II. Redress funds were used to build the Steveston Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre...symbolizing the return of the Nikkei to Steveston and their willingness to be part of the larger community. Through their dramatic history, and tireless building and rebuilding of their lives, the Nikkei have made Steveston a unique place, and one of the most vibrant Japanese Canadian communities in Canada.

Nikkei Stories Glossary

Evacuation	Sometimes used to describe the forced removal all persons of Japanese origin from the exclusion zone or “the protected area” – which was an area 160 kilometers from the coastline of British Columbia. A controversial term, in that traditionally the term is used in regards to safety from danger toward the evacuee, which was not the case in 1942 when Japanese Canadians were forced to leave their homes and be interned in the interior of BC.
Enemy Alien	Governmental term used to describe Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, as they were registered as enemies of the state, regardless of citizenship or proof of crimes against the state. The term referred to Japanese Canadians only, as all Japanese Canadian citizens were racialized by the government of Canada and assumed to be a threat against the state since Canada and Japan were countries at war.
Franchise	The right to vote. Tomekichi Homma fought for the Japanese Canadian franchise in 1902, but was denied by the Privy Council of Britain. Only the surviving Japanese Canadians that fought in the First World War received the franchise in 1931. In 1936, the Japanese Canadian Citizens’ League petitioned for the franchise again, and was denied. Japanese Canadians did not have the right to vote until 1949, four years after the end of the Second World War, when the War Measures Act was finally lifted.
Discrimination	The process of treating people differently in a negative way, depending on their collective social position or identity, such as: race, class, sexuality, ability, political belief, religion, language, or ancestry.
Dispersal	The splitting up of people or things over a wide area. With the Second World War, the Japanese Canadian community went through forced dispersal multiple times with

	internment in 1942, forced labour camps across Canada throughout the war years, being sent to prisoner of war camps in Ontario, and, rather than returning home to the coast, being forced to choose from an ultimatum after the Second World War ended to either go “back” to Japan or East of the Rockies. As a result of the dispersal of the Japanese Canadian communities, there is no “Japantown” or area in Vancouver or Greater Vancouver where Japanese people thrive in community.
Displacement	The act of putting people or things out of place. Japanese Canadians lives were forced to uproot their communities, families, homes, and all belongings. The entire communities that lived in Steveston and Powell Street were displaced. In the contemporary times of Powell Street, the communities that reside there now are also being displaced by city-initiated gentrification. The Nikkei Community involved with the Powell Street Festival, which takes place on Powell Grounds/Oppenheimer Park in the middle of the Powell Street neighbourhood, works to not repeat the governmental acts of displacement of the community by working with the residing neighbourhood communities to protect the shared pride in the history and future of the area.
Hastings Park	Before being forced to move to Internment camps in the interior of BC, Japanese Canadians from the coastal area were held at a temporary detention centre in Hastings Park, now called the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE). The living conditions were below all health standards with masses of people living in the animal stalls.
Issei (nissei, sansei...)	Japanese for: first generation immigrant: <i>issei</i> second generation immigrant: <i>nissei</i> third generation immigrant: <i>sansei</i> fourth generation immigrant: <i>yonse</i>
Internment	From 1942 to 1949, Japanese Canadian families and communities were forcibly displaced and dispersed to the

	<p>interior of BC to live in shacks in large camps so that they could be fully surveilled, restricted, and monitored as “enemy aliens”. Japanese Canadians were also interned to work in labour camps building roads across Canada, slave-labour farms in Alberta, and prisoner of war camp in Ontario.</p>
Internment Camps	<p>The places in the interior of BC where Japanese Canadians were forced to live from 1942-1949. There were self-supporting internment camps (Lillooet, Bridge River, Minto, McGillivray Falls, and Christina Lake); road camp projects (Hope – Princeton, Revelstoke – Sicamous, Blue River – Yellowhead); and non-self supporting internment camps (Tashme, Greenwood, Slocan, Lemon Creek, Popoff, Bay Farm, Roseberry, New Denver, Sandon, Kaslo). The camps consisted of shacks and buildings made of tarpaper and wood board, and did not have running water, electricity, proper living space or amenities. Internees’ freedom of movement was strictly prohibited, mail was censored, there were not allowed any radios or cameras, and their lives were under complete surveillance. There was no infrastructure, so Japanese Canadians had to create a living and a normalcy of life out of practically nothing, since they were only allowed to bring one suitcase with them to the camps—their only belongings.</p>
Nikkei	<p>Japanese for: of Japanese descent</p>
Persevere	<p>To continue on, to persist, to carry on with the course of action even in the face of difficulty.</p>
Picture Bride	<p>Picture brides were a type of an arranged marriage where women in Japan, would exchange pictures with Japanese men in Canada. If a couple agreed to a union, they were married by proxy in Japan, and the woman was then allowed to immigrate.</p>

Powell Street	A street located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, BC, which runs between Cordova St. and Alexander St. Historically significant Japanese Canadian settlement in the early years of immigration.
Prejudice	Is a predetermined judgment about a person or group of people that is not based on reason or experience, but rather on preconceived opinions or stereotypes.
Protected Area	“exclusion zone” or “the protected area” was an area 160 kilometers from the coastline of British Columbia. See Map of BC.
Redress	To set right, to remedy an unfair ruling by governing bodies. The Japanese Redress movement began around the year 1977, the centennial of the first Japanese Immigrant’s arrival to Canada. There was a renewed sense of pride within the community and Japanese Canadians began to discuss seeking official acknowledgement and redress from the federal government for the injustices committed during and after The Second World War. After much rallying and organizing the NAJC announced a Redress Settlement negotiated with the federal government to acknowledge injustices against Japanese Canadians during and after the Second World War in 1988.
Repatriation	Rather than have interned Japanese Canadians move back to their home on the coast after the Second world war ended in 1945, and in an effort to further disperse the Japanese Canadian community, the government orders Nikkei citizens to either be ‘deported’ and ‘repatriated’ to Japan, or move East of the Rockies. Approximately 10,000 people remaining in the camps, facing uncertainty and unable to confirm new residences east of the Rockies, sign deportation forms, even if Japan was not their home. For many second generation Nikkei citizens, Japan was a foreign place. To be ‘repatriated’ was a misnomer in that a government cannot repatriate those who are already citizens of Canada.

Solidarity	Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group. In an act of solidarity with residents of the Downtown Eastside communities of Powell Street, Nikkei community members actively work against governing bodies that are displacing residents from the same area that they were displaced in 1942.
Stereotyping	A generalizing used to describe a whole group of people based on prejudiced opinions, or based on the words or actions of a single member of that group.
Steveston	Originally a small town, it is now an area that is a part of the city of Richmond, BC. A historic canning centre of coastal fishers and a major settlement of Japanese Canadian community and fishers.

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Nikkei Stories Credits

Writer / Director
Gordon McLennan

Camera / Editor
Greg Masuda

Researcher
Linda Kawamoto Reid

Storytellers
Sam Araki • Colin Chan • Naomi Horii • Daniel Iwama
Mariko Kubota • Kai Nagata • Carolyn Nakagawa • Donna Nakamoto
Steve Sakamoto • Lisa Uyeda • Carly Yoshida-Butryn

Website
Greg Masuda

Graphic Design
Cindy Mochizuki
Maksim Bentsianov

Photoshop
Greg Masuda
Clark Henderson

Audio Post Production
Jeffrey Yellen

Social Media Consultant
Lisa Uyeda

Study Guide
Naomi Horii

Archival Film and Photographs
Bazil Izumi • BC Sports Hall of Fame • City of Vancouver Archives
City of Richmond Archives • Clive Cocking • Cumberland Museum

David Mitsui • Glenbow Archives • Greg Masuda
Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society Archives • Hayashi Family
Homma Family • Japanese Canadian Cultural Center in Toronto
John Flanders • Langham Cultural Society & Kootenay Lake Historical Society
Kishi Family • Library and Archives Canada • Maikawa Family
Michael Bedford • Miki Family • Mukai Family
New Westminster Archives • Nikkei National Museum • Rumi Sasaki
Saskatchewan Archives Board • Tamio Wakayama • Ted Shimizu
Tomio Baba Family • The Canadian Press • Graeme Wood, The Richmond News
The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto
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Vancouver Maritime Museum • Vancouver Public Library • Vancouver Sun

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Sheila Hill • Tenney Homma • Grant Ikuta • Leslie Irie
Glenn Kishi • Kristen Lambertson • Krisztina Laszlo
Brooke Lees • Bill McMichael • Don Mukai • Bill McNulty
Emiko Morita • Consul General Seiji Okada • Bill Purver
Heidi Rampfl • Kate Russell • Alan Sakai • Loren Slye
Harold Steves • Rika Uto • Mitsuo Yesaki

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