



## City of Richmond

## Report to Committee

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**To:** Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee  
**From:** Harold Steves, Chair, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services  
**Re:** **Re-Naming of Don and Lion Islands to Oikawa and Sato Islands**  
**Date:** September 22, 2005  
**File:**

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### Staff Recommendation

That the City of Richmond take appropriate steps and work with the GVRD to re-name Don and Lion Islands to their local historical names, Oikawa and Sato Islands.

Harold Steves  
Councillor  
(4134)

Att. 5

## **Staff Report**

### **Origin**

In the late 1890's Steveston fisherman Soemon Sato wrote to Jinzaburo Oikawa in Japan, telling of the rich salmon harvest of the Fraser River. Salmon was canned and shipped to Europe but the eggs, or suzuko, a much prized delicacy to the Japanese, was discarded. On August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1898 Oikawa left for Canada to see the rich salmon harvests and prized suzuko for himself. He established a colony at Sudbury, then moved it to Don Island and Lion Islands where the Ewan Cannery was located. They called the Islands Oikawa and Sato.

In 1906, Oikawa chartered the 196 ton three-masted sailing ship Suian Maru to bring 82 more Japanese settlers to add to the colony at Oikawa and Sato Islands. They arrived off the Coast of Vancouver Island, via the Bearing Sea and Alaska on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1906. They disembarked near Victoria on foot because they did not have proper exit permits from Japan. Strangely dressed they were soon apprehended. However, there were many jobs available on the railroads and in the fishery and with the assistance of the Japanese Consul they were soon released to settle in Canada.

The Japanese communities on Oikawa and Sato Islands flourished until the Japanese were evacuated in World War Two.

### **Analysis**

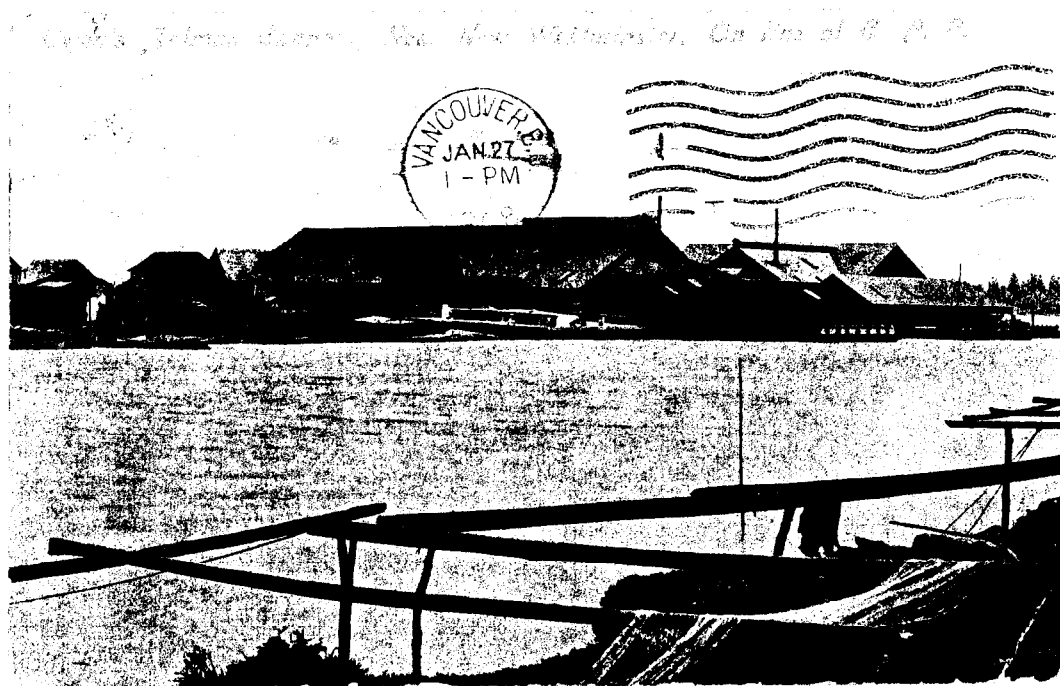
There appears to be no historical significance to the names Don and Lion Islands. Therefore, it is appropriate, in commemorating the centennial year of the arrival of the settlers on the Suian Maru in 2006, that the islands should once again be given the names they were known by for half a century, Oikawa and Sato Islands.

### **Conclusion**

It is recommended that the City of Richmond take appropriate steps and work with the GVRD to re-name Don and Lion Islands to their local historical names, Oikawa and Sato Islands. This re-naming would coincide with the commemoration of the centennial year of the arrival of the settlers on the Suian Maru in 2006.

Harold Steves  
Councillor  
(4134)

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**Ewan's Salmon Cannery, Near New Westminster. On line of C.P.R.**

from: Ito, Roy (1994) Stories of My People. A  
Japanese Canadian Journal. S-20 and Nisei  
Veterans Association, Hamilton, ON. 499 p.

### 5. The 1906 Voyage of the SUIAN MARU

*Jinzaburo Oikawa, Kimpei Goto*

JINZABURO OIKAWA'S DREAM was to establish a Japanese colony on the Queen Charlotte Islands and harvest the bountiful north Pacific sea. He was a successful silk merchant in Miyagi-ken, Yonekawa-mura, in Tohoku area, north of Tokyo. His silk enterprise started in 1886 employed 150 workers. He was a man of influence in rapidly changing Japan following the Restoration of the Emperor in 1868.

The story begins when Oikawa visited the home of Yoshimatsu Goto. After introducing the visitor to his seven-year-old son, Kimpei, Goto produced an interesting letter he had received from Soemon Sato in far-off Canada. Sato was a salmon fisherman on the Fraser River. He lived in Steveston, a fishing community on Lulu Island at the mouth of the river with hundreds of Japanese. In the letter he described the river as ten times the size of Kitakami River in Miyagi-ken. In the fall, salmon by the thousands came up the river driven by their instincts to reproduce. By this time the fish were turning red and the water became scarlet as they headed up the river to spawn. The fish were caught, canned and sent to England but the eggs of the salmon were discarded. In Japan, the eggs were called *suzuko*, a much prized delicacy, especially during the festival of the New Year, and commanded a high price. Oikawa could hardly believe his ears. It was such a waste. The more he thought about Sato's letter the more he was taken with the idea of going to Canada. If the letter was correct, there was wealth to be made. In Japan, people lived at sustenance level producing barely enough from a small plot of land to feed their families. In Canada they could earn money to alleviate the dreary lives of their parents and relatives.

He wasted no time. On August 3, the 29th year of the Meiji, 1898, 42-year-old Oikawa embarked for Canada and saw for himself the rich harvest of fish and the discarded *suzuko*. He established a colony in nearby Sunbury away from rowdy Steveston with its drinking, gambling and prostitution. The colony was later moved to two small islands Don and Lion, collectively called Lion Island by the Japanese, near Annacis Island. The Japanese named them Sato' Island and Oikawa Island. Three times Oikawa returned to Yonekawa-mura to recruit workers for his

<sup>1</sup>Soemon Sato died January 14, 1956, age 80, in Hamilton.

Jinzaburo Oikawa. His birthplace, Towa-cho, formerly Yonekawa-mura, in Miyagi-ken, is prominent in the restoration of historical sites related to his life.

(Tom C)

colony without success. Oikawa assembled 82 families of money made possible. Among the 82, there were 5 and five under 20 which

Unable to obtain employment, Oikawa chartered the SUIAN MARU. On August 31, 1906, the ship sailed north to Alaska and the village of Tofino.

On October 19, the ship arrived at Beacher's Bay near Victoria. Each group was given a plot of land. They were instructed to be as inconspicuous as possible. They would be able to earn money, but hardly inconspicuous; local residents as a suspicious

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Jinzaburo Oikawa. His birthplace,  
Towa-cho, formerly Yonekawa-  
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related to his life.

(Tom Oikawa)



colony without success because of the poor economic times. In 1906  
Oikawa assembled 82 people who paid 60 yen each, a considerable sum  
of money made possible only with the assistance of friends and relatives.  
Among the 82, there were 16 in their 40s, 23 in their 30s, 38 in their 20s,  
and five under 20 which included Kimpei Goto.

Unable to obtain emigration permits from the Japanese government,  
Oikawa chartered the *Suian Maru*, a 196-ton three-masted sailing ship.  
On August 31, 1906, they set sail. It was a long voyage, the Captain taking  
the ship north to Alaska and then heading south. It was not until October  
5 that they cast anchor off Vancouver Island about 30 miles from the  
village of Tofino.

On October 19, the 50th day of the journey, they went ashore at  
Beacher's Bay near Victoria in the middle of the night in four groups.  
Each group was given a compass, a map and food for two days. They were  
instructed to be as inconspicuous as possible and head for Sidney where  
they would be able to catch a ferry boat for Vancouver. Alas, they were  
hardly inconspicuous; on the contrary they were quickly reported by  
local residents as a suspicious group of strangely dressed Orientals and

### Stories of My People

were soon picked up by the police. The *Suian Maru*, lacking proper papers, was escorted to the naval base at Esquimalt. Oikawa had a disaster on his hands. His venture had little hope for success. At one time he had toyed with the idea of taking the ship through the Strait of Juan de Fuca, anchoring off Oikawa Island and putting the people ashore in the dark of the night. Oikawa had to contend with intense hostility to Oriental immigration.

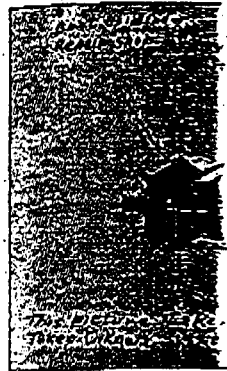
The office of the Japanese consul in Vancouver sent Saburo Yoshie to Victoria to see what could be done. Yoshie had a difficult situation and when he spoke to the captured would-be immigrants he was suitably stern. "You people have broken the law, you are illegal immigrants and the authorities are talking of sending you back to Japan. You will be sent back to the *Suian Maru*. Behave yourself and if you don't, terrible things will happen!" \*

Yoshie's instructions were to play down the incident and negotiate with the authorities to land the immigrants properly. Yoshie assisted the police in rounding up the immigrants who were given a complete physical check up, disinfected, and put back on the ship. Yoshie spoke to each immigrant and learned of their great desire to work in Canada. He felt it would be a tragedy for them to return to Japan. After explaining this to the Canadian authorities, he managed to obtain permission for them to land.

Although no member of his family remained in Canada when he returned to Japan in 1917, Jinzaburo Oikawa left his mark on Japanese Canadian history. In the directory published by the *Tairiku Nippo* just before Pearl Harbor there are 31 Oikawas listed with Miyagi-ken as their place of origin. Talk to an Oikawa and the probability is high that Miyagi-ken is somewhere in the background. I asked my friend Robert Shizuo Oikawa (retired head cost accountant, Bathurst Containers) for his father's name. We looked for Hachisaburo Oikawa in Jinshiro Nakayama's book and there he was: Place of origin Yonekawa-mura, Miyagi-ken. I

\*Terrible things did happen on May 23, 1914, when the *Komagata Maru* with 400 East Indians on board entered Vancouver harbour. They had boarded the specially chartered ship at Hong Kong, Shanghai, Kobe and Yokohama and had clearly broken the regulation that immigrants from India must come "by continuous journey from the country of their citizenship to the country of their destination". The regulation was cruel, unreasonable and clearly discriminatory since there was no direct sailing from India to Canada.

For eight hot weeks the East Indians were confined to the ship under the 8-inch guns of HMCS *Rainbow*. So great was the agitation that three riots took place and the army was called out to keep order until the *Komagata Maru* left Vancouver.



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Tom Oikawa visiting the memorial to Jinzaburo Oikawa, 1977. From left: Ryoichi Oikawa, Tom, sister Chisaki. (Tom Oikawa)

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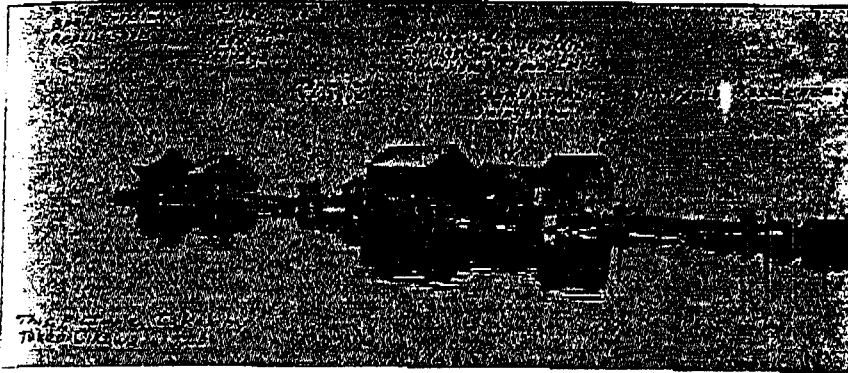
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Oikawa Island, 1920. Photograph by Takeo Oikawa. Captions by Tom Oikawa who lived on Oikawa Island. He recalls: "On Oikawa Island the people grew *hakusai* and *daiikon* (Japanese vegetables), made pickles and sold them in Vancouver and Steveston. I remember remains of a rice mill, a steam engine, boilers and a big tank for making *dobu sake*. Oikawa Island is now completely deserted. A logging company once used the island to store, scale and sort logs. My wife, Kay, and I visited Towa-cho, formerly Yonekura-mura, in 1977. All the old-timers were gone and the younger ones knew little or nothing about Jinzaburo Oikawa."



Tom Oikawa visiting the memorial to Jinzaburo Oikawa, 1977.  
From left: Ryoichi Oikawa,  
Tom, sister Chisaki.

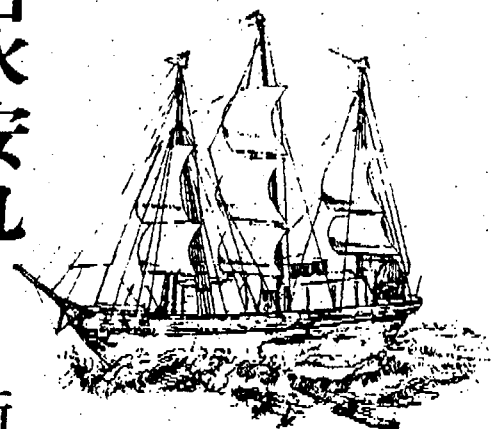
(Tom Oikawa)





Suian Maru

## 密航船水安丸



新田次郎

Frontispiece, Mitsukosen Suian Maru. (The Secret Journey of the Suian Maru) by Jiro Nitta

Jinzaburo Oikawa's childhood name was Ryoji. He was the third son of Fujiro Onotera, Tome-gun, Yonekawa-mura. As an adopted son, he entered the house of Oikawa and assumed the name of his grandfather. He worked hard in the silk business and then emigrated to Lion Island near New Westminster in Canada. He opened up fishing on the Fraser River for the Japanese people and Lion Island became known as Oikawa Island. On returning from Canada he lived at Tosei-gun, Kata-mura. His wife, Yaeno, from the Masubuchi village had two children, Shima and Eiji. Eiji was drowned in the Fraser River. Shima was adopted by the Hosoboshi family.

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## Stories of My People

*Erected in their memory. September 1969, by Teichiro Oikawa. Jinzaburo Oikawa, died April 4, the second year of Showa, (1927) age 74, Yaeno Oikawa, died January 20, the 38th year of Showa, (1963) age 81.*



Kimpei Goto was one of the last survivors who made the voyage on the *Suian Maru* in 1906. In September 1966, at his home on Oxford Street in Hamilton, Ontario, Goto, 77 years of age, wrote a short account of his life.

IN THE YEAR MEIJI 37, 38, 1904-05, the time of the Russo-Japanese War, from my small village of Yonckawa-mura, young men, only seven or eight years older than I were called to the service. I remember accompanying my uncle to the Ichinoseki station to see my brother-in-law leaving to join the Aomori 8th Division. It was the first time I had seen a train and the reality of war did not strike me. My hopes and ambitions were to get as much education as possible but family finances made this an impossible dream.

I read everything that came into my hands and thought of trying out as a substitute teacher. Gradually in our remote village in Miyagi-ken I became aware of the many problems that confronted our nation—the sacrifices necessary for the war effort, the falling standard of living of the middle class, the increasing tax burden, people leaving the village to work in Hokkaido, and diminution of family savings. We sang victory songs but the nation faced many problems and we had little hope of escaping the poverty of rural life.

In 1902, I heard about Jinzaburo Oikawa who was building a fishing industry in "America". He was gathering a group to accompany him to Canada. He said that money could be made in the new country. My father suggested that I join the group and return when my army call-up came since my uncle and other relatives and people in the village were going. I had hoped to leave the village and now I was going to a foreign country with my father's approval! What work I was going to do didn't matter! It seemed my prayers had been answered.

I was 17 1/2 years old. Some questioned my father for letting a young boy go to a foreign country but he said that I was in good company since many respected village people had also applied. Every day seemed to drag on as I waited for the big day.

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<sup>1</sup> Jinzaburo Oikawa's first Michie. Jinzaburo Oikawa, Island.

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I travelled to my aunt's house and waited for the ship. It was a three-masted sailing ship, the *Sulan Maru*, 196 tons. To me she was a magnificent vessel. Every experience was new and exciting—the sea, the ship, the hustle-bustle of getting ready for a long sea voyage.

The captain, 43 years old, was from Mie-ken and the crew mostly from Kansai. The three cooks were from Igu-gun in the same prefecture. Among the 83 on board, there were three young men including myself from the same village. Most men were age 27–28 years and only five or six were over 40. Apart from the young men, the others were married and were planning to stay in Canada for two or three years to make a nest-egg and then return to Japan. People who went to work in Hokkaido usually returned home for New Year but to be separated from wife and family for two or three years as *dekasegi*, working in another place, must have been difficult to contemplate.

We started on September 10 with all sails set to catch the morning wind. The second morning I saw on deck the three women who were in the group. One was 24 and she was to become the wife of Taijiro<sup>3</sup>, the eldest son of Jinzaburo Oikawa. The second woman was a beautiful young girl. The third was the wife of Suzuki who was from Sendai. Taijiro Oikawa and his wife returned from Canada after a few years and operated a hotel, *Oikawa Ryokan* in Sendai. When I returned to Japan seven years ago, we had a pleasant evening talking about our experiences.

Crossing the ocean on a three-masted sailing ship was a great adventure. Most passengers were seasick but it never bothered me. On the 50th day we reached our destination. Since we did not have proper papers, we went ashore about nine o'clock in the dark of the night. We were dressed in surplus army uniforms and shoes and were given a two-day supply of food. Divided into four groups we were told to head north. On shore I stumbled often in the dark and pulled myself up the bank with the aid of branches of small trees. My shoes were too small. After a while we sat down to rest, built a small fire and tried to sleep.

For breakfast we chewed on hard biscuits, *katapan*, bought from army surplus stocks. The leader who had a compass directed us north. We broke branches to leave a trail for the slow ones to follow until we reached a path. Some men complained that their shoes were hurting, others that their loads were too heavy.

<sup>3</sup> Jinzaburo Oikawa's first wife, Oo-i-no, died 1900. She had two sons, Taijiro and Michie. Jinzaburo Oikawa, 47, and Yaeno, 19, his second wife, were married on Oikawa Island.

### Stories of My People

Several memories remain with me of my first day in Canada. I recall hearing a ship's whistle and worrying that authorities were coming after us. We saw a young girl riding a bicycle, her silver hair blowing in the wind—she appeared to be a young goddess from heaven. We met a *hakujin* on the path, a giant of a man, well over six feet. He stopped and spoke to us. One of the men who had been in "America" translated. He said the *hakujin* was looking for workers. As he talked he spat red juice from his mouth. Since he had red hair naturally his saliva was red, I thought. Later I learned about chewing tobacco and often laughed about that experience.

We came to a single track railway which we followed hoping that it would lead us to the ship taking us to Vancouver. We met six bearded dark men wearing cloth on their heads; they were East Indian rail workers. Each new experience brought surprises. The horses were twice the size of Japanese horses, the women were huge. Canada was a big country and everything must be big I thought. We were small Japanese from a small country.

We came to the end of the railway track and rested while three of the men scouted ahead to find the ship that was to take us to Vancouver. They did not return. Three white men armed with rifles appeared. Needless to say we were frightened. There was much hand talking. Finally we understood they were policemen who were taking us prisoners. The three men who had gone ahead had also been arrested.

We were taken to an enclosure and given food. Next morning we learned that we were in the Victoria immigration centre. We were stripped naked and disinfected with a powerful powder. I still remember how difficult it was to breathe. After lunch a Japanese gentleman wearing a suit and a top hat spoke to us. He said, "You have broken the law by attempting to enter the country illegally. They are talking about sending you back to Japan. The Japanese consulate is negotiating with the authorities in the capital. Until we receive an answer you will be returned to the *Suian Maru* and confined to the ship. Behave yourself and if you don't terrible things will happen." The man was Saburo Yoshie, secretary in the Japanese consulate in Vancouver, who later married the beautiful young girl, Oikawa Oon.

A few days later we received the wonderful news. Permission to land had come from Ottawa. We boarded a splendid ship which took us from Victoria to Vancouver with our worldly goods packed in wicker baskets. The owners of Japanese rooming houses were at the pier to meet us and offered temporary shelter. We were taken to Powell Street, the Japanese



Saburo Yoshie (centre) came from Korea and one year in Hawaii.

area and were surprised that it was not to welcome us with a celebration—

The Japanese area had many restaurants, Japanese rooming houses, and was necessary for the Japanese. Different rooming houses were found work on the railroad. All Japanese arriving in the first months to a year underwent hard work before, even a hard labor to shoulder, to build Japan.

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Saburo Yoshie (centre) came to Vancouver January 30, 1901, after serving five years in Korea and one year in Hawaii. Left, Consul Seizaburo Shimizu; right, secretary Takio.  
*(Canada no Hoko)*

area and were surprised to see the flag of Japan decorating the street. It was not to welcome us. The day was November 3, *tencho setsu*, the celebration marking the birthday of the Emperor. Thus began my life in Canada with a celebration—the 39th year of Meiji, 1906.

The Japanese area was three blocks long with Japanese stores, Japanese restaurants, Japanese rooming houses, Japanese bath houses—everything necessary for the Japanese. We were divided into small groups and sent to different rooming houses. Through a Japanese employment agency I found work on the railway. This seemed to be the customary procedure. All Japanese arriving for the first time worked for the railway from six months to a year until they had the feel of the country. High school graduates, middle school graduates, people who had never done physical work before, even a lawyer from Asada, all worked on the railway, shoulder to shoulder, to begin their quest for a nest-egg before returning to Japan.

### Stories of My People

Before working for the railway, I had stayed in Vancouver for three days and with my uncle had visited a good friend of my father who had come to Canada six years earlier. He shook my hand, and asked, "Are you the eldest son of Yoshimatsu?" He seemed very pleased to see me and gave me \$5.00. That was a huge sum of money in those days and especially for a boy who never had money of his own. I have never forgotten his generosity.

We worked in a gang of 50 to 60 men, everyone equipped with a shovel. We quickly learned that as long as a man had a shovel in his hand he was all right even though he may not be working very hard. The company purchased the necessary clothing, shoes and gloves and the money was deducted from our pay of \$1.50 for a ten-hour day.

The railway camp in the Rockies was very cold the temperature often dropping to 30 degrees below zero. We lived in baggage cars. Since I was under five feet and lightly built my job consisted of cleaning, fetching water, and helping in the kitchen but I was paid the same wage as the outside workers. Many men could not write and I wrote letters to their families for them. During the year I grew 4 or 5 inches and I was treated well. When spring came there was the added danger of slides caused by the melting snow. During one tragic incident fifteen men were killed. Some complained that working under such conditions was not worth any money and wanted to return to Japan.

After working for one year in the Rockies, I was transferred to a rail gang on the prairies. The prairie land was still in its virgin state. Cultivation had not started in many areas and all one could see was a great expanse of prairie grass.

I worked for two years on the railway then became a houseboy in Vancouver to learn English. Even now I can recall with indignation the menial tasks I was required to do. Letters continually came from Japan asking for money. A common greeting was — "Has your money letter come?"

After a year as a houseboy I went to Golden 500 miles from Vancouver to work in a restaurant owned by a Japanese. There were seven or eight young Japanese employed by the owner who had been to a university in the United States and was a highly respected man. He took an interest in me and encouraged me. I worked hard. It was a shock when he disappeared one day. The restaurant was another failure of the depression years but I never thought the owner would abandon his workers without paying them. Luckily, I had a friend in Calgary who found a job for me waiting in a posh restaurant that attracted wealthy customers. The chandelier was beautiful. With my tips I was making \$200 a month.

In 1912, five years after becoming a Canadian, Canada was called to serve in the army. To avoid being drafted to the back woods. Naturally since Japanese were excluded from this category applied for exemption and was declared fit for service. Since Canadians were not drafted in the summer of 1918 before the northern waters barely melted. Then, I ran into the form for \$300 for my wages. My father was the oldest son and he was including close relatives to become my wife. The docks and harbour were decorated with war.

After twelve years in Canada, Japan and saw the great earthquake train to Yonekawa-mura with It didn't seem right to me. When the road became rocky kept saying, "That's OK. I had the whole experience."

It was about 8 in the evening I was studying by a very dim light she called out, "Nii-san ga" the family, some who were. This was the year that the

Later discussions turned to finding someone I had not met. She was a country girl of 10. I marvelled that parents who had spent twelve years in the parents decided that in two or three years. So often the wife was not able to did not agree to that.

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In 1912, five years after coming to Canada, I became a naturalized Canadian. Canada was to be my home. Naturalized Canadians were called to serve in the army in the World War under the Military Service Act. To avoid being drafted some went to Japan, others disappeared into the back woods. Naturalized Japanese Canadians petitioned Ottawa that since Japanese were excluded from full citizenship rights we should not be called for compulsory military service. (Over 90 per cent of men in this category applied for exemption.) I received my call, took my physical and was declared fit for service but the government decided that Japanese Canadians were not required for compulsory military service. The summer of 1918 before returning to Japan I fished for salmon in the northern waters barely making enough money for my passage to Japan. Then, I ran into the former restaurant owner at Golden who gave me \$300 for my wages. My family in Japan urged me to get married since I was the oldest son and nearing 30 years of age. In a family conference including close relatives they had selected a girl who eventually was to become my wife. The day I arrived in Japan all ships in Yokohama harbour were decorated with flags; it was November 11, the end of the war.

After twelve years in Canada I had returned with a *dantai* (group) to Japan and saw the great changes in Yokohama and Tokyo. I boarded a train to Yonekawa-mura where I hired a *jirikisha* to take me to my home. It didn't seem right to me that another human should be pulling me. When the road became rough I offered to get off and walk but the man kept saying, "That's OK. Don't get off." I felt uncomfortable about the whole experience.

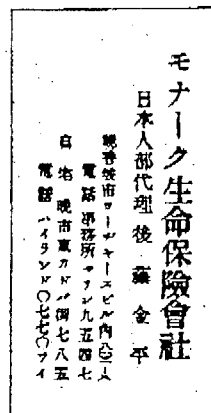
It was about 8 in the evening when I arrived home. A young girl of 8 or 9 was studying by a very dim lamp. It was my sister Tomiko. Immediately she called out, "*Nii-san ga kita!*" (Older brother has arrived!) Members of the family, some who were sick in bed, got up and welcomed me home. This was the year that the Spanish flu was sweeping around the world.

Later discussions turned to my marriage. I could not see myself marrying someone I had not met or talked to but I agreed to visit her family. She was a country girl of 19 and I was nearly 30. We had little in common. I marvelled that parents could give their beloved daughter to a stranger who had spent twelve years in a foreign country. After some discussion the parents decided that we should get married and I would call for her in two or three years. Such arrangements had been made before and often the wife was not able to join her husband for five years or more. I did not agree to that.

## Stories of My People



Kimpei Goto, wife Takeki, and their first child, Elchi.  
(Tosh Goto)



Kimpei Goto's business card in Vancouver. He was the Japanese representative for Monarch Life Assurance Company. He lived at 785 Cordova Street, telephone Highland 0770Y.

The date of the wedding arrived. My bride came on a horse through a street decorated for the occasion.

I returned to Canada with the previous group on the 10,000-ton *Kashima Maru*. It was April. All young men, it seemed, had married and the ship was filled with new brides. When I landed in Vancouver I had \$30 to my name. I will never forget my friends who pressed \$200 in my pocket as a wedding gift.

I rented an old rundown hotel and started a rooming house. My wife, who couldn't speak a word of English, was left in charge while I went to work for an import-export firm. Next, I bought a variety store and we worked from 7 A.M. to one in the morning. When our children arrived, it became too much for us. Through the assistance of Saburo Shinobu, who was also from Miyagi-ken, I opened an insurance agency in the fall of 1928. My office was at 785 East Cordova Street and I did fairly well in my business.

Twenty-four years ago coastal British Columbia war with Japan started in newspapers and magazines, worthy, vicious people. Bayfarm in the Sloca. When we moved east i distrust and refused t were treated as enem young children as we

One group, the Ch Japanese. Just before home. I was very angr us, I thought. I talke received a hamper of the city had raised m food to mark the cele thy enemies" and the Christ. I accepted the beautiful spirit of Chr

It is September 19 except for an operatio enjoyed twelve years came on the *Suian Ma* people who came to *Suian Maru* are the Miura, Naoto Oikawa Hiratoku, the Koji bro

*Kimpei Goto died on Monday, March. Father of Eichi, Koji (Miyoko). Also sur grandchildren and ter, Shizue Sekine,*

*Takeki Goto died*



### Suian Maru

Twenty-four years ago, the forced removal of the Japanese people from coastal British Columbia was a time of great distress and worry. When the war with Japan started, the hatred for the Japanese Canadians expressed in newspapers and magazines was fearful. We were pictured as untrustworthy, vicious people. My family and I were uprooted and moved to Bayfarm in the Slocan Valley. So much for my Canadian citizenship. When we moved east to Hamilton in 1947 many *hakujin* looked at us with distrust and refused to rent us rooms. We were Canadians and yet we were treated as enemies. It was a time of great worry for parents with young children as we tried to get settled before school started.

One group, the Christian churches, extended a helping hand to the Japanese. Just before Christmas a large hamper of food arrived at our home. I was very angry, we didn't need charity. They're making fools of us, I thought. I talked to another family and I found that they too had received a hamper of food. I soon learned that the Christian churches in the city had raised money and sent to every Japanese family a hamper of food to mark the celebration of the birth of Christ. The Bible says "Love thy enemies" and these people were literally practising the teachings of Christ. I accepted the hamper of food with gratitude and marvelled at the beautiful spirit of Christianity. I later became a Christian.

It is September 1966. I am now 77 years of age. My health is good except for an operation for stomach ulcers. We have lost one son. I have enjoyed twelve years of retirement. There are only two of us left who came on the *Suian Maru*. Gennosuke Suzuki must now be 86 or 87. The people who came to Canada at the invitation of men who came on the *Suian Maru* are the relatives of Kengo Oikawa, Keigo Oikawa, Eisaku Miura, Naoto Oikawa, Jugoro Fukahori, the son of Kamegawa, Saburo Hiratoku, the Koji brothers and their wives. They must all be in their 70s.

*Kimpei Goto died in Henderson General Hospital, Hamilton, Ontario, on Monday, March 4, 1978, husband of Takeki Goto, in his 85th year. Father of Eichi, Koji, Mitsuo, Richard, Toshiko and Mrs. Frank Shimoda (Miyoko). Also surviving are seven brothers and sisters in Japan, eight grandchildren and four great grandchildren. A son, Shiro, and a daughter, Shizue Sekine, predeceased him.*

*Takeki Goto died 1990.*

モナーク生命保險會社  
日本人部代理 後藤金平

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# Stories of My People

## PASSENGER LIST, SUIAN MARU, VOYAGE OF 1906

All passengers, except seven, were from Miyagi-ken. Ages are shown in brackets. Note: Japanese names can be read in more ways than one.

Gensaku Chiba (48)	Takeyoshi Sugahara (19)
Gennosuke Suzuki (28)	Seinosuke Suzuki (29)
Harusaburo Ito (40)	Jinzaburo Sugahara (22)
Jogo Suzuki (25)	Suekichi Abe (26)
Sanji Abe (22)	Eikichi Chiba (26)
Yojuro Kumagai (43)	Sakae Sasaki (19)
Juzaburo Sato (26)	Matsutaro Chiba (32)
Terajiro Oikawa (29)	Eiji Sudo (36)
Yojiro Oikawa (42)	Yaezo Sato (39)
Yoshiharu Fujiwara (30)	Usaburo Oikawa (28)
Kichiemon Sato (24)	Harujiro Oikawa (27)
Shinshiro Inage (35)	Shitagoro Iwabuchi (22)
Seichiro Oikawa (22)	Takanori Hatakakeyama (21)
Chiyomi Oikawa (22)	Kumakichi Sugawara (24)
Tarobe Fujiwara (21)	Kuroji Sato (31)
Riemon Hatakakeyama (28)	Yuhci Fujiwara (38)
Yoshizo Oikawa (29)	Ichiji Oikawa (29)
Kikuji Sato (21)	Kuraji Sato (21)
Goroji Oikawa (33)	Sozasaburo Sato (36)
Chosaburo Iwabuchi (32)	Magobe Numakura (36)
Sosuke Hatakakeyama (42)	Chuzo Goto (26)
Shigejiro Sato (33)	Tatusaburo Sato (26)
Kimpei Goto (18)	Ichinojo Taira (41)
Gizo Onodera (27)	Kibinosuke Sato (48)
Torakichi Chiba (41)	Bunji Goto (24)
Kosaburo Goto (43)	Tokujuro Sato (36)
Shinkichi Sato (21)	Masa Chiba (43) Iwate-ken
Unkichi Sugawara (27) Iwate-ken	Zensuke Sato (25)
Dainosuke Miura (23)	Tatusaburo Tadano (31)
Chusasuke Kumagai (29)	Heizo Horiuchi (33)
Yoshio Takizawa (18)	Toyomatsu Kumagai (46)
Seitaro Oikawa (38)	Kunibei Kumagai (41)
Ryoji Oikawa (30)	Ichisaburo Kumagai (22)
Yonishin Oikawa (25)	Kenzo Shima (48)
Takeru Igarashi (24)	Taiji Kumagai (24)
Seichiro Sato (29)	Iwao Endo (37)
Yoemon Asano (29)	Hisao Inouye (32) Kanagawa-ken
Kobe Ono (45) Kanagawa-ken	Jizaburo Tsuyuki (41) Kanagawa-ken
Saijiro Shibuya (33) Kanagawa-ken	Hirokichi Komazawa (40) Kanagawa-ken
Toyo Oikawa (25)	Oon Oikawa (16)
Hisayo Suzuki (22)	Jinzaburo Oikawa (53)

(Source: Kiyoki Shudo, *Canada Mitsuko Monogatari*)

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<sup>1</sup> Victoria Colonist, Ma



## City of Richmond

6911 No.3 Road, Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1

Telephone (604) 276-4000

[www.city.richmond.bc.ca](http://www.city.richmond.bc.ca)

August 30, 2004

File: 2000-01

**City Clerk's Office**

Telephone: (604) 276-4007

Fax: (604) 278-5139

Mr. Terry McPhail  
President  
Shelter Island Marina Inc.  
6911 Graybar Road, #120  
Richmond, BC V6W 1H3

Dear Mr. McPhail:

**Re: Don and Lion Islands**

This is to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of August 27, 2004 in connection with the above matter.

A copy of your letter has been forwarded to the Mayor and each Councillor for their information. In addition, your letter has been referred to Mr. Joe Erceg, General Manager, Urban Development for response. If you have any questions or further concerns at this time, please call Mr. Erceg at (604) 276-4083.

Thank you for taking the time to make your views known.

Yours truly,

J. Richard McKenna  
*City Clerk*

JRM:rms

pc: Mayor and each Councillor (with letter)  
Joe Erceg, General Manager, Urban Development

June 12, 1997.

Dr. Yoshiyuki Okamura,  
10155 122nd Street,  
Surrey, B.C. V3V 7J9.



JAPANESE CANADIAN  
NATIONAL MUSEUM &  
ARCHIVES SOCIETY

511 East Broadway  
Vancouver BC V5T 1X4  
Tel (604) 874-8090  
Fax (604) 874-8164

Dear Dr. Okamura:

I was delighted to talk with you yesterday on the telephone and to hear about your historical research and interests. Thank you very much for the draft article about Oikawa and Sato Islands. I am encouraged to hear that there is interest in restoring the old names to these islands, and would definitely like to lend my own support to these efforts. I will bring this matter to the JCNMAS board and hope that they, too, will endorse the efforts.

Enclosed is a copy of the pages from Roy Ito's book that deal with the islands and the Suian Maru story. Roy would probably also support the renaming campaign, and the same could be true for Toyo Takata (who wrote Nikkei Legacy). Randy Enomoto, NAJC president, is also very interested in Japanese Canadian place names and landmarks and is planning a summer climb of Mt. Manzo Nagano. Roy Miki of Simon Fraser University has also expressed concern to me about the loss of Japanese Canadian place names.

The JCNMAS board and staff are a relatively small group immersed in plans for the new museum and archives to be built at Nikkei Place. If anyone seems reticent to lend support, it is only because of fears that we might take on too many projects and over-extend ourselves! In the case of these islands, however, I am personally prepared to address Richmond Council, if necessary. I am keenly aware of the importance of landmarks as memory devices for preservation of history, and strongly interested in the cultural meaning of landscapes.

We have published several historical articles already in Nikkei Images and would be delighted if you would like to submit a version of your article for the series. The photographs would make it especially interesting, given the fact that few people today acknowledge the former importance of the islands.

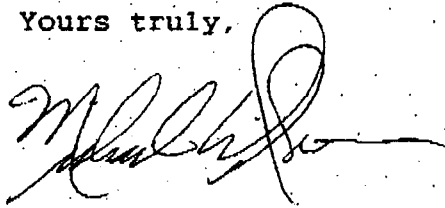
Along with the material from Roy Ito's book I am also enclosing a set of the 1996 issues of Nikkei Images and a reprint of an article about Native ceremonial landscapes. I hope to write a parallel article about the attempts to obliterate the Japanese Canadian cultural landscape and am collecting case histories such

Dr. Y. Okamura/p. 2

as renaming of places, bulldozing of cemeteries, relocation of people, and so on. What happened to Japanese Canadians is part of a more pervasive pattern in Canadian society and could easily happen again. I applaud your own efforts to document and counter this process, and look forward to possible joint efforts in future.

Thank you very much for contacting us, and please accept my sincere best wishes.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Michael C. Wilson', with a large, stylized loop at the end of the signature.

Michael C. Wilson,  
Executive Director.

June 16, 1997

Fry.

I have learned since there are at least three books in English containing articles of Japanese Behavior. They are Tokyo Iphata's Nihon Legacy; Ray Ota's Stories of My People; Gordon Fraleyama's The Issei's.

I phoned the Japanese Canadian National Museum and Archival Society and receive a very positive approach to the idea of changing the names of at least one of the Island.

He will try to get the support of the J.C.N.M. & a society board.

The names he mentions in his letter are all well known in Canadian J.C. society.

As soon as he obtains us of his board's approval, I will ask him to talk to you directly to 12 steps approaching the National Council.

If you think it would be appropriate to have Nelson on site, we are also willing to talk to him.

Sincerely

Y. Okamura

May 15, 1997

July.

- ① Even Cannery was on Ligon island (Isle) sometime shortly after 1870 before Okawa moved to San Island. (Aikawa) so it would be more appropriate to confer the name Aikawa to San Island.
- ② The following has been extracted from "The Canada Times" a local Japanese language newspaper published in Toronto.
  - (a) the house in the picture is the place Okawa was born.
  - (b) Vernon BC is a sister city of To Iwa City (city) in Kanagawa Prefecture where Okawa was born and developed as well before he came to Canada. It is the place where he recruited the people he smuggled to Canada. The article claims many of the travellers from Japan are now going to Vernon.
  - (c) Kan Centre has been developed in Sasebo city named after Okawa to promote international exchange.

*Seneca*

*C. Charnock*

*40*

TOTAL P. 01