

Landscapes of Injustice



Research News and Project Updates

Summer 2015

Welcome to the summer edition of the newsletter for Landscapes of Injustice, a seven-year Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Partnership Project.

Thank you for your interest in *Landscapes of Injustice*, a project to research and tell the history of the forced sale of Japanese-Canadian-owned property during the Second World War. Our work is still beginning (we won't have accomplished our aims until 2021), but we've had an exciting summer of research and of connecting with one another. Thanks so much to team members for all of your work.

You'll find details of some of our activity in the pages that follow, but please also check in with Project Manager (and newsletter editor-in-chief) Mike Abe, mkabe@uvic.ca or with me if you want further information. I'm always happy to talk about the project.



Jordan Stanger-Ross, Project Director jstross@uvic.ca



Thank you to the Nikkei National Museum and the Powell Street Festival for providing space for Landscapes of Injustice to display information on the project. It was a great weekend and we spoke with many attendees about the project and made some incredible connections talking with the Nikkei people. We are also grateful for the interest from non-JCs in our project. We will see everyone again at the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre's Nikkei Matsuri Sat. Sept. 5 and Sun. Sept. 6, 2015.

1500 Chickens

Sally Ito

"By the time the war started, [the family] were forced to walk away from all this, including 1500 chickens."

In the late 1990's, my great aunt was asked to contribute something about her family to a book that was going to be self-published about the Japanese Canadian community in pre-war Surrey. The book was titled "Who was Who: Pioneer Japanese Families in Delta and Surrey" by Michael Hoshiko.

I dug up that book recently and read the above sentence in it. The line struck me as awkwardly constructed and comic at the same time. 1500 chickens? That's a LOT of chickens to walk away from. But let me give you the rest of that story to set the sentence in its context. By the early 40's, the Itos were well entrenched in their livelihoods as farmers in Surrey. The family owned 80 acres of land where they raised chickens, grew strawberries and rhubarb. My great aunt was married at the time to her first husband, her brother was also married, with a child, and her sister (my grandmother) also lived there, with her husband and brood of five boys. My great aunt's parents also resided with their son's family. They had a good operation going as farmers. The chickens were clearly a part of that business.

My great aunt told me about losing the chickens. This was one occurrence that really bothered her and stayed with her for a long time. The family had just purchased a bunch of chicks to raise when the war broke out. When the evacuation order went out, and it was clear that all the Japanese Canadians were to be moved out of the area, my aunt recalled the chick-seller coming back to their place and taking all the chicks back, even though they'd paid for the whole lot. She painted a vivid picture of the man coming back in his truck just days after the chicks had been dropped off and loading them back up. By this time, I believe the men in the family were gone, sent to road camp in the Rockies – it may have just been my great aunt and my grandmother now left on the farm with the five boys. I know they stayed as long as they could until the RCMP finally came for them to take them to Hastings Park. I can imagine them standing there – the two women, the boys – just staring poker-faced at this man loading up the cages and cages of chicks, until they were all stacked and chirping in the back of the truck. What the two women must have felt then! Helpless and angry. But also resigned. *Shikata ga nai*. It couldn't be helped. The world was at war. They were the enemy and injustice was their lot.

Sally Ito is a member of the Landscapes of Injustice Community Council. Find out more about the Council by clicking on the "Community Council" tab [here](#)

Touched By Dispossession

We would love to hear your stories. A section on the project website conveys stories that readers have submitted. These include firsthand accounts (Gently to Nagasaki by Joy Kogawa) or stories of their JC neighbours (Deep Bay Logging by Evelyn Surgenor) as well as memories passed down through generations. The stories of people touched by the dispossession are an important resource that we hope to preserve.

<http://www.landscapesofinjustice.com/touched-by-dispossession/>

1500 Chickens is part of a larger collection of 40 short anecdotes recounting Sally Ito's special relationship with her late Nisei great aunt. Sally is a Sansei writer living in Winnipeg. You can read the other stories in the series at

<http://cowbird.com/grdvp/stories/chronological/>

Like us on Facebook and stay updated on news and events on the project and in the Nikkei community

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Landscapes-of-Injustice/717741814954269>

Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/LandscapesInjus

A busy June for the Oral History Cluster

The Oral History Research Cluster of Landscapes of Injustice has been busy this summer collecting interviews and communicating results. The summer began flurry of activity in early June. First, on June 1st, Alexander Pekic competed on behalf of the cluster at the SSHRC Storytellers competition in Ottawa, Ontario. A new event, held in conjunction with the SSHRC Congress each year, the Storytellers competition highlights student engagement with research at universities across Canada. The first step in the competition is a video submission; the Oral History Cluster's video, produced with significant assistance from Elena Kusaka, was selected as one of the top 25 videos out of almost 150 submissions. The second stage in the competition was the presentation in Ottawa, where Alex gave a simple and moving presentation about the work of the cluster. Congratulations Alex on representing Landscapes well! You can see the cluster's top 25 submission here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ljNNMUK9jL0&list=PLww1dvjSoO4OULyHJtogMTDsOCi-G4iq-&index=18>

Then, on June 2, Dr. Pamela Sugiman delivered a keynote lecture as part of being honoured with the annual Outstanding Contribution award from the Canadian Sociological Association, and presented a talk reflecting on her career as a sociologist. In her talk, she discussed some of her early research into the stories of non-Japanese Canadians related to her work on Landscapes of Injustice, confronting the challenges of listening empathetically to the memories of those whose families were directly involved in the events of the dispossession. The cluster is quite proud of Pam's accomplishments; congratulations Pam!

And finally, on June 3, 2015, Dr. Pamela Sugiman, Dr. Heather Read, and 5 members of the Oral History Research Cluster (Kyla Fitzgerald, Alicia Fong, Joshua Labove, Alexander Pekic, and Momoye Sugiman) presented a panel at the Canadian Historical Association Conference. Held as a part of the annual SSHRC Congress, the three-day annual CHA conference focused on exploring the theme of interdisciplinarity in historical studies. The cluster's presentation fit well within that theme, as the team discussed the complexities of the Landscapes of Injustice oral history interviews. The interviews will deal with issues of race, gender, power and place, and will contribute to the work of the other research clusters working in other disciplines, in addition to documenting the individual stories of people involved. The presentation was well attended, and several important contacts were made within the Ottawa area community of Japanese Canadians.

Now returned to their various parts of the country, the cluster is beginning an intensive summer of interviewing. If you have any suggestions for people who might like to share their stories related to the dispossession, please let us know!

General Email: oralhistory@arts.ryerson.ca
Submitted by Dr. Heather Read, Post-doctoral Fellow
Oral History Research Cluster



L-R. Pamela Sugiman, Momoye Sugiman, Heather Read, Joshua Labove, Alex Pekic, Alicia Fong, Kyla Fitzgerald, Jordan Stanger-Ross

Nikkei Stories

Check out a newly launched project from Gordon McLennan and Greg Masuda in collaboration with the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre. www.nikkeistories.com

The Powell Street area in Vancouver, BC, once a thriving community of over 8,000 Nikkei, was decimated during WW II and never returned to its pre-war heyday. Through 10 narratives, Nikkei Stories reanimates the people, places, and events of the largest and most vibrant Japanese Canadian centre in Canada.

The next phase will focus on the fishing village of Steveston which prior to WW II had over 2,000 Nikkei. Unlike Vancouver, many returned after internment to rebuild and contribute to the Canadian mosaic.

BC Studies Panel

A number of participants in the Landscapes of Injustice project presented preliminary findings to an interested group of historians at the BC Studies conference at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in May 2015. Laura Ishiguro (UBC) was the moderator.

Nick Blomley (SFU) provided an introduction to the project as a whole. Sarah Fitterer (UVic) presented on the use of land titles in tracing the history of dispossession. Sonja Aagesen and Samantha Bets (SFU) discussed the use of Geographic Information Science in the project, providing graphic examples of the uses of the geovisualization of historic data from the Powell Street area. Finally, Martin Holmes (UVic) provided information on the technical challenges and creative solutions associated with integrating the diverse types of data drawn from the various clusters. A lively discussion ensued, with a keen interest from audience members in the project and its application to other areas of historical research.

Submitted by Nicholas Blomley,
Geography Professor and Steering Committee member



L-R Sarah Fitterer, Samantha Bets, Sonja Aagesen, Martin Holmes, Laura Ishiguro

Article Prize for Project Director Jordan Stanger-Ross

Congratulations to Project Director Jordan Stanger-Ross, who won the article prize of the Canadian Committee on Migration, Ethnicity, and Transnationalism (Canadian Historical Association) for his article, "Telling a Difficult Past" Kishizo Kimura's Memoir of Entanglement in Racist Policy," which appeared in BC Studies in Spring 2014.



In this photograph [1926], Kishizo Kimura relaxes with friends on Bowen Island, BC.

Photo credit: Nikkei National Museum 2010.4.71.50

Prize Citation: In this well-written and tightly argued article, Jordan Stanger-Ross tells the story of Kishizo Kimura, a Japanese Canadian who was involved in the liquidation of the property of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War. Through a close reading of Kimura's unpublished memoir, Stanger-Ross explores this much-discussed period of Canadian history from a new angle, providing an intimate window into Japanese Canadian power brokerage and Kimura's privileged position as a Japanese [Canadian] businessman and community organizer. The article serves to unfix stereotypes and blur the boundaries of history, nation, race, and ethnicity. Stanger-Ross offers an important reflection on history and memory, and tackles a difficult subject with nuance and grace.

If you would like a copy of the article, please contact Jordan at jstross@uvic.ca



This photograph depicts two key bureaucrats in the history of the forced sales of Japanese-Canadian owned property. Ephaim Coleman (left) and Glenn McPherson (right). Research Assistant Will Archibald and Jordan Stanger-Ross are working on an article focusing on the latter. Photograph used by permission of the RBSC, UBC Library.

For a preview of that work, see Jordan's presentation for the Madam Justice Southin Lecture at UBC Law School earlier this year:

<http://mediasitemob1.mediagroup.ubc.ca/Mediasite/Play/180b319815e94db59ce3cdc9d7c56c8c1d>

News from the Research Clusters

This is the second summer of research and is proving to be an exciting one with added emphasis on integration between the research clusters. There are five research clusters (Community Records & Directories, Historical Geographic Information Systems, Land Title & Government Records, Legal History, and Oral History) currently active this summer with two more, Knowledge Mobilization and Teacher Resources, ready to gear up in the fall. Research Assistants (RA) from the clusters have provided short updates of their research findings since the Spring Institute.

The four study sites that the project focuses on is Powell Street (expanded to a 24-block area), Steveston, Salt Spring Island and Haney (Maple Ridge). Learn more about the clusters below.

Land Titles and Government Records

Cluster Chair: Jordan Stanger-Ross

Research Assistants: Ariel Merriam, Rebeca Salas, Kaitlin Findlay, and Adam Kostrich

Land Title researchers (Rebeca and Ariel) spent the summer expanding the Powell Street study area to 24 blocks, and have now entered data for almost 4,000 transactions. This data will allow researchers to trace the history of real estate exchange in the Powell Street area and to assess some of the material impacts of the forced sale of property. As the summer ends, they're laying the foundation for next summer's research, which will focus on Maple Ridge properties.



In Ottawa, Adam Kostrich and Kaitlin Findlay worked with government records. The image above is a photograph from the records of the Royal Commission that inquired into Japanese Canadian property claims after the War (the Bird Commission). It was included in the file of Shintaro and Kikuye Yamada, depicting their family before the uprooting and dispossession.

The 3rd annual Nikkei Matsuri takes place Sat. Sept. 5 and Sun. Sept. 6 from 11 am – 7 pm both days. They bring Japan to you and your family and share with you the heart of Nikkei. The matsuri celebrates Japanese culture, showing an appreciation of Japanese immigrants and new Canadians, and their contribution to making a strong and vibrant community at Nikkei Place. Performance schedules and event info at <http://nikkeimatsuri.nikkeiplace.org/> 6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby BC

Legal History

Cluster Chair: Eric Adams

Research Assistants: Monique Ulysses and Lauren Chalaturnyk

The Legal History Research Cluster is currently working towards creating a comprehensive database of Orders-in-Council and other legislation that related to the uprooting and dispossession of people of Japanese descent. Cases that involved litigants of Japanese descent are also being researched in order to create a broader understanding of how Japanese-Canadian communities engaged with the law in Canada during the twentieth century leading up to and including the uprooting and dispossession. The cluster is also beginning to accumulate archival materials that provide biographical information on various legal actors, including but not limited to litigants of Japanese descent, judges, individual lawyers, law firms, and government legislators.

And lastly, the legal history cluster has begun work on an article "Applicable Equally to a Scotsman: Rights, Racism, and Japanese Canadians in Canadian Immigration Law" an investigation of the little known 1932 Supreme Court of Canada decision, *Samejima v The King*. Using archival court records, and the expanding newspaper and government records archive, they tell the story of Munetaka Samejima and his legal struggle to remain in Canada. It is equally a story of Canadian immigration law during a period of national economic struggle, heightening racial tensions, and early signals of an aspiration towards the ideals of equality.



Community Records and Directories

Cluster Chairs: Sherri Kajiwara and Stewart Arneil
Research Assistants: Eiji Okawa, Christopher Tam, Alissa Cartwright, and Hikari Rachmat

In Vancouver and Victoria, the Community Records team has been compiling and digitizing directories, which provide a snapshot of Japanese Canadian life before the uprooting, and working through diverse and rich community-based sources in the records of the Nikkei National Museum. Christopher Tam has examined textual sources and photographs in the *John Mark Read Collection* and the *Michi Saito Collection*, identifying sources that are relevant to dispossession and displacement. Many of the sources in these collections are photographs from Haney prior to 1942 and of internment sites. Chris also found letters from the city council of Greenwood in 1945 that indicate local community's support of the interned Japanese Canadians, concerns for their welfare, sympathy for their loss of assets, and resistance against the plan proposed by the BC Security Commission to relocate them yet again to a different site.

Eiji Okawa has been looking at the *Sato fonds* and *Morishita Family collection*. The *Sato fonds* contain writings and documents kept by Tsutae and Hanako Sato, who were closely involved with the Japanese Language School on Alexander Street. Unlike virtually all other properties held by Japanese Canadians, the school was not sold, and the fonds contain rich records of how they handled the school properties while they were forced out of the area.



Tsutae Sato (left) is pictured here in the back of his classroom in 1918. The Vancouver Japanese Language School & Japanese Hall survives today and we're delighted to have them as a partner on the project.

Photo credit: Nikkei National Museum 2010.23.2.4.667

NAJC Hide Hyodo-Shimizu Scholarship

My name is Hikari Rachmat and I'm entering my second year at UBC, studying Astronomy. I am working with Landscapes of Injustice at the Nikkei National Museum, under the Hide Hyodo-Shimizu Scholarship. The work environment at the museum is really comfortable and all of the co-workers get along with each other very well. We eat together almost every day and we are just like a family.

As a part of the Community Records and Directories cluster of the Landscapes of Injustice Research Project, I am digitizing a ledger from the Japanese Fishing Boat Disposition Committee and recording all the valuable information contained within it. I am inputting this information into a spreadsheet that will be accessible to the public in the future. This ledger contains detailed information on the number of Japanese-owned fishing vessels that were sold, requisitioned, and lost in 1942, the registration, dimensions, ownerships, and values of the vessels, whom they were sold to and for what price. This information is important because fishing was one of the largest industries that Japanese Canadians were employed in before their internment.

Through my work at the Nikkei National Museum, I have learned many things about our gallery exhibits and Japanese Canadian history. I am now at a level where I can confidently discuss issues that Japanese Canadians experienced during the WW2 era and tell interesting stories from that time.

I would like to thank the Hyodo-Shimizu family, Landscapes of Injustice, and the NAJC for creating the Hide Hyodo-Shimizu Scholarship and making this experience possible. I would like to also thank the selection committee for awarding me this scholarship.



L-R Jordan Stanger-Ross, Hikari Rachmat, Ken Noma, Mike Abe

Links of interest: **Asian Canadians on Vancouver Island** John Price History professor at Uvic

<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/acvi/2015/07/30/acvi-inauguration-in-duncan/>

Revitalizing Japantown? Right to Remain Project info: <http://www.revitalizingjapantown.ca/>

Greg Masuda's documentary, *The Right To Remain*, looks at Vancouver's Downtown Eastside residents and their fight to save the community from development. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/the-right-to-remain-documentary-explores-development-pressure-on-vancouver-s-dtes-1.3183890>

Landscapes of Injustice Inaugural Spring Institute

From April 27-May 1, 2015, the inaugural Landscapes of Injustice took place at the University of Victoria.

This annual conference brings together the entire team including research associates, partners and co-investigators to present and discuss the previous year's research and project developments. Along with the executive and steering committees, advisory board and community council, the institute saw over 60 participants.

Hearty discussions and interesting presentations as well student training and a field trip to Steveston, Powell Street and the Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre kept the delegates busy. It was a great opportunity for many of the project to meet each other for the first time.



Photos: Tosh Kitagawa



Community Council

The Community Council consists of established or emerging leaders who have a strong understanding and interest in Japanese Canadian history and are able to provide a national perspective to the Landscapes of Injustice project. The Council's role is to be a community sounding board for project leaders, partners, and students, acting as a source of advice and guidance from the wider community of Japanese Canadians to help ensure that the project is delivered in ways that are best suited to their needs and remains accountable to the community concerns. Eight of the nine members of the council along with facilitator Jeff Masuda were in attendance at the spring institute. They listened intently to the presentations and discussions and provided valuable feedback and recommendations to the project team. Representatives from Landscapes of Injustice and the community council will be present to provide updates at the upcoming National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) AGM in September in Victoria.



L-R Jeff Masuda, Ken Noma, Sally Ito, Mary Kitagawa, Vivian Wakabayashi Rygnestad, Art Miki, Susanne Tabata, Eiko Eby, Tosh Kitagawa
Unable to attend Jennifer Matsunaga

Congratulations to Dr. Pamela Sugiman, recipient of the prestigious Outstanding Contribution Award from the Canadian Sociological Association in 2014 and keynote lecture at the 2015 CSA annual conference.

Pamela is also featured in the column Face To Face in the July/ August issue of Legion Magazine.

Should the Canadian Government have authorized the forcible evacuation inland of Japanese citizens during the Second World War?

Hear from authors J.L. Granatastein and Pamela Sugiman. Click here for the full article, <https://legionmagazine.com/en/2015/07/face-to-face-should-the-canadian-government-have-authorized-the-forcible-evacuation-inland-of-japanese-canadians-during-the-second-world-war/>