



WINTER 2007~8

BAINBRIDGE ISLAND JAPANESE AMERICAN COMMUNITY

BIJAC News

www.bijac.org

MEMORIAL UPDATE

by Clarence Moriwaki, Chairman, Memorial Committee

It was one for the memory books. On March 30th, the 65th Anniversary ceremony of the first forced removal of Japanese Americans during World War II began precisely at 11:03 a.m., marking the exact moment when the ferry arrived at the former Eagledale Ferry Landing to take 227 Bainbridge Island men, women and children away to the Manzanar concentration camp.

Several hundred people attended the moving event, including speeches from elected officials U.S. Congressman Jay Inslee, former Governors Mike Lowry and Gary Locke, Washington first gentleman Mike Gregoire and Bainbridge Island Mayor Darlene Kordonowy.

Heartfelt words of support, courage and friendship were shared by Dr. Frank Kitamoto, president of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; Rev. Brookes Andrews, son of former Seattle Baptist Church Rev. Emory Andrews; Mary Woodward, daughter of Walt and Millie Woodward, late publishers of the Bainbridge Review; Hal Champness and Earl Hansen, Bainbridge Island High School class of 1941 and classmates of Jerry Nakata, first president of the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Community; and Donna Mohr, president of the North Kitsap/Bainbridge Island Interfaith Council and partner of the memorial committee.

Along with Dr. Kitamoto, many internees also witnessed the ceremony, including his aunt

Bainbridge Island has become an iconic symbol of this sad chapter in American history, being seen everywhere from the Smithsonian Museum to the cover of the *Nidoto Nai Yoni* brochure.

National Memorial Status

At the time of this writing, the *Nidoto Nai Yoni*—"Let It Not Happen Again" memorial is just one vote and a stroke of the pen away in Washington, D.C. to becoming a unit of the National Parks Service.

The measure requested by the George W. Bush administration—the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Monument Act of 2007 sponsored by Congressman Jay Inslee (D-Bainbridge Island)—has passed unanimously in the U.S. House of Representatives and just awaits action by the Senate and President Bush's signature to officially become a satellite unit of the Minidoka National Monument.

By becoming a unit of the National Parks Service, the memorial would receive staffing at the site and would be eligible for at least



Taiko performance at the Memorial's new pavilion. Photo by John Buday.

Fumiko Hayashida and her daughter Natalie Ong, who made a trip from El Lago, Texas to attend the event. At 96 years young, Fumiko is the oldest living Bainbridge Island survivor, and the photo of her holding infant Natalie prior to departing

\$400,000 for interpretative materials and displays.

The memorial project is also eligible for a share of a \$38 million federal "Preservation of

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MEMORIAL UPDATE (from page 1)

Japanese American Confinement Sites” grant program. This fall, the National Parks Service held a series of public outreach meetings in states where the concentration camps were located. On September 27, the National Parks Service came to Bainbridge Island, and community and memorial supporters came out and voiced their strong support.

Story Wall Construction

Also by the time of this writing, we had hoped to be reporting on the completion of Phase II of the memorial project, the 272-foot long story wall on the path leading to the former Eagledale Ferry Landing.

However, to paraphrase poet Robert Burns, “The best laid plans of mice and men often go astray.”

Advertising went out in late summer for the \$400,000 project, but only one bid came in—a sign that contractors were apparently too busy to take on a new project—and the lone bidder said it would take \$1,050,000 to build.

Memorial designer architect Johnpaul Jones and Timber Framing Guild leader John Buday have been going over the story wall design with a fine tooth comb, meeting with building experts and working with the city of Bainbridge Island staff to refine the plans before we re-bid the project. They’ve also teamed up with members of our capital campaign committee seeking out contractors and companies who may be willing to donate the stone and framing work, potentially saving hundreds of thousands of dollars.

The memorial committee is urging that the city of Bainbridge Island move forward with removing the cinder-brick pump house this year, and we plan to re-advertise Phase II of the project after the New Year. Should a bid come in with our budget resources, construction of Phase II could begin next spring and be completed by mid-fall.

At least \$3 million is needed to complete the entire memorial project, including the 4,000 sq. ft. interpretive center and 150-foot departure pier, and, depending on the bids next spring, additional funds may be needed to get Phase II underway.

Donations for the project are welcome. Please mail your check made out to the Bainbridge Island Japanese American Memorial Committee to P. O. Box 10355, Bainbridge Island, WA 98110. Thanks!

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Mike, Get Well Soon!

For those of you who haven’t heard, Mike Okano was badly injured in a motorcycle/car collision on Hwy 101 in Brinnon, Washington, on September 1. He was released from hospital in late November, and is slowly recovering from the significant head injuries and fractures he received in the accident.

Many will recognize Mike as a central figure in our annual Mochi Tsuki events for many years. He was the keeper of the heavy stone *usu* (mortar) and the large mallets, and was generally the one who, to the delight and amazement of onlookers, would dart his hand in and out between the pounding mallets to turn the steaming hot rice—a hazardous undertaking at best.

It was decided unanimously at a recent BIJAC meeting that all proceeds from the coming 19th annual *Mochi Tsuki* at IslandWood on Sunday, December 30 will go to help offset his considerable medical expenses.

For day-by-day accounts of his progress, or to learn how you can help with his recovery, go to www.nakataconnection.com and click on the link to his portion of the website; password is “getwellsoon.”



Oral Histories Update

We filmed our latest round of interviews over the weekend of the BIJAC picnic in August. Thank you to those who shared stories with us, especially those who traveled from out of town. We were even able to catch a few of you at our picnic!

To date we have recorded 41 interviews covering life on Bainbridge Island, World War II, exclusion and internment, and life after the war. Sixteen of our interviews can be viewed on the Densho website, www.densho.org. With additional funding, Densho will eventually place our entire oral history collection on its website.

We will continue to film interviews as long as we have willing participants. If you have not already done so, please consider sharing your memories with us. Contact Frank Kitamoto at (206) 842-4772 if you are interested.

Coming Soon: New BIJAC Website!

BIJAC has received a grant for \$20,000 from the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI) to create an educational component of our website, www.bijac.org. This Washington Civil Liberties Public Education Program grant is intended to raise awareness of the exclusion, forced removal, and internment of people of Japanese descent during World War II.

It provides an opportunity to completely redesign our current website, which was initiated by Mac Davis (with zero budget!) back in April, 2003, to jump start us into the 21st century.

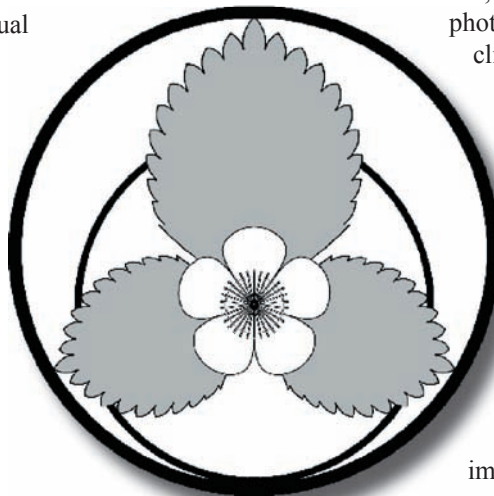
The new website, slated for completion by spring, will continue to have information on BIJAC and our projects, including the WWII

Nikkei Memorial, as well as expanded sections with photos, artifacts, and oral history film clips that share the history of our community on Bainbridge Island. Educational outreach and wider, speedier communication are two of our main goals in this on-going project.

A new logo (left) by John Buday of Cascade Crest Designs will grace the site and continue the “strawberry” theme that has become our symbol.

Many thanks to all of you who have helped to make our “virtual” impact online even more effective.

—Debra Grindeland



Edwin Takayasu Nishimura • 1917~2004

Ed, my father-in-law, my friend, grew up in Sacramento California. His father owned a grocery store and Ed lived a very American life as a kid. He fished, he built unwise boats and ventured out onto the Sacramento river, he picked fruit for pocket money as a teenager. He went to movies, and he fixed old cars. All in all his stories were what I would expect to hear from anyone of his generation. (The unwise boat thing was to be a lifelong habit.)

Ed had very American tastes. He drove a Ford pickup to work (Professor of Pathology at the UW), he preferred a good hot dog to sushi (note the previous mention of pathology which informed this opinion) and he loved football and baseball. Ed was every inch (66") an American. He was also the most down-to-earth man I have ever known; there was no pretense about him and he had a great decency. One of his most admirable traits was how seriously he took his Hippocratic Oath. Ed had at one time played the part of country doctor in a small town in South Dakota where he said you took in anyone who came to you whatever their capacity to pay.

Why am I writing about Ed here? Two reasons:

The first is that my perception of the internment experience is so very informed by my conversations with Ed. Not nearly so much for the stories of the internment itself as about the other stuff, the boating on the river the fruit picking, the old car fixing. These stories made it easy to see myself living that same life but with one difference. I'm not Japanese American, I'm Caucasian American, and that difference does not matter one whit to any of the stories of Ed's childhood and young adulthood. But where it does matter of course is the internment. That's when his country told him he was not an American like any other. He was someone who through no fault or action of his own was told he was not trusted and that he must be locked up so that others could feel safe.

It's not that I learned about the interment from Ed, or from my wife, his daughter Jan. I knew about it and had a strong opinion, the injustice and simple stupidity of the thing have always been obvious. The difference was that I could imagine being Ed. There was an identity I could slip into and imagine the knock on *my* door. I could imagine someone telling me that *my* face meant I could not be trusted, that *I* would be "relocated" for the common good. When I think about it this way I find Ed's equanimity and lack of bitterness on the subject remarkable. Me, I know I'm angry.

The second reason to write about Ed is that as I write this it will be three years tomorrow since he died. I set out to write something else but research into the timeline of events brought this into focus.

I have been involved for four years now in the Japanese American Internment Memorial project on Bainbridge Island. I represent the Timber Framers Guild in this endeavor. The first project we did was the gate that stands in front of the post office in Winslow which will later be moved to the memorial. As this project came to fruition, Ed was diagnosed with cancer. By the time we were shingling the roof I was not sure Ed would be around to see the pictures of the completed project.

He was.

Ed would never want what happened to him and the other Japanese Americans to happen to anyone.

We're working on it buddy.



Gerald K. Nakata • 1923~2007

The stories he loved to tell, and those told by those who loved him, have become a permanent part of the folklore of Bainbridge Island where he was born on March 18, 1923. Following his passing in his Pleasant Beach home on June 3, 2007 of pulmonary fibrosis, many of those stories were remembered at a memorial service held at the Rolling Bay Presbyterian Church, attended by many dozens of his friends and members of or related to the extended Nakata family. Like the man himself, the service was unique—a celebration of sorts, marked by memories of his kindness and spirit of caring, and most notably his rich sense of humor.

Jerry—he preferred the "J" spelling of his nickname—was the eighth of ten children of Jitsuzo and Shima Nakata who settled on the Island around 1906, shortly after the end of the Russian-Japanese War. His father was originally from Oshima, an island about 100 miles south of Hiroshima. He worked at the Port Blakely Mill for 20 years until it shut down. Then, his mother and father started a barbershop and laundry in Winslow. By the time of Jerry's graduation from Bainbridge Island High School in June, 1941, the family business had been transformed into a grocery store (located near the intersection of Winslow Way and the highway), and along with his brothers, Jerry was on his way toward a life-long career as a grocer.

The bombing of Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, put that career on hold for a few years, however. Many of the stories heard at the memorial service were related to the aftermath of that event, told by several of his classmates of the Class of '41. They tearfully remembered witnessing their friend's departure from the

Island for the California desert and, most fondly, Jerry's return to Bainbridge along with others of their friends and neighbors from the Japanese American community.

After his return, Jerry worked with his brother John at the Paramount Grocery in Seattle in 1947, ran Lynwood Market in 1960, worked for Town and Country Market in 1967 and he worked at Poulsbo Market Place and Poulsbo Central Market. Poor health in his later years didn't prevent him from working almost to the end. Even as late as February, he was at Central Market in Poulsbo doing some of the ordering.

While devoted to his job, Jerry's interests reached far beyond the check-out counter. He enjoyed cooking, was an avid golfer, and served some 17 years as a founder and the first president of BIJAC.

Jerry, it was remembered, cherished his friendships made at school and work and liked bantering with co-workers and customers. His granddaughter, Christie, said at the service, "Grampa had that kind of impact on people. There was just something about him that made people gravitate towards him, and that made people want to be friends with him. I really admire this ability in him. That was a pretty special thing. He was my hero."



—John Buday

Word of Mouth
from
Frank Kitamoto



One of the highlights of the year was having our luncheon at Sawan Thai Cuisine to honor the Bainbridge Island Nisei generation. About a hundred people attended. The documentary “Behind Barbed Wire” by Kathryn Crawford was shown. Her father, Ken Crawford, Superintendent of Bainbridge Schools, produced the film. Ken is retiring at the end of this school year and one of our own Community members, Assistant Superintendent Faith Chapel, niece of Frank Emi, will be assuming the position.

In May the Seattle Japanese Baptist Church brought our traveling photo exhibit to Washington, D.C. to display at their National Convention. In April it was at the Cherry Blossom Festival at Seattle Center and in September at the Bellevue Matsuri. In June, Lilly Kitamoto Kodama, Fumiko Hayashida, Mary Woodward Pratt, Jerry Elfendahl and I attended the Minidoka Pilgrimage. Fumiko and I became part of a Idaho PBS documentary on Minidoka. In July, Floyd Mori, Executive Director of the JACL from Washington D.C. spent an afternoon with us.

Our biannual Reunion Picnic was held at Battle Point Park in early August. We had special guests attend: Jim Azumano, President of Friends of Minidoka and his wife Lois from Salem, Oregon; Friends of Minidoka Board Members Jerry Arai from Seattle and Steve Thorson from Idaho. I continued to give a slide presentation to schools and civic groups around the state on the Bainbridge Island Experience, growing up with the face of the enemy, why people act like they do in times of fear and the relevance to today. Anyone interested in this presentation can contact me at fkitamoto@fkitamoto.clearwire.net or call (206) 842-4774.

The Minidoka Pilgrimage for 2008 will be held June 20~22 in Twin Falls, Idaho, preceded by a Civil Liberties Symposium on June 19~20 at the College of Southern Idaho, also in Twin Falls. The Symposium’s theme for ’08 is the media and the incarceration of Americans of Japanese descent. College credits can be obtained through the College of Southern Idaho.

The Pilgrimage starts with the bus leaving Bellevue Community College at 6:00 a.m. on Friday the 20th and returning at midnight on Sunday the 22nd. Parking passes are given to participants for the weekend. During the trip there will be videos to watch, stories and games to share and an ample bento lunch, along with frequent stops for relief. The bus will arrive in Twin Falls for an outdoor Dutch Oven dinner where you will join other participants who have either flown or driven in.

On Saturday morning buses leave the motel for the Minidoka Concentration Camp site and/or the Idaho Farm Museum where you can tour an actual barrack. We return to Twin Falls for a Chinese buffet lunch followed by sharing of stories and discussions in the afternoon. In the evening the buses transport us to the Prescott Ranch for a barbecue dinner with Idahoans and dignitaries.

On Sunday morning closing ceremonies are held at the Minidoka Rock Garden. We then return on the buses to Twin Falls for our closing luncheon before leaving to return home.

I had the honor of delivering the closing address last year (you can

read it on our website at www.bijac.org or request a hard copy from me, if you like) and despite this, I feel that the last Pilgrimage was one of the best. It was especially exciting to see families with several generations attending together. Let’s all go as a group to share in this special experience.

The tuition fee for the Symposium has not yet been determined. Last year the fee for non-college-credit attendees was \$50. The first two Symposia were terrific and had internationally known speakers. The registration for it is separate from the Pilgrimage. You can fly into Boise and rent a car. It’s about a two-hour drive to Twin Falls.

Tentative costs for the Pilgrimage:

For bus riders: \$225 adults, \$190 children 5-12 and seniors 75 and older.

For non bus riders: \$90 adults, \$75 for children 5-12 and seniors 75 and older.

Breakfasts and motel costs are not included in the fee.

For more information and registration, contact May Namba (206) 784-3824 or go online to minidokapilgrimage.org.

We’re Looking for a Few Old ‘Things’ ...

BIJAC has several exciting projects on the horizon: a redesigned and expanded website, a book by Mary Woodward, and the WWII Nikkei Memorial. To bring these projects to life and to illustrate the stories of our community, we need to add a personal touch. We are looking for a few “things”—photos, home films, scrapbooks, correspondence, documents, journals/diaries, official records, artwork, luggage, tea sets, toys, clothing—basically anything your family has saved from its time on Bainbridge Island.



Shig Moritani recently donated a petition signed by 15 young men asking that the chief cook for Block 44 be removed. The Nagatani family has some wooden signs carved in camp and an old army duffel bag. These are the items that illustrate the day-to-day lives of people in our community.

We would like to borrow any items you or your family have in connection with the history of Japanese Americans on Bainbridge Island. These items will be digitally photographed and/or scanned so they can be stored electronically. If you would like to donate any items to BIJAC, we can store them until they will be permanently archived at the Bainbridge Island Historical Society or future Bainbridge Island WWII Nikkei Memorial Interpretive Center.

... and Some ‘Long Lost’ Folks

In addition, we are trying to find at least one contact for each family or individual from the Japanese community who lived on Bainbridge Island during World War II. We are still missing contacts for: Miki Arota, the Furukawa family, Reverend Hirakawa, Hiromi “Joe” Kuji, Henry Ogawa, the Oyama family, and the Taniguchi family. If you have any leads, or “things” you can contribute, please contact:

Debra Grindeland (206) 780-0689 debrakei@msn.com

or

Hisa Matsudaira (206) 842-1195 himatsudaira@msn.com

LEAVING OUR ISLAND

By Frank “Kazu” Kitamoto

— Chapter Three—

Moving from Manzanar in February, 1943, the group of internees from Bainbridge Island found themselves in the wilds of Utah at the concentration camp known as Minidoka. Frank Kitamoto was just a few months short of his fourth birthday.

Arriving in Minidoka in February, 1943, all of us from Bainbridge were assigned to block 44, the last block. Our family settled into Unit E in building No. 8. As I tended to leave my clothes lying wherever I took them off, my mother embroidered “44-8-E” into them.

It is so cold that you can’t touch the door knob with your bare hand; your skin will peel off when you try to let go. Lefty Katayama (“Mits”), another Bainbridge High grad, pulls me around on a sled on the frozen pond. He’ll eventually be with the counter intelligence service with the U.S. Army.

When spring comes it becomes so muddy that people tie boards to the bottom of their shoes to get around. Help! Help! I’m sinking in the mud. The more I struggle, the deeper and deeper I get. A man pulls me out—*thuruup*—and I’m out, but my boots are still stuck in the mud.

Dad’s upset. Everyone over 17 has to fill out and sign a loyalty oath. Question #27: “Are you willing to serve in the armed services of the U.S. on combat duty whenever ordered?” Question #28: “Will you swear unqualified allegiance to the United States of America and faithfully defend the U.S. from any or all attacks by foreign or domestic forces, and forswear any form of allegiance or obedience to the Japanese emperor or any other foreign government, power or organization?”

Dad’s refusing to write “Yes, Yes.” He’s still mad that he was separated from his family by the F.B.I. for no apparent reason. The Issei are not allowed to become naturalized citizens of the U.S., by law. They would become people without a country. Is this a trick question? How can you forswear allegiance to the emperor if you never had it in the first place? Give me and our people back our constitutional rights. Treat us like Americans and I will be glad to bear arms. It’s being said that if you didn’t say “Yes, Yes,” you’d be shipped to Japan.

Mom’s pleading with Dad, “Please write ‘Yes.’ What would you do in Japan? You can speak Japanese but you can’t read or write Japanese. I’d rather hang myself than go to Japan!” Dad gets even more upset. He says, “Get a rope! Go ahead!”

Rev. Emory Andrews, the minister of the Seattle Japanese Baptist Church who moved to Twin Falls to look after his flock, finally convinces Dad to write “Yes, Yes.” And that’s why I speak English today.

Mom saves my Minidoka kindergarten report card. I get two U’s—unsatisfactory. One is in citizenship; the other in following directions. Under “Comments” the teacher has written that though I am an aggressive child, I show “leadership qualities.” I must have been a holy terror, taking toys away from other kids. I think she added the “leadership qualities” part to make my mother feel better.

Sometime after this, Dad leaves for Chicago to attend watch-repair school. He worked for Friedlander’s Jewelry before the war and has a letter of recommendation from Jack Friedlander. His dream is to own his own jewelry store. If you have a sponsor, you can leave concentration camp to work or go to school. You still aren’t trusted to go home to the West Coast, though. The army ammunitions depot in Utah finds that Americans of Japanese descent are hard, conscientious workers. They start recruiting them out of the Topaz concentration camp. With men and women leaving, to work or go to school, or to volunteer or being drafted into the Army, the only people left in camp now are mothers, old people and the very young. Role models are gone.

Mo Nakata serves with the 42nd “Go for Broke” regimental combat team in Italy. Years later I learn that he received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart. Art Koura was wounded helping save the “Lost Texas Battalion”; he survived thanks to a new medical discovery: penicillin.

The Terashita brothers and the Okazaki brothers are serving in Italy and France. The Omoto brothers—Sets, Sada and Tak—are on furlough. They have to figure out how to get into the concentration camp to visit their parents. The Sakumas have seven sons serving in the military. Hanami Nishi is in the nursing corp; her brother is in the army. Peter and Paul Ohtaki, Paul Sakai, Tats Moritani—all in the military intelligence service. In the

end, some 60 men and two women of the 276 people of Japanese descent on Bainbridge Island served with the U.S. armed services.

As the summer of 1945 begins, we learn we are leaving Minidoka. It’s been 5-1/2 years since leaving our island. The war isn’t over, but the government anticipates losing a Supreme Court case. They say, “Here’s \$25. Go find your own way home.”

By July, our family is the second to return to Bainbridge Island, after the Takemotos. Some families stay in concentration camp until October, until they are “kicked out” because they have no place to go. Dad came back earlier to “check out the climate.” I don’t think he meant the weather. Some people he used to commute with on the ferry greet him warmly; others turn away and refuse to acknowledge him. Genevieve Williams, a neighbor from Fletcher Bay, tags along with him. Dad realizes it’s to be sure he’s O.K.

...

The concluding chapter of Frank’s memoir will be published in a future issue of BIJAC News, and on our website at www.bijac.org.

*Illustration: “Nightwatch 2006” by Roger Shimomura
Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 45 inches. Original at the Greg Kucera
Gallery, Seattle, WA www.gregkucera.com
Courtesy of the artist • www.rshim.com*

🌸 FAMILY HISTORIES 🌸

TAKETO OMOTO

My grandfather, born in 1917, remembers life on Bainbridge Island was difficult, especially after his father passed away at the height of the Great Depression in 1931. “He was a farmer and he also worked among the strawberries fields where Wing Point Golf Course is now. He raised peas and was a sharecropper. We were the only Japanese there [and] they treated us real good.”

His mother didn’t believe in going on welfare, even after the Furio Bank failed. “A lot of our family and friends had money in this bank, and a lot of people lost their money. I knew people on relief. I don’t remember the vagrants or Okies because we lived on the Island and they didn’t come out that way.”

What little money they made helped toward the household and their own education. “We had little spending money, but you know a nickel would buy candy. In those days a nickel or dime went pretty far. We were just happy with just homemade tools and toys. We had horse and wagon and we had it until [my] junior or sophomore year when we finally got a small truck. [But] even though gasoline was 12 or 15 cents a gallon it was hard to come by. I know my mother kept me well and clean even though the clothes were old. She still kept us well dressed so we didn’t suffer from rags or anything like that.

Things got even rougher after his father passed away. “I lost my sister the same year, within a month or two of each other. My mother used to do housework among the people there. She had a regular round that she made doing housework for these people.” He and the rest of the family helped out, doing yard work and such. “All my brothers had all kinds little jobs, like splitting wood. In those days people had wooden stoves and they would haul wood in big pieces and we would split it into little pieces so they could fit it into the wood stoves. I never lost my finger but my older brother chopped some off. It was things like that made me realize that in life if you work hard you will be able to get the things you want. I know we had to work. Everybody. Picking strawberries and working for the summer people. Like I said, it was hard work, but it was worth it to realize money is hard to come by and [that] made me more thrifty in saving.”

Grandfather was in his early 20s when the war started. He was drafted into the Army in June, 1941, and was serving at the Barnes General Hospital in Vancouver. “After Pearl Harbor I was scared because sometimes white soldiers would get drunk and say things like, ‘Let’s start killing these Japs right now.’ There were four of us Japanese Americans at the hospital and the 1st sergeant made sure we weren’t physically harmed. In January of 1942, we were sent to Fort Snelling, which was an induction center in Minneapolis, for our own safety. For many people in Minnesota this was the first time they had seen Japanese and many thought we were prisoners of war.

“I read about the evacuation of the Japanese on the West Coast and didn’t know what had happened to my mother and two younger brothers because I was in the Army in Minneapolis. I went to the Red Cross and they finally located them in the Manzanar internment camp in California, which is where all the Bainbridge Island Japanese Americans were first sent.” Eventually, his two younger brothers left the camp to join the Army, leaving his mother there by herself.



“Once I was on a troop train in the Midwest going East and when it was time to eat, there were four of us and across from me were two other soldiers. I knew by their ribbons on their uniform that they were survivors of the Bataan Death March. One guy in our group was a new recruit and kept asking them questions about their experiences. Since these two soldiers knew I was Japanese they didn’t say much, so I hurriedly ate my dinner and left.” For the most part, however, he remembers being treated well. “I recall that Jewish soldiers were treated bad and picked on.”

Grandfather remained at Camp Crowder until November, 1945, and was working in surgery the day Hiroshima was bombed. “There was a sigh of relief that the war was going to end soon. However, the civilians around there were kind of sad knowing their work was going to end. We couldn’t imagine one bomb doing so much damage. We got a lot of our information from the radio and newspaper. People were generally in favor of the use of the bomb because it would mean the end of the war.” This was a good thing in more ways than one. “Economically, for us it was better because several doors opened for Japanese. For example, before the war, Boeing wouldn’t hire Japanese. The war record of the Japanese Americans who served in the military also helped. People were much more receptive to hiring Japanese Americans.”

Returning to Bainbridge, Grandfather found it a little difficult to adjust to civilian life. “When I returned home I noticed things had changed... It seems like the Army had broadened my experiences and opened my eyes to life beyond Bainbridge Island. Having faced discrimination, I had learned to take care of myself better. Initially I worked around home, fixing things around the house. Eventually I went back to work at Kawachi’s greenhouse in Renton, Washington.

—From interviews with Taketo by his granddaughter, Tricia.

THE KOURA FAMILY

Otohiko Kanazawa was born in 1893 in Fukuoka-ken, the last of seven siblings. He attended Nakatsu-mura Primary and Yukuhashi Middle Schools, and spent three months at Fukuoka-shi Agricultural School before deciding to immigrate to the United States. Seeing no future at home, he asked older brother Takahei if he could join him in Seattle. Takahei, himself an 1894 immigrant because No.1 son would inherit the Kanazawa farm, understood and readily agreed. Otohiko borrowed boat fare and with some 35~40 other emigrants, shipped out of Kobe. They stopped at Victoria, Canada, to disembark a few emigrants, and on December 24, 1907, arrived at Tacoma where they boarded a ferry to Seattle. Otohiko was left to fend for himself at the ferry terminal and somehow found his way to a First Avenue jewelry store where a Japanese employee took him to the Japanese-run inn Daihokkan, where Takahei picked him up.

The 15-year-old boy worked at various odd jobs before moving to Vancouver, Canada, in 1914 to join older sister Moyo (immigrated originally to Honolulu in 1901) and her husband Nobuzo Koura (immigrated to Canada in 1899 from Hiroshima-ken). It was there that he met Nobuzo’s daughter Hatsuko, who arrived in 1915, and married her after a short courtship. Otohiko changed his last name to Koura,

as the family had no sons to carry on the name while he had enough brothers to perpetuate the Kanazawa clan. So Nobuzo Koura became his father-in-law as well as brother-in-law. The new Koura couple worked in Ketchikan, Vancouver, and Vader, Washington before returning to Seattle where they were joined by Moyo, Nobuzo and Nobuzo's second daughter Tomiko, who had arrived in 1917.



Otohiko and Hatsuko operated the Princetone Café 9 on Jackson Street with Nobuzo from 1918 to 1920. The first two sons were born in Seattle in 1918 and 1920. Also in 1920 they had to quit the restaurant business and join Nobuzo and Moyo on their strawberry farm in Winslow. Their first daughter was born in 1922 in Seattle, and another daughter and two more sons were born in Winslow in 1924, 1926 and 1928.

The Koura family farm expanded and they moved from north of High School Road to the south, where the children were able to walk to Lincoln Elementary and Bainbridge High Schools. In 1937 the Kouras contracted to buy 80 acres of land and a new house in the Manzanita area, to which they moved in 1938.

The Koura berry farm prospered until Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and everything changed. Being president of the local Japanese association, in January 1942 Otohiko was arrested by the FBI and jailed in Seattle with fellow islanders Amatatsu, Furuta, Yamashita, Kino, Kitamoto, Kojima, Hayashida, Nishimori and Terashita. Otohiko was jailed at the Immigration Office in Seattle until February 19, and then transferred to Fort Abraham Lincoln near Bismarck, North Dakota. He was interned with about 600 other Japanese and 500 German nationals—seamen stranded in U.S. ports at the start of war. Amatatsu, Furuta, Yamashita and Kino were sent to Lordsburg, New Mexico, and the others to an internment camp in Arkansas.

Shortly thereafter, the rest of the Koura family and all other Japanese on Bainbridge Island were evacuated on March 31, 1942, to Manzanar. When Nobuzo died of pneumonia on May 18, Otohiko was denied permission to attend the funeral because the deceased was not his real father. He was finally paroled in August, 1942, and ordered to report to Manzanar. In October he had to decline to be repatriated to Japan—something they all had to do. In addition, in February 1943, he had to sign a “Declaration of Declination” that, having been informed he was under consideration for exchange to Japan “by reason of the request of the Japanese Government,” he declared his desire to remain in the U.S. and not be repatriated. The Koura family moved to Minidoka with most of the Islanders in March 1943. Finally, in anticipation of being released from camp and returning to the Seattle area, Otohiko, whose family there had been reduced from nine to four (three sons were in the Army or awaiting call-up in Chicago, a daughter was in Minneapolis and Nobuzo had died), applied for movement of government-stored household goods to Seattle, where first daughter and the Furuta family had purchased a house. Otohiko was given a short-term pass to visit Bainbridge Island in July 1945. On the return trip, he stopped by Vancouver, Washington to visit his son who was recovering in an Army hospital from wounds suffered in France with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. Finally, on

September 7, 1945, Otohiko and several others departed for Seattle.

The Koura family completed the purchase of their Manzanita property, and was able to move back in early 1946. They worked hard, buying adjacent forested land and clearing 20 acres at a time, eventually owning 190 acres—the largest berry farm on the island. In 1955 they donated right-of-way for a county road connection to the State Highway; it was named Koura Road in honor of the area's pioneering family. The Kouras raised berries on the farm until 1964 and then sold much of the land to subdivision and golf course developers. Before this, Moyo, Otohiko and Hatsuko retired and moved to Seattle. Grandma Moyo died in 1968 at age 87. Hatsuko and Otohiko were happy in retirement, returning to help on the farm during harvest season, traveling to Japan, Hawaii and elsewhere, and visiting with friends. He died of cancer in 1971 at age 77. She, still in good health, continued living by herself for some 20 years near widowed sister Tomiko Furukawa, and even survived a bout with tetanus (at the time, reportedly the oldest woman to do so). Because of diabetes, however, Hatsuko had to move into Keiro where she was well taken care of until succumbing to heart failure in 1996 at age 96.

—Tony Koura

THE NISHIMORI FAMILY

Bainbridge Island was the home to Kirohachi and Tsue Nishimori since 1915. Kirohachi, born on April 20, 1879 in Arao, Kumamoto Japan, was the fifth child of Jinzaburo and Taka Yamashiro Nishimori. He immigrated to the U.S. in 1904, arriving in Tacoma, Washington on October 10. Tsue was born April 22, 1889 in Kumamoto, Japan, the youngest of three daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Kakuhei Hamasaki.

On February 5, 1915 Kirohachi married Tsue upon her immigration into Tacoma, Washington and moved to Crystal Springs on Bainbridge Island where Kirohachi found employment in the lumber mills and later started his strawberry farm at Point White. In 1929 they purchased a home and five acres of land in Winslow to grow strawberries, raspberries, peas, tomatoes and rhubarb. To enlarge his business they cleared land and leased additional farmland in Port Blakely and Winslow. Kirohachi passed away in February of 1973, two months short of age 94.

When the Naturalization Act of 1790 was revoked in the 1950s, the foreign-born Issei were allowed to become citizens and on April 11, 1955 just before her 66th birthday, Tsue became an American citizen. She passed away on November 24, 1978 at age 89.

Incarceration: Kirohachi was incarcerated in February, 1942 at Missoula, Montana, released and joined his family on June 27, 1942 at Manzanar, California. The rest of the family was forcibly removed from Bainbridge Island on March 30, 1942 and incarcerated in the desert at Manzanar.

Children: All six children of Kirohachi and
(continued on page 8)



NISHIMORI FAMILY (from page 7)

Tsue were born on Bainbridge Island and worked on the family farm until evacuation. The extended family now includes twenty grandchildren and many great grandchildren.

Eldest son: Tairoku Nishimori was born on February 18, 1917 and graduated in 1936 from Bainbridge High School where he played varsity football and basketball. He married Chizuko Matsuno of Glendale, California on September 18, 1943 after they left Manzanar for Chicago, Illinois. They returned to Bainbridge in 1946. After his retirement as a television technician, he remained active growing and selling noble trees as a hobby and business. He passed away at Virginia Mason Hospital on May 10, 2002 from complications of pneumonia after a severe fall at his home.

Daughters:

Masako was born on October 3, 1919 and graduated from Bainbridge High School in 1938. She relocated from the incarceration camp to Chicago, Illinois before returning to Bainbridge Island. In 1954 she was married to Kimitomo Muromoto of Bellevue, Washington.

Kiyoko was born on January 9, 1921 and graduated from Bainbridge High School in 1939. She left Manzanar for Chicago in 1943 and in 1945 married Tsutomu Kumagai.

Sueako was born on September 28, 1924 and graduated from Bainbridge High School in 1942. She left Manzanar for Chicago in 1943 and married Robert Yonemitsu in 1946.

Matsue was born on June 27, 1927. In September 1944 she left Manzanar for Evanston, Illinois, where she graduated from Evanston Township High School in 1945 and returned to Bainbridge in 1948. She married Samuel Watanabe in 1952.

Shimako was born on April 6, 1932. She graduated from

Bainbridge High School in 1950. She left Manzanar for Chicago in 1945 and returned to Bainbridge Island in 1946. She married Tom Kitano in 1957.

Tairoku and all of the daughters' husbands are veterans who served honorably in the U.S. military during World War II and the Korean War.

—*Matsue (Nishimori) Watanabe*

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

• **COME JOIN US** at our 19th annual *Mochi Tsuki* at IslandWood, 4450 Blakely N.E. on Sunday, December 30, from 11:00 to 3:00. Pound or roll mochi for good fortune, health, and prosperity as we celebrate the coming of the New Year. Mochi purchased by donation. Award winning photo exhibit "*Kodomo No Tame Ni* (For the Sake of the Children)"; Bainbridge Island WW11 Nikkei Memorial, "*Nidoto Nai Yoni* (Let It Not Happen Again)" graphics and models; Nikkei videos; Taiko drummers. Overflow parking at Blakely School.

• **MONTHLY COMMUNITY MEETINGS** are held on the first Wednesday of each month, Town and Country meeting room, west of T&C parking lot and across from (north of) the Post Office, second floor, 6:00 p.m. All are welcome.

• **NIDOTO NAI YONI MEMORIAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS** are held on the third Thursday of each month, Dr. Kitamoto's office, Grow Ave. and High School Road, 6:30.

If you are interested in participating or helping in these activities, please call Dr. Kitamoto (206) 842-4772 or visit our website www.bijac.org for further information.

If you wish to make changes in the address shown below, or to be removed from our mailing list, please let us know.

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We urge you all to attend our monthly meeting on the first Wednesday of the month. Call or visit our website for time and location. There are no dues, the only obligation being an interest in Japanese American history and heritage and a willingness to lend your support and interest to our ongoing projects.