

Family, Community and Livelihood

1. Torazo Iwasaki owned 598 acres on Salt Spring Island, with farmland, oceanfront, and a sawmill that supplied lumber, including boxes for herring salteries. In 1942, their property was seized and sold at a fraction of its value. After the war, the family fought for compensation; a later legal challenge was unsuccessful.

2. Shimoji, a bachelor, lived with the Okano family in Duck Bay around 1909 and later on Goodrich's property near Vesuvius around 1912.

3. The Ito family first leased land near Fernwood for a poultry farm, later purchasing five acres on Sharp Road where they raised chickens and berries. After the war, the family moved to Montreal where son Jerry established a photography studio.

4. Hikotaro Numajiri was employed by Harry Bullock on his farm, along with other Japanese men and their families from the early 1900s, including Masukichi Mikado, Junichi Izumi and his two sons, and Chiyoza Ando. A skilled carpenter, Numajiri was often called upon for building projects in the community.

5. Tsunetaro Murakami and his son Tameo Peter worked as fishermen. In the off season, Tameo also taught Japanese. Their 27-acre property along Lower Ganges Road covered what is now Wildwood Crescent.

6. Morihei Murakami and family owned 21 acres at the southwest corner of Sharp and Lower Ganges Roads where they built extensive tomato greenhouses. Morihei was a skilled carpenter and boatbuilder, well known among Japanese Canadian fishermen.

7. The Ohara family lived on the Okano property near Booth Canal. Originally from Wakayama, they first settled on North Galiano Island where Sajiro Ohara worked as a cod fisherman. Later, the family moved to Salt Spring for better schooling.

8. The Okanos immigrated to Canada in the late 1800s. Typical of many Japanese pioneers, they shifted from logging to fishing, and then, in 1909, to farming, establishing a large acreage on Sharp Road with greenhouses, poultry, and market gardens. At 19, their daughter Kimiko delivered eggs in a Model T truck, the island's first female driver.

9. Katsuyori Murakami married Kimiko in 1926, purchasing 17 acres across Sharp Road in 1932. Their productive farm supplied poultry and berries to local and Victoria markets, including the Empress Hotel. They built a dormitory for seasonal workers, and provided childcare for working mothers.

10. The Hirano family leased land from the Okanos at the end of Sharp Road. Mrs. Hirano was the first person who made and sold tofu on the island.

11. The Inouye family owned a 10-acre property near the junction of Rainbow and Atkins Roads.

12. Masukichi Mikado arrived in Canada from Hiroshima in 1905 via Hawaii, settling on Salt Spring Island. In 1936, he and his wife Tsutayo purchased land on Norton Road, where they built a home, ran a laundry, and raised seven children. Their daughter Shigeko Martha married Philip Murakami, Morihei's son.

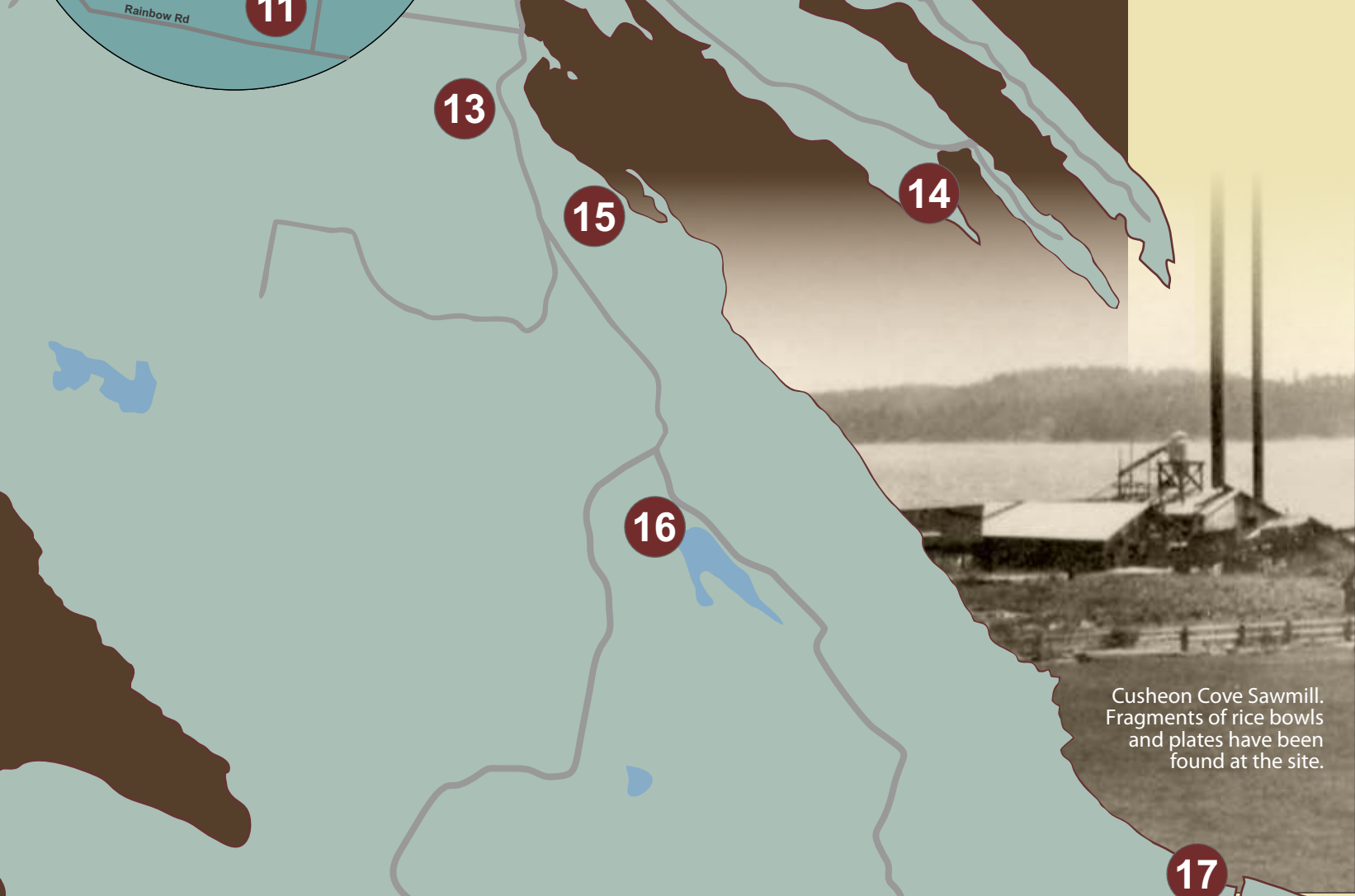
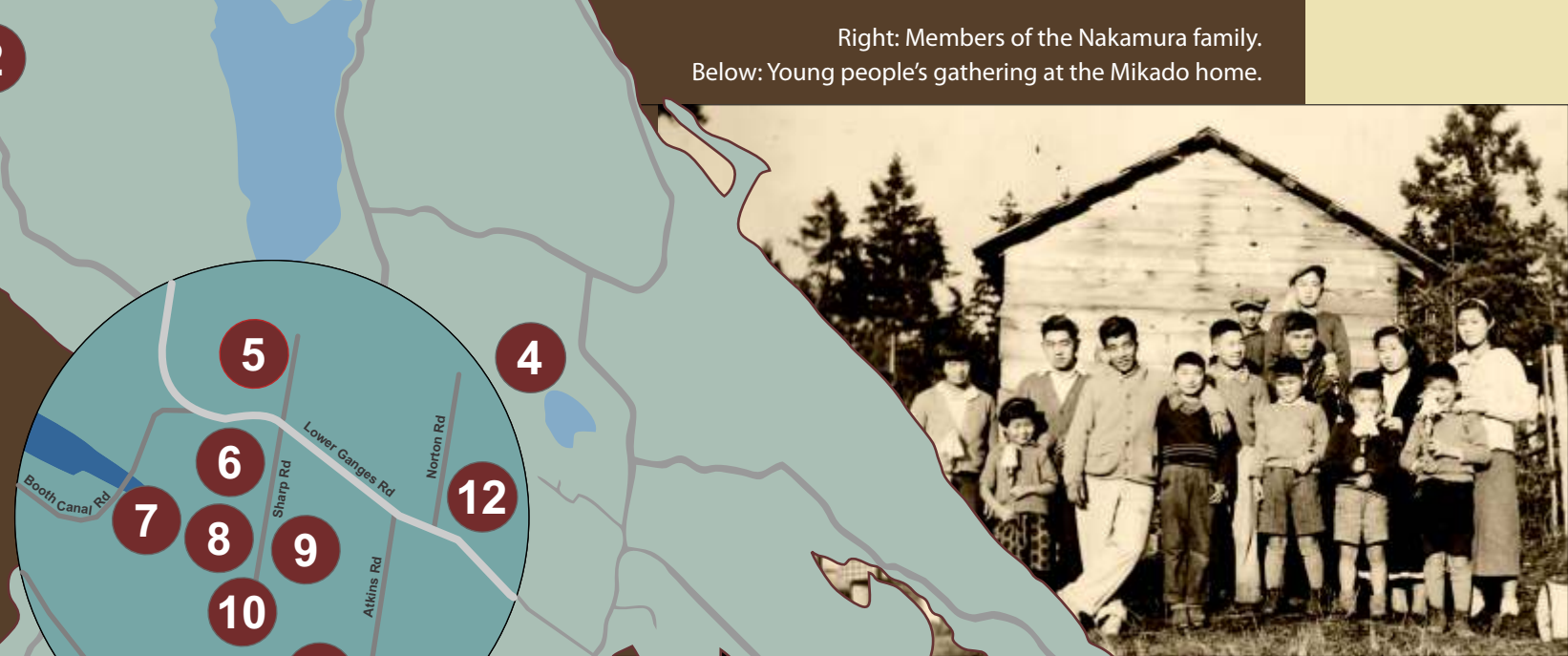


Torazo and Fuku Iwasaki at age 87, when they challenged the highest court in 1957. Photo: The Vancouver Sun



Above: Masukichi and Tsutayo Mikado with their infant child. Right: The home they built, still lovely after nearly a hundred years.

1929 Central, aka Vesuvius, School photo. Front Row, L-R: Roy Selby, Jimmy Wood, Ichiro Numajiri, Kazumi Jerry Ito, Fred Whims, James Jimmy Okano, Eichi Ken Ito, Ken Goodrich. Middle Row, L-R: Shizuko Ito, Juanita Frances Smith, Muriel Stevens, Hideko Iwasaki, Babe Smith, Mitsuko Iwasaki, Leola Tizzie Whims, Melita Smith, Ruth Goodrich, Kanako, Ruby Numajiri. Back Row, L-R: Masatoshi Victor Okano, Horace Stevens, Hatsue Helen Ito, Gladys Wood, Evelyn Wood, Sachi Numajiri, Masao Ito, Umeo Luke Murakami, Alice Forward (teacher). Jerry Ito was proud to be holding the slate.



Six of the Tasaka children with their mother Yorie (at the back), c.1925.



13. Isaburo Tasaka, originally from Hiroshima, settled with his family in Ganges between 1905 and 1907 on land owned by William McAfee. He supported his large family through fishing, carpentry, and labour, and built charcoal kilns supplying local industries. A skilled stonemason, he later built a dry-stone retaining wall for Mouat's, a section of which still survives beneath the boardwalk.

14. Yetsujiro Takebe, a widower, lived near Welbury Bay from about 1900. Kimiko Murakami recalled that he worked for forty years for Frank Scott, one of the Scott brothers who owned Fruitvale orchard.



15. The Nakamuras settled on Bittancourt Road in 1924, farming strawberries and vegetables while operating Snow White Laundry, serving local hotels using one of the island's first Japanese-owned delivery vans. After Shinkichi's death in 1938, the family moved to Victoria. During wartime uprooting, Taki carried koji and continued making miso in the camps, sustaining family traditions.

16. Magoe Ishizumi lived near Cusheen Lake on Beddis Road from about 1900. The bachelor held 20 acres of rough land with a log dwelling. Though much of his documentation was lost, records show he was later uprooted to Sandon, BC. He is buried at Central Cemetery on Salt Spring Island.

17. Labourers from Japan and China worked at the Bulman and Allison Lumber Company Ltd. sawmill at Cusheen Cove between 1906 and the 1920s, living in separate bunkhouses at the mill.

18. Three Japanese labourers cleared land and lived on the McLennan farm in 1892.

19. Omata (or Omadan) and his wife worked on Ruckle Farm in the 1910s (see first panel for photo). The cabin they lived in was still standing as of 2026.

20. Matsukubo and other Japanese labourers worked for J.H. Monk at Beaver Point. Schoolteacher Kyrle Symons photographed and wrote in his journal about them between 1908 and 1910, while living in a Kanaka cabin.



They used to come to me at night, to learn to read from an infant's reader; in return they used to cut and stack a fine lot of firewood for us every Sunday. Kyrle Symons photo and journal entry

21. Japanese loggers cut pilings near Musgrave Landing, about sixty living there in a settlement, recalled Walms Newman of Musgrave in 1929.

The day after the attack on Pearl Harbor, nobody in my class would talk to me.

Mary Ohara

Below: The Princess Mary at Ganges Harbour. Japanese Canadians from Salt Spring and Mayne Islands were taken to this ferry for transport to the detention centre at Hastings Park in Vancouver. Photo: Mikado Family Collection



In the spring of 1942

Japanese Canadian communities on the BC coast disappeared virtually overnight. When the war ended, a second uprooting forced all persons of Japanese ancestry to choose between moving east of the Rockies or to war-torn Japan, even though most were born in Canada or naturalized Canadians. War time restrictions prevented them from returning to their coastal communities until 1949—four years after the end of the war.

I was there on the wharf on the day most of them left.

Shipped off on the Princess Mary to the stables at the PNE grounds. Bob Rush

