

Research News and Project Updates

Summer 2021

## Message from the Project Director

Jordan Stanger-Ross

Canada was far from alone in its mistreatment of Nikkei civilians in the 1940s. Rather, people of Japanese descent were uprooted, interned, dispossessed and displaced in allied countries across the Americas and the Pacific. The specifics varied significantly by locale. Brazil, with the largest Nikkei population (190,000), forced only 4,000 civilians from their homes, but the rest suffered draconian regulations: the Japanese language was banned, assets seized, and community leaders removed from positions of authority.



An estimated 80 percent of Japanese Mexicans were uprooted and dispossessed. The Nikkei in Peru were the targets of racism, mass deportation, and theft. Australia was a regional internment hub, with its civilians of Japanese descent interned among people displaced from the future Indonesia, New Caledonia, New Zealand, and nearby islands; almost all were deported to Japan after the war. It is widely known that over 115,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated in the continental United States. How does our understanding of the internment of Japanese Canadians change, if we think about it from a global perspective?

Nikkei museums and organizations across the globe have been building a network for the last several years, including Landscapes of Injustice partners, the Nikkei National Museum and the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre. Following their lead, our collective took the plunge last winter to propose a project that would draw together a global history of the violations of Nikkei civilians in the 1940s. The Canadian story is one of the best known in the world; Landscapes of Injustice now joins efforts to tell it alongside the histories of other Nikkei communities. From this wider perspective, new questions arise. For example, how can we explain that virtually all civilians of Japanese origin were deported from Australia, as compared with a quarter of prewar Japanese Canadians, and less than 1 percent in the United States? Answering this question, and others, we hope to gain insight into connected but different expressions of racism during wartime, as well as how and why various forms of legal and constitutional protection failed at a time of crisis.

This new project, Past Wrongs, Future Choices, is still in embryonic form. Who knows if it will get funded? But even if it does not, a remarkable network, including scholars and institutions in Australia, Brazil, Japan, Canada, and the United States, has already come together around the idea. Our conversations have been exciting and illuminating. As described in this newsletter, we're proud to be able to host, later this month, a presentation by members of Nikkei Australia. Their story has been too-little connected with our own. Whatever the outcome of the proposed project, we hope that the global history of Nikkei internments will be an area of discussion in the years to come. Present challenges of migration, racism, and security are global in scale; so too is the history necessary for understanding of how we came to this point and how we can forge new paths forward.

# Identity and Internment: The Japanese-Australian experience

Just hours after the declaration of war in December 1941, Japanese in Australia were swiftly arrested. The Nikkei community had shrunk to only 1100 people at the outbreak of war, and the majority (almost 98%) were interned in remote camps around Australia.

There, they joined more than 3000 other Japanese civilians who'd been arrested in Allied-controlled countries such as the Dutch East Indies and New Caledonia, and sent to Australia to be interned. Despite being grouped together as "enemy aliens," the Japanese internees in Australia were extremely diverse and many did not speak the same language.

From February 1946, the majority were repatriated to Japan, many against their will.

Join us for a fascinating look at this history and how it compares to the Japanese Canadian story.



**Wednesday, September 22, 2021**

**4:00 pm-5:30 pm Pacific Daylight Time**

**(Thurs. Sept. 23 Japan 8 am and Australia 9 am)**

[Click here to register through Zoom.](#)

<https://uvic.zoom.us/join/8445444444>

Free and open to the public

Presented by the University of Victoria [Centre for Asia-Pacific Initiatives](#), *Landscapes of Injustice/Past Wrongs, Future Choices* in association with [Nikkei Australia](#).



[Dr. Yuriko Nagata](#), Honorary Senior Research Fellow at the University of Queensland and an authority on the Japanese diaspora in Australia will introduce the [Nikkei Australia](#) collective and outline the history of Japanese in Australia, focusing on their wartime treatment.



Award-winning writer [Dr. Christine Piper](#) will discuss her research on the experience of Australian-born Japanese who were interned, which informed her novel [After Darkness](#). Rejected by their country and at odds with the nationalistic Japanese leaders at camp, these Australian-born Japanese were caught between two cultures and welcomed by neither.



Fourth-generation Nikkei Australian [Andrew Hasegawa](#) is the great-grandson of [Setsutaro Hasegawa](#), who immigrated to Australia in the late-19th century. Andrew will explore the identity of five generations of the Hasegawa family, starting with his great-grandfather and finishing with his daughter. The talk will encompass the pre-war, war and post-war environment and how his family responded.



**Landscapes of Injustice**

**Past Wrongs, Future Choices**



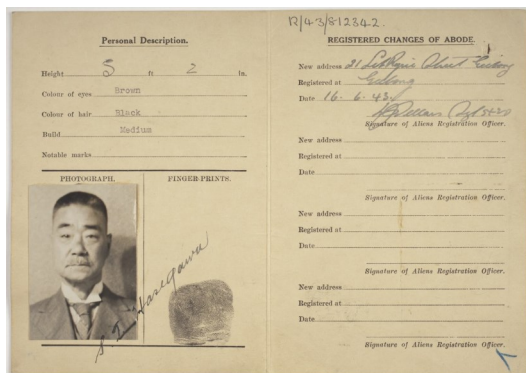
**University  
of Victoria**

Centre for  
Asia-Pacific Initiatives

## Past Wrongs, Future Choices – Partner profiles

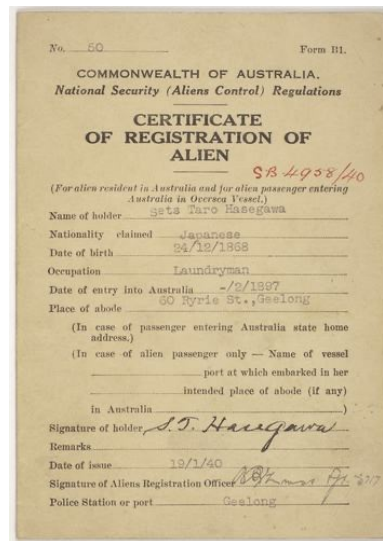
Past Wrongs, Future Choices, introduced by Jordan earlier has over 35 partner organizations from 4 continents and over 60 co-applicants and collaborators from countries around the globe.

We'll begin to introduce them in upcoming issues of the newsletter. Here are a few.



Personal Description.  
Height 5 ft 2 in.  
Colour of eyes Brown  
Colour of hair Black  
Build Medium  
Notable marks  
PHOTOGRAPH  
FINGER PRINTS  
REGISTERED CHANGES OF ABODE  
New address 21 La Trobe Street, Sydney  
Registered at  
Date 16.6.43  
Signature of Alien Registration Officer  
New address  
Registered at  
Date  
Signature of Alien Registration Officer  
New address  
Registered at  
Date  
Signature of Alien Registration Officer  
New address  
Registered at  
Date  
Signature of Alien Registration Officer

Certificate of Registration of Alien Setsutaro Hasegawa 1940



No. 50 Form B1.  
COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.  
National Security (Aliens Control) Regulations  
CERTIFICATE  
OF REGISTRATION OF  
ALIEN  
SB 4958/40  
(For alien resident in Australia and for alien passenger entering Australia in (Green) Pass.)  
Name of holder Setsutaro Hasegawa  
Nationality claimed Japanese  
Date of birth 24/12/1868  
Occupation Laundryman  
Date of entry into Australia 7/2/1897  
Place of abode 60 Ryrie St., Geelong  
(In case of passenger entering Australia state home address.)  
(In case of alien passenger only — Name of vessel  
port at which embarked in her  
intended place of abode (if any)  
in Australia.)  
Signature of holder S.T. Hasegawa  
Remarks  
Date of issue 13/1/40  
Signature of Alien Registration Officer  
Police Station or port Geelong

## Andrew Hasegawa – Nikkei Australia

I am a fourth generation Nikkei Australian born in 1960 in a small country town not far from the city of Geelong where my Great Grandfather, Setsutaro Hasegawa (STH), spent much of his life. My father often talked about Grandpa Hasegawa as he lived in the same house and considered him to be his male role model. His biological father, Leo Takeshi, had joined the army and was stationed in Sydney until he made his way home in the early 1960s. It was my father's respect for his grandfather that triggered my interest in my Japanese ancestry.

In the 1970s I spent many summer vacations in Geelong at my grandmother's house and she often spoke of her father-in-law who she lived with until he died. I had so many questions about Grandpa Hasegawa that couldn't be answered and one day I decided to seek some answers. There were a couple of things that I wanted to know such as when did he arrive in Australia, where did he come from in Japan. My grandmother always said he was from Tokyo though my father always said Kobe. So, I wrote to the Public Record Office of Victoria to see if they might have a record of when STH arrived, to my surprise several weeks later I received a reply confirming he arrived in February 1897 on the Yamashiro Maru. My next port of call was the Japanese Consulate to see if they could help translate the handful of documents written in Japanese that had withstood the ravages of time. The consulate couldn't help with translation but introduced someone who could. James Oki was in his seventies and had lived in Australia since the 1950s, he spoke English with a crisp North American accent and lived in an old apartment in East Melbourne. I made an appointment with him and took the various documents for him to translate. He did it with good grace and didn't ask for money. The one gold nugget he told me was that STH was born in the port city of Otaru not Tokyo. The follow up was to write to the Otaru City office and obtain a copy of the family register, which they sent through a month or so later and that answered a lot of questions.

And so began an adventure to become familiar with the land where STH was born. In 1981, forty years ago this year I arrived in Japan, I was twenty. It was the start of a lifelong relationship with Japan that continues to this day. I spent several years living in the Kansai studying Japanese and teaching English before returning to Australia to finish my degree. In late 1985 I returned to Japan to collect data for my honors thesis on an outcaste (buraku) community in southern Osaka. It was and still is a sensitive subject that I became familiar with on my first visit to Japan when a student at the university where I was studying broached the subject then told me I wasn't allowed to talk about it. That made me even more interested and I went to the library, found a book called "Japan's Invisible Race" and devoured it. My thesis topic was rejected several times as the head of the Japanese department said you cannot succeed unless you have access. His point was fair, you can't just walk into a community and start knocking on doors. I persisted and the Japanese Department reached out to a well-known Japanese academic who agreed to help me enter a "buraku" community. Even then there were no guarantees, it was a series of introductions that got me in. Two local leaders of buraku communities who I was introduced to rejected me. Then the third person who



was on my list asked me what I wanted to do and said "welcome". I was in with unfettered access. In hindsight I was given the privilege of entering the Yata community, interviewing residents and gaining an insight into Japan that stays with me to this very day. Many years later I realized that my patron was a leading figure in the Buraku Liberation League, a warrior for his cause.

On graduation I had a choice go on with my studies or find a job. A friend introduced me to a Japanese investment bank and I hopped on that merry go round and it took 26 years before I could get off. The past few years I have run an import business specializing in Japanese homewares that is now just online.

I became involved with the PWFC project late in 2020 and I am really thrilled to be a part of it. It has taken me back to the days when I was student, I am energized.

### **Stanley Kirk - Associate Professor, Institute for Language and Culture, Konan University**

I grew up in rural Alberta and did undergraduate studies in Greek and Latin literature at the University of Victoria and the University of Calgary. After a short stint as a grad student at the University of Cincinnati, I came to Japan with the intention of teaching English for one year. I have been here ever since, with the exception of one year when I returned to the University of Calgary to finish my MA degree. I am presently employed at the Institute for Languages and Culture at Konan University in Kobe, Japan, where I teach a variety of English courses.



After completing my MA thesis (a comparison of the Greek goddess Gaia with the Japanese goddess Izanami), I spent 2 years as a research-student at Kobe University on a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. Later, I did a distance diploma in TESOL through Vancouver Community College and an MA in Applied Linguistics through Leicester University. At that time my main research interest was in the application of Self-Determination Theory to second language education. I also did some volunteer tutoring of immigrant teenagers at the Kobe Foreigners Friendship Center which raised my awareness of ethnic minorities in both Japanese and Canadian society.

I became interested in Japanese Canadian history mainly by accident or fate. During my early years in Japan, I met several Japanese Canadians whose families had been exiled to Japan at the end of World War II. Most did not talk about their past, except for one who gave me an earful about how his family was treated by the Canadian government. Several years ago, I gave a public lecture about Japanese Canadian history including the Japanese Canadians who were exiled to Japan at the end of the war. After I finished, an audience member identified himself as one of those exiles and later told me his life story. I realized almost immediately that this would be the focus of my future research. Since then, I have interviewed and written life histories of several such exiles (see list on next page). This research has brought me into contact with members of the Mio research project who kindly invited me to join their team. I am very grateful for the opportunity to be involved in the Past Wrongs Future Choices project.

Kirk, Stanley. "[The Izumi Family Revisited: Living as Japanese Canadian Exiles in Postwar Japan.](#)" [The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture \(Vol. 25\)](#), Konan University, March 2021, (101-120).

Kirk, Stanley. "[A Japanese Canadian Teenage Exile: The Life History of Takeshi \(Tak\) Matsuba.](#)" [The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture \(Vol. 24\)](#), Konan University, March 2020, (3-36).

Kirk, Stanley. "[A Japanese Canadian Teenage Exile: The Life History of Kazuko Makihara.](#)" [The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture \(Vol. 23\)](#), Konan University, March 2019, (3-20).

Kirk, Stanley. "[A Japanese Canadian Child-Exile: The Life History of Basil Izumi.](#)" [The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture \(Vol. 22\)](#), Konan University, March 2018, (71-108).

Kirk, Stanley. "[Life Histories of Japanese Canadian Deportees: A Father and Son Case Study.](#)" [The Journal of the Institute of Language and Culture \(Vol. 21\)](#), Konan University, March 2017, (3-42).

These stories are explored in more detail in a series of articles in Discover Nikkei  
<http://www.discovernikkei.org/en/journal/author/kirk-stanley/>

When not teaching (online these days) I enjoy hiking with my wife and son on the occasional weekend, and more recently making trips to places like Mio and Hakone, etc. I'd also like to mention that I am teaching a course titled Global Topics. It is only intermediate language level, but I am trying to incorporate my research as much as possible. In the first semester I focus mainly on Japanese Canadian migrant history while touching on other ethnic minorities in Canada, and in the second semester I'm focusing mainly on the stories of the Japanese Canadian exiles to Japan while touching also on ethnic Chinese and Koreans in Japan. I am just now into the second year of doing this course so am still getting my act together.

## **Landscapes of Injustice: Reflections on the Dispossession of Japanese Canadians**

Vancouver Historical Society presents

**Jordan Stanger-Ross**

During the 1940s, Canada enacted mass displacement and dispossession of people on racial grounds, a collective moral failure that remains only partially addressed. Japanese Canadians lost their homes, farms, businesses, as well as personal, family, and communal possessions. Landscapes of Injustice, a multi-year, multi-university project, is dedicated to recovering and grappling with this difficult past. Its leader, Dr. Jordan Stanger-Ross of the University of Victoria, last spoke to the Vancouver Historical Society on this project in 2014.

Vancouver Historical Society

Thursday, September 23, 2021

7:00 pm

Contact [presidentvhs@gmail.com](mailto:presidentvhs@gmail.com) in order to get the Zoom log-on.

<https://www.vancouver-historical-society.ca/events.html>

## **Into The Interior**

Dear Landscapes of Injustice community,

We are pleased to announce that our choose-your-own adventure game, *Into the Interior*, will be publicly available in January 2022 as a permanent part of teacher resources. *Into the Interior* is an interactive game that simulates the experiences of Japanese Canadians during the internment era. It is run via Twine, an open-source program for creating text based non-linear narratives, and purposefully focuses on choices—some important, others false, and many beyond Japanese Canadian control. Our story begins in 1941 and follows two siblings as they experience domicide, the deliberate killing of home, by the Canadian government; it centers around locations such as internment camps, prisoner of war camps, Hastings Park, as well as the sugar beet farms, and highlights the evacuation order, dispossession, exile to Japan, as well as other historic events. Our intention is to use the game as an education tool so that youth across the country can learn about this important chapter of Canadian history in a way they find more engaging than a textbook.



Former site of Japanese Language School pre-1941, Nanaimo, BC

We originally created the game in under two weeks as part of the University of Victoria’s “Canada’s Internment Era: A Field School” in 2019. Since our original product, we have had great interest and feedback in the game: we received the 2020 Peter Liddell Award in Humanities Computing; at the inaugural Unessay Competition at the University of Victoria, held during Humanities Literacy Week 2021, we won Audience Favourite; and just last May we broadcasted the narrative at [RBCM@Home \(Kids\)](#) with great interaction from both teachers and students. While we were proud of our initial product, we approached LOI with the opportunity to improve *Into the Interior* throughout the summer, adding greater research elements and narrative details to enhance user experience. Our team of three members—Natsuki Abe, Nathaniel Hayes, and Jennifer Landrey—have been involved in Landscapes as volunteers, research assistants, and thesis students. Thanks to a research stipend, LOI helped us fund our initial improvements—furthering this, we also received generous funding from both the Victoria Nikkei Cultural Society and the NAJC Endowment Fund; this will allow us to run beta tests in classrooms this fall, as well as engage in community consultations. We are beyond grateful for their faith in us and our project.

Our team is currently finishing the latest build on the game and this version will be used in classrooms across Canada to test out its playability and learning functionality over the coming months. Our next step is to host an online consultation event where members of the Japanese Canadian community can play the game with us, offering feedback and suggestions to our narrative (this will be hosted mid-to-late October, so stay on the lookout!). Finally, at the end of the year, we will add the finishing touches so that *Into the Interior* will launch as part of LOI’s online resources in January, 2022. We look forward to sharing our hard work with all of you.

## Family Story Sharing

On July 30, Landscapes of Injustice and the National Association of Japanese Canadians held a joint on-line event as part of the 2021 Virtual Powell Street Festival.

Thank you to guests Johanna Smith from the Library and Archives Canada and community members Tami Hirasawa and Kevin Okabe who related their family stories supplemented by documents from the [LOI digital research database](#). We encourage you to explore this rich database.

[Here is the link to a recording of the event.](#)

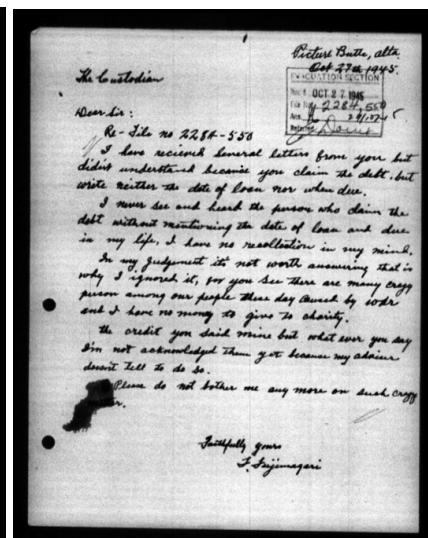
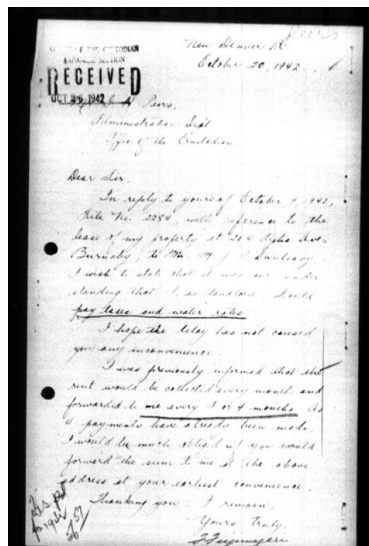
We continue with our series of family stories that have arisen from the documents in the database from Tami Hirasawa and Stephanie Kawamoto and an entertaining short story from writer, Sally Ito.



## Hirasawa/Fujimagari Family Sharing

My name is Tamiko Hirasawa. I grew up in Hamilton, Ontario and I am currently living in Nanaimo BC. My late father was George Hirasawa. His family lived in Strawberry Hill, Surrey BC prior to 1942. My mother is Yukiko Joyce (nee Fujimagari). Her family lived in Vancouver Heights (Burnaby) BC prior to 1942.

My grandfather, Fusakichi Fujimagari was 58 years old in 1942. From the digital archives case file, I learned that his property at 204 Alpha Avenue was one acre with a newly built two story home (with *ofuro* in the basement and a flush toilet!) a chicken house, brooder house, thousands of flowers, many fruit trees and a large vegetable garden.



I found a handwritten letter from my grandfather telling the Custodian he had rented the property to a tenant for \$10/month starting May 29th, 1942 and now in October he is expecting 4 months rent.

*"...I would be much obliged if you would forward the sum to me at the address above at your earliest convenience".*  
October 20 1942 New Denver.

The case files show that taxes were \$60/year plus water bills which were paid by Fujimagari. Other hand written letters are from Picture Butte 1945 and Taber 1949. From the files, starting in March 1943, offers to purchase the property were submitted ranging from \$475-\$2100.

Using these handwritten letters as a reference with dates and locations of where the family lived, my 95 year old mom shared her experiences:

"My dad and 18 year old brother Jack had already been sent to work in a Road Camp in Griffin Lake BC with other JC men when we got the order to report to Hastings Park on May 28, 1942. We walked there from our house which was next to Confederation Park. In Hastings Park, we were given a metal bunk bed for the four of us girls and were told to stuff our mattress with straw. We were in the livestock building section U. I slept in the top bunk with Anne and Jean slept in the bottom bunk with Maggie. We hung sheets around our bed for privacy. My brothers, Tak and Yosh (12 and 14 years old) had to sleep in the boys' building. We ate in a separate building and there was a laundry building. I remember Mrs. Fukumoto who lived in a different section often looked out for us as we had to pass her every day.

We were sent by train to New Denver in September. When we got to New Denver, they weren't ready for us. We had to sleep in tents. It was so cold. My father had building experience, (he had just finished building our house) so he and Jack were sent from the road camp to New Denver to build the shacks. Our family was happy to be together in one shack.

In 1943, we applied to work on the sugar beet farms of Alberta. We were one of the first families to leave New Denver. I remember standing on the platform when the train stopped at Iron Springs. All the local sugar beet farmers were there looking over the families. They wanted strong boys to work their fields. We stayed in a granary on the Beeswanger farm (a German family) for one season and then moved to another farm in Picture Butte before we moved to Taber."

The case files document our family at John Pinter's farm, Picture Butte in 1945 and the Fekete Farm, Taber where they stayed until the early-1950's when they moved into a house in the town of Taber.

I am happy that my mother remembers events and places with so much detail and was able to connect the dots on some of the discoveries we encountered in the files. When I asked my 17 year old daughter Naomi about her thoughts on hearing Baachan's stories, she said, "I like hearing the family history because I didn't learn anything about this in school. I also think it is very special to hear it directly from my Baachan."

It was in Taber where my mother married my father, George Hirasawa on September 10, 1955.

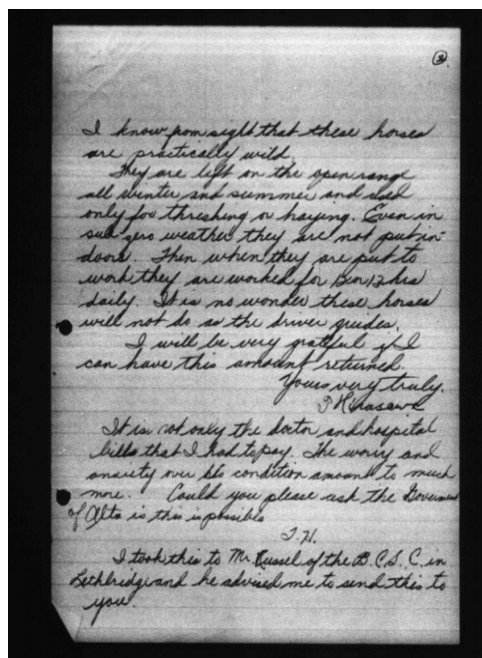
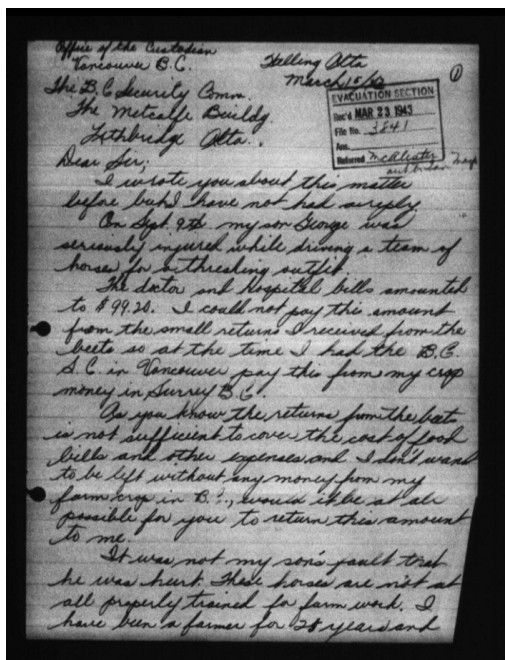


Photos courtesy the Hirasawa family

In April 1942 (right before harvest), the Hirasawa Family was relocated from their 20 acre farm in Surrey BC to a sugar beet farm in Welling, Alberta near Raymond. My Uncle Goro has done extensive research into our family history and in 2002, self-published a book "Hirasawa Family in Canada". Takejiro Hirasawa was a very literate, hard-working man who was meticulous in his record keeping. After reading through the 209 page case file on Takejiro Hirasawa, I realized that he really fought for his property by writing numerous typed letters to the Custodian and Security Commission. There is a misconception that the Issei just let these events happen to them and just said "shikata ga nai" (there is nothing that can be done). In his numerous letters, Takejiro keeps asking for his belongings to be shipped to him in Alberta. There is a detailed list of items that he asks for including his Japanese books, 2 wooden boxes, farm tools and his farm scale. A report from May 26, 1943 states that Mr. Bardwell threw out 4 sacks of strawberry plants, 2 wooden boxes plus mattresses, wooden beds, a large amount of books and magazines out the window and instructed the tenant to burn them. I could hear the racism in the written replies to his letters. On June 15, 1944, the Credit Manager William Page wrote to the Custodian: *"...we have just about got to the end of ourselves and feel like taking action against him. You can convey this to him as we do not intend to cater to him anymore. He has caused us more trouble than all the other Japanese put together. I do not see why we should comply with all the requests he sends us."*



In a handwritten letter of March 15, 1943, Takejiro talks about an accident where my father was run over by a horse wagon. He asks the Custodian to please pay the \$95 hospital and doctor's bill from his account. He explains that he asked the owner of the farm and the person who my father was working for at the time to help with the medical costs without success. He also explains how my father is now not able to help with the sugar beets and my Auntie Mary has to look after him and therefore, she cannot help with the sugar beets either. This accident has caused a lot of anxiety, stress and worry for my grandfather. The Custodian writes back to say that there is not enough money in his account. Takejiro then asks if they can please sell his incubators for him but case files note that the incubators were sold at auction with the rest of his equipment. It is during this time of letter exchanges that both Hirasawa properties are listed for sale by the Custodian.



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takejiro

The Hirasawa farm, purchased uncleared in 1911 for \$2000, was sold for \$2377 in 1943 despite over \$18000 in improvements, fully cleared and cultivated, and a net income of \$6000 per year in the years preceding 1942. The other property my grandfather owned was a parcel of land purchased for \$350 was sold to the City of Vancouver for \$75 of which my grandfather received \$49 after fees.

I feel so much respect for Takejiro Hirasawa. His letters are respectful and written with great integrity in his second language-English. I am still learning new things about his losses, the injustice and how hard he worked throughout his life.



My name is Stephanie Kawamoto. I am a yonsei and a descendant of the Kawamoto, Koyanagi, Hyodo, and Kagetsu families. I grew up hearing about my mom's side of the family, especially Hide Hyodo Shimizu and Eikichi Kagetsu, but not much about my dad's side of the family. Through *Landscapes of Injustice*, I have been fortunate to learn about all four of my grandparents' families and their experiences during World War Two. Although they all experienced dispossession and forced relocation, each family's experience was different.

My paternal grandfather, Yoshimasa (Tom) Kawamoto, grew up in Vancouver. He was in high school during World War Two, and his parents, Koichi and Masuyo, had a confectionery on Powell Street. Koichi and Masuyo attempted to send their belongings to their former address before being sent to Greenwood internment camp, but they were caught by the British Columbia Security Commission and their belongings were taken. Maybe because of this, or perhaps for some other reason, my great-grandfather was sent to the P.O.W. camp in Angler, Ontario, and he was not released until March of 1946. The rest of the family (Masuyo and seven children) were interned at Greenwood for the remainder of the war. The family reunited and settled in Hamilton, Ontario after the war.

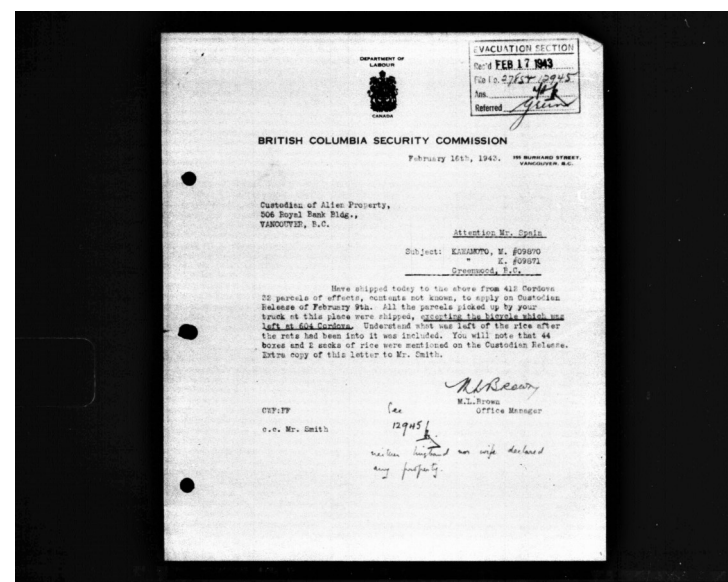


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My paternal grandmother, Chieko (Connie) Koyanagi, was from the Eburne area on Sea Island. Her father, Mata-shiro, worked at Acme Cannery, and the family lived in cannery-owned housing. Matashiro had a fishing boat, which the RCMP sold to a fisheries company for 25% less than its value in 1942.

The Koyanagi family (Matashiro, wife Kisa and seven children) relocated to Chin, Alberta and then to Taber, Alberta, where they worked on a farm until the end of the war. After the war, they moved to Hamilton, Ontario.

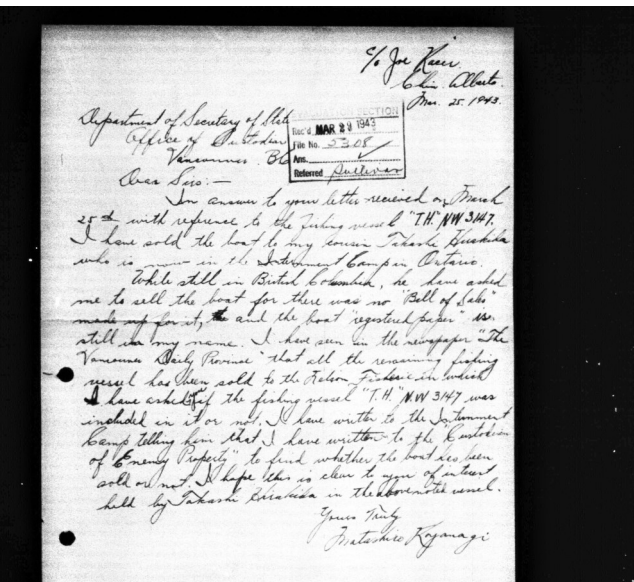


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## Hyodo

My maternal grandfather, Masao (Mas) Hyodo, was from Vancouver. His father, Hideichi, was an unemployed janitor, and his mother, Toshi, owned rental properties. At the time that the Japanese Canadians had to register with the RCMP, two siblings had already moved to Ontario for work, and shortly after, two siblings moved to Montreal. Grandpa was permitted to finish his high school exams before moving to Hamilton to work as a house boy. His parents and youngest brother Toshio were sent to Kaslo before relocating to Montreal. His eldest sister, Hideko (Hide) stayed in British Columbia, first to teach at Hastings Park and then to run the education system in the internment camps. Grandpa and his brother Yoshio eventually joined the S-20 unit of the army, but since they didn't speak Japanese they spent most of the time in language training and didn't go overseas. After the war, Toshi and Hideichi reunited with three of their children in Hamilton, but the family never all lived in the same place after they left BC.

Throughout the war, Hide (on her mother's behalf) wrote to the Office of the Custodian to demand that their belongings be sent to them and to question the government's treatment of their property. These efforts paid off, as some of the things they left with friends and relatives outside of the protected area did make their way back to the family rather than being sold.

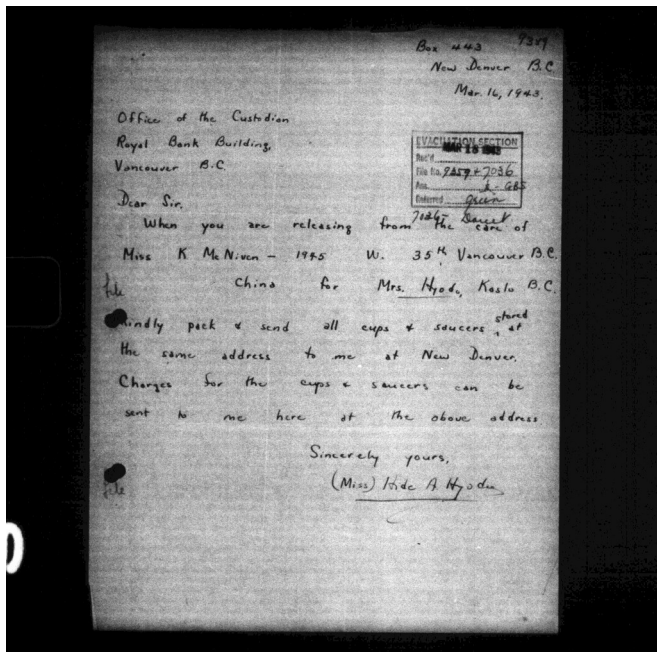


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## Kagetsu

My maternal grandmother, Sachiko (Sachi) Kagetsu, was from Vancouver. Her father, Eikichi, was an entrepreneur who owned fishing boats, a train and train track, a logging company, and several other properties. Her mother, Toyo, worked as a housekeeper for Eikichi's businesses. As they were a wealthy family, they were able to go to a self-supporting site when they were forced to leave the coast and they went to Minto City, with the exception of two of the eldest children who were in Japan. Most of the family eventually moved to Toronto.

Growing up, we had always thought that Grandma's piano had been left with a trusted neighbour when the family was interned and then sent to them in Ontario later on. We didn't find out about self-supporting sites, or that the family had been in one, until my Aunt Margaret and I went on the Internment Bus Tour in 2019. Now we know that the piano that we learned to play on actually went with the family to Minto City.

As a yonsei who teaches grade six students about the Japanese Canadians during World War Two, my family history helps to bring another level of authenticity to my teaching. I get to use documents from my family files to talk about belongings, loss, and injustice, and the students get to interact with real history — Japanese Canadian history in general, but also my own family history. They are always shocked to learn how little money families received for their belongings after auction, and to see the various fees the government used to ensure they received even less. For example, my great-grandmother arranged for the sale of her property on her own, but she was still charged for valuation and advertising. During the unit, we also read from my great uncle's journal, we look at



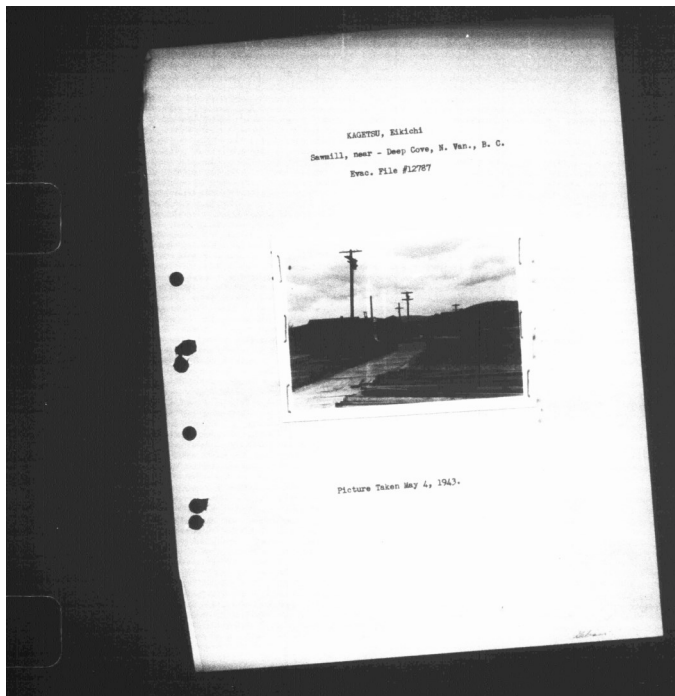


Photo: lac\_rg\_117\_c3\_12787\_kagetsu-eikichi

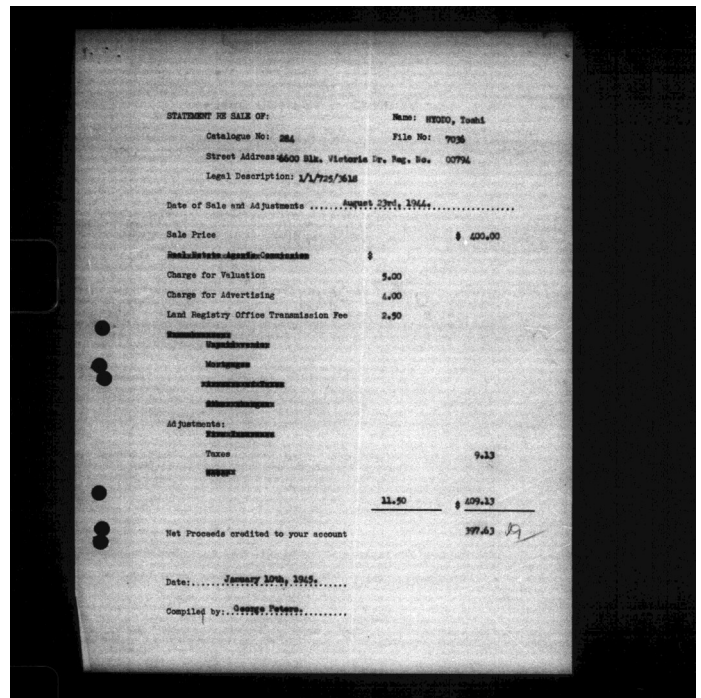


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*This year's group did a virtual Powell Street Simulation due to COVID protocols.*  
 Photo courtesy of Stephanie Kawamoto

maps and photographs, and the students ask me questions about my family. When we do the Powell Street Simulation activity, my grandparents' store is one of the properties so one student or group gets to create it and then experience many aspects of the internment era as my "family". The simulation is always emotional for me, especially when my great-grandparents' business is part of it, and it's deeply meaningful for the students.

Another way that I bring my families' lived experiences into my teaching is through a choose-your-own-adventure activity that I made, inspired by the stories of my ancestors and other Japanese Canadians during the war. This activity wraps up their learning by having them choose a character and then make the decisions that the character would have had to make to survive. You can try it out at <https://bit.ly/jcwwii>.

## Cheese Island

By Sally Ito

In life, there are fake places and real ones. So if a friend tells you a volcano has erupted in her country, how do you believe her if she doesn't send pictures? Or if she sends you one from public domain stock images? I mean, if it's still a volcano and it's shown erupting, why wouldn't you believe her?

In writing, there are true stories but not fake ones, because the fake ones are just called fiction. And people read those stories all the time and often think they're true. But true is different than real.

Cheese Island is a real place.



Photo credit: Cheese Island Gustavo Zambelli on Unsplash

I found out about it when I was doing research on Japanese Canadian internment. My dead grandfather – Jiichan, is what Japanese call grandpas – bless his soul – was interned in a place called Lemon Creek. That’s what my Mom told me. When I heard the name, I thought of a sour place in the mountains where every one moped around with puckered faces as if they had sucked too many lemons instead of trying to make lemonade with them. There just wasn’t enough sugar around in those days. Rationing it, you know, because it was war time.

Then I went to Lemon Creek. It was a pretty place in the Kootenay mountain range in interior British Columbia. There was an empty field with grasses and a blue mountain in the distance. There was a stream that must’ve been the place’s namesake. And though it was hard to believe Jiichan ran around here with his brothers and a bunch of other interned Japanese Canadians, I found it peaceful. I knew Jiichan’s boy-soul was there. Jiichan died before I was born so I never knew him. This was as good as it was going to get for me.

Time marches on and forgets a place. But historians don’t. And they’re the ones that provide the information on Wikipedia sites I need to research to make my films.

Historians want films to be factual and accurate. But for filmmakers like me and writers like my mom, we just want them to *feel* that way. There’s a difference, see?

So when I saw Cheese Island as an internment site of Japanese Canadians on the Japanese Canadian Internment Wikipedia site, I got interested real fast.

*Mom, have you ever heard of Japanese Canadians interned on Cheese Island?* I asked her.

She looked at me and said *What?* in that horrified way she looks when people get facts wrong. Especially about the internment. But I got her on that one.

*You know, Cheese Island, that place in Ontario in Sharbot Lake Provincial Park located between Peterborough and Ottawa off of the TransCanada Highway also known as Highway 7?*

Always arm yourself with the facts, I say.

*No!* Mom said, almost indignant. *Where did you read that?*

*On Wikipedia,* I said triumphantly.

Then my little sister sailed into the room and said, “I know Cheese Island! It’s the place Cheese Daijin rules – you know, the Minister of Cheese? It’s one of the islands around Whole Cake Island that Momma Pirate rules in Totto Land. Sanji and Charlotte Pudding got married there.”

Now it was my turn to say, “What?”

“You know, it’s a place on One Piece, the TV show. The anime.”

Ohhh, now I get it! And so did Mom, too. Sort of. We all knew One Piece because when Mom took us to Japan, a former student of hers told us it was her favorite anime on TV and so we all got hooked on it, too, as kids. Mom, not so much, but she was glad we were watching Japanese TV. That’s why she took us to Japan. So we would watch Japanese TV. Not American TV like what she grew up with.

\*\*\*

I’m mixed race; I’m also Christian. In either case you wouldn’t know it to look at me. So when that Christian dude went into that Asian spa and killed all those women that looked like my mom, I was really torn up about it. I went to a Christian camp on an island in the middle of a lake. There I swam a lot and took kids on canoe trips. On those trips, I told kids that God loves them no matter what they look like. There used to be a song sung on that island that they don’t sing anymore.

*Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world*

*Red and yellow, black and white, all are precious in His sight*

*Jesus loves the little children of the world.*

I guess that song is considered racist nowadays. And also, there's some missing colors, like where's brown?

I like the idea that somebody out there got sent to Cheese Island. On the satellite image on Google maps, you can see there's a dock on it with a boat parked there. The island is in the middle of a provincial park so I know it's beautiful and harsh at the same time, and the Japanese in me, says that's the way life is, sometimes, *Shikata ga nai*. It can't be helped. But then the Christian in me says, 'But God loves you always and forever no matter where you are.'

That's the great thing about being mixed – you can think and feel at the same time.

*This short story was originally published in The Junction on Medium.com and used with permission from the author. Sally Ito is a Sansei. She is a writer who has published three books of poetry, a collection of short fiction, and most lately a memoir about her Japanese Canadian family called The Emperor's Orphans. She lives in Winnipeg and is a member of the Landscapes of Injustice Community Council. Recently she, along with other Community Council members, Jennifer Hashimoto and chair Vivian Rygnestad participated with University of Victoria students to review and update the Japanese Canadian Internment page on Wikipedia. This story was inspired by that Wiki-A-Thon.*

Broken Promises Museum Exhibit at the  
Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre



JAPANESE CANADIAN  
CULTURAL CENTRE  
日系文化会館



Grounded in research from Landscapes of Injustice – a 7 year multi-disciplinary, multi-institutional, community engaged project, this exhibit explores the dispossession of Japanese Canadians in the 1940s. It illuminates the loss of home and the struggle for justice of one racially marginalized community. The story unfolds by following seven narrators. Learn about life for Japanese Canadians in Canada before war, the administration of their lives during and after war ends, and how legacies of dispossession continue to this day.

#### Visiting Hours

Registration for on-site exhibit tour appointments of **Broken Promises** and **Maru: Immigration Stories** will be available soon. Please check back to sign up for available time slots.

<https://jccc.on.ca/event/2021/09/broken-promises>

#### More Resources

Complementary website: [Landscape of Injustice - Narrative Site](#)

Download exhibit tour app: [Apple Store](#) or [Google Play](#)

[Broken Promises Catalogue \(PDF\)](#)

[La brochure Promesses Brisées \(PDF\)](#)



## Mini-traveler Museum Exhibit

Now showing at the [Sunshine Valley Tashme Museum](#) until February 2022

The Tashme Museum recently renovated two of the remaining cold storage rooms in what was the Tashme Butcher Shop (1942-1946) and is showcasing the Landscapes of Injustice: Broken Promises mini-traveler exhibit. This exhibit takes you on a story of seven narrators on their loss of home and the struggle for justice of one racially marginalized community. They look forward to welcoming you for a safe and memorable experience.

They are open Saturdays from 10 am to 4 pm plus private reservations/tours upon reservation by emailing them at [Tashmemuseum@gmail.com](mailto:Tashmemuseum@gmail.com)



Photos courtesy the Tashme Museum

Future venues and dates (confirmed to date)

### **Broken Promises (full exhibit)**

Feb 1-Apr 22, 2022: Museum of Surrey, Surrey BC

May 20-Aug 14, 2022: Royal BC Museum, Victoria BC

Feb 11-Apr 23, 2023: Canadian Museum of Immigration Pier 21, Halifax NS

May 27-Sep 3, 2023: Galt Museum and Archives, Lethbridge AB

Feb 1-Apr 27, 2024: Nanaimo Museum and Archives, Nanaimo BC

## Mini-traveller Museum Exhibit Tour Schedule

Now until February 2022 Sunshine Valley Tashme Museum, Sunshine Valley BC

Feb 26-May 29, 2022: Touchstones Nelson: Museum of Art and History Nelson BC

June 26-September 7, 2022: Qualicum Beach Museum: Historical and Museum Society

Mid September - mid December, 2022: The Langham Cultural Centre Kaslo BC

For inquiries for hosting the full or mini-traveller exhibit, contact;

Nichola Ogiwara

Museum Programmer

Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre

6688 Southoaks Crescent, Burnaby BC V5E 4M7

T 604.777.7000 ext.109

[ogiwara@nikkeiplace.org](mailto:ogiwara@nikkeiplace.org)

## Accolades

### Awards

Congratulations to our long time Research Assistant and PhD candidate, **Gord Lyall** as the [Winner of the 2020 BC Studies Prize](#).

["They smashed it right through our reserve': The Problem of Settler Consultation for Infrastructure on Chawathil IR4"](#) by Gordon Robert Lyall BC Studies no. 201

The BC Studies Prize is awarded to the paper judged by the editors and members of the BC Studies Editorial Board to have made the greatest contribution to understanding British Columbia in the previous year, primarily on the basis of the significance and originality of the research but also taking into account the career stage of the author.

**Jordan Stanger-Ross** and [Landscapes of Injustice](#) are the recipients of the 2021 [Practice Category for the Public History Award from the Canadian Historical Association](#).

This award recognizes work that achieves high standards of original research, scholarship, and presentation; brings an innovative public history contribution to its audience; and serves as a model for future work, advancing the field of public history in Canada.

**Landscapes of Injustice and its partners** received the [Outstanding Award in Education, Awareness and Communication](#) in the 2021 Heritage Awards from Heritage BC.

Landscapes is extremely grateful to the community organizations who nominated us, your support and endorsement makes it an extra special win.

### Book Review

[Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians](#) continues to garner strong reviews. The publisher McGill Queens Press is very pleased and reports that "since its publication in August 2020 it has sold close to 600 copies, which is outstanding for a scholarly book just one year in print, and was shortlisted for the Basil Stuart-Stubbs Prize in 2021". They were also impressed with our earlier book, "Witness to Loss: Race, Culpability, and Memory in the Dispossession of Japanese Canadians (2017) has sold 700 copies and has been reprinted and was a finalist for the Wilson Book Prize".

Here are some of the first reviews for Landscapes of Injustice, the book, presented movie trailer style:

"Startling revelations," [The Bulletin](#)

An "impressive and unprecedented study," [BC Studies](#)

"Well written, clearly and effectively conceived and argued throughout, and intensely moving at times, *Landscapes of Injustice* is a significant book that both sheds light on the processes of dispossession and racial injustice and demonstrates the utility of collaboration to historians," [H-NET](#)

The latest review, in the Canadian Journal of History, features chapters by our brilliant former RAs and UVic history students, **Ariel Merriam and Kaitlin Findlay**.

"The book addresses hard questions about how states and citizens can protect human rights during times of national insecurity, and what is at stake when they fail to do so . . . *this book is a remarkable and comprehensive addition to studies on Canadian history*," **Canadian Journal of History** (see next page)

Jordan Stanger-Ross, ed. *Landscapes of Injustice: A New Perspective on the Internment and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020. 496 pp. \$130.00 Cdn (cloth), \$39.95 Cdn (paper or e-book).

*Landscapes of Injustice*, edited by Jordan Stanger-Ross, is an excellent and important collection of essays about the internment and dispossession of Japanese Canadians during and after World War II. This book builds upon histories of Japanese Canadian internment. Yet, to date, there have been few studies as comprehensive and detailed as this one, and none that focus so specifically on the devastation brought on by the dispossession of homes and belongings. The book is particularly timely and urgent, since, as the editor, Jordan Stanger-Ross, states in the epilogue, millions of people are currently being displaced, and "the politics of security, migration, and race [are] perpetually entwined" (485). The book addresses hard questions about how states and citizens can protect human rights during times of national insecurity, and what is at stake when they fail to do so.

Based on an impressive array of archival materials, photographs, personal interviews, and oral histories, and balancing personal stories with public ones, *Landscapes of Injustice* demonstrates how the Canadian state did not serve to protect but rather actively and intentionally broke apart Japanese Canadian families by violently dismantling their homes, their livelihoods, and their goods. The authors explain that the Canadian state

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was not monolithic in its actions. They offer nuanced readings of dispossession, in part by drawing upon a "Foucaultian interpretation of power" (189) that understands the complexities of power and its intertwinement with structures and systems.

Within those systems, particular individuals were responsible for creating and enacting policies that facilitated dispossession. Chapter five, for instance, provides a detailed account of how Glenn McPherson, the executive assistant to the Custodian of Enemy Property, ensured the widespread sale of Japanese Canadian property and was directly responsible for it. Analyzing hundreds of archived letters between the Nagata family and offices of the Canadian state, and tracing the family's moves from Vancouver to Edmonton to Toronto, chapter six outlines how dispossession did not happen under a single and unified administrative state, but rather through various and ongoing interactions between individuals and administrators. It was a process, in other words, that involved continual and sustained actions. In this chapter, the authors depict the Nagatas not only as victims but also as agents who were motivated to act against their dispossession and who made decisions within the confines of their circumstances.

The book goes well beyond examining the movement of Japanese Canadians from their homes. It examines how their belongings were sold too, and it takes into account not only the fiscal impact of that theft, but



also the emotional, spiritual, and familial impact of loss. It theorizes on the meanings of home, what it means to move and to settle, and how colonialism is evident in the history of Japanese Canadians and their movement within Canada. Chapter seven explains how the Canadian state mismanaged and auctioned Japanese Canadian property in the 1940s, even as officials promised Japanese Canadians that they were keeping their belongings safe. This understudied part of the story is important, as it delineates the explicit racism in both systems and individuals. “Every two weeks for nearly three years,” the authors note, “hundreds of people attended the auction of Japanese Canadians’ belongings in the Fraser Valley” (213). Drawing upon philosophers such as John Dewey, chapter seven analyzes the devaluation of the goods, the bureaucracy of the Canadian state, and the haphazard ways in which Canadian officials stole and sold properties and items that were not their own.

*Landscapes of Injustice* analyzes and critiques the legalities surrounding the dispossession of Japanese Canadians, and so the book is of interest to legal scholars as well as historians. As the authors note in chapter eight, the story of Japanese Canadians’ dispossession is one of “law’s capacity to carry multiple meanings—protection and coercion, trust and duplicity, justice and injustice—and to shift in meaning over time” (255). This chapter articulates how Japanese Canadians demanded protection of their belongings in the face of their internment, and it explains how that protection was

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### *Comptes Rendus*

199

promised and then undermined. The book, moreover, addresses the aftermath of dispossession, including the loss of intergenerational wealth that ensued, since many Japanese Canadians lost their homes as those properties were on the verge of historic price increases. It addresses questions related to honorific naming and naming’s interrelations with place and landscape, and it examines redress and social accountability.

Overall, this book is a remarkable and comprehensive addition to studies on Canadian history. The volume of research and the various kinds of research materials presented in this book are impressive. The chapters each focus on a specific theme or case study related to the history of Japanese Canadian internment, and yet all of the chapters speak to one another and are interrelated. The project as a whole was undertaken collectively by a group of researchers, and so the findings are very well integrated. The authors clearly worked collaboratively to unearth the details of this important history and to explain the details of that history in a way that is comprehensible to academics and the public alike. The knowledge the authors disseminate here is vital, and the study is a welcome addition to the corpus of work on histories of war and injustice within Canada and beyond.

Laura K. Davis, *Red Deer Polytechnic, Alberta*

